

THESIS

Adventure Changing People Transfer Effect in Adventure Travel

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ABSTRACT

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This paper investigated the effects of a three-week Nepal expedition in its participants. The case study examined three different commercial expeditions conducted high in the Himalayas in 2022 and 2023 to find out what kind of an impact they had on the expedition members and what were the elements of their experience that affected people the most after returning home. The development plan was commissioned by Travel Agency Aventura in order to learn about transfer and the impact of their products in their clientele.

With a knowledge base leaning on theories in for example adventure, transfer and adventure tourism, the research was executed by first observing the groups during their expeditions, then presenting the members a series of hypothesis' to confirm or reject via a survey and eventually interviewing the members regarding their experience. The objective was to learn what kind of transfer the participants had recognized during and especially after their trips.

The results show that joining a broad scale expedition including a physical challenge affects people in many positive ways that are transferrable to other aspects of life. The treks and climbs in Nepal enhanced the participants' self-confidence and resilience and had an impact on their values. People experienced agency and spirituality, pondered their approaches on sustainability and learned new personal skills while working their way together towards a 6000 meter Himalayan peak. The research shows that, when pedagogically guided and facilitated, long expeditions provide an excellent opportunity for learning, contribute to the participants' personal development and can change lives for the better.

The Research results provided Aventura a range of information and feedback on how their expeditions affect their clients outside the fixed curriculums in sometimes surprising ways. Paying attention to elements of transfer recognized in this development plan helps Aventura implement pedagogical elements into their adventure itineraries to build an even better portfolio of meaningful travel products.

Keywords: Adventure, adventure education, adventure travel, guides (occupations), tourism, tourism businesses, tourists and travelers, transfer, transferable skills, travel agencies

CONTENTS

ABSTRACT

1. INTRODUCTION.....	7
2. THE DEVELOPMENT PLAN	9
2.1. Background.....	9
2.2. The commissioner	9
2.3. The research goals	11
2.4. The expeditions	12
3. KNOWLEDGE BASE.....	13
3.1. What is adventure?	13
3.1.1. Authenticity	14
3.1.2. Agency.....	15
3.1.3. Uncertainty	15
3.1.4. Mastery	16
3.2. Adventure tourism.....	17
3.3. Tourism in Nepal	18
3.4. The transfer effect.....	19
3.5. Other research related to this thesis.....	22
4. METHODS	24
4.1. The survey	24
4.2. Interviews	25
4.3. Observation	26
4.4. Analysis method	27

4.5. Ethics	27
5. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS	29
5.1. Execution.....	29
5.2. Main observations results.....	29
5.3. Survey results	31
5.3.1. Motives.....	31
5.3.2. Skills.....	32
5.3.3. Values	33
5.3.4. Other survey points	34
5.4. Interview results	35
5.5. Analysis of the results	36
5.5.1. Personal skills.....	36
5.5.2. Values	37
5.5.3. Spirituality	38
5.5.4. Peers	38
5.5.5. Physical challenge	39
6. CONCLUSIONS	41
6.1. Implementation for Aventura.....	41
6.1.1. Vital elements for success	42
6.1.2. Investing in locality	42
6.1.3. Educated tour leaders	43
6.1.4. New destinations	43
6.1.5. Marketing points.....	43
6.2. Implementation for the professional and educational field.....	44
6.3. Limitations and self-criticism.....	45

7. FINAL WORDS	47
REFERENCES	48
APPENDICES	51

1. INTRODUCTION

In the summer of 2014 I climbed Mount Elbrus, the highest peak in Europe. After a week-long push towards the summit with all odds against me, standing on the highest point of the continent felt like the biggest accomplishment of my entire life up until then. It ended a long process of recovering from a substance addiction and depression which both had swallowed the past 10 years of my life. On the summit, for the first time in years, I felt like I had accomplished something.

That climb changed my life. In addition to new senses of strength and self-confidence, I rediscovered my long-lost love for the outdoors. I found it to be a setting where I could find meaningful ways to control and develop my feelings, exercise personal agency, feel commitment and most of all, where I needed to learn to cope with uncertainty. All skills I had lost during my illness.

Once I realized adventures were all I wanted to do, I applied for studies to become a certified wilderness guide. A year later I graduated as one, started guiding for a living and grabbed on every chance I got to go on an adventure. Eventually these events also resulted in me applying for my bachelor's studies in outdoor and adventure education at HUMAK some years later.

After a few years of guiding, in 2017 I found myself sitting in the downtown office of the travel agency Aventura in Helsinki. Working with Aventura had been an aim of mine since getting involved in the outdoor business and all of a sudden I got my chance. I started leading groups in Iceland, then Greenland and after gaining more experience and positive customer feedback, I got an opportunity to travel to Nepal for the first time for a more demanding job description in the Himalayas. In 3 years after my first climb to Elbrus my outdoor professional dreams had come true and I was living a new, exceptional life.

After this very personal and life-changing experience I have always wanted to offer the same opportunity for others: a chance to change something in their lives through adventure, to take them out and show them the beauty of challenge that has the possibility to modify our ways of thinking, improve our personal skills and make us better as humans.

