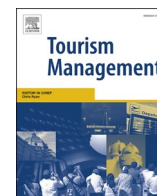


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# Tourism Management

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## Book Review

### **Adventure Tourism and Outdoor Activities Management: A 21st Century Toolkit, I. Jenkins (Ed.). CABI, Gloucester (2019). p. 220 pp (Pbk.), £39.99 ISBN: 9781786390868**

*Adventure Tourism and Outdoor Activities Management: A 21st Century Toolkit* is a book that emerged from the need to compile comprehensive, up-to date material on adventure tourism theory and practice. The relatively limited corpus of literature in this field was the impetus for developing the concept and content of a single book that would cover the critical areas of adventure tourism and outdoor activities management. The key features of the book include positioning adventure tourism within the broader concept of sustainability, providing guidance on managing products and customers, and presenting case studies that illustrate specific issues in adventure tourism operations. The author, Ian Jenkins, is a widely respected and published author with an in-depth understanding of the adventure tourism field. In the process of developing the book, he largely built on his personal two-decade-long experience of working in both academia and the tourism industry. The book is thus strengthened by the insights he has gained during his career and is further enriched by the visual material collected in some of the most popular adventure tourism destinations, Iceland and Wales among them.

The aim of the book is to provide critical knowledge that can assist in understanding and improving the operation of an adventure tourism company. The focus is on the latest trends in relation to sustainability, consumer profiles, product creation, service providers and their skillsets, management issues, and cultural dimensions of the adventure tourism field. Jenkins claims that by understanding the wider context and key factors influencing the dynamics in the tourism market, companies will be in a better position to secure profitable, responsible and sustainable businesses, as well as a better positioning in the marketplace. The book consists of two parts – Part One is a theoretical section, while Part Two presents seven accompanying case studies as examples of good practice to aid a better understanding of the earlier topics. Each case deals with challenges and issues in running an adventure tourism company, a crucial aspect of education in this field.

Part One provides a broad overview and illustrates how changes in society and new trends in travelling have created new behavioural patterns and perspectives in tourism, stimulating the growth of new sectors such as the adventure tourism industry. This niche market has grown exponentially in the past decades, including a period of expansion in the 1980s and 1990s with the emergence of new education and adventure activities centres worldwide. As a consequence, some destinations have come to specialise in outdoor adventure activities, such as Iceland, New Zealand, Canada and Scotland. However, Jenkins argues that the concept of adventure tourism is somewhat elusive, suggesting that it is rather difficult to define due to various factors that are ever changing, highly relational and fluid. The author claims that adventure is a state of mind and depends on the subjective perception of the

activity, the risk and the place in which the activity is taking place. With that in mind, the reader can more readily understand the multiple approaches to, and interpretations of, adventure tourism both as a commodified tourism product and as a concept.

A particular strength of the book is Section 8, which illuminates new trends in adventure tourism development, clearly emphasising that adventure does not necessarily mean taking risks and that it is not only based around fast and adrenaline-pumping outdoor activities. Although the book starts with the premise that ‘adventure is risk, and risk is the essence of living’, in its later sections it shows that the concept includes more than risk-taking. With changes in lifestyles, technological advances and new ways of consumption of travel experiences, the adventure tourism product has undergone significant changes. For this reason, Jenkins claims, it should be approached and managed in different ways. To illustrate this, he cites concepts such as Alastair Humphrey’s microadventures (Humphreys, 2015) and Varley and Semple’s (2015) slow adventure, the latter being put into practice and operationalised through the SAINT (Slow Adventure in Northern Territories) project. Since its inception, slow adventure has grown in popularity in other parts of Europe and was recently recognised as a good model of tourism development by the European Travel Commission. In an era of prevalent speed and time deprivation, and as an extension of fast adventure, which has been associated with much of adventure travel, microadventures and slow adventures have been highlighted as products on which business may also largely capitalise. The emphasis here is on the journey itself, in all its senses – through time, through nature, and through the self. The slow adventure product is aimed at affluent tourism demand, and suitable for all those seeking less risky yet adventurous activities in the outdoors, where risks and hazards are reduced to a minimum in favour of more immersive, slower experiences.

While the author spends a lot of time discussing the organisations and bodies that in some way regulate or oversee adventure tourism, and provide relevant data on the sector, academic research has been entirely marginalised. The author does list academic journals that publish articles on adventure tourism, but the perspectives and directions in research have not been further unpacked and presented to the reader. The reason for this lies in the author’s explanation that most academic research has little relevance to practice, although recent trends suggest the opposite. Close collaboration between academia and the tourism industry should be encouraged. This has proven to be highly productive as in many ways they inform each other and together push the boundaries of knowledge and practice in the realms of adventure studies and adventure tourism management alike.

All in all, the book offers many benefits for its target audience and will most certainly prove to be a valuable resource in providing guidance to the sector. The recommendations and advice will be extremely helpful for students, instructors and practitioners as they are derived from real-life situations and hands-on experiences in adventure tourism practice. While implementation of practice is central to much of the content, the

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scale and structure of the book make it appropriate for practitioners, policymakers, academics, undergraduate or postgraduate students undertaking research and applying research to practice in the field of adventure tourism and outdoor recreation.

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Jelena Farkic  
West Highland College, University of the Highlands and Islands, Fort  
William, UK  
E-mail address: [jfarkic@gmail.com](mailto:jfarkic@gmail.com).