



## Understanding the Appeal of Adventure Tourism: A Qualitative Exploration Based on the Push–Pull Theory

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**ABSTRACT:** Adventure tourism is becoming a prominent global trend, driven by its combination of exploration, outdoor sports, and a sense of thrill. In Vietnam, this sector is increasingly developing due to its diverse natural landscapes, but research on the motivations for participating in adventure tourism remains limited. This paper applies Crompton's (1979) push-pull theory to analyze the factors influencing the decision to participate in adventure tourism. Using a qualitative methodology with structured in-depth interviews, the study analyzed data from 13 participants, including tourists, their relatives/friends, and service providers. The findings indicate that push factors influencing the decision include: demographics; risk acceptance (driven by the high value of adventure tourism); and the desire for social interaction. Conversely, pull factors include destination attractiveness, safety assurance systems, and pressure from family and friends. The study proposes recommendations to strengthen safety standards, enhance service quality, and boost communication efforts to promote adventure tourism, while also balancing economic development with the conservation of natural and cultural resources.

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### I. INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, the tourism industry has evolved into a key economic sector, delivering immense benefits (Pham & Ngo, 2022). Within this sector, adventure tourism has emerged as a phenomenon, attracting strong interest from tourists of all ages, particularly the youth, due to its unique exploratory nature and its integration with outdoor sports (ATTA, 2022); it is also one of the fastest-growing sectors of the global tourism industry (Swarbrooke, 2003). According to Fortune Business Insights (2025), the adventure tourism market reached \$804.51 billion in 2024 and is projected to increase from \$896.06 billion in 2025 to \$1,682.28 billion by 2032. Given this trend, adventure tourism is assessed as a high-potential sector for the future, with the Asia-Pacific region leading, holding a 42.99% market share in 2024.

In Vietnam, adventure tourism has also gradually become a prominent trend, thanks to the diversity of its landscapes and the potential for organizing activities that challenge personal limits. In recent years, activities such as caving, waterfall exploration, mountain climbing, trekking, and camping have become familiar to both domestic and international tourists, especially in prominent locations in Quang Binh and the Northwest provinces, leading to a rapid increase in tour operators (The Saigon Times, 2023). Notably, the National Standard on Adventure Tourism – Information for Participants (TCVN 12549:2018) was issued in 2018, contributing to the enhancement of activity quality and safety. Furthermore, the Vietnam Tourism Development Strategy to 2030 also identifies adventure sports tourism as one of the product lines to be promoted, aiming to turn tourism into a key economic sector.

It is clear that adventure tourism is increasingly affirming its appeal. Many studies have identified factors that motivate tourists to participate in this type, including: destination attractiveness (Kassean & Gassita, 2013; Kim & Brown, 2012), the need to seek novelty (Khuu & Nguyen, 2019), the desire for adventure, curiosity, and the wish to escape daily life (Ryan & Glendon, 1998), creating unforgettable memories and a sense of 'escape' (Pomfret & Bramwell, 2016), as well as the desire to share experiences or make an impression within social groups (Weber, 2001). These factors not only satisfy individual needs but also contribute to the cultural and economic value of the tourism industry. Although research on tourism motivation has received broad attention, research on adventure tourism motivation remains relatively limited, especially in Vietnam, where the majority has only examined general factors affecting tourism decisions, without clearly distinguishing between push and pull factors in adventure tourism. Therefore, our study was conducted to clarify these two groups of factors, thereby proposing recommendations for developing appropriate

development strategies, meeting the diverse needs of tourists, and ensuring sustainability in the development of adventure tourism in Vietnam.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1. Related Concepts

#### Adventure Tourism

Adventure Tourism is a type of tourism focused on exploration, challenge, and novel experiences, often associated with physical activity, interaction with the natural environment, and an element of risk. It is commonly divided into two groups: hard adventure and soft adventure (Loverseed, 1977). This is an outdoor recreational activity that takes place in wild, unfamiliar environments with a high degree of physical exertion, helping visitors to train themselves (Millington, 2001; cited in Do, 2015), conquer fear, and learn from risk (Truong et al., 2006). According to ATTA, this tourism type requires the combination of at least two of the three elements: physical activity, natural environment, and cultural immersion (cited in Dinh, 2019). In this study, the research group adopts Loverseed's (1977) approach, viewing adventure tourism as a form of exploratory experience based on physical activity in a natural environment, categorized into two levels: hard adventure and soft adventure.