The transfer effect refers to applying something in one setting and then being able to use it in another. Bruner describes it as "learning not a skill but a general idea which can then be used

as a basis of recognizing subsequent problems as special cases of the idea originally mastered". (Bruner 1960, 48.) Since that Elbrus expedition, I've been fascinated about the phenomena of the transfer effect. It is, after all, what I consider my new life the offspring of. Before taking on my adventure education studies I had no use for a name for it, but once I did, I knew transfer was going to be the topic of my thesis.

Through research it's known that adventurous activities promote transfer. It basically forms the core of our field of study which uses adventure as a tool for education. Now I and Aventura as this thesis' commissioner wanted to study transfer in a commercial and non-educational setting to see its impact on an adventure-seeking clientele. We wanted to learn what kind of transfer Aventura clients experience.

The research was narrowed down to a case study of three expeditions Aventura performed in Nepal, the first in October 2022, second in April 2023 and the last in October 2023. After personally observing the three groups on the field as the tour leader, we reached out to all the 35 participants with a survey about their experiences and finally also interviewed a few people from each group face to face. Finally, the results were examined with a classification analysis for conclusions.

In this thesis I will present the process and the results of the research. I will explain what is adventure and take the readers through theory on the transfer effect. I will explain how the study was conducted, analyze the results and conclude the project into how Aventura will be able to use the results in their future operations. During the way I will also take a look at Nepal as a tourism destination and discuss several adventure-related concepts like the McDonaldization of adventure. The results will show that commercial adventures provide a chance to change lives, offer opportunities for learning and can affect life-values stretching far beyond the fixed expedition dates.

Though commissioned by Aventura, this thesis is also my personal journey into understanding more my past, my new life and, most of all, the future possibilities and the impact of my work. As the ancient Hindu proverb goes: If you want to learn something, read about it and if you want to understand something, write about it.

2. THE DEVELOPMENT PLAN

2.1. Background

Since that first raised fist and a new found glory on the summit of Elbrus in 2014, I have joined over 40 different expeditions in different roles, both as a client and as a guide. I've climbed and trekked all over the world from the Andes to the Alps, turned a hobby into a new career and experienced a lot of personal growth on the way. And so have my clients. It's been a huge privilege to be a part of people's journeys into themselves.

The idea of transfer is that once you learn something in one setting, you can then transfer the same skill to another. It has been described as "one of the most critical features of adventure programming". (Priest & Gass 2005, 21.) As a simplified real-life example, one can for example master to cross a huge crevasse on a Himalayan glacier by stepping on an aluminum ladder and then several years later, in a ski resort in Finland, use that moment of courage as a reference and think "if I had the guts to do that, I can overcome this" while trying to ski a steep powder snow hill for the first time. This happened to a customer of mine and it was one of the moments that opened my eyes to what my work can achieve.

Research has shown that leaders play a major role in promoting transfer. Gass suggests that the key to increasing transferrable learning lies, in addition to the activity, also in the teaching methodology. (Gass 1999, 230.) The problem with transfer is that the major impact most likely happens later, after the expeditions are over, and so most times any metaphoric and non-specific changes will occur without the leader or expedition provider ever knowing about them anymore. Ideally feedback leads to better performance so that's what this development plan for Aventura went after of.

2.2. The commissioner

Aventura is a privately owned Finnish travel agency founded in 2000 by Tero Norvio, who still runs the company as the sole stake holder. In 24 years Aventura has sealed its name as one of the most distinguished travel agencies in Finland in the field of adventure and luxury travel. They offer a vast variety of both packaged tours and personalized services in mainly long distance destinations all over the world for both individual and corporate clients. Each

year Aventura serves about 500 customers, new and regular, with their travel plans across the globe. The Aventura office is situated in the centre of Helsinki and the company employs 12 people full-time. In addition to their office personnel Aventura uses the services of dozens of freelance tour leaders each specialized in their own field of interest and destination.

I have been freelancing with Aventura since the summer of 2017. I'm a part of the mountain expedition team and my main guiding destinations today are Nepal and Greenland. I have also lead groups in Iceland and Mount Elbrus in Russia. In total I have worked on 13 expeditions commissioned by Aventura, which averages to – counting out the covid years – 2,6 expeditions a year with each expedition lasting from 1 to 4 weeks. For the 2024-2025 travel season, Aventura is offering over 120 different guided tours with a Finnish tour leader and destinations in over 130 countries around the globe. (Matkatoimisto Aventura 2023.) Even with this amount, guided tours still make less than half of their yearly revenue as customized private travel arrangements are still Aventura's main business. In November 2023 Aventura was awarded Tour Operator of the Year in the Finnish Travel Gala.

Nepal expeditions have been in Aventura's portfolio since 2002 when they were among the first blood in Finland offering Himalayan climbs and treks to the public. Today Aventura arranges 14 different products for Nepal yearly, the main destinations being climbs to Island Peak, Lobuche East, Mera Peak, Ama Dablam and Baruntse, and treks to the areas of Annapurna Circuit, Poon Hill, Everest Base Camp and Langtang. The company collaborates with two outfitters in Nepal as their main destination management companies, DMC's: Expedition Himalaya and Royal Mountain Treks & Adventures. Both DMC's organize things locally operating from their offices in Kathmandu, including local bureaucracy, permits, local travel, accommodation etc. They also provide the teams with local trekking and climbing guides who, when on the trail, work under the supervision and command of the Finnish tour leader. Aventura is committed to the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism, which serves as a guideline for, for example, sustainability, equality and cultural treatment in travel destinations. (World Tourism Organization UNWTO 2023, 37.)

