Conceptualising family adventure tourist motives, experiences and benefits

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CONCEPTUALISING FAMILY ADVENTURE TOURIST MOTIVES, EXPERIENCES AND BENEFITS

KEYWORDS

Families, adventure tourism, motives, experiences, benefits, whole family approach

ABSTRACT (245 words)

Families are becoming increasingly important to the adventure tourism industry, yet previous research neglects to investigate these tourists, instead focusing on family participation in non-adventure holidays and recreational activities. This conceptual paper develops a theoretically grounded perspective of family adventure tourists and considers the following research questions: Which key motives encourage families to participate in adventure activities while on holiday? What are the experiences of families during adventure activity participation on holiday? What benefits do families gain from these experiences? The paper addresses a research gap through synthesising previous research findings pertaining to family tourists and recreationists, adventure tourists and recreational adventurers. It makes connections between these studies to develop fruitful insights into family adventure tourists. It adopts a whole family approach as the perspectives of children and their parents are equally important in progressing understanding of these tourists. Many older family tourism studies only investigate parental viewpoints, yet children are integral to shaping the family holiday experience and understanding them is essential for organisations striving to deliver fun, enjoyable and challenging family holidays which satisfy parents as well as children. The paper presents a conceptual model of family adventure tourists, which illustrates the multidimensional journey families take before, during and after their adventure holiday. The paper highlights the complexities of understanding families who partake in adventure holidays and the key considerations that adventure organisations need to take into account in designing such holidays. It also makes suggestions for further research on family adventure tourists.

MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS (164 words)

The key findings from this paper have several management implications for the adventure tourism industry:

- There is strong and continued growth in the demand for family adventure holidays, and participation is associated with numerous benefits which can lead to improved family functioning.
- Understanding the family adventure tourism market can assist organisations to design suitable holidays which take into account the complexities of families and the multifaceted needs of parents and their children.

- In developing these holidays, organisations need to consider that: families enjoy packaged as well as independently organised adventure holidays; they participate in a range of hard and soft adventure activities; there are motivational differences between parents and children; holidays need to combine activity experiences with opportunities for downtime and relaxation to ensure all family members are happy; activity participation may trigger family conflict at times due to the challenging nature of adventure; and, holidays should facilitate opportunities for family togetherness, bonding, communication, relationship-building, consolidation of family values and traditions, and other benefits.

1. INTRODUCTION

The demand for, and supply of, family outdoor adventure activities and holidays has risen considerably, reflecting exponential growth within the adventure tourism industry (Adventure Travel Trade Association [ATTA], 2016; Outdoor Foundation, 2016), and an increasing desire for active, adventure-filled experiential family holidays (Schänzel & Yeoman, 2015). Many benefits, such as enhanced family functioning and communication, are associated with family recreational adventure participation (Huff, Widmer, McCoy & Hill, 2003; Reis, Thompson-Carr & Lovelock, 2012) but there is an absence of research on families who participate in adventure activities while on holiday. This could be due to the complexities involved in studying family adventure tourists, with parents and children, and different age groups of children having potentially differing desires and needs. The impetus for this conceptual paper therefore arises from a need to conceptualise family adventure tourists to contribute towards understanding an increasingly important type of adventure tourist. Previous work on families has focused on more conventional types of holiday (e.g. Larsen, 2013; Schänzel & Smith, 2014). The paper responds to calls for further research (Pomfret & Bramwell, 2014) to assist adventure organisations in designing suitable holidays which appeal to both children and their parents.

The aim of this paper is to add new knowledge to previous work on family tourism and recreation, specifically to develop a theoretically grounded perspective of family adventure tourists' motives, their experiences while on holiday, and the benefits that they gain from these experiences. The research questions guiding this study are: Which key motives encourage families to participate in adventure activities while on holiday? What are the experiences of families during adventure activity participation on holiday? What benefits do families gain from these experiences? The paper addresses a research gap through synthesising previous research findings pertaining to family tourists and recreationists, adventure tourists and recreational adventurers, to better understand family adventure tourists. Recreational adventure is 'at the heart' of adventure tourism (Weber, 2001, p.361) and both evoke similar psychological and social reactions (Tangeland, 2011), hence it is important to include this literature in the discussion. While previous research has examined family participation in non-adventure holidays and recreational activities (e.g. Carr, 2011; Larsen, 2013), this paper focuses on families in an adventure holiday setting. It advocates a whole family approach, which collectively considers children and parental perspectives, reflecting shared family holiday experiences (Schänzel & Smith, 2014). Many older family tourism studies only explore parental viewpoints (Gram, 2005; Hilbrecht, Shaw, Delamere & Havitz, 2008; Kang, Hsu & Wolfe, 2003; Litvin, Xu & Kang, 2004; Nickerson & Jurowski, 2001) yet children play an important role in shaping the family holiday experience (Carr, 2006), and understanding them is essential for

organisations striving to deliver fun, enjoyable and challenging family holidays which satisfy parents as well as children. The insights developed in this study can be used to progress understanding of other family tourist markets as family tourism is also enjoying a strong upward trajectory (Carr, 2011; Obrador, 2012; Schänzel, 2010). Furthermore, it is likely that commonalities between family adventure tourists and other types of family tourists exist relative to their motives, experiences and benefits.

