The online market and the consumer in the tourism activity

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AN EMPIRIC ANALYSIS OF THE ONLINE MARKET FOR THE ADVENTURE TRAVEL TOURISM INDUSTRY IN GERMANY

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Abstract

The present article analyses the potential e-commerce in the tourism industry, particularly in the niche market of adventure travels. Tourists are increasingly booking travels using online platforms, especially Generation Y. This trend leads to the reduction the number of offline and traditional travel agencies and gives the opportunity to maximise the online travel market. E-commerce business is increasing as well as the market for adventure tourism. In this article we analyse existent online platforms for booking adventure travels and employ a survey to get the consumer perception about such platforms. The sample of 310 questionnaires analysed together with the nethnography conducted allow us to have useful information in order to better understand the phenomenon and give insights to managers and improve the service provided.

Keywords

Adventure travel tourism, Online experience economy, Generation Y

Introduction

The seminal work of Pine II and Gilmore (1998) on experience economy as well as the conceptualization of brand experience by Schmitt, and colleagues (Schmitt, 1999; Wolf, 1999) shift the paradigm from make a good or deliver a service to create an experience. Several researchers and practitioners recognize a changing mind set regarding values and desires of today's generation that are progressively looking for extraordinary experiences (Wolf, 1999). This movement has been accelerated by the World Wide Web, which turned these experiences possible

Although past research have dealing with this concept in several activity sector, particularly on hospitality industry (e.g.: Oh et al., Loureiro 2014), studies and information about online tour operators providing and staging sportive adventures is scarce. To contribute to fill this gap, the aims of this study are: (i) to get information about the online booking and adventure travel experiences of potential customers; (ii) to analyse communication exchanges in sportive adventure or experience travels online forums; (iii) to identify lead users and opinion leader and travel trends and behaviours.

Following this introduction, next provides a theoretical foundation pertaining to a brief review of previous research related to experience economy, e-commerce and adventure tourism. Section 2 describes the research methodology, followed by the results and the findings. Finally, we present implications, limitations, and suggestions for future research.

Literature Review

Adventure Tourism

Even though the concept of adventure tourism has become non-consensual due to the nature of the topic, ATTA (2013) proposes the following criteria to classify a trip as "adventure": (i) interaction with nature; (ii) interaction with culture; or (iii) a physical activity, while the core of adventure is a trip which involves all three elements.

The adventure market has been growing, with the percentage of adventure travellers from the Americas (South and North America) and Europe rose from 26.3% in 2009 to 42% in 2012 (ATTA, 2013).

Regarding the last trip, 56% of adventure travellers have indicated that they do everything on their own and do not use a guide, tour operator or instructor; 22% used a guide, 18% used a tour operator and 13% used an instructor on their last trip (categories were not mutual exclusive) (ATTA, 2013). The same study claims that 45% of adventure travellers are planning to use a tour operator on their next trip, what constitute good indicator for tour operators with appealing promotions, products and prices (ATTA, 2013) Further trends can be summarised as: (i) the average age of an adventure traveller is 36 years, which younger than non-adventure travellers; (ii) in 2012 adventure travellers spent an average of 947 USD per trip; (iii) there are more male than female adventure travellers (57 versus 43%); (iv) few adventure travellers travel by themselves. 21% travel with friends, 37% with another person and 30% with family; (v) the average duration of an adventure travel was 10.2 days (ATTA, 2013).

Online Travel Bookings

Electronic commerce (e-commerce) is a growing field that is closely connected to the development of the Internet. Although, the literature does not offer a single definition for the term, it is widely understood that e-commerce is related to buying and selling of goods and services, or the transfer of funds or data over an electronic network such as the Internet (Techtarget, 2014). The core benefits e-commerce business for consumers are the accessibility and convenience factor (available 24 hours), the selection benefit (offerings of a wide array of products), the international reach (Techtarget, 2014), safe costs of retail floor space, staff and inventory (Kotler & Keller, 2012). However, existing drawbacks such as insufficient customer service, no instant gratification (you have to wait for product delivery) and no ability to physically experience the product (see, feel, touch), may limit the e-commerce experience. The m-commerce (mobile commerce) is a step further, hence it is possible to do the transactions through the use of smartphones or tablets (Xu & Yang, 2012).