#### Risk Acceptance

Risk acceptance is a core element in adventure tourism, influencing tourists' satisfaction and motivation to participate (Cater, 2006; Swarbrooke et al., 2003; Imboden, 2012; Sung et al., 2000), and has become the focus of many tourism studies (Lepp & Gibson, 2008; Berdychovsky & Gibson, 2015). This behavior is a decision based on uncertainty about the outcome (Michel et al., 2001) and is closely linked to risk perception (Davis-Berman & Berman, 2002). However, it is a relative concept influenced by multiple factors (Ryan, 2003). The perception of risk and potential loss is weighed against benefits such as self-improvement or social recognition (Bentley & Page, 2008). Therefore, risk acceptance often goes hand in hand with precautionary measures and generates a sense of excitement for tourists, despite conflicting views.

### 2.2. Current Situation of Adventure Tourism

Adventure tourism has attracted tourists of all ages and genders since the early 20th century (Do, 2015) and is one of the fastest-growing segments of the global tourism industry, driven by the demand for unique experiences, personalization, and connection with nature. The UNWTO (2014) recorded that this tourism market increased from \$89 billion to \$263 billion during 2010–2013, particularly in South America, Asia, and Africa. This type of travel accounts for 42% of total international trips and is considered sustainable, as 65.6% of expenditure is retained at the destination, compared to 5% in mass tourism. The market size was estimated to reach approximately \$450 billion in 2023, with an average annual growth rate forecast at 15% for the 2024–2032 period (UnivDatos, 2023). Popular activities include hiking, trekking, cycling, safari, culinary experiences, and wellness tourism (ATTA, 2024). The UNWTO forecasts that by 2030, international arrivals will reach 1.8 billion, with 57% originating from developing countries.

Vietnam, with three-quarters of its area consisting of hills and mountains, a diverse river system, numerous caves, primeval forests, and over 3,000 kilometers of coastline, is emerging as an attractive destination for adventure tourism. According to Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism (2023): Hà Giang stands out with diverse activities such as off-road racing (Yen Minh, Hoang Su Phi), kayaking (Vi Xuyen, Meo Vac), paragliding (Quan Ba, Yen Minh), and mountain climbing (Chieu Lau Thi, Tay Con Linh),... alongside many other landmarks like Fansipan, Lang Biang, Bach Ma, Ha Long Bay, and Phong Nha - Ke Bang.

In summary, global adventure tourism is developing strongly in terms of both market size and the diversity of types and destinations, while also bringing economic value and promoting environmental conservation and sustainable development. In this context, Vietnam, with its abundant natural resources, diverse terrain, and unique ecosystems, is emerging as a potential adventure tourism destination, attracting an increasing number of domestic and international visitors.

### 2.3. Push Factors in Adventure Tourism

Push factors are considered to appear before pull factors in the process of forming travel decisions. This is because pull factors are only considered by tourists after they have already formed the intention to travel, in order to determine where to go, what to see, and what to experience at the chosen destination (Kim et al., 2003; Zoltan & Masiero, 2012). In other words, push factors answer the question, "Should I go or not?", while pull factors address "Where should I go?" (Klenosky, 2002).

Many studies indicate that risk is always present in adventure tourism and in everyday life (Lipscombe, 2007). However, tourists are still willing to accept risks because they value the emotional benefits and personal growth higher than the physical or financial risks. According to Keyes (1985), the level of risk acceptance includes short-term physical risk and long-term psychological risk. Adventure tourism belongs to the first group, providing experiences of stimulation, action, change, excitement, and freedom, replacing the fear of boredom and repetition (Keyes, 1985; Lipscombe, 2007). For instance, surfing creates a sense of novelty and satisfies curiosity for tourists (Pranoto et al., 2024), while mountaineering helps relieve stress by fully focusing on the conquest goal, regenerating energy, and temporarily forgetting social pressures (Zalewska, 2018). It is evident that despite the inherent risks, adventure tourism remains appealing due to the outstanding value it offers.