The remainder of the paper is structured as follows. After presenting a brief overview of adventure tourism and adventure tourists, to highlight their complex and diverse nature, it appraises research on parental and children's holiday motives, and adventure tourist and recreational adventurer motives. It then considers research about non-adventure family holiday experiences, and adventure tourist and recreational adventurer experiences. Following this, it evaluates studies related to the benefits associated with family holidays, family outdoor recreation, adventure tourism and adventure recreation experiences. Discussion focuses on making connections between extant research and theorising about family adventure tourists. It then presents a conceptual model (Figure 1) of family adventure tourists and the conclusion, which explores opportunities for further research.

2. ADVENTURE TOURISM AND ADVENTURE TOURISTS

Adventure tourism is multifaceted and problematic to define as there are divergent perspectives, activities and participants. Adventure holidays comprise a broad range of land-, air- and water-based activities which can be short, adrenalin-fuelled encounters such as windsurfing, or longer experiences such as mountaineering (Pomfret & Bramwell, 2014). There is no known definition of family adventure tourism and its tourists although a plethora of adventure tourist categorisations exist (ATTA, 2016; Patterson, 2006; Pomfret & Bramwell, 2014; Sung, 2004) which segment according to travel behaviour, hard and soft adventure, physical activity, interaction with nature, traveller features, age, gender and cultural learning. Yet, family groups are rarely mentioned in these classifications, making it problematic to propose a definition of this type of adventure tourist. The industry offers family holidays with a plethora of adventure activities mostly situated at the shallow-end of the adventure commodification continuum (Varley, 2006). At this end of the scale, 'the activities are rendered more predictable, and the vagaries of nature are managed-out wherever possible in order to create safe, reliable commodities with only a veneer of risk' (p.188). Such holidays are often multi-activity experiences which accommodate the varied needs and skills of individual family members. Itineraries tend to be a mixture of collective participation in certain activities interspersed with time apart partaking in either parent- or children-only pursuits. This approach positively impacts on the success of a family holiday as optimal social experiences and togetherness will only be

enjoyed if each family member's needs are fulfilled (Larsen, 2013). There have been some attempts to define family tourism. A commonly cited definition suggests it involves a family group, of at least one child and one parent/carer, travelling for leisure for more than one day (Schänzel, Smith & Weaver, 2005). They can be divided into four main types: 'bonded and nature seeking', 'attached and enthusiastic', 'self-directed and recreation-oriented', and 'sociable and static' (Lehto, Lin, Chen & Choi, 2012, p.843). Some family adventure tourists fit into the bonded and nature seeking category given their propensity to partake in nature-oriented activities such as wildlife viewing, hiking and camping, and the emphasis on family togetherness. Others are more aligned to the self-directed and recreation-oriented groups because these families enjoy skills-based outdoor sports such as skiing and cycling.

A further problem in defining family adventure tourists is that 'adventure' is a highly subjective concept which individuals perceive in different ways. Consequently, while one tourist may experience adventure activity participation as 'adventurous', another may not (Pomfret, 2012; Weber, 2001). People's perceptions of adventure are influenced by personality, lifestyle, and level of skill and experience (Priest, 1999). In a family context, it is likely that members will experience adventure differently given differences in age, activity skill level and experience. Additionally, adventure tourism shares commonalities with other types of tourism, such as activity tourism, volunteer tourism and ecotourism, making it problematic to clearly delineate adventure tourism activities (Swarbrooke, Beard, Leckie & Pomfret, 2003). Moreover, adventure tourism consumption involves challenge, risk, uncertain outcomes, insight, excitement, stimulation, novelty, discovery and exploration, contrasting emotions, separation and escapism, focus and absorption, responsibility, commitment, anticipated rewards and play (Cater, 2006; Swarbrooke et al, 2003; Walle, 1997). Yet, there is a lack of consensus about whether adventure tourists who are on commercially organised and guided adventure holidays experience these different elements during activity participation, and if so, to what extent. Finally, there are two broad categories of adventure tourist: those who go on tightly organised, packaged and guided skills-based courses and holidays - known as 'package adventure tourists' - and those who organise and manage their own adventure holidays, sometimes using guiding services to help them achieve their goals – known as 'independent adventure tourists' (Pomfret, 2011). It is thought that each of these categories of adventure tourist share some similarities yet they are also different. Family adventure tourists take both types of holiday, and parental experience in adventure activities and their children's ages are likely to influence decision-making.