According to numbers from “eTrack”, “eMarketer” and “Alexa.com”, “Internet travel booking revenue has grown by more than 73% over the past five years” (Statisticbrain, 2014). The annual online travel sales increased from $145 billion in 2011 to $162.4 billion in 2012. In 2013, 65% of all travel reservations were made on the Internet (+10%) and only 25% (+4%) through a travel agency (IPK, 2014). Mature markets seem to have hit saturation regarding online bookings with close to 70% for Internet bookings (Statisticbrain, 2014).

Mobile and tablet bookings are on the rise however mostly used for spontaneous decisions. 65% of same day hotel reservations are made from a smart phone (IPK, 2014). Based on previous information it can be estimated that the market size for online bookings in the adventure travel sector runs between $75 billion and $81 billion.

In terms of online adventure traveller’s behaviour, according to the ATTA study, adventure travellers are more likely than non-adventure travellers to prepare for a trip prior to leaving. “The most common forms of pre-trip preparation for adventure travellers were online research and consulting friends and family” (ATTA, 2013, p.10). Over sixty percent (69%) of adventure travellers claimed to have done research online in order to prepare for their trip. That means supporting travellers with valuable information about activities, sports, destinations, travel tips, and other travel related content could be a way of attracting customers to the adventurer website.

Another growing trend is the use of social media to share experiences with the web community. According to the ATTA study, 81% of adventure travellers were likely or very likely to recommend to friends and family a trip that was similar to their own. 39% indicated doing that via posting a social media update after their trip, 18% via posting a review on a travel website and 9% via posting a social media update during their trip. Only 36% indicated telling their friends and family directly (2013). The most popular social media platform amongst adventure travellers is Facebook (78%), followed by YouTube (37%), Google+ (35%) and Twitter (25%).

German Travel Market

The German travel market is of special interest because this is a growing market in Europe. Therefore, the country is examined in greater detail. Tourism is a growing industry in Germany, accounting for 97 billion Euro of the country's GDP (German Tourism Information, 2014). In 2010, 2.9 million people were directly employed by the tourism industry and an additional 2 million people are indirectly generating an income through the tourism industry. That accounts for about 12% of all employed people in Germany (BMWi, 2012). Furthermore, in 2013, there were 9.729 traditional travel agencies in Germany, which in relationship to Germany's population, is one of the densest networks worldwide. Overall, Germans prefer travel destination within their own country (30%), followed by the European coastlines (25%), Spain (12.6%) and long distance destinations (7%) (German Tourism Information, 2014). The average length of a trip declined from an average of 13.8 days in 2000 to an average of 12.4 days in 2013. With the overall travel expenditures still on the rise, it seems as if trips are becoming more frequent but shorter (German Tourism Information, 2014).

A study done by the "Verband Internet Reisevertrieb" (VIR, 2015), a German online travel research institute shows that 41% of German travellers used the Internet for online travel bookings. In addition, 68% of German travellers access the Internet to search for information about their trip. The following chart displays the online behaviour of German travellers from 2001 to 2015. The red bar indicates the percentage of Germans who booked online and the blue bar indicates the percentage of Germans who searched information online.

In terms of online bookings Germany seems to be lacking behind international trends. However, there was still a remarkable growth of 7% from 2013 to 2015. Furthermore, Germans are very active in using social media for sharing their travel experiences. 36% indicated sharing travel experiences online. This percentage is even higher for the age group of 14 to 29 year olds (51%). The most prominent network amongst Germans is Facebook, where 73% shared their travel experiences, followed by travel websites (26%) such as tripadvisor.com or holidaycheck.com or other photo or video platforms. (13%) (VIR, 2015).

Methodology

A quantitative and a qualitative approach were employed in the current study. The online survey aims to get information about the online booking and adventure travel experiences of potential customers. The questions focus on (i) whether people had already booked adventure travels; (ii) which kind of adventure travels they would be interested in, (iii) how they evaluate the booking process and (iv) how much they would be willing to spend for adventure travels. The qualitative approach aims (i) to analyse communication exchanges in sportive adventure or experience travels online forums; (ii) identify lead users and opinion leader and (iii) identify travel trends and behaviours.