Additionally, the decision to engage in adventure tourism is also influenced by the need for social interaction, especially in soft adventure activities. This need is fulfilled by the ability to satisfy the need for communication, improve mental health, and enhance subjective well-being (Bichler & Mike, 2021; Hung & Wu, 2021). For example, hikers are often satisfied more by social interaction than by the feeling of conquest (Bichler & Mike, 2021). According to Social Comparison Theory (Festinger, 1957), individuals tend to connect with those who share similar interests. Therefore, finding a travel companion significantly influences the decision to participate in adventure tourism (Morey, 2012; Porter & Usher, 2019), as companions can provide information, share resources, increase satisfaction and happiness, and maintain motivation even when an individual lacks enthusiasm (Choo & Petrick, 2014; Zalewska, 2018). Older adults also engage in soft adventure activities to find joy, a sense of achievement, expand social relationships, and reduce the feeling of boredom during retirement (Patterson & Pan, 2007). In general, adventure tourism, particularly soft adventure, can boost mental health, increase social interaction, and improve well-being for both young and older people.

Furthermore, pursuing adventure tourism is also seen as a form of self-expression of personal values, status, and social position. For women, it is also an opportunity to build identity and affirm competence in a context where prejudice still exists that adventure activities belong primarily to men (Elsrud, 2001). Many studies show that women view adventure tourism as a "reward" to challenge social expectations, thereby feeling stronger and defining their roles more clearly, which sets the stage for success (Lupton & Tulloch, 2002; Zalewska, 2018). The feeling of freedom in adventure tourism drives the need for self-affirmation, becoming a motivation for tourists to participate (Kyle & Chick, 2004; Saffari & Heidari, 2022). Overcoming challenges, such as white-water rafting, helps them shape and reinforce their personal image and gain recognition in the desired way, which further encourages them to seek more experiences (Beckman, 2013). Robinson's (1992) model also identifies "self-expression" as one of the five key factors influencing the decision for adventure travel, emphasizing the role of personal image in choosing risky experiences.

#### **2.4. Pull Factors in Adventure Tourism**

In contrast to push factors, pull factors comprise external influences that affect tourists after they have decided to travel (Crompton, 1979; Lam & Hsu, 2006). These are social elements that help shape the adventure travel behavior of tourists, thereby creating the appeal of this tourism type.

The image of the destination (climate, weather, scenery, etc.) is a crucial factor in tourism due to its ability to attract visitors (Crompton, 1979; Kassean & Gassita, 2013). Specifically for adventure tourism, the appeal lies not only in novelty and adventure stimulation but also in the physical environment which shapes the attraction of outdoor destinations, influences behavior, and enhances the experience through its unique location and visual stimuli (Kim & Brown, 2012; Pomfret, 2006; Naidoo et al., 2015; Giddy, 2018; Urry & Larsen, 2011; Giddy & Webb, 2015). For example, the sea-sun-sand of Mauritius or the pristine landscapes of Kyrgyzstan boost adventure tourism products in these countries (Naidoo et al., 2015). In Vietnam, this type of tourism is gaining attention due to its uniqueness and potential to prolong the length of stay (Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism, 2023). However, for some tourists, the natural environment is not the determining factor but merely a means to satisfy their psychosocial motivations (Crompton, 1979); conversely, they seek excitement rather than appreciating nature (Buckley, 2010). Therefore, a multi-dimensional approach is needed to fully understand tourists' motivations for adventure travel.

In addition to the landscape, adventure travel motivation also stems from indigenous culture and history (Del Chiappa et al., 2009). Local events, customs, and traditions increase the destination's appeal and influence tourist decisions (Khan et al., 1993), especially in culturally rich rural areas (UNWTO, 2013). The novelty in culture sparks curiosity, encouraging tourists to explore, feel the cultural differences between destinations, and expand personal knowledge (ATTA, 2017). Remote, mysterious destinations rich in tradition attract the bold to visit (Zurick, 2010). For instance, overland routes in Asia allow travelers to both trek and experience culture, sacred sites, and real-life challenges (Weber, 2001). The combination of the risk element and the need for cultural exploration differentiates adventure tourism from other forms of travel, while the authenticity of traditional customs provides a genuine experience for tourists seeking the essence of the destination.

