



## FACTORS AFFECTING ADVENTURE TOURISM: CASE STUDY OF BOULDERING CLIMBING ZOOLANDER, KHON KAEN ZOO

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### Abstract

The objective of this research project is to study on factors that affect adventure tourism: case study of Bouldering Climbing Zoolander, Khon Kaen Zoo. The factors are divided into 2 groups 1) Push Factors which consist of Physiological Needs, Safety Needs, Social Needs, Esteem Needs and Self-actualization Needs; and 2) Pull Factors which consist of 5A's, namely, 1) Attraction, 2) Accessibility, 3) Activity, 4) Amenities and 5) Accommodation.

*Keywords: Adventure Tourism, Motives, Bouldering Climbing*

### Introduction

Growth of Tourism of Thailand has reached the target, with the number of foreign tourists coming to Thailand being 38 million and expected to continuously expand. Thailand can be considered as a World-class Tourism Brand; and tourism industry of Thailand is an essential part of the drive of the economy of the country. According to the disclosure of Thailand's tourism situation of 2018 by Ministry of Tourism and Sports, Thailand has welcome 38,277,300 foreign tourists. Of all the foreign tourists, Chinese tourists are of the greatest number or 10.53 million. Even though the overall number of foreign tourists have not reached the target set for that year, or 39 million, it can be said that tourism has expanded in almost every region of the world, except the region of Middle-east which has faced with economic problems and conflict within the region. In addition, in 2018, European tourists have become recovered; hence, Thailand has achieved the target revenue of 2 million million baht. As for 2019, it is anticipated that the number of foreign tourists will increase and reach 41.1 million. It is also estimated that over 11.69 million Chinese tourists will come to Thailand whilst the anticipated numbers of ASEAN tourists and European tourists are 11.31 million and 6.90 million, respectively (Bangkok Post, 2019).

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Sport Climbing is a sport for a single player or a small group of players (Individual Sport), which agrees to the trend of sport tourism, leading to the belief that the market of sport climbing tourism will continuously grow in the future. Rock climbing is a very challenging sport whereby players have to climb up or down cliffs to the destinations. Rock climbing may be on natural or artificial cliffs with or without time limit or fall limit. While many Thais view rock climbing as a dangerous activity, this semi-sport has become more and more popular among local and international tourists. Also, there have been the introductions of new cliffs that are potential and unique in terms of beauty that varies in different locations. Furthermore, rock climbing or rappelling is integrated with the activities of trekking and exploration on forests and waterfalls; and there is the international rock climbing contest held every year (Tourist Attraction Promotion Department, Tourism Authority of Thailand, 2016).

Concerning tourism in Khon Kaen Province, the potentiality of the province that has promptness as a big economic city, and a hub of transportation, trade, investment, education, health service, and innovation; and is a big city of tourism diversity including natural, historical, cultural, way of life and art tourist attractions, big hotels, gigantic auditoriums, restaurants and shopping centers, all of which can impress tourists. In addition, Khon Kaen Province all has a long to improve urban public transportation and is upgrading Khon Kaen Airport as an international airport to support flights and tourists to Khon Kaen Province, or event MICE travelers the number of which has been increasing continuously. Therefore, TAT has been trying to strategically push Khon Kaen Province as a major tourism city since 2018 in accordance with the TAT's Enterprise Plan 2017 - 2021, under the strategy to promote tourism in minor cities in order to add value in the sustainable manner by setting the target number of tourists to Khon Kaen Province to be at least 5 million per year (Bangkokbiznews, 2018).

As stated before, I, the researcher, am thus interested in studying on factors that affect the adventure tourism: case study of Bouldering Climbing Zoolander, Khon Kaen Zoo, in order to learn more directions to promote rock climbing sport because adventure tourism is a pretty new tourism activity for niche market in Thailand. Thus, it posts good opportunity for promotion rock climbing sport (Bouldering Climbing) in Khon Kaen Province so that it will be better known by Thai and foreign tourists.

## **Research Objective**

To study on factors that affect the Adventure Tourism: case study of Bouldering Climbing Zoolander, Khon Kaen Zoo

## Literature Review

### Motives

According to Maslow's hierarchical need theory, human beings have needs and desires to achieve things that are meaningful to themselves. These needs are hierarchical, starting from the most basic one in the first level to needs in upper levels in 5 levels in total, as follows:

1. Physiological Needs are needs for things that allow survival such as foods, clothing, shelters, medicines, water and rest;
2. Safety Needs are safety for physique and life such as safety from accidents and dangers while traveling and security at work that each individual is aware of the limit or scope of behaviors that are acceptable by the society;
3. Social Needs are needs to be a part of the society which is a nature of human being such as needs for love and acceptance, and compliment from others;
4. Esteem Needs or self-esteem needs are the needs for respect, recognition and social statuses such as the needs for respect and the needs for knowledge and capabilities; and
5. Self-actualization Needs are the needs in the highest level of each individual that each individual achieves by using every capability such as the need for the CEO position and the need for success in everything.