Quantitative Research and Data Collection

The questionnaire was designed with a specific software for online surveys called "Sawtooth". Participants received a short introduction about the questionnaire and functionality of the program. The content of the questionnaire was grouped into three parts, which included demographic, market specific and product specific questions. On the one hand participants answered questions about their experiences with adventure travels, on the other hand participants were asked about how an online booking platform could be improved. In the last part, participants answered demographic questions, such as marital status, income and so forth. We used ordinal, interval and nominal scale questions. Some of the questions were open ended questions. That was important because participants were able to fill in thoughts, comments and ideas that should help the development of the product.

The survey started with the question whether one had already purchased an adventure experience. Dependent on answering "yes" or "no", participants were provided with a set of questions that was unique to each group.

Data was entirely collected through the online survey and distributed over social networks. This process was selected in order to capture the target population. Participants had the option to answer the survey in German or in English. However, the focus was on finding German-speaking participants since it is part of the target market. Further, the survey was distributed over travel networks, where people have a certain affinity to traveling. The duration for collecting the data was set for about six weeks from January until mid-March 2015. Before the survey was launched, a pilot sample of 5 potential customers (personally interviewed) was employed to ensure that the questionnaire was clear.

Data Analysis and Results

The total number of participants was 310 people (n=310), of which 168 were female and 142 were male. The average age of participants was 24.2 years, which falls well within our set target group. Most participants were university students (68.7%), followed by "employed with university degree" (13.5%) and "employed without University degree" (5.5%). The rest are "high school students" (2.5%), "self-employed" (1.9%) and "other" (5.2%).

In terms of available funds for leisure activities, 39.9% indicated to be able to spend between 50 and 150 Euro per month, 22.4% between 150 and 300 Euro, and 21.4% between 0 and 50 Euro. 8.4% are able to spend 300 to 500 Euro and 7.8% more than 500 Euro. 48% of all participants engage in sportive activities 2 to 4 times per week and 10.9% engage 5 to 7 times. The rest engages once or less per week.

The following set of questions was used to determine how “adventurous” participants were. Therefore participants had to indicate how much they agree with 6 statements about their personality. Figure 1 shows the results and tendencies. They indicate that participants are open towards new sports and experiences, that they classify themselves as adventurous and that they would like to discover new places. They also value special experiences more than material goods. However, only few would describe themselves as “Adrenaline Junkies”.

The first question asked participants whether they had already booked/purchased an adventure activity or adventure travel. Based on the answer our sample was split in two groups, as each group was then served a specific set of questions. In the following section we will look at participants who already booked an experience activity or adventure travel. 64.8% of our sample indicated that they had already done so. It was of great interest to see under which categories these purchased adventures fall. The most prominent categories were water sports (74%), ski and snow (58%) and fun sports (43%), such as paintball or laser tag. 21% reported that they had already booked extreme sports, such as bunjeejumping, speed flying, or wild water kayaking (see Figure 2).

Most of these experiences were booked for personal use and just very few as presents for other people. A bit surprisingly, but in agreement with the market research, 64% did not book these experiences online, whereas only 36% purchased online. In terms of gender differences, results seem to be very similar. The only difference is that women prefer mountain sports over fun sports, which seems to be a male domain.

In terms of reasons for booking adventure experiences, 96% said that fun is an important factor. Further prominent reasons were variety (67.7%) and the adrenalin factor (44.8%). Group pressure (6.5%) and “as a present” (13.9%) were not very common reasons. Participants had the option to fill in reasons for booking such experiences. Some that were mentioned more commonly were to “try something new” and “holidays”.

Looking at the price range of adventure bookings, 62.7% reported spending less than 300 Euro for a trip/activity. About 10% of purchases fell in between the 300 and 500 Euro range and the rest indicated spending 500 Euro or more. In terms of total yearly expenditures for adventure travels and activities, 46.3% spend between 0 and 150 Euro, 19.9% between 150 and 300 Euro, 14.4% between 300 and 500 Euro and 19.4% spent 500 Euro or more.

In this category, the most striking difference between male and female participants can be found in the amount of yearly spending. Whereas almost ¼ of all man spend more than 500 Euro per year, only 1/6 of all women spent more than 500 Euro on adventure experiences. Almost half of all participants plan to spend more money on adventure activities in the future. Furthermore, a strikingly 83.6% of participants indicated booking their adventure at a local provider. 38.3 % indicated that they had access to booking references and evaluations before making their purchase.

Figure 3 gives us a glimpse about how participants got to know about certain adventure trips, booking platform or provider.