Parallel to the spirit of readiness for adventure and risk, tourists still prioritize safety (Hem et al., 2003; Lin et al., 2022), such as the competence of the guide, safety track records, or the condition of the boats for white-water rafting (Patterson & Pan, 2007). Conversely, when paying for an adventure activity, tourists are assured by the provider of risk control, protecting them from the dangers of illness, injury, and medical-legal costs (Lipscombe, 2007; McGillivray & Frew, 2007; Buckley, 2012). Tourists themselves are also aware of risks beyond their control and proactively equip themselves with skills and experience to handle situations (Page et al., 2005). Thus, besides professional guidance and modern equipment, enhancing personal skills and ensuring a robust safety system are crucial factors that "pull" tourists to choose adventure experiences.

The decision for adventure tourism is also influenced by the tourist's social relationships. The need for integration and meeting social expectations plays an important role in shaping individual behavior (Dann, 1977). Therefore, peer and family pressure can encourage them to participate in activities they might not have initially desired. When a group of friends or family participates, an individual may feel the need to join to maintain relationships, avoid feeling excluded, and sometimes to avoid being considered

"deviant" from the group's norm. This is particularly evident among young people because this type of travel is a dynamic behavior, fitting a modern lifestyle. Furthermore, pressure can affect the individual's travel experience. Support from family and friends helps them overcome fear, creating a positive experience; conversely, if the pressure causes stress or they feel forced, they will have negative experiences regarding their trip (Buckley, 2012).

Overall, adventure tourism is developing rapidly and becoming a popular trend. With rich landscapes and diverse terrains, Vietnam is increasingly asserting its appeal, offering tourists adventure experiences, stress relief, health improvement, and opportunities for self-affirmation. For women, this type of tourism also helps overcome social prejudices and express personal values. Simultaneously, pull factors such as destination image, indigenous culture, safety systems from service providers, and peer/family pressure play a vital role in attracting tourists, shaping their experience and satisfaction, thereby promoting the sustainable development of adventure tourism.

### **III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

#### **3.1. Research Methodology**

In this study, the authors primarily employed a qualitative research approach, specifically using structured in-depth interviews.

Regarding the sampling method, a non-probability sampling strategy was adopted. The study utilized quota sampling by group (tourists, friends/relatives, and service providers) combined with the snowball sampling technique. Participants were recruited through the following process: (1) data collection began by contacting social networks to obtain information on suitable respondents; and (2) after interviewing the initial group, participants were asked to refer friends or relatives who shared similar characteristics relevant to the study.

The projected sample consisted of 3 tourists, 2 friends/relatives, and 5 staff members working for adventure tourism service providers. The interviews were conducted online via Google Meet. In practice, however, the primary data collected included 3 tourist interviews, 2 interviews with friends/relatives, and 8 interviews with service provider staff (3 porters, 3 management personnel, and 2 tour guides).

Regarding socio-demographic characteristics, the final sample comprised 13 respondents divided into two main groups: tourists and adventure tourism service providers, along with several friends and relatives of tourists to incorporate diverse social perspectives. The respondents' birth years ranged from 1975 to 2003, reflecting notable generational diversity in adventure tourism experiences and perceptions. In terms of gender, males predominated in the service provider group due to the physical demands and mobility required in natural environments. In contrast, the tourist group exhibited more balanced gender representation and varied occupations (e.g., freelancer, student, manager), indicating greater flexibility and autonomy in choosing adventure experiences. This diversity contributed to a more comprehensive understanding of behaviors and motivations in adventure tourism.

For the data analysis process, the authors transcribed all interviews and manually coded the transcripts. After a thorough review and synthesis, the data were categorized into two major thematic groups: (1) "push" factors influencing decisions to engage in adventure tourism, and (2) "pull" factors attracting individuals to adventure tourism. To ensure participant anonymity, identifiers were assigned based on characteristics such as respondent type, gender, birth year, and occupation.