3. FAMILY ADVENTURE TOURIST MOTIVES

Extant research on family tourists tends to examine parental or children's motives and neglects to consider the shared motives within family groups. Parents'

preoccupations with their children's enjoyment, family health, family well-being, togetherness, shared experiences and developing their identity as good parents are key motives (Carr, 2011; Gram, 2005; Shaw, Havitz & Delamere, 2008). Furthermore, relative to adventure tourism and other forms of purposive leisure, generativity may strongly influence parental motives. This involves family members nurturing younger generations, through parenting, teaching and mentoring, to create a family legacy of shared values, history, traditions and wisdom (Erikson, 1963; Hebblethwaite & Norris, 2011). Family adventure holidays provide plentiful opportunities for parents and grandparents with adventure activity experience to facilitate development of their children's adventure skills and personal competencies. For instance, outdoor experiences such as navigation skills, dam building and scrambling up waterfalls are known to instil family traditions and values, and secure a family legacy (Schänzel & Jenkins, 2017). Parents are, therefore, more extrinsically driven as their motives reflect their children's needs. Critical to fulfilling these motives are communication between family members and enhanced emotional bonding between family members, known as family cohesion (Olson, Russell & Sprenkle, 1989; Shaw & Dawson, 2001).

Motivational differences between parents and children are apparent because children are 'not just mini adults … they are wired differently, act differently, talk differently, see the world differently' (McNeal, 1999, p.23). Children have individualistic desires which change throughout their childhood alongside their psychological and social development (Carr, 2006). Young children enjoy a range of novel, fun, stimulating and exciting holiday activities (Nickerson & Jurowski, 2001). They 'seek sensory experiences and experiences where they are active and immersed' (Gram, 2005, p.5) while on holiday, and these reflect core adventure elements (Swarbrooke et al, 2003). Similarly, adventure tourists desire meaningful, extraordinary, emotionally charged experiences which contrast starkly with ordinary experiences in their home environment and contribute to personal development (Jefferies & Lepp, 2012). As such, families with younger children are a highly suitable market for the adventure tourism industry. Teenagers desire adult-like holiday experiences, which fulfil their need for relaxation, escapism and socialising (Blichfeldt, 2007; Carr, 2011; Small, 2008). Adventure tourism provides plentiful opportunities for escapism and socialising (Patterson & Pan, 2007), therefore, there is considerable potential for adventure organisations to develop holidays for families with older children.

Previous work on adult adventurers' motives is worth briefly reviewing to provide insights into the motives driving individual family members. From a review of 50 studies (Buckley, 2012), 14 different intrinsic and extrinsic motives - categorised into 3 groups - encouraged adventure participation: activity performance such as skills and fitness; nature and spirit; and, the adventure participant's social position. Building on this review, 16 studies specifically about adventure tourism motivation were examined (Pomfret & Bramwell, 2014), and most of these explored multi-activity

participation (Buckley, 2012; Cater, 2006; Patterson & Pan, 2007; Schneider & Vogt, 2012; Tsaur, Lin & Liu, 2013; Walle, 1997; & Weber, 2001). Other sports included hiking, mountaineering, skiing, white-water rafting and kayaking while there was an absence of research on tourists who participate in clear-cut adventure activities such as snowboarding, horseback riding, paragliding and surfing. Common motives across different activities are skills development, gaining experience, natural environment, challenge, risk, thrill-seeking and achievement. Risk features as a prominent motive for some while others view it as a secondary yet integral element of their adventure (Kane & Tucker, 2004). Exposing children to controllable risk facilitates personal development, and develops confidence in tackling their fears and learning from their mistakes. However, there needs to be a balance between children's exposure to risks and ensuring their safety (Staempfli, 2009), therefore play environments should be challenging while also offering an acceptable level of risk and danger (Frost, Wortham & Reifel, 2008). The adventure tourism industry provides activities which match children's desires to embrace exciting and challenging activities while on holiday. Adventure organisations strive to create an 'illusion of risk' while concurrently anticipating and managing any real risks (Holyfield, Jonas & Zajicek, 2004, p.175).

While extrinsic motives predominantly influence parental decisions to take family holidays, it is suggested that external and internal motives are important to family adventure holiday participation. However, their importance depends partly on the adventure activity experience levels of parents and their children. Adventure motivations gain complexity with experience, and accomplished adventurers are more intrinsically motivated by the need for challenge, achievement, risk-taking and enjoyment, for instance. Contrastingly, novice adventurers are more extrinsically motivated by the need to socialise and be with others, for example (Patterson & Pan, 2007; Ryan & Deci, 2000). By default, parents will be more experienced in the chosen adventure activity or activities than their children if they have previously participated in the specific adventure activities pre-children. As such, they may be intrinsically driven by the need for challenging and exciting experiences, and extrinsically driven by the desire to ensure their children are happy while on holiday. Their children, if novices, are likely to be more extrinsically motivated although older children with more skill, training and experience in adventure activities could also be intrinsically motivated.