Word of mouth from friends and family play a very important role in the process of getting to know about a trip. 33.8% also reported that they got to know about a provider or offer by using search engines such as google. That means that search engine optimization in combination with being ranked highly is very important. Lacking behind is above the line advertisement with 5% as well as social media with 2%.

In the next part we analysed the case with participants who answered "No" to the question, whether they had already booked an adventure travel. It was interesting to find out about the reasons for not having done so (see Figure 4). 51% indicated that it was too expensive, 31.2% want a "quiet and relaxing" holiday experience, 17.4% don't know any offers or places for booking, 16.5% didn't find a companion to go with and 12.8% were "afraid" of action experiences. Because the question was open ended many participants also indicated that time constrain was an issue.

Interestingly, 78.9% could principally imagine purchasing an adventure trip in the future. In the following chart we can see in which segments the participants would book their adventure.

Most of the participants (60.6%) may purchase a water sports activity, followed by fun sports (50.5%), air sports (31.2%), ski and snow (30.3%), mountain sport (24.8%), motorsports (22%), extreme sport (16.5%) and biking (5.5%). In regards to the price range in which the participants would purchase an activity, 39.4% indicated spending between 50 – 150 Euro, 21.1% between 150 – 300 Euro, 22% between 300 – 500 Euro and 13.8% are willing to spend more than 500 Euro. Further, participants were asked which travel providers they knew. Jochen Schweizer (85.3%) is the most prominent, followed by Mydays (72.5%) and local travel agencies (33%).

Another question that gave insight into the mind of the consumer' mind was what participants would value most when booking an adventure trip. 78.9% indicated that the "action factor" is important. 58.7% also thought that the price is important, followed by a "beautiful landscape" (51.4%), getting to know a different culture (47.7%) and the adrenaline kick (21.1%).

The following set of questions was given to both groups, whether they had already purchased an adventure or not. Asked whether participants plan on booking an adventure experience in the near future, 46.1% said yes. Over sixty percent (60%) of the group that already had booked an adventure answered with yes, whereas only 20% of the group that had never booked an adventure answered with yes.

Over fifty percent (56.5%) of the whole sample indicated watching short, inspiring adventure or sport clips online. However, that happens on a very infrequent basis. Comparing the purchasing with the non-purchasing group, we find large differences. Whereas 12.4% of the purchasing group watches such videos often only 2.8% of the non-purchasing group does so often. Males are also watching more frequent than females.

In regards to building a well-functioning online platform, participants were asked to evaluate various functions on a scale from 1 "not important at all" to 4 "very important". The functions included being able to see evaluations from previous customers, information about the travel offer from the provider, being able to access video about the adventure, being able to access pictures about the adventure and being able to exchange information with the community.

Figure 5 shows that user evaluations/reviews and information about the package (place, accommodation, activities, etc.) play an important role for participants. To be able to access videos seems to be less important. The majority of clicks, 70%, lay in the middle of the scale, between value 2 and 3. Only 13.9% indicated that videos are very important. Looking closer we can see that people who have booked adventure trips before value videos as more important than those who have not done so. This finding is a bit surprising as our research indicated that offers that contain a video are four times more likely to be purchased. Nevertheless, pictures play an important role as 28.1% thought they are “very important”, 44.2% thought they are “important” and only 24.8% thought they are “not so important”. The last evaluated function was whether participants would like to have a built in online community to exchange information with other users. 80.3% clicked on value 1 or 2, which indicates that this function is not very desired.

For the last part of the market and product specific questions, participants were asked which parts of a booking platform could be improved. 53.2% thought that the design and presentation of trips and offers could be improved. 52.6% thought that offers could be arranged more clearly, 38.4%, would like to see more personalized offers, 31.3% can imagine a better service, 19.7% hope for more offers and 7.7% thought that nothing needs improvement (see Figure 6). Participants had the chance to mention additional problems or improvements. Interesting input was that participants would like to see more individual offers and that there seem to be many platforms which do not give, or which give an unrealistic assessment of how difficult and hard an activity or adventure trip is.

Qualitative Research

Qualitative approach was employed to identify trends, needs and wants about the adventure tourism industry from the online community. This will be achieved through the implementation of a qualitative research method from Philipo Mayring (2010) and called nethnography, which is based on the ethnography methodology. In essence its aims is to observe the behaviours and habits of a target group in the online realm through documenting and analysing written content and communication exchanges on the web, which should help to identify opinions, values, motives, feelings, expectations and trends of a certain group (Kozients, 2010).