The in-depth interview method in qualitative research offers several strengths. It allows for the collection of rich, detailed information that provides a multifaceted understanding of tourists' experiences and motivations for participating in adventure tourism. The use of the snowball sampling technique also helps expand the sample through social networks, contributing to more comprehensive insights. However, the small sample size limits the representativeness and generalizability of the findings, particularly for the tourist group. Furthermore, the use of non-probability sampling may lead to uneven demographic characteristics, potentially excluding certain perspectives. Constraints related to time and access to participants also affected the diversity and objectivity of the sample.

#### **3.2. Theoretical Framework: John L. Crompton's Push-Pull Theory**

Crompton's (1979) Push-Pull Theory is one of the most popular theoretical frameworks for analyzing the motivations that drive travel and tourist behavior (Kay, 2003). According to this theory, travel behavior is influenced by two main sets of factors: push factors that originate from within the individual (intrinsic), related to psychological needs or states, and pull factors originating from the destination, including the environment, scenery, or service quality.

Crompton (1979) posited that once the desire to travel is established, the internal motivations shift to guide behavior, meaning they direct tourists to choose a specific type of tourism and destination. He also identified nine travel motives, seven of which are classified as "psychosocial," belonging to the push factors, including: escape from the commonplace environment; self-exploration; relaxation; prestige affirmation; escape from daily roles; enhancing relationships; and facilitating social interaction. The remaining two cultural motivation factors are the pull factors, encompassing novelty and education.

Building on this foundation, Terblanche (2012) expanded the theoretical framework with more factors. Push factors include motivations such as relief, relaxation, self-esteem, prestige, health, adventure, social interaction, benefits, and interests. Conversely,



pull factors relate to the destination and its facilities, including climate, historical sites, scenic beauty, sun, beaches, snow, cultural events, and recreational opportunities.

Applying this theory to the analysis of adventure tourism behavior, the theory provides a comprehensive approach to explaining the appeal of adventure tourism through push and pull factors—the motivations that drive tourists to engage in travel behavior. The decision to engage in adventure tourism is a combination of individual needs (push factors) and the attraction of the destination (pull factors), such as a tourist choosing to go mountaineering on the weekend to relieve stress (push factor) and enjoy the beauty of nature (pull factor).

## IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Adventure tourism, despite having higher costs compared to many other types of tourism, still attracts tourists due to the following factors.

### 4.1. Push Factors

#### Tourists' Demographics

Findings from the qualitative analysis of in-depth interviews indicate that not all demographic factors influence tourists' decisions to engage in adventure tourism. Age appears to be the most significant factor. Younger participants tend to take part more frequently due to *"a need for exploration, learning, and new experiences"* (P05, friend). In contrast, *"older individuals who do not exercise regularly may face greater risks because of declining health and bone density"* (P03, tourist). Regarding gender, some interviewees suggested that men participate more often than women because adventure tourism *"requires high physical endurance"* (P03, tourist) and because *"men tend to enjoy physical activities more"* (P02, tourist). However, most participants believed that gender does not play a decisive role and that participation primarily depends on each individual's interests and physical condition. Education level was also *perceived as having limited influence. Many respondents stated that the decision to participate "relies more on personal experience than on educational attainment"* (P05, friend). Nevertheless, a few noted that individuals with higher education levels may be more attentive to their health (P02, tourist) and more likely to *"recognize the benefits that adventure tourism offers"* (P04, relative). These findings are consistent with Gross et al. (2023), who reported that men, younger people, and those with higher education levels tend to participate more frequently due to a stronger preference for exploration and novel experiences. However, the degree of influence varies, which is supported by Schneider and Vogt (2012), who argued that psychological factors and personal motivation exert a stronger effect on participation than demographic characteristics.