2.3. The research goals

For Aventura, knowing the impact of their business is, of course, of value. Thus, the main goal for this development plan was to collect feedback and data on the impact of Aventura's products that stretch beyond the actual expeditions and analyze the results for suggestions for development.

Being a relatively small company in personnel, Aventura does not have the resources for prolonged tracking and following up on their clientele. All participants are sent a basic questionnaire link once returning home, but the feedback is gathered immediately after the expeditions and there are no long-term results available. Meaningful transfer overall is difficult to investigate and in most cases it doesn't happen during or immediately after the trips but takes time to sink in. So to have plausible data on the impact of a product, a follow-up on the clientele should be made significantly later.

The research question was not *does* transfer happen, but *how* it happens and especially *what kind* of transfer people experience. It is in the interest of Aventura to learn what elements of the trips make the difference in promoting transfer, for example what is the role of the tour leader. The desired outcome was to, via a credible level of research, gather evidence how the Nepal adventures had changed the participants' lives, values and attitudes for the better.

The results of this study produce development suggestions to be used in the overall improvement of the commissioner's products to make them better conducted with planned outcomes regarding positive experiences. For a commercial operator, better products equal better revenue. The results are implemented in the training of Aventura tour leaders in what their roles could be and how they should position themselves and compose the expeditions for better results. This will eventually benefit not only Aventura but most of all the end-customer, aka. future clients. Finally, the results can be used as a marketing reference when Aventura can add to their customer promise that, by actual research, their services benefit the participants' lives beyond the duration of the trips.

For the educational field, analyzing adventure educational methods in the context of commercial guiding and expedition leadership has not been researched in numbers, and the input of this development plan can be added to the existing few.

As a disclaimer, it needs to be emphasized that the original interest for the topic of this thesis was mostly personal. As explained in the introduction, I wanted to explore the phenomena of transfer to learn more about it and only after I had narrowed the topic down to a plan did I approach Aventura with the idea of bringing them along as the commissioner.

2.4. The expeditions

The three expeditions used as case studies for this thesis took place on Lobuche East and Island Peak. The Lobuche East trips were executed in October 2022 and October 2023 and lasted for 18 days. The first one had a pax of 8 clients and the second 11. The main goal for these trips was to climb to the 6090 m eastern summit of Lobuche Peak. The Island Peak trip in April 2023 had 16 clients and included a trek to Mount Everest Basecamp. For 11 participants, the EBC was their main destination and only five people ascended the 6189 m high Island Peak as well. In total three people had to be evacuated mid-trip but the interrupters are all included in this study as equals.

Nepal is not your average trekking and climbing destination. It requires more experience than most other similar venues both in technical skills and skills such as resilience and endurance. All trekking areas in Nepal are situated in the Himalayan mountain range and take place at high altitude. Every Aventura climbing expedition in Nepal reaches over 6000 meters and are minimum 18 days long. The clientele of the Nepal expeditions usually have a strong background in for example trekking, climbing or similar adventure sports and can be considered experienced. Investing in and joining a long expedition is usually made after careful consideration and needs good self-knowledge. Traveling to Nepal is not for the pennywise, which adds to the decision making of booking a trip. Links to broader descriptions of the expeditions (in Finnish) can be found in the appendixes section of this thesis. (Appendice 1.)

3. KNOWLEDGE BASE

3.1. What is adventure?

In the modern Instagram-age, when the youth of today regard to everything as an adventure, we must start by first defining what we mean by the term. What is actually 'an adventure' and what does it mean in the context of this thesis?

Adventure means different things to different people and is subjective and culturally relative. (Beames & Brown 2016, 4.) For example, an expedition in Nepal is usually adventurous to the paying customer but for the tour leader, it's more a regular day in the office and for the Sherpas who accompany the group even less, merely just the daily grind. Adventure has meanings in western cultures that may have little or no relevance to others in their own society or culture (Ibid, 38), so it's not the activity itself that makes something an adventure. But even for those who work on the trail, every expedition is an unknown road and it's never known how it's going to play out. The group might face severe weather, objective hazards such as rockfall or avalanches, they might suffer various unexpected events and might even have to abort the trip. Every expedition has elements the participants have no control of and thus the outcome is always uncertain. This uncertainty is pivotal to what contributes to an adventure. (Priest 1999, 112.) Then again, it is again relative what we consider to be an 'uncertain outcome'. (Beames & Brown 2016, 15.)

Priest (1999) looks at adventure as a subset of a leisure experience that needs to be entered voluntarily, provide senses of pleasure and hold an unknown outcome. Varley (2006) goes to the extent of questioning if the term 'adventure' is "simply a product of the leisured imaginations of those who live in comfort and convenience-obsessed modern industrialized countries." (Varley 2006, 192.) In fact, many theories have positioned adventure as just an alternative to the 'dullness' of everyday western life, but as Beames and Brown argue, the approach is problematic since it is through adventure individuals of all ages have opportunities to construct their identities. (Beames & Brown 2016, 18.)