Objective of Qualitative Research

The goal of this part is (i) to analyse communication exchanges in sportive adventure or experience travels online forums; (ii) identify lead users and opinion leader and (iii) identify travel trends and behaviours. In order to structure this process we created three sub-parts: (i) user expectations about products; (ii) user expectations about tour operators and (iii) “other” expectations about adventure travelling.

Data Collection and Analysis

After extensively researching about adventure travel blogs, forums, and networks two widely used and popular forums could be identified:

(i) The “Outdoors/ Adventure Travel Forum” from tripadvisor.com, the biggest online travel platform in the world. On average, the website counts 2800 new forum topics every day and 90% of those are answered and responded to within 24 hours. The website has a monthly traffic rate of 288 million people and about 60 million registered users (Tripadvisor, 2014). The forum counts 2.240 topics and has a total of more than 10.000 posts. Some users are labelled as “destination experts”, which means that they are knowledgeable about certain travel regions. They are very active, answer quickly, have a high number of posts and are specifically selected by Trip advisor employees. In other words, these are trustable users that can be identified as opinion leaders.

(ii)The second forum comes from the website “bootsnall.com”. Bootsnall declares itself as “around the world travel community for indie travellers” and offers the possibility to exchange information with other travellers (Bootsnall, 2014, Sp.1). This platform is not only an online forum but also a platform for booking travels in categories such as. Adventure Trips, Vans for Campers, Eurail Tickets, Flights, Hostels, Hotels and Insurances. The network was built in 1998 and counts 100.000 members. The forum counts 400.000 posts and has an additional 15.000 professionally written articles about traveling (Bootsnall, 2014). The forum is a separate part of the website and is similarly structured as the Trip advisor forum. The forum topics are based on categories, such as “region/destination”, “resources” (e.g. food and travel), “travel gear” and “type of travel”.

Discussion and Limitations

Taking into account the large amount of travel websites, blogs, forums and communities it seems that travellers are rather outgoing personalities. On the one hand it means that adventure travellers are eager to share their experiences and help others with their journeys, on the other hand it shows that travellers are also looking for information and advice from likeminded people. The structure and organization of travel forums makes it rather easy to identify lead users and opinion leaders. For example, users labelled as “destination experts” in the Tripadvisor forum, can be categorized as opinion leaders. Looking at their posts, they receive a greater amount of attention and have a larger impact than posts from normal users. This is due to the trust users generate when somebody with extensive experience and knowledge is helping them. Similarly, the lead users in the Bootsnall forum can not only be identified easily by labels and the number of postings but also generate more trust. From these observations we can conclude that outdoor and adventure travellers are seeking expert opinions, which are tailored to their specific needs and situation.

Another observation was that a great number of discussion topics in the tripadvisor.com forum were about a certain tour operator. Adventure travellers often ask for the experience of other community members with a service provider in order to gain more information and a better overview. From this we can conclude that people are carrying high amounts of uncertainty when spending a large amount of money for adventure travels. For adventurer.com it will be very important to show transparency and give the best possible insights regarding partnering tour operators. Even earlier it will be of great importance to select tour operators, which are already trusted and have a good reputation amongst travellers.

An issue that comes up in combination with the service provider is whether to book at a smaller and local tour operator or whether to book with an international and larger tour operator. Based on the traveller's preferences, opinions diverge on this matter. People who regularly book adventure and outdoor travels seem to prefer local providers. The underlying reasons are twofold. First of all they have more travel experience and have more trust in their travelling capabilities. Second, experienced travellers value flexibility as well as the often cheaper prices at local providers. Inexperienced travellers tend to book with international tour operators as they value security over flexibility. Furthermore, these people mostly have less time for vacation and therefore safe time with the organization of their travels as the operator takes care of everything. From various posts it was possible to infer that travellers would like to have the possibility to review and evaluate the tour operator. However, it is important to note that customers emphasize to evaluate the customer service rather than the product or offers of a tour operator. Issues, for example, were the flexibility to change things before or while travelling, the responsiveness of the personnel and the knowledge of the travel guides. These observations give rise to a consumer trend towards increasingly tailored and personalized travel offers, greater transparency and access to customer reviews.