#### Risk acceptance driven by perceived benefits

Risk acceptance in adventure tourism appears to be primarily driven by tourists' perception that experiential and psychosocial benefits outweigh potential hazards. Participants consistently expressed a desire for novelty and immersion in pristine natural environments, which makes them feel associated with heightened excitement, emotional uplift and self-validation. As several interviewees noted, young travellers are motivated to *"explore beautiful scenery and unfamiliar cultures"* (P01, tourist) and experience feelings they describe as *"interesting and satisfying"* (P02, tourist). A preference for natural settings was also cited as a reason for engaging in trekking activities (P03, tourist). Participation behaviour is closely linked to the symbolic value of personal challenge. Feelings of *"accomplishment"* and *"pride"* (P03, tourist) after the surpassing of individual limits appear to strengthen continued engagement in adventure tourism. Respondents further highlighted benefits related to a sense of freedom, improved physical well-being, and exposure to environments distinct from everyday routines. The comment by a porter that *"guests go when they want to go, as long as they can afford"* (P07, porter) suggests a high degree of readiness and autonomy among tourists. Despite acknowledging potential risks—including injuries such as sprains or fractures (P04, relative) and material losses or uncontrollable incidents (P05, friend) - most participants evaluated these hazards as acceptable. This assessment seems to be influenced by the perceived superiority of the emotional and experiential rewards. These findings correspond with Keyes (1985) and Lynch and Moore (2004), who conceptualise the *"risk acceptance paradox,"* whereby travellers willingly tolerate risk in exchange for enhanced experiential value. However, the results diverge from Kiatkawsin et al. (2021), who observed that Vietnamese tourists may, in some contexts, prioritise risk more heavily than benefits.

#### Desire for interaction

Social interaction is a significant motivation for participation in adventure tourism, as many activities require team orientation, contributing to the development of soft skills and a sense of group cohesion. One interviewee explained, *"every time we go, we talk, chat, and confide [...] The more I go, the more I understand this person, and understand myself better... This also helps me expand my relationships"* (P05, friend). The desire for interaction arises not only from tourists but also from porters, who seek to build closer and more personal relationships with travelers and to position themselves as true companions throughout the journey. As one porter shared: *"The happiest part is drinking beer in the evening, eating together, and feeling that the guests cherish me..."* (P08, porter). However, this motivation is not universal. Some tourists demonstrate minimal interest in social engagement, as one noted: *"I am not very interested in that... once out of the activity, it's over"* (P02, tourist). This motivation corresponds to the belongingness needs in Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (1943). Social connection enhances overall satisfaction and experiential

value (Iso-Ahola, 1982; Pearce & Lee, 2005; Dinh, 2019), however, tourist behavior results from a more complex set of motives (Dann, 1977).

## 4.2. Pull factors

### Destination Factors (Destination image, Local culture, History)

In spite of potential risks, destination-related pull factors play a central role in shaping tourists' participation and their intention to revisit (Stylidis, 2022). The appeal of *"natural scenery"* (P05, friend) constitutes the most salient motivation. As one tourist noted: *"likes the natural landscape, so the most fundamental reason is still participating because of being closer to the natural environment [...]"* (P03, tourist). Recommendations from social media or local residents tend to function only as preliminary influences. Climatic conditions are also considered essential for ensuring a safe and satisfying experience, with destinations *"where the climate and the season offer cool weather"* (P02, tourist) often being prioritized. Conversely, some tourists reported that scenery and environmental features had only limited influence on their decision-making: *"[...] not as beautiful as people describe and not as interesting as people say"* (P02, tourist), suggesting that participation may derive primarily from personal motivations rather than environmental attributes. Local culture and history exert a more indirect influence, yet they contribute to destination identity and are often conveyed through tour guides. As one guide explained, *"Local culture is transmitted; when talking, tourists focus on listening and then ask more [...] the national pride of our Raglai people will increase"* (P13, guide). Overall, natural scenery and climate appear to be the dominant motivations, while cultural and historical elements serve a complementary role. This highlights the need for flexibility and diversification in the design of adventure tourism products (Xalxo & Matharu, 2021; Nguyen, 2023).