### Push Factor and Pull Factor

Push Factors and Pull Factors: Motives for a trip can be divided into 2 types, namely, Push Factors and Pull Factors. Push Factors mean factors that motivate an individual to travel, such as stress and boredom of daily life. Meanwhile, Pull Factors are Factor that are related to a tourist attraction that motivate people to visit that place such as uniqueness and interestingness of that tourist attraction (Dann, 1977; Crompton, 1979).

Hudman (1980) stated that motives to travel are caused from both Push Factors and Pull Factors, which are main motives. These two factors are major psychological factors that are inter-related to each other:

1. Push Factors are the desire to travel that drive and become reasons for traveling such as the need to experience new things to disseminate to others, to gain new knowledge or to build personal satisfaction such as to rest, to make merits, to build harmony in teams, to get business benefits and to participate in sport events;
2. Pull Factors are the factors that make people go to a place, including different types of tourism such as cultural and physical, geographic features, and nature, with the components of fame, identities beauty, products or souvenirs, safety and expenses on the trip related to that particular place.

### Approach and Theory of Components of Tourist Attraction (5 A's)

Dickman (1996) stated that attraction is a greatly important element because it motivates tourists to travel to a place. Attractions can be religiously significant places, beautiful beaches, mountains, national parks, festivals or any other beautiful place that is unique and famous. In general, most famous tourist attractions will have more than one attraction such a historical park that is valuable in terms of interesting architectural features and history.

Thoetchai (2008) stated that tourism resources should have at least 5 main elements or 5 A's, as follows:

1. Attractions: each tourist attraction must have features that attract tourists such as tourism resources and activities;
2. Activities: in each tourist attraction, there should be activities for tourists to completely participate in, such as trekking, learning of nature, boat rolling;
3. Accessibility: each tourist attraction should be located in an area that can be accessed by transportation means such as having a road that is in good condition, facilitates accessibility and is convenient; as well as other ways of transportation;
4. Amenities: each tourist attraction must have complete and sufficient facilities for tourists, such as infrastructures, pipe after, electricity, police stations, hospitals, and restaurants; and
5. Accommodation: at or around each tourist attraction there should be accommodations or lodging services for tourists.

**Table 1** Motivating Factors

Key Factors	Details	Reviewed Research Works
Motives	1. Physiological Needs	Maslow (1954); Chalongsri (2007)
	2. Safety Needs	Maslow (1954); Chalongsri (2007)
	3. Social Needs	Maslow (1954); Chalongsri (2007)
	4. Esteem Needs	Maslow (1954); Chalongsri (2007)
	5. Self-actualization Needs	Maslow (1954)
	6. Attractions	Dickman (1996); Phayom (2006); Thoetchai (2008)
	7. Activities	Dickman (1996); Phayom (2006); Thoetchai (2008)

Key Factors	Details	Reviewed Research Works
	8. Accessibility	Dickman (1996); Phayom (2006); Thoetchai (2008)
	9. Amenities	Dickman (1996); Phayom (2006); Thoetchai (2008)
	10. Accommodation	Dickman (1996); Phayom (2006); Thoetchai (2008)

### **Adventure Tourism**

Adventure tourism can be divided into 2 types, namely, Hard Adventure Tourism and Soft Adventure Tourism (Hudson, 2002). This tourism has been integrated into eco-tourism and uses natural resources for arranging ecological adventurous activities (Mihalic, 2006). In general, adventure tourism is the travel to an unusual place that is located afar or in wilderness (Maccarthy & Whiriskey, 2006). Meanwhile, ecological adventurous activities are held in the areas of national parks or conserved forests (Fredman & Sandell, 2009). In addition, there has been the integration of the concept of wellness of human beings in the context of ecological adventurous tourism, as well as risks that tourists have to encounter (Bentley & Page, 2001). Definitions of adventurous vary highly due to the natures and types of tourists, and personal perception to the risk level, starting from the lowest one or Soft Adventure Tourism to the highest one or Hard Adventure Tourism (Evan, 2003; Shephard & Evans, 2005). The key characteristics of adventure tourism are uncertain results, risk, challenges, expected outcomes, new experience, stimuli, excitement, avoidance of mediocrity, exploration, discovery and emotional difference (Swarbrooke et al., 2003).