In general the active participation shows that user generated content is very important as it trusted by the travelling community. The reason for this is that people expect the opinions of other travellers to be unbiased and "honest" as one user puts it. We have to note that one of the limitations of this analysis is that our findings are not generalizable. Merely they express individual opinions about traveling. A strength as well as a limitation is the target group and the chosen forums. On the one hand we get insights into the mind of people who already have a passion or interest for traveling but need further assistance or guidance. We do not however, analyse people who have not thought about traveling or who do not participate in travel forums. In that sense we do not know about desires, questions, and uncertainties from people who have not travelled.

Finally, analysing and going through a great amount of forum posts, we can constitute that outdoor and adventure travellers are eager to explore, find new destinations and activities and are willing to put time, effort and money into their adventures. Reading through some of the posts is it possible to sense a certain enthusiasm about travelling to far away destinations, which are located off the beaten path. A motivating reason could be the drive to explore something unknown, something new and special. Adventure travellers are looking to push themselves beyond their boundaries and master new challenges to grow on a personal level. Is seems as though adventure traveling has become much more than visiting a city or taking a plane from A to B. It is about personal growth and expanding ones horizon. However, these adventures and challenges often times need the guidance and help of professionals to be accomplished.

Conclusion

In sum this paper identified tendencies of adventure tourism market. Both the quantitative analysis, as well as the qualitative studies have helped to analyse and reflect on a product that may add value to adventure travellers. In conclusion, this market is an opportunity for anybody interested in the online context.

Internationally, Europe is the most popular travel destination where young people (15-34) are the fastest growing demographic regarding international travels. Adventure travellers are typically younger than non-adventure travellers with an average age of 36 years. In this context, German young travellers (15-29) account for almost 1/5 of Europe's entire holiday travel market for this particular young age group. The international hospitality market is increasingly splitting into classical "top-end" (4 and 5*) and "bottom end" market. The Adventure travel sector is rapidly growing and had an estimated value of $263 billion in 2013.

Based on demographic results we can say that most participants were students and therefore relatively young without a steady income. As mentioned above, about 40% of our sample was able to spend between 50 and 150 Euro and about 20% was able to spend between 150 and 300 Euro. We can assume that these numbers would be higher if our sample would be more representative.

Regarding the size and growth of the adventure travel market, we can consider that our results support the research findings. With 65% of participants already having booked an adventure and about 50% planning to do so in the near future the findings that the market is already quite popular and also growing and expanding is supported.

Regarding the modality of the adventure, water sports as well as ski and snow activities were well received by participants. Further, man also value fun and motorsports whereas women prefer mountain sports. This information shall be used to identify market and target segments when building categories and offers for the adventurer.com web platform.

Another result that aligns with the research literature is the online booking rate. Compared to the value of 41%, proposed by the VIR German Travel Institute (2014), our study shows that 36% of participants used the internet for travel bookings. Looking at the high density of local travel agencies this number has potential for development.

In order to create awareness and choosing a marketing strategy it was of great interest to know how participants got to know about an offer or a provider. Almost half of participants indicated that they knew about certain offers through friends or family. In order to build a customer base and get referrals, the trips must be exciting and exactly what the customer was looking for. Expectancies have to match with actuality. Furthermore, websites must be entertaining and engaging, which comes clear when looking at customer wants further on. Besides referrals from friends, search engines, in particular google, play a crucial role. That means that search engine optimization will be very important to successfully acquire customers.

As already mentioned, the design and the content of the website are core factors as the survey shows which elements are of special importance. Asking the participants what can be improved on travel platforms, almost half mentioned a clear design and arrangement as well as a lively illustration of offers. That means it will be important to find an intuitive way of categorizing offers such as by region or activity.

One third of the sample thought that personalized offers as well as good service is important. On the one hand that means to be available and easily reachable, on the other hand it means to be responsive to personal desires and needs. To accommodate for personalization and more flexibility the plan is to offer a certain freedom in combing different offers. In addition to a FAQ page, this could be achieved through an online chat, service hotline or even through a modern messaging service.

The concept of adventurer, working with high quality images and videos is partly confirmed by the survey. When asking participants what was important to them, only pictures seemed to be very important, whereas video wasn't so much of a game changer. However, as planned in further stages of the web development, a review system, which was also seen as very important, will be a vital part of the website.