### Safety Assurance Factors

Given that adventure tourism is associated with vigorous physical activity and a high level of risk, which leads participants to place safety as the foremost priority. Experienced participants often prepare their own equipment, such as *"shoes that must grip well, or knee protectors, or walking sticks to keep balance"* (P03, tourist), and pay attention to their physical condition: *"Before participating in an adventure tour, my mother exercises more regularly"* (P04, relative). Tour managers and guides also play a crucial role in ensuring safety by surveying terrain, designing appropriate routes, and providing instructions and first-aid training. As one guide explained, *"To form a tour, first, we must ask local people... once the survey is finished, we started to get opinions on dining and camping spots... only then we do open the route"* (P12, guide). Another added, *"Must advise guests on what to do and what not to do [...] Along the way, any difficult spots must be noted"* (P13, guide). For challenging environments, participants recognize that professional guidance, insurance, and commitment documents are essential. One tourist affirmed, *"Going into the mountains absolutely requires a guide"* (P02, tourist), while another noted, *"The tour provider will prepare the most basic level of safety assurance and also include travel insurance"* (P03, tourist). However, organized tours can constrain the experience, requiring *"a lot of paperwork"*, *"limiting the group and time"* (P04, relative), and *"requiring signing a commitment to ensure organizational responsibility"* (P05, friend). The need for risk control in adventure tourism is well documented (Bentley et al., 2001), and increased experience enhances participation frequency (Ewert & Hollenhorst, 1994). Despite potential limitations in popular locations, professional guidance, structured tours, and insurance remain effective strategies for risk mitigation and improving the quality of the adventure experience (Beedie & Hudson, 2003; Cater, 2006).

### Pressure from family, friends

Data from the interviews indicate that tourists may perceive pressure from family members and friends as influencing their decision to participate in adventure tourism. However, this pressure is not always negative and can sometimes act as a motivating factor. One relative explained, *"I think the issue lies with the person exerting pressure and the community group they wish to join... if they are relatives of the same generation... everyone goes together and I don't go, then there might be that feeling"* (P04, relative). Another participant recalled, *"Halfway along the route, they saw rough terrain and asked to turn back. But we didn't let them go back, forcing them to continue... in the end, they still managed to go all the way to the end and never gave up"* (P05, friend). Nevertheless, most tourists emphasized that their participation is based on personal preference rather than social influence. As one tourist stated, *"It's not because of anyone else, I go because I like to go"* (P02, tourist), while another added, *"If I can participate, I participate; if not, then no"* (P04, relative). According to Dann (1977), the need for social integration and recognition within a group influences significantly individual behavior, meaning that refusal to participate could be perceived as "deviant." However, the findings of this study contradict Dann's assertion, as the majority of tourists reported minimal social pressure from relationships when deciding to engage in adventure tourism.

## V. CONCLUSION

This study clarified the factors influencing adventure tourism behavior in Vietnam through two main groups: push and pull factors. The results emphasize intrinsic and extrinsic motivations. Adventure tourism in Vietnam is seen as symbolic of the combination of personalized experience, nature exploration, and self-challenge. The push factors include: demographics (age influences, gender does not, education level shows mixed results); risk acceptance because of superior values (exploration, excitement, overcoming limits, accomplishment, freedom) despite risks (health, material damage, incidents beyond control); and

the desire for social interaction (developing soft skills, cohesion, expanding relationships), depending on individual goals. The pull factors include: destination image and cultural factors (natural beauty, favorable climate are key; culture/history are supplementary; need for sustainability); safety assurance factors (top concern, involving personal prep and professional guidance; organized tours control risk but may limit unique experience); and pressure from family/friends (can be motivational for some, but most decide based on personal desire).

## VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Focus on exploiting and enhancing the unique value of adventure tourism destinations by preserving culture, history, and nature, utilizing sustainable management. Trekking tourism helps conserve natural heritage and indigenous knowledge through local guides, promoting conservation awareness and sustainable exploitation (e.g., sustainable medicinal plant harvesting).

2. Safety assurance must be considered the top priority. Before opening new routes, rigorous risk assessment, terrain, and climate evaluation must be performed. Service providers should invest in modern equipment, professional guides, transparent insurance policies, safe infrastructure, and emergency response systems. Training programs should be organized for guides and porters in emergency response. Tours need to be flexibly designed to balance risk control and appealing discovery experiences.

3. Community awareness and creative communication need to be raised. Promotional campaigns should emphasize benefits (self-discovery, freedom, accomplishment) while being transparent about risks. These recommendations contribute to sustainable development and enhance Vietnam's position on the global tourism map.

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

This article contains no abbreviations.

## CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding this manuscript.

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