### **Bouldering (Boulder Climbing)**

Boulder climbing is an excellent recommended sport for rock climbing amateurs because it requires least equipment, is safe, and is not interrupted with rope-work or vertigo phobia.

Boulder climbing and rock climbing in general are sports that both male and female athletes can compete one another on the proper and fair basis. Bouldering depends on each individual's strength, flexibility and balance. As for professional rick climbers, if you can do climbing of other types, you will learn movement skills that are useful.

Boulder climbing is a good way to improve one's strength and body movement skill. Even for one who has little time, bouldering is the choice of fast rock climbing, which is useful in terms of the use of limited free time. Bouldering for only one hour is sufficient exercise.

Most of the time, bouldering is the rock climbing practice; however, sometimes, to climb boulder with others such as to climb in the switching turns, to share recommendations and to boost once another's morale can be regarded as a social event.

## Research Methodology

This research project relies on systematic literature review in order to learn about factors that affect adventure tourism: case study of Bouldering Climbing, Zoolander, Khon Kaen Zoo, before developing a script for the in-depth interviews with 2 groups of respondents that have participated in making the marketing plan for international bouldering tourism in Khon Kaen Province. The script for the interview is structural one with pre-set open-ended questions that allow each respondent to express their opinions and the researcher can fully share ideas and receive true information.

## Conclusion and Discussion of Research Findings

From the literature review (Table 1) and opinions of respondents from the interviews, the push factors and the pull factors for tourism are shown in Table 2 and motivating factors for adventure tourism are shown in Table 3.

**Table 2** Details of Motivating (Push - Pull) Factors

FACTOR AND ITEMS

Factor	Items
1. Physiological Needs	Ph 1 To avoid mediocrity
	Ph 2 To find a peaceful corner to take care of health
	Ph 3 To have leisure activities
	Ph 4 To be relaxed
	Ph 5 To hang out with friends
	Ph 6 To take some rest
	Ph 7 To break physical limits
2. Safety Needs	Sf 1 Safety for Physique and Life
	Sf 2 Safety from Trip
	Sf 3 Knowledge of Limit of Behaviors Acceptable for the Society

Factor	Items
3. Social Needs	Sn 1 Need to Participate
	Sn 2 Need to Give and Receive Love
	Sn 3 Need for Acceptance from Colleagues
	Sn 4 Need to Be Part of the Team
	Sn 5 Need for Other's Recognition to Importance
4. Esteem Needs	En 1 Need for Fame
	En 2 Knowledge and Capability
	En 3 Need for Success
	En 4 Recognition and Praise
5. Self-actualization Needs	Sa 1 Need for Expected Success
	Sa 2 Need to Use All Capabilities
6. Attractions	At 1 Natural Attractions
	At 2 Man-made Attractions
	At 3 Cultural and Art Attractions
	At 4 Community Relations Attractions
7. Activities	Ac 1 For Tourists Who Visit the Place
	Ac 2 Meet Tourists' Needs
	Ac 3 Diversified Activities
8. Accessibility	As 1 Transportation Convenient for Traveling to the Tourist Attraction
	As 2 Distance Appropriate for the Traveling
	As 3 Routes in Good Conditions
	As 4 Websites of Tourist Attractions

Factor	Items
9. Amenities	Am 1 Convenient Infrastructure Systems
	Am 2 Security System
	Am 3 Accommodation and Lodging Services
	Am 4 Service Places
	Am 5 Food and Beverage Shops
10. Accommodation	Ad 1 Sufficient Accommodations
	Ad 2 Diversity of Prices
	Ad 3 Appropriateness with the Place
	Ad 4 Not Far Distance to Tourist Attraction
	Ad 5 Safety

**Table 3** Details of Factors for Adventure Tourism

Factors	Variables
Adventure Tourism	At 1 Hard Adventure
	At 2 Soft Adventure

From Tables 2 and 3, it is apparent that the factors and indicators of the framework have the objective to show the relations between factors or hidden variables that have effects on other factors as in the empirical data collected from the samples. This is the comparison between pre-test framework and the latest framework in order to analyze whether the current conceptual framework is appropriate or not.