4. FAMILY ADVENTURE TOURISM EXPERIENCES

As with motivational differences, family holiday experiences reflect what children want to do, what their parents want to do, and the dynamics between different family members (Gram, 2005; Larsen, 2013). Successful family holidays are a 'harmonic balanced set of different individual pleasures' (Larsen, p.171) comprising time spent together and free time by oneself or with others. Mirroring their holiday

motives, children enjoy playing, and partaking in fun, exciting and new experiences. Socialising with other family members and the familiarity associated with this positively impacts on young children's holiday experiences, and they thrive from the security and comfort of family around them (Hilbrecht et al, 2008). Paradoxically, young children's holiday experiences seem partially incongruent with their motives and with the concept of adventure, which embraces elements of uncertainty, unpredictability and risk (Holyfield, Jonas & Zajicek, 2004). Nonetheless, when children are faced with unknown situations, despite their fears, they usually make the most of and enjoy their holiday experiences (Carr, 2011). Accordingly, a key challenge for the adventure tourism industry is to design flexible adventure holidays which range from perceived 'safe' activities in recognisable environments to more challenging activities in less familiar environments.

The happiest holiday times are when families participate in activities together (Schänzel, 2010), although reaching this state of happiness can be replete with intermittent bouts of conflict and a lack of engagement from different family members resulting in negative group dynamics. For instance, children can interpret dangerous situations differently to their parents as their perceptions of risk differ (Schänzel & Smith, 2014). Family leisure experiences can frequently trigger negative emotions and contradictory thoughts, particularly between different generations within a family (Hebblethwaite & Norris, 2010). However, these negative aspects can be overcome through constant negotiation, cooperation and compromise (Schänzel & Smith, 2014). There are other reasons why family conflict occurs on holiday. Family expectations of their ideal holiday may not coincide with their experiences while actually on holiday. Parents sometimes describe family holidays as stressful and troublesome, more akin to their daily busy lives than enjoyable family bonding experiences. Their needs are not always fulfilled as they prioritise their children's desires over their own. This is particularly the case with younger children, who can disrupt holidays if their needs are not met (Gram, 2005).

The richest holiday experiences are enjoyed when four different elements of the holiday are combined - entertainment, education, escape and aesthetics – and all five senses are engaged, leading to a long-lasting memory of the holiday (Pine & Gilmore, 1998). These ingredients reflect the composition of adventure holidays, which offer rich experiences through challenging, exciting, adrenaline-inducing activities, and intense sensory encounters. Parents on family holidays enjoy relaxation and togetherness with their family although this can sometimes become boring for their children. Concurrently, activity overload can become stressful and exhausting (Larsen, 2013), causing tension and conflict and resulting in reduced family cohesiveness and family functioning (Gram, 2005). It is therefore important to maintain a balance between activities and relaxation on such holidays so that all family members' needs are met. In a family adventure tourism context however, this balance is likely to tip in favour of action-packed, activity-based experiences with less emphasis on relaxation

and time-out from activities due to the desire to experience adventure's core elements (Cater, 2006; Swarbrooke et al, 2003; Walle, 1997). However, because of their challenging nature, participation in these activities can trigger conflict and resentment as family members have to work together to overcome problems (Huff et al, 2003). The degree of family conflict will be contingent on numerous factors including the level of skill and experience parents and children have in the adventure activity, the age of the children, and their interest in and enthusiasm for the activity, and the extent to which parents are willing to compromise their own needs so that their children can experience maximum enjoyment.

Flow (Csikszentmihalyi, 1975) describes the optimal experiences, deep satisfaction and exhilaration which individuals enjoy during and after adventure activity participation. Accordingly, it can help to explain family adventure holiday experiences. Critical to enjoying flow is the challenge-skills balance dimension, where people's perceived level of challenge is positively matched to their perceived level of skill during activity participation (Jackson & Csikszentmihalyi, 1999). Studies on adult adventurers demonstrate the importance of flow to their activity experiences and their continued participation (Houge Mackenzie, Hodge & Boyes, 2011; Pomfret, 2011; Pomfret & Bramwell, 2014; Seifert & Hedderson, 2010; Wu & Liang, 2012). While little is known about family adventure tourists and their flow experiences, it is suggested that children may experience flow, or flow-like feelings during and after activity participation. They may encounter differing levels of flow - ranging from 'micro flow' to 'deep flow' (Csikszentmihalyi, 1975, p.141) - depending on if they feel sufficiently skilled to partake in the activity and if they perceive the challenge positively.