A key concept for adventure is challenge, which – again – is personally relative. Beames and Brown describe challenge as something that is "within the grasp of abilities of the learner and requires the application of skills and knowledge to achieve the desired outcome". (Beames

& Brown 2016, 86.) It stems from the uncertainty and the unknown result an expedition offers and it is different to everyone. When joining an expedition, the clients see a challenge, maybe even risk, with a reward of achievement at the end and this process is what equals to an adventure. Related, challenge-by-choice (Schoel, Prouty & Radcliffe, 1988) is an idea of participants making informed choices and choosing their level of personal challenge. (Beames & Brown 2016, 87.) In this context, challenge-by-choice means the clients are joining the Nepal trips after careful and informed decision making and thus are choosing to participate in this particular adventure. They are doing it willingly which affects the positive agency and transfer they might experience. A no fun at all forced participation would lead to a more negative approach and a very different expedition. To have meaningful experiences, the clients need to know that the challenge at hand is within their grasp. (Ibid, 86.)

Arguing that the term has been appropriated into being too vague for discussion anymore, Beames and Brown break adventure down to four key elements required to define an activity as such: authenticity, agency, uncertainty and mastery. (Beames & Brown 2016, 20.) Authenticity refers to keeping things real, non-fugazi and genuine as senses of adventure can't arouse with fake curriculums. Agency means participants feel personal commitment to the task at hand and are allowed to be active actors in their experience. Uncertainty, as already discussed above, refers to an unknown result and mastery means people get to use, learn and improve their skills during the activity. If we inspect the Nepal expeditions through these four elements for this thesis, we can confirm the trips, by definition, are adventures:

3.1.1. Authenticity

For an activity to be considered as an adventure, the setting and the experience can not be artificial. It has to be no FX, real and authentic. In other words, in order to experience a climb to a Himalayan summit, one needs to actually attempt to climb a Himalayan summit, with all its mental and physical challenges, ups and downs and the whole madball included. Even though the Aventura expeditions are professionally planned in high detail to be as safe as possible, they don't lose their authenticity because the challenge in Nepal is very real. Aventura can't take people to the top but their itineraries offer a real chance for the clients to take *themselves* up. As Beames and Brown argue, an adventure outfitter can not offer theme-park rides in order to stay in business. (Beames & Brown 2016, 14.) When selling an expedition with marke-

ting promises, if Aventura was to water down the experience to a rancid walk in the park by making it too tame or unauthentic, they would quickly be losing their clientele.

3.1.2. Agency

Agency means that the people attending an activity have senses of engagement and autonomy in the process and have the power to shape what they learn and how they learn it. Participants take ownership and responsibility of their own experience. (Beames & Brown 2016, 62.) Even though commercial and planned adventures, the Aventura expeditions require a lot from the participants. Aside from the obvious physical demands, they require commitment, team work, decision-making and engagement. Here also the tour leader's role is vital. The leader can either serve his customers everything on a silver plate, or he can create an environment where the participants are able to make informed decisions by themselves. By promoting agency and involving the group in negotiating the challenge at hand, the participants are more likely to have opportunities to make authentic decisions, take responsibility for their actions and thus exercise collective and individual agency. (Brown & Frazer, 2009, 73.)

3.1.3. Uncertainty

Uncertainty is a vital characteristic for an adventurous experience. Priest suggests that "the outcome of an adventure is uncertain when information critical to the completion of a task or the solution of a problem is missing, vague, or unknown". (Priest 1999, 112.) On a 3-week expedition anything can happen within the surroundings, the group and the individuals. They only have a plan and the ever-changing circumstances in a destination such as Nepal are always bound to disrupt. But through this uncertainty, powerful experiences can come about as neither the clients nor the guides know what awaits them and they need to work together to reach their goals. (Beames & Brown 2016, 7.) Uncertainty is the common challenge on expeditions and, if well conducted and navigated, it's also the glue that keeps the teams working together.

Uncertainty is linked to another term: risk. As Beames and Brown state, "if an outcome is uncertain, there is the risk that the participant might lose something of value". (Beames & Brown 2016, 11.) For example, by joining an expedition, the participants risk losing their investment or even health only to return home with an unsuccessful attempt for a summit and

that risk adds to experiencing something as an adventure. But we are not to consider risk as a synonym for uncertainty or a method for keeping the adventures authentic. Aventura expeditions don't promote risk as a selling point and experiencing transfer doesn't require for the participants to be placed in dangerous situations. More the other way around, the absence of physical risk and staying out of harm's way can actually create a better space for learning when the focus can be kept relevant, the expert intervention is down to a minimum and the participants get to experience autonomy and agency. (Beames & Brown 2016, 86.) Cater has shown that the main reasons people engage in adventurous activities are "thrill and excitement" rather than a desire to take risks. (Cater 2006, 321.)

3.1.4. Mastery

Mastery refers to learning, building and mastering new skills and knowledge. Commercial expeditions are not educational events but ideally should provide participants opportunities to learn, draw on their existing knowledge on the way and build on that as the expedition and tasks become more complex. (Beames & Brown 2016, 88.) The position of an adventure tourist can thus be compared to one of a student in an educational setting. (Ibid, 14.) The development and mastery in both technical and mental skills such as resilience is a crucial part of the reward customers look for in an expedition: by mastering this level of mountaineering they have the confidence to move on to the next, maybe a bigger challenge. An expedition is very often a part of a process and a roadmap to other objectives.