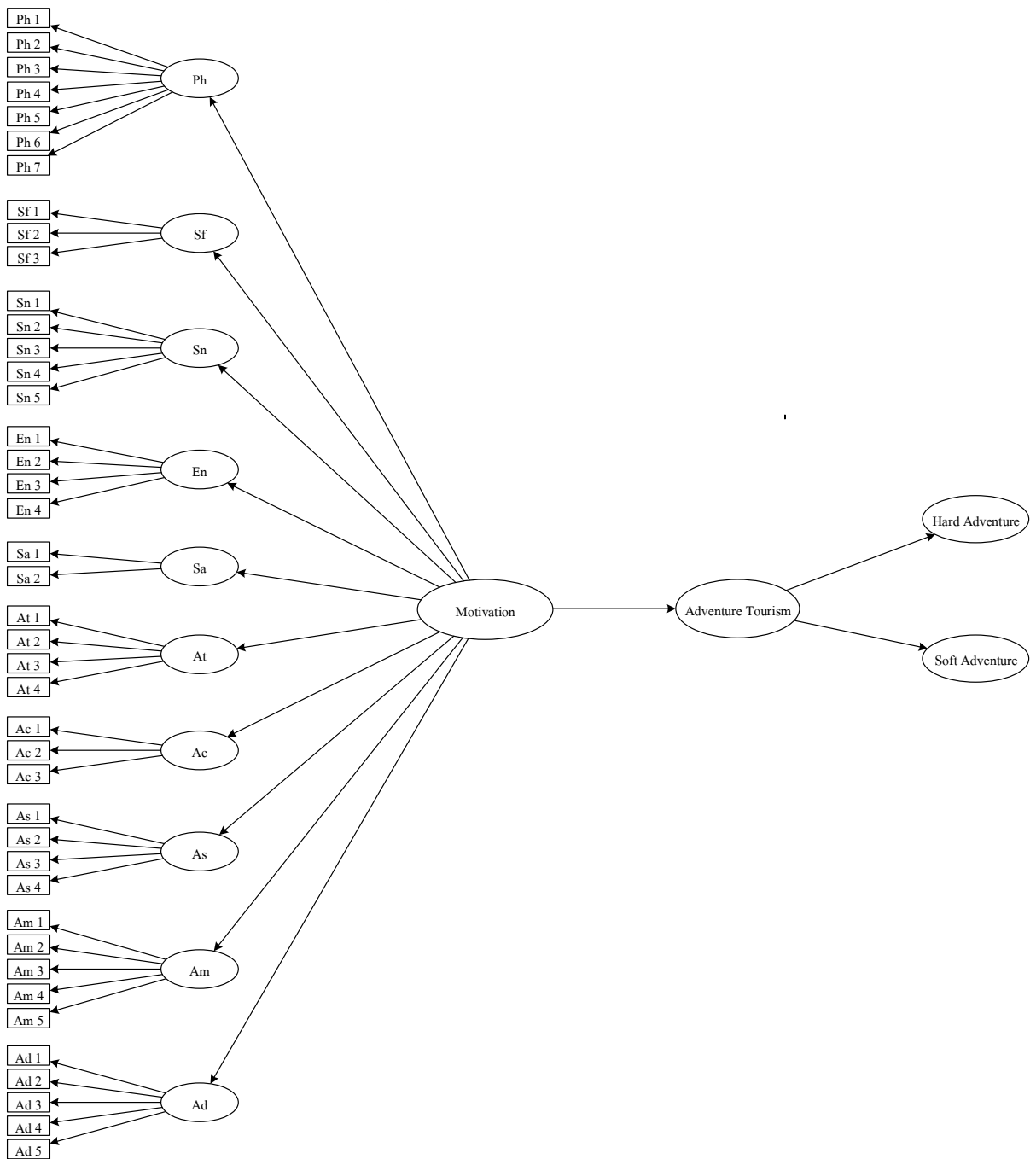


Figure 1 Conceptual Structure in details

In this research project, the conceptual framework is created for reviewed literatures. Collected data are input into an instant program and analyzed for testing the relations among variables. The findings from the research on related factors and motivating factors are as follows: 1) Physiological Needs (Ph 1- Ph 7), 2) Safety Needs (Sf 1- Sf 3), 3) Social Needs (Sn 1- Sn 4), 4) Esteem Needs (En 1- En 4), 5) Self-actualization Needs (Sa 1- Sa 2), 6) Attractions (At 1- At 4), 7) Activities (Ac 1- Ac 3), 8) Accessibility (As 1- As 4), 9)

Amenities (Am 1- Am 5), and 10) Accommodation (Ad 1- Ad 5). Meanwhile, factors and variables for adventure tourism are 1) Hard Adventure (At 1) and 2) Soft Adventure (At 2).

## Suggestions

This article presents the conceptual framework of factors that affect adventure tourism: case study of Bouldering Climbing Zoolander, Khon Kaen Zoo. This research project is a research work that uses in-depth interviews on personnel of governmental agencies and private organizations relating to tourism, and literature review. This work can be applied to the making of marketing plan for promoting adventure tourism with bouldering climbing activity.

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