Collective efficacy (Bandura, 1997) can also help to develop understanding of family adventure holiday experiences. This dynamic construct reflects the strength of belief in a group's ability to organise and successfully complete an activity together. Self-efficacy – belief in one's own ability - mastery, past performance, environmental factors, shared efficacy beliefs and verbal persuasion influence collective efficacy (Salanova, Rodríguez-Sánchez, Schaufeli & Cifre, 2014). Given the demanding, intense nature of adventure activity participation, the importance of strong collective efficacy for families is palpable. Verbal persuasion is important for children participating in adventure activities. This involves group members encouraging each other to continue participating rather than giving up when faced with perceived overwhelming challenges (Bandura & Jourden, 1991). It is particularly important for children who are inexperienced in an adventure activity to receive verbal persuasion, given its potentially positive influence on their motivation and self-efficacy. Cohesive families are more likely to demonstrate strong collective efficacy during adventure holiday participation because their efficacy beliefs are aligned. Furthermore, parents with previous experience and mastery in particular adventure tourism activities can enhance their family's collective efficacy during participation.

Studies on dysfunctional families participating in therapeutic adventure programmes found notable improvements in families' collective efficacy (Huff et al, 2003; Wells, Widmer & McCoy, 2004). This was because adventure activity participation necessitated considerable effort from all family members and a strong collective belief that they could do well. While these programmes have a curative focus, the findings help to understand family adventure tourists, and demonstrate that strong collective efficacy is important to successful activity experiences. Collective efficacy can lead to collective flow, 'a collective state that occurs when a group is performing at the peak of its abilities' (Salanova et al, 2014; p.167). This is thought to be more enjoyable than individually experienced flow, as people act as agents of flow for one another and emotional contagion comes into play. This occurs when group members' emotions converge because they unconsciously emulate each other's facial expressions, feelings and postures (Totterdell, 2000). Moreover, intense absorption and engagement with the activity is shared, group members are highly attentive to one another, the experience instigates a shared sense of purpose, and deep satisfaction and elation are felt jointly during the group activity (Walker, 2010). While family adventure tourists might experience collective flow during activity participation, it is thought that this is contingent on the skill and experience levels of different family members, particularly parents. If parents are highly experienced in their chosen adventure holiday activity and their children are inexperienced, the former are unlikely to be performing to the highest of their abilities and, as such, collective flow may not be experienced. Contrastingly, if the whole family group are novices in a specific activity, there is a higher propensity to enjoy collective flow as ability and experience levels are more aligned amongst different family members.

Reversal theory (Apter, 1982) can provide insights into family adventure tourists. People experience regular reversals in their psychological needs, for example the need for immediate enjoyment versus the need for serious achievement. These needs facilitate different metamotivational states and are contingent on individuals' arousal levels. While high arousal can evoke anxiety or excitement, low arousal can instigate boredom or relaxation, and both levels can lead to pleasant feelings of well-being or unpleasant emotions and tension. Accordingly, if a pleasant state becomes unpleasant, individuals make an effort to reverse this state to enjoy well-being once more and to regain their 'optimal level of arousal' (Larsen, 2013, p.157). Reversal theory can explain family holiday experiences better than flow because individuals' experiences are constantly in a state of flux, and unpleasant as well as pleasant holiday experiences can encourage optimal experiences (Larsen, 2013). Family holidays are, therefore, 'an intra-family dynamic of experiential reversals aimed at balancing individual experiences in a way that permits all family members to have a pleasurable holiday' (p.169).

Reversal theory has been applied to recreational adventurers (Cogan & Brown, 1999; Kerr, 1990; Kerr & Sveback, 1989) and adventure tourists (Houge Mackenzie &

Kerr, 2013; Kerr & Houge Mackenzie, 2012), revealing that they fluctuate between telic and paratelic metamotivational states. A person in the '*telic state* tends to be primarily serious, goal-oriented and arousal avoidant, and spontaneous, playful and arousal seeking in the opposing *paratelic state'* (Kerr & Houge Mackenzie, 2012, p.650). A telic-oriented state can manifest itself in the lead up to adventure activity participation when skills training, goal setting and preparation are important. However, individuals can also be in a telic state during participation and if they encounter excessive arousal while trying to accomplish their goals, this can lead to feelings of fear, anxiety and a desire to reduce arousal. By contrast, a paratelic state is usually prominent during activity participation when high levels of stimulation, fun and excitement are enjoyed. In this state, negative emotions such as anxiety and danger are experienced positively due to the presence of a protective frame, which involves personal competencies to provide perceived security from any dangers and risks (Houge Mackenzie, Hodge & Boyes, 2011). Adventure tourists seemingly experience both telic and paratelic states during activity participation, manifested through contrasting emotions which include waves of 'terror and elation, joy and despair, [and] anxiety and pleasure' (Swarbrooke et al, 2003, p.14). This may be because adventure holidays take place over longer time-frames than recreational adventure activities, providing plentiful opportunities for tourists to alternate between both states.