Rubens makes a difference between two kinds of adventures: narrow and broad. Narrow adventures offer high thrills but have short time scales and require minimal effort from the participants, while broad adventures require more responsibility and agency from those attending. They offer varied challenges, decision making opportunities, longer time scales and thus more space for growth. (Rubens 1999.) The Nepal expeditions are considered broad adventures.

To sum it up, as shown, adventure as a term is very subjective and always reliant of the user and the context. In this thesis I refer to adventure as a specific challenge taking place in an outdoor setting offering a personal reward at the end. In connection, I refer to the Nepal expeditions as adventures and adventure tourism because of their challenging nature and the

inclusion of the key elements of authenticity, uncertainty, agency and mastery suggested by Beames and Brown.

3.2. Adventure tourism

As with adventure, defining adventure tourism is not simple either because of its subjectivity. Hudson et al suggest that adventure tourism involves for example practical engagement and physical outdoor effort with positive side effects (Hudson, Bennet & Rea 2002, 209), while Laing and Warwick talk about "escape, self-discovery and honoring others". (Laing & Warwick 2014, 30.) What is common to most definitions is that adventure tourism is very much connected to developing and 'wild' countries such as Nepal, where travelers are bound to encounter "spiritual and transformative encounters". (Laing & Warwick 2014, 179.)

An essential part of adventure tourism is exploring exotic cultures and interacting with traditional communities. Travelers are looking to get up close and personal with locals, who represent a different culture from their own. (Laing & Warwick 2014, 198.) In the past decades these interactions have enhanced Nepal's social justice and the impact of tourism can be witnessed in, for example, equality and human rights. While in general the impact of visitors in local cultures is highly debated and, as argued by Zurick (1995), the paradox of adventure travel is that the more a place is visited, the more unattractive it becomes, in Nepal the effects are still mostly considered positive. As Krakauer writes, in for example the Khumbu area, where also Aventura expeditions take place, most of the people have no desire to return to the old days when life was more simple and picturesque. The last thing the local Sherpa people want is to "be preserved as specimens in an anthropological museum." (Krakauer 1997, 48.)

McDonaldization is a concept, which was first implemented to the context of adventure by Loynes in his paper *Adventure in a Bun* in 1998. The term originates from Ritzer's thesis on the McDonaldization of society (1993) and refers to experiences being provided as "standard, dependable, and safe products just like the McDonald's hamburger". (Loynes 1998, 35.) In adventure tourism, it's easy to wish an outfitter good riddance for McDonaldizing their products by making them calculated, efficient and highly predictable, like a Big Mac at the drive-in. Referring to the four elements explained earlier – authenticity, agency, uncertainty, mastery – the blame in Aventura's case is unjustified. Even though many adventure business' are

arguably heading towards a McDonaldized culture, authentic events are still possible to be conducted.

Priest and Gass talk about 'adventure programming' (1999) while Beames and Brown prefer the term 'adventurous learning' (2016), both of which are concepts primarily related to adventure education. Even though commercial and without specific educational targets, the Nepal expeditions offer many opportunities for learning and growth in an adventurous setting and therefore I'm suggesting the theories also apply in the context of adventure tourism.

3.3. Tourism in Nepal

Nepal is a developing country ranking 42. poorest in the world. (Global Finance Magazine 2023.) Tourism is crucial for the country's economy and its yearly share of their GDP stood at 6,7 percent in 2022, which equals to about 2 billion euros in impact. (World Bank report 2023.) Still in recovery from the Covid19 pandemic and even the 2015 earthquake killing over 8000 people, in 2022 Nepal received a total of almost 615 000 visitors and aimed to reach 1 million in 2023. (Nepal Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation 2023.)

In the past 30 years Nepal has risen from a poor, rural and undeveloped country to a rising tourist destination and taken a leap for the better in the poorest countries rankings. Much of this is thanks to travelers who have brought to the country not only jobs but for example better data connections, stable electricity and cleaner water. Even though still in a developing stage, the impact of tourism has been vital to Nepal's growth which in 2024 is estimated to reach 3,9 percent. (World Bank Report 2023.)

Financially tourism affects Nepal in two ways: First, visitors leave money in the industry and local economy through the usual accommodation, travel, restaurants, local guides etc. thus creating jobs and income for locals. Global travel-field corporations such as hotel and restaurant chains don't really have a foothold in Nepal, so most of the income flooding to the tourism sector actually ends up in the pockets of the locals. Another major financial impact tourism has in Nepal is building the country's foreign currency reserve. The local currency, Nepali Rupee, can not be exchanged abroad so tourists need to bring in foreign currency to purchase local money in Kathmandu. This plays a major part in keeping up the Nepali banking system. Most of the trading is still done in cash in Nepal.

3.4. The transfer effect

Transfer effect, to be put simple, refers to learning a skill in one setting and then using in on another. It has been around as long as us humans have and has been pivotal to our evolution. Ever since people have roamed this earth we have drawn from our experiences and then used that knowledge in improving the next ones. We have learned from not only our mistakes but positive experiences as well and passed the information on to our descendents. Transfer has been crucial to the survival of the species.

