

Abstract

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Title:	
Specialties of Climbing Tourism: An Investigation of Risk Perception, Travel Behaviour and Destination Attribute Preferences	

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Climbing is an activity with a growing number of participants. As it relies on very specific natural conditions, rock climbing is closely connected with tourism and thus can be defined as an own tourism segment. A very specific community and requirements among climbers point out the importance of gaining knowledge in this field.

The empirical study in this thesis investigates specifics of this tourism segment by asking in how far there are correlations between risk perception and travel behaviour as well as preferences for destination attributes among rock climbers. Data of 348 climbers was collected using a quantitative online-survey.

The results show that there is a correlation between risk perception and travel behaviour, in a way that overall climbers with a lower risk perception are going on climbing vacation more often, spend higher amounts of money on climbing vacations per year, draw on specific accommodation options like sleeping in a car, or options of access via plane more often and they show a higher likelihood to project routes. Opposing to that, the results show that the higher the risk perception of a climber is, the lower the amount of days that he or she would spend on climbing vacation.

Looking at destination attribute preferences, the results of the study clearly indicate that differences in risk-perception go together with different levels of weight that rock climbers put on certain attributes. The correlation is specifically strong among attributes that concern safety and protection, infrastructure, accessibility, or comprehensive description of the area, which all show to be more important if the risk perception is high. A higher risk perception also goes together with a higher rating of importance of alternative recreation and activity offers.

The findings add to the comprehension of climbing tourism as well as it supports the need for climbing- and destination specific management in tourism. Based on these findings, guidelines for destination management will be provided, that will help to decide for appropriate management in a climbing destination.

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