While there is a paucity of research which applies reversal theory to family adventure tourists, it merits further consideration. It is possible that family members have differing levels of skill and experience in particular adventure activities. Alternatively, they may all be competent and experienced in the activities, or they may all be complete novices. This will influence whether the perceived risks involved are viewed positively or negatively, and, subsequently, whether or not a paratelic-telic state is experienced. More experienced and skilled families could experience reversals within this state both before and during their holiday, responding positively to any perceived or real risks during activity participation. This is particularly pertinent to individuals who have immersed themselves into pre-holiday training and goal setting, and where they already participate in the adventure activities recreationally within their home environment.

5. FAMILY ADVENTURE TOURISM BENEFITS

Benefits are the rewards associated with certain behaviours whereas motives encourage and direct these behaviours (Mykletun & Mazza, 2016). Benefits may differ from, but are influenced by, the motives encouraging families to participate in adventure holidays in the first place. Accordingly, motives and benefits are not mutually exclusive and they operate in a continuous cycle whereby the benefits gained motivate people to continue taking family holidays. Many benefits are associated with

family holiday participation including improvements in family well-being, functioning, cohesion, togetherness, bonding, communication, solidarity and relationships (Agate, Zabriskie, Agate & Poff, 2009; Chesworth, 2003; Hornberger, Zabriskie & Freeman, 2010; Lehto, Choi, Lin & MacDermid, 2009; Obrador, 2012). Shared holiday experiences can encourage individual family members to start thinking as 'we' instead of 'I' (Lehto et al, 2009) and can facilitate 'intensely authentic, natural and emotional bonds, and a real intimacy in the family relationship' (Wang, 1999, p.364). Such experiences can create long-lasting memories, which influence life-making decisions in the future, because they are more deeply embedded within children's minds than memories of a non-experiential nature. These recollections can encourage families to re-live their positive holiday experiences and further strengthen family bonding (Lehto et al, 2009; Shaw et al, 2008). Despite the many benefits associated with family holidays, such experiences are not always positive for everyone, as highlighted in section 4. Parents, particularly mothers, can become stressed and feel guilty as their expectations for an ideal holiday, which focuses on family togetherness, are thwarted (Shaw, 2001). Furthermore, holidays based only on relaxation initiate family conflicts because children become bored, and action-packed holidays cause stress for parents (Larsen, 2013). This can lead to parental stress levels becoming worse or remaining unchanged post-holiday (Backer & Schänzel, 2013). Nonetheless, it is recognised that motivational differences and desires between parents and children exist and are 'solved by some families through compromises and doing activities apart, whereas others may live through holiday moments of conflict and frustration' (Larsen, 2013, p.154).

It is likely that families enjoy the above mentioned benefits from participating in adventure tourism activities. Similarly, the drawbacks identified above are applicable in an adventure tourism context. Although activities form the core of adventure holidays, family members still desire opportunities for downtime and, accordingly, there may be conflicts when negotiating the balance between activity-time and relaxation-time. Additionally, as adventure activity participation facilitates a plethora of contrasting emotions (Pomfret, 2012) including fear, anxiety and terror (Swarbrooke et al, 2003), these negative feelings can dominate participants' experiences, potentially leading to reduced self- and collective-efficacy and feelings of failure. Some of the generic family holiday benefits reflect those gained from family participation in camping adventure activity skills' development programmes, for instance, improved family communication and problem solving ability (Reis, Thompson-Carr & Lovelock, 2012). This is because 'clear communication, trust, cooperation, and mutual respect among family members' (Huff et al, 2003, p.22) are needed to cope with the level of challenge and novelty offered by such activities. Recollecting the intense, rich and long-lasting memories associated with their outdoor recreational experiences brings families closer together because they have so much to talk about, they feel stronger, they become more aware of their strengths and

weaknesses, and how they can develop as family. Similarly, the benefits of collectively participating in outdoor recreation include strengthened family functioning and cohesion, healthy youth development, consolidation of family values and traditions, and enhanced cooperation and trust between family members (Huff et al, 2003; Lee, Graefe & Burns, 2008).