All our general learning is based on the transfer effect, often also called the 'transfer of learning', or just 'transfer'. It has been a significant topic of research since the early 20th century, when Thorndike and Woodworth developed a theory called *Identical elements* that concluded learning can be transferred between contexts. (Thorndike & Woodworth 1901.) Today it is recognized that transfer is a very complex and variable process and researchers are still trying to understand the contemporary challenges learners encounter when trying to transfer knowledge between contexts. (Hajian 2019, 102.) While it's possible to only scratch the surface of all transfer theories documented, what is clear is that the extent, the impact and the mechanisms of transfer in learning are still and constantly being discussed.

In the context of adventure education transfer has been a foundational concept since the 1980s pioneered by for example Priest and Gass, who have described it as "one of the most critical features in adventure programming". (Priest & Gass 2005, 21.) It pretty much lays the basis for the field of adventure education where, through adventure and abstraction, individuals learn inter- and intrapersonal skills that are then transferrable to other endeavors. Abstraction means an activity through which we become aware of the similarities between our experiences and it's one of the most foundational concepts of transfer. (Hajian 2019, 96.) Interpersonal skills refer to skills that we use daily to communicate and interact with others and are often referred to as social skills or social intelligence. Intrapersonal skills mean soft skills that involve self-awareness and are focused on recognizing one's inner values.

Salomon and Perkins came up with the concepts of low and high road transfer that recognizes two different but connected mechanisms for transfer. (Salomon & Perkins 1989.) Low road transfer refers to when the activities the knowledge is aimed to transfer between of share

many similarities, while high road transfer occurs as a result of abstraction of principles between events that might seem very different to each other.

Since transfer research is scattered into multiple theories and arguments throughout the field, to simplify what I mean by the term in this thesis, I have chosen to use a division of transfer very similar to Salomon's and Perkins' low and high road transfer: specific and nonspecific transfer.

Specific transfer refers to learning a specific skill, like wearing a helmet or using a pulley on a rope, and then knowing how to use that pulley the next time climbing. It's pretty straightforward and the transfer happens between somewhat similar contexts. Also sometimes referred to as 'near transfer' (Gass 1999, 4) or what Bruner calls "the extension of habits or associations" (Bruner 1960, 17), specific transfer is both pretty easy to recognize and study. In the research conducted for this thesis, we weren't too interested in specific transfer since it is pretty obvious and can be confirmed already by observing the groups. Most of human learning happens through specific transfer.

The main interest of this research was nonspecific transfer, also known as the transfer of principles and attitudes (Bruner 1960, 17) or high road transfer. (Salomon & Perkins 1989.) In nonspecific transfer one learns personal inter- and intrapersonal skills like teamwork or resilience in a more unconventional setting and then implements these skills into other not-so-related situations. These skills can transfer as emotions like self-confidence or pride etc. that mirror from the emotions the original events ignite, much like in the earlier example of crossing the crevasse and using the same bravery for skiing. What makes non-specific transfer interesting is that it can occur unexpected or even unrecognized and after a long period of time. It can happen between very different contexts that at first could seem very alien to each other. This is also why it is both hard to define and difficult to investigate. (Beames & Brown 2016, 47.)

Transfer doesn't just happen, it needs to be conducted and facilitated. (Gass 1999, 230.) Actually, often times it doesn't happen at all. But it is evident that a well structured and carefully planned adventure educational programme can support transfer if the conditions are right. (Beames & Brown 2016, 34.) Brown argues that while fun and enjoyable experiences can be memorable and have an impact on one's self-worth, the outcome of an activity depends on a

range of factors, such as motivation, the opportunity to repeat the behaviours in similar contexts, and peer support. (Brown 2010.) As there's no linear relationships between experiences, they might as well be dismissed as being only entertainment. But while Brown warns that fun and enjoyable activities might be of entertainment value only, Passarelli goes against the grain arguing that we benefit of all experiences of positive emotions and they are stored to create "a reservoir of physical, intellectual and social resources" from which we can then draw from later. (Passarelli 2010, 122.) So, according to Passarelli, also uncondensed positive events can converge into transfer.

In addition to Gass' argument that transfer has to be planned, he nails the adventure educator in a key role. He suggests a 10-point list of techniques necessary for an educator to use in order to promote transfer. (Gass 1999, 230-233.) The points are

1. designing conditions for transfer,
2. creating learning environments similar to be met in the future,
3. providing participants the opportunity to practice the transfer of learning while still on the program,
4. having the consequences of learning be real and non-artificial,
5. providing the means for participants to internalize their own learning,
6. including successful alumni in the program,
7. including other people in the program,
8. placing as much responsibility of their learning as possible to the individuals,
9. developing techniques to facilitate transfer and
10. providing follow-up experiences

Beames and Brown underline that in order to enhance the possibility of positive transfer the focus needs to be on the learner instead of the activity. They insist the educators need to "stop being guru-like figures who believe the solutions lie in activities that, far from being adventurous, continue to position learners as passive recipients rather than as active autonomous actors". (Beames & Brown, 2016, 73.) The same can be said about commercial guides, whose roles on expeditions are vital in promoting transfer. Gass' list above should be added in every guide's toolbox.