Adventure travellers are active social media users, sharing their experiences with friends and family and therefore online bookings have been becoming more and more popular and e-commerce will play an important role in the future.

The increasing popularity of online travel bookings, and the enthusiasm to use social networks to communicate about adventure experiences provides a solid foundation for engaging in an e-commerce business. Finally, Germany seems to be a promising starting ground as it is a financially healthy and wealthy nation, which has a young demographic that is eager to travel and engage in adventure activities.

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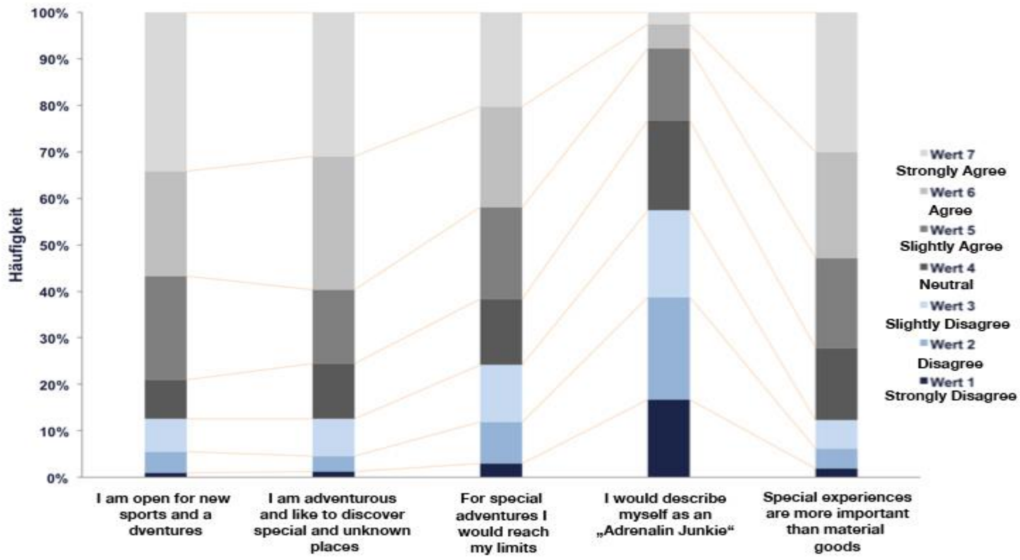