Studies which explore the benefits of adventure activity participation focus on women (e.g. Dilley & Scraton, 2010; Fendt & Wilson, 2012; Harris & Wilson, 2007; Myers, 2010; Small, 2007). These have been developed into five categories, and these benefits culminate in feelings of empowerment (Doran, 2016): sense of freedom, self-development, social encounters, heightened bodily experience (the physical and emotional experiences of adventure tourism) and female company. It is likely that family adventure tourists enjoy some of the benefits enjoyed by female adventure tourists. For instance, in the self-development category, fitness and exercise may be benefits sought by families. In the sense of freedom category, escape from everyday life is a potential benefit for these tourists as they desire to get away from their busy lives to spend quality time together as a family (Carr, 2011). The psychosocial benefits of extreme adventure racing, an endurance sport in which racers 'often push themselves to their physical and mental limits' (Mykletun & Mazza, 2016, p.543), include flow, exploration, socialising and self-change. Similarly, participants in softer forms of adventure racing, which take place in natural settings within close proximity to well-populated areas, enjoy the natural, adventure and physical elements of these events (Cater, Funk & Low, 2018). While it is unlikely that families would participate in such competitive events during their adventure holidays, they may experience similar benefits.

The core and balance model of family leisure functioning (Zabriskie & McCormick, 2001) can be used to explore family benefits. This is based on family systems theory, which proposes that families strive for a dynamic state of homeostasis to maintain effective family functioning and fulfil their needs for stability and change (Bowen, 1978). Family leisure patterns are shaped by those activities which provide stability (core) and those which provide change (balance). Core family leisure activities occur frequently, they often take place within the home environment, and require little or no planning; for instance, playing in the garden or watching television together. They fulfil a family's basic need for familiarity and safety and encourage members to negotiate with each other about rules, roles and boundaries, ultimately improving family cohesion. Contrastingly, balance family activities happen less regularly, they usually take place away from home and demand more resources and planning. Outdoor recreation activities, holidays and special events fall into this category. Participating in balance activities potentially imposes challenges for families, and overcoming these can be beneficial to family adaptability (Melton, Ellis & Zabriskie, 2016). This is particularly pertinent to family adventure tourists who are likely to be driven by challenge and the change and variety offered by adventure

activities. Balance activities can encourage the development of adaptability and flexibility skills, and these can foster effective coping strategies to deal with challenges in everyday life (Zabriskie & McCormick, 2001). Taking part in both types of leisure activity, and maintaining a state of equilibrium, contributes towards enhanced family functioning, cohesion, adaptability and communication (Freeman & Zabriskie, 2003; Zabriskie & Freeman, 2004; Zabriskie & McCormick, 2001).

6. CONCEPTUAL MODEL OF FAMILY ADVENTURE TOURISTS

Figure 1 presents a conceptual model of family adventure tourists, based on the extant literature discussed within this paper. The model illustrates the multidimensional journey which families take before, during and after their adventure holiday. It adopts a whole family approach which includes mothers, fathers, their children and the dynamics of the family group (Schänzel, 2010). Elements of sociality and sharing bring most pleasure on holiday, yet studies of individual tourists often ignore the influence of others on the tourist experience (Larsen, 2008). Families have 'unique group dynamics' with 'special consumptive characteristics' (Lehto et al, 2009, p.835) which all interplay to foster a whole family identity (Gram, 2005). Accordingly, the differing perspectives of parents, children and extended family members influence holiday experiences rather than one individual member being the sole source of these. Nonetheless, it is important to consider both individual and collective experiences to holistically understand the whole family (Schänzel, 2010). Group activity participation is often integral to adventure holidays, and this provides further impetus to explore adventure tourists collectively as families, using the whole family approach, rather than only individually.

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The model starts with the motives which encourage family adventure tourism participation before and during holidays (1). These are followed by the family adventure tourism experiences while on holiday (2). Then, the participation benefits enjoyed by families both during and after their adventure holiday (3) are shown. The left section depicts general family holiday motives, experiences and participation benefits gained. It indicates that children and parents are differently motivated for family holidays, yet their experiences together bring shared benefits for all members. The right section depicts the motives, experiences and participation benefits of adult adventurers, clearly highlighting the dearth of research on families in an adventure tourism context. It also indicates that collective efficacy and collective flow are concepts which can be explored within a family adventure tourism context. The central

section delineates family adventure tourism motives, experiences and participation benefits gained. It features specific insights into family adventure tourists, based on the existing research discussed within this paper. It alludes to potential areas of future research to ascertain the importance of differing motives, experiences and participation benefits for family adventure tourists.