Finally, it is important to acknowledge that transfer is not always a positive concept and that negative transfer might also occur. But research has shown that negative transfer is usually problematic only in the first stages of learning and once more experience is gathered, it loses its significance. This is why the main focus in academic research has been in positive transfer (Hajian 2019, 103) and this is also why it is in the focus of this thesis.

3.5. Other research related to this thesis

In 2007 the National Outdoor Leadership School NOLS conducted a comprehensive research examining transfer on their alumni. The participants were asked through a survey about their experiences on NOLS courses and especially if they had recognized nonspecific transfer. The research questions circled around for example experiences of changes in life perspective, self-awareness and self-confidence. In the results these mentioned transferable lessons were considered the most valuable by the alumni as they were ones that were most relevant to their lives. (Gookin, Sibthorp, Furman, Pasisley & Schumann 2011, 116.) The survey results confirmed transfer in high numbers among the alumni and study meritoriously different mechanisms of how transfer happens. It also, again, underlines the role of the instructor as a generator. But at the same time, among many, one of the interesting points in the NOLS survey was that even though an activity is exploited to promote transfer, a number of the transferrable lessons experienced were still more tied to occurrences than the curriculum or specific instructor actions. (Gookin et al. 2011, 122.)

Allison and Von Wald studied expeditions in particular as a tool for learning. Their research focused on adolescents whose "expedition experiences are happening at crucial times in life when metaphysical questions dominate". (Allison & Von Wald 2010, 219.) The authors suggest that long expeditions provide an excellent environment for gaining positive experiences that contribute to the participants' personal development. The study also underlines that expeditions provide a venue for growth for the leaders as well, as long as they are able to discharge of their egos and are "comfortable in in their role as leader, choice-maker, mistake-maker and above all else, as a learner on the expedition". (Ibid, 229.)

Cavanaugh et al evaluated the impacts of a Kilimanjaro expedition to its participants. Their case-study-expedition to the highest peak in Africa is very similar to the Aventura expeditions

in Nepal. (Note: also Kilimanjaro expeditions are in the Aventura portfolio). A month after their 10-day climb to the Kilimanjaro summit the group were interviewed about their experience and whether the expedition had changed them. An interesting detail in the results is a description of the group visiting a local school and how all participants referred to the visit as the second eye-opening moment of the trip together with reaching the summit. The visit, irrelevant to the actual expedition, made them reflect on their own privileged lives and values. An important suggestion made by the authors is that interaction with the local community should be an integral element of any expedition taking place in rural countries. (Cavanaugh, Gajer, Mayberry, O'Connor & Hargis 2015, 430.)

As a summary, above I have presented and discussed the transfer effect from various angles. In this thesis I am concentrating in positive nonspecific transfer the Nepal expeditions produce in Aventura groups. I'm researching meaningful learnings and abstracts the clients have experienced to be transferrable to other, maybe unrelated contexts in 'normal' life after returning home.

4. METHODS

The main research question was "what kind of transfer occurs in the Aventura clientele after an expedition to Nepal?" The research was conducted as a case study of three similar expeditions that provided an authentic opportunity to study people in and after real situations. The total research population was 35 people, so what was conducted was a very limited scale research. But as Bradford and Cullen stress, small-scale does not mean insignificant or irrelevant and even small case studies have "the potential to support the development of well-focused research design". (Bradford & Cullen 2011, 27.)

The three particular expeditions studied were selected on the basis of their similarity but also because I was personally leading them and had the opportunity to observe the groups. In this kind of case Humberstone and Prince underline that the researcher needs to identify their personal biases and remain focused on the purpose of the study. (Humberstone & Prince 2019, 75.) Combining different methods facilitates the gathering of stories witnessed through observation, intentional conversations and document collection and together they triangulate the data collected and support other methods of the research. (Ibid 2019, 75.) Triangulation means using multiple methods in addressing a research question. In this study, three different methods were used: a survey, interviews and observation.

4.1. The survey

The main method for data collection was a survey. As a quantitative method, surveys offer a simple way for researchers to present a hypothesis and then test it empirically for acceptance, rejection, verification or falsification under controlled circumstances. (Humberstone & Prince 2019, 40.) They have high reliability because of the standardized questions that are equal to all and the measurement of the answers is precise. (Bradford & Cullen 2011, 118.)

When doing research, one needs to have a clear focus. As Bradford and Cullen state, "we need to pin down what we actually want to find out and why. We need to clarify why we want to explore the issue and what we hope to learn." (Bradford & Cullen 2011, 26.) For this survey, the statements presented for verification or rejection were all tied to the original research question of what kind of transfer occurs. The statements were based on observations that were made during the expeditions and are aimed to confirm what has been witnessed. The limita-

tion surveys have is that, as the hypothesis' are given, they don't allow the participants to use their own voice which might diminish the significance of the results. (Ibid 2011, 118.) To minimize this, the questionnaire included several fields for free comments where the participants could write and clarify their views independently. The survey was conducted with the Webropol tool using a Likert scale questionnaire, which offers simple numerical data for analysis. The commonly used scale gives a numerical value, in this case from 1 to 5, for measuring the strength of the level of agreement towards a statement. The questionnaire is included in the appendices of this development plan. (Appendice 2.)