Figure 1. Evaluation of degree of adventure level of participant

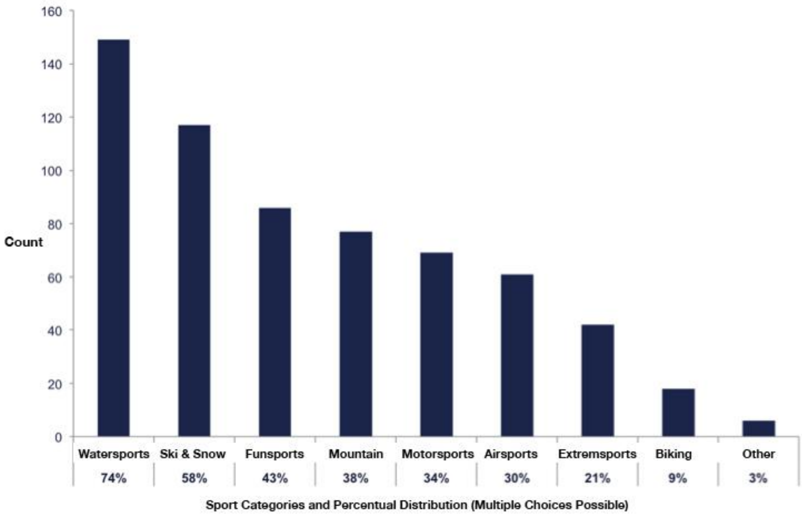

Figure 2. Favourite sport activities for people buying adventure offers

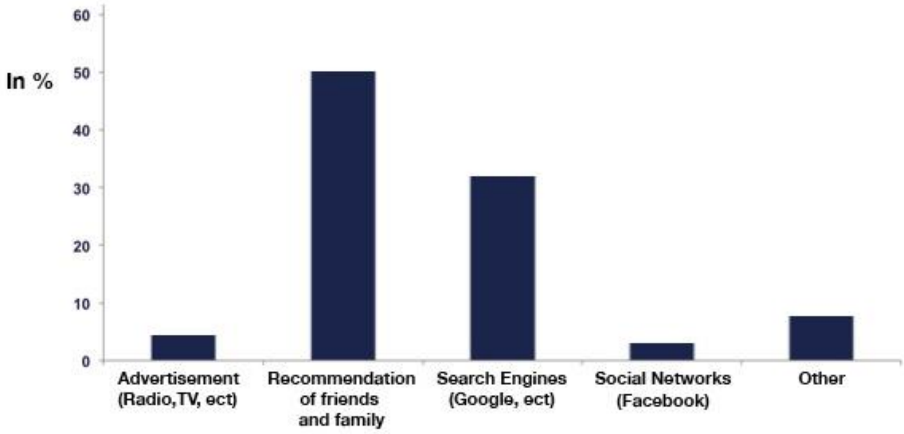

Figure 3. How people got informed about adventure offers

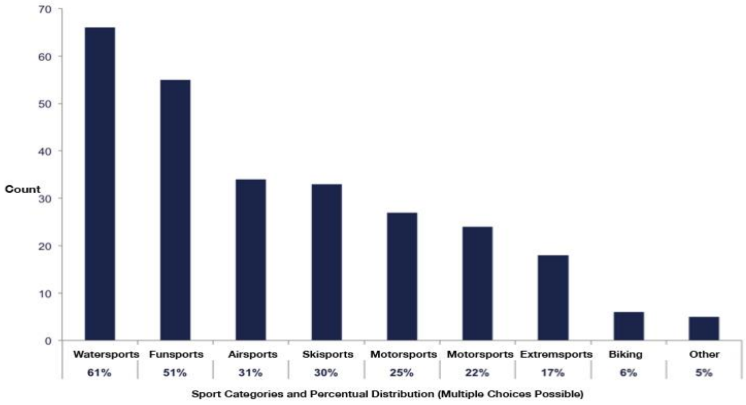

Figure 4. Favourite sport activities for people who have not purchased any activity

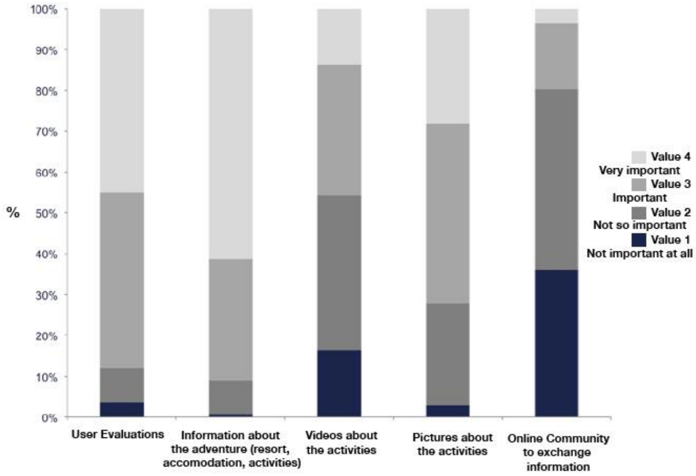

Figure 5. Most important features for adventure platforms.

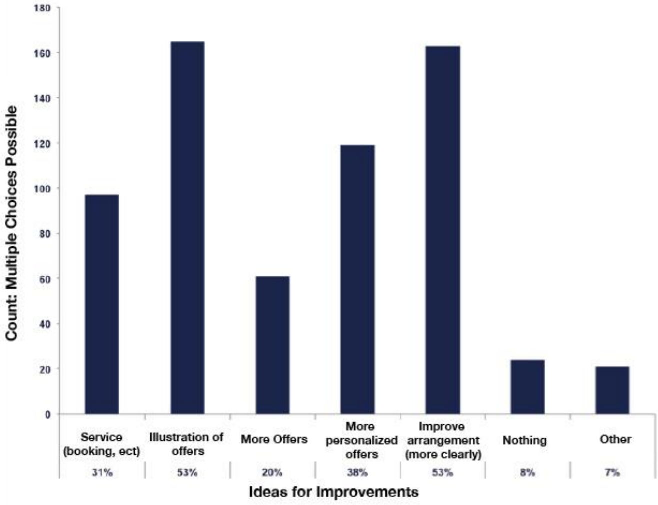

Figure 6. Areas of improvement for adventure travel platforms.