The dotted lines around the boxes, along with the arrows, highlight the lack of stringent boundaries and the interrelationships between each box. The horizontal arrows demonstrate the inextricable links between each theme at stages 1, 2 and 3. Accordingly, they show that family holiday motives and adult adventurer motives are related to family adventure tourism motives; family holiday experiences and adult adventurer experiences are linked with family adventure tourism experiences; and, family holiday benefits and adventure recreation and tourism benefits are associated with family adventure tourism benefits. Consequently, togetherness experienced on general family holidays, and optimal flow experiences encountered by adult adventurers, for example, may be enjoyed by both parents and children on family adventure holidays. Similarly, the benefits of improved family well-being and cohesion associated with general family holidays are also benefits of family adventure holidays. The vertical arrows show the interconnectedness of the 3 stages of motives, experiences and benefits. Therefore, motives are related to experiences and benefits; experiences are linked to motives and benefits; and, benefits are influenced by motives and experiences. For instance, the experiences enjoyed and the benefits gained from adventure holiday activity experiences can serve to motivate families to participate in such activities again, either in their home region or while on holiday. Furthermore, motives may change as a result of these adventure experiences. The model therefore illustrates that the journey for family adventure tourists is not linear but multifaceted and cyclical with many influences.

7. CONCLUSION

This paper develops a theoretically grounded perspective of family adventure tourists and presents a conceptual framework to illustrate the multidimensional, cyclical journey before, during and after family adventure holidays. It highlights the complexities of understanding families who partake in adventure holidays and the key considerations that adventure organisations need to take into account in designing such holidays. It has addressed the research questions outlined in section 1 through making connections between relevant tourism and recreation literature, and drawing implications from this to better understand family adventure tourists. Accordingly, it contributes towards understanding these tourists, how they are motivated, what their experiences of adventure activities on holiday are, and the benefits they enjoy from these experiences. While this paper explores the positive elements of family adventure

holidays, it is acknowledged that adventure activity participation can evoke negative feelings due to its challenging nature, although a more thorough discussion of negative adventure holiday experiences is beyond the scope of this paper. It is apparent that family adventure tourists desire flexible holidays to accommodate for a range of skill levels, experience and age groups of children. They collectively and individually participate in adventure activities while on holiday, take both packaged and independently organised adventure holidays, and participate in a range of soft and hard adventure activities. They desire action-packed, activity-based holidays with less emphasis on time-out activities, although some downtime is necessary to avoid family conflict and to ensure all individual family members' needs are accommodated for. There are extrinsic and intrinsic motivational differences between parents and children, and also between younger and older children. Families are driven by individual as well as shared motives and members aspire to fulfil their own needs as well as collective needs while on adventure holidays. Parallels exist between children's holiday motives and adult adventure motives, and this provides an impetus for adventure organisations to design suitable holidays for the family market. Similar to motives, children and parents experience holidays differently depending on factors such as the age and activity experience level of the child. Collective flow (Salanova et al, 2014) and reversal theory (Apter, 1982) usefully explain adventure tourists' experiences, but they have not yet been employed in a family adventure setting. However, there are challenges in applying these to family adventure tourists (see section 4), not least because they are predominantly used with adults. Nonetheless, there is potential to adapt these concepts to family groups. Collective efficacy (Bandura, 1997) has been applied in a family therapeutic adventure setting (Huff et al, 2003; Wells, Widmer & McCoy, 2004) and, as such, there is scope for further research which adopts this construct to understand families' experiences of adventure while on holiday. Fundamentally though, a theoretical model which holistically reflects the complexities of these tourists, their family dynamics and their individual needs would be most valuable in progressing understanding of this group. Participating in adventure holidays benefits individuals as well as the whole family, and such holidays help families to maintain a state of equilibrium, as explained by the core and balance model of family functioning (Zabriskie & McCormick, 2001). A plethora of benefits are associated with family holiday and outdoor recreation activity participation (section 5) both during and after the holiday or activity. Nevertheless, these benefits are sometimes offset by negative activity experiences which are etched into the minds of adventure activity participants for some time post-trip. Consequently, adventure operators should attend to the differing levels of experience, children's ages and competencies within family groups to ensure holidays and activities are carefully matched with their participants.

Given the conceptual nature of this paper, and this relatively untouched research area, there is scope for primary research to progress understanding of family

adventure tourists. It is suggested that this focuses on families who already take adventure holidays, or who participate in adventure activities during their trips. It is important to gain insights into the characteristics of these tourists, ascertaining the demographic profile of individual family members and the extent to which they participate in adventure tourism or recreational adventure in their home environment. Investigations should also explore the adventure activity skill and experience levels of different family members to establish whether the experiences currently offered by the adventure tourism industry, which are mostly at the shallow end of the adventure commodification continuum (Varley, 2006), match the demands of the market. Related to this, there is a need to develop a typology of family adventure tourists which focuses on the latter points and also considers their motivational decisions, adventure activity experiences and participation benefits enjoyed both individually and collectively. Future studies should also consider 'testing out' the conceptual model (Figure 1) to establish the prominence of the elements identified in the different boxes.

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