When sending out a survey, it's important to make sure the response rate is as strong as possible. (Bradford & Cullen 2011, 127.) The used questionnaire was planned to be fairly quick and easy to respond to without needing to put too much effort on it, but still to collect meaningful data. It was sent via WhatsApp to the group chats that were set up before the expeditions and was confirmed to reach every participant. The message included information on the research and the link to the survey. Some people might not appreciate being approached via a channel that was originally created for other purposes but it was considered a minor threat in this case as the WhatsApp groups were the simplest way of reaching all participants. No-one immediately refused to participate.

4.2. Interviews

After the quantitative survey, selected interviews were added as a qualitative method to the data collection. Interviews in general allow researchers to understand the participants' perspectives and experiences better and thus are a central feature of qualitative research. (Humberstone & Prince 2019, 57.) They can answer the 'why' and the 'how' after the survey's 'what' and 'if' and allow access to more in-depth information on the research subject. In fact, many critics argue that in quantitative research the interpretation is often too guided and they fail to make a distinction between the physical and social world, while qualitative methods allow better to study individual subjectivities. (Bradford & Cullen 2011, 120.) In this thesis' case, one of the advantages of semi-structured interviews was that they allowed people to answer the questions in their own terms whilst I as the researcher was able to seek clarification for my proposed hypothesis'.

Two people from each Nepal group were selected for the interviews. The attendees were chosen mostly by convenience, as in who would be the easiest to reach schedule- and location-wise. Also, as I knew all the people from the trips personally, I first approached members I knew were vocally capable. In this sense I can be considered personally biased in choosing the participants. Everyone contacted agreed to take part with informed consent. Informed consent points to an ethical commitment to ensure the participants interviewed have enough information about the study to make a sound decision about their participation. (Humberstone & Prince 2019, 22.) The interviews were conducted between November 30 and January 8, half face to face, half via Zoom, each lasting between 20-40 minutes. They were semi-structured as the survey questions served as a basis for discussion but the answers were kept open with a probability for conversation and additional questions. The idea was to gather stories for flesh around the bones of the survey data and the goal of the interviews was to gain understanding of the experiences the participants had of transfer upon returning from Nepal. The main interview questions are added in the appendices. (Appendice 3.)

4.3. Observation

As an Aventura tour leader I observed all three climbing expeditions in Nepal, which served as another qualitative method for this research. But in this particular case, the limitation of the method was that the development plan for the commissioner was decided on in September 2023 when the first expedition took place already in October of 2022 and the second in April 2023. So the two first expeditions were executed without any plans for observation. Ideally, observation provides the researcher an opportunity to observe what people do and say and ask clarifying questions to understand a specific phenomena. (Gillham 2000.) Observation also requires systematicity and should be guided by a theoretical framework (Bechhofer & Paterson, 2000), both of which it lacked in this research.

To justify the method, one of the strengths of observation is its sensitivity and accessibility to interactions within a social context. (Humberstone & Prince 2019, 71.) As the itineraries for the Nepal expeditions are fixed, each group are guided in very similar ways. I consider my approach professional, directed by expertise and I work the same way on every expedition. I facilitate conversations, present my personal thoughts for debate, hold reflection sessions daily, promote agency and treat all groups and individuals equally. I am systematic in my ap-

proach and use methods such as bridging, which means encouraging the making of abstractions and explaining possible connections between experiences. (Perkins & Salomon 1992, 8.)

For this study, the goal of observation was to identify different challenges, issues and opportunities for transfer in an authentic environment. The observations formed a core for the survey proposals and interview questions and offered an opportunity to compare what is said and done during the trips vs. the research results later. So, even if controversial in this study, I suggest observation can be used to complement the other methods for triangulation. As the first two expeditions were originally conducted without a research in mind, for equality and credibility, the participants of the last expedition of October 2023 were not informed of the study either until after returning home.

4.4. Analysis method

The data was analyzed through a simple classification analysis, which is commonly used for text analysis' and statistical modeling. It helps researchers in identifying patterns between individual observations, understanding their datasets, recognizing trends and thus reaching accurate conclusions. (Samarth 2023.) Classification is often used for marketing strategies and product development and as such suited this research. The Webropol tool automatically collects the numerical Likert scale data into percentages, averages and charts from which it's simple to start recognizing similarities and drawing patterns. After the data was gathered, the interviews were compared to the survey data and the classification of the written answers for confirmation or dispute and the analysis was complete with adding observation results for triangulation and meaningful conclusions.

4.5. Ethics

Good research practices were carried out in this study following the guidelines of the Finnish Code of Conduct for Research Integrity by the Finnish National Board on Research Integrity TENK. (Finnish National Board on Research Integrity 2023.) All participants were informed of the purpose of this study, their role in it, the handling of the data, their consent and option to withdraw at any time or to not participate. Reliability, honesty and accountability towards the participants were practiced through the whole life span of the research.

The survey data was collected anonymously and the interview data was destroyed after it was transcribed. The transcriptions didn't include any personal data and were anonymized so they could not be connected to any individuals, as can't the observation results. All interviewees were presented the HUMAK participation information (Appendice 4) and consent (Appendice 5) sheets.

No fabrication, falsification, plagiarism or misappropriation was carried out in the process of this research.

5. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

5.1. Execution

The technical part of the research was conducted between November 28th 2023 and January 8th 2024 in Finland while the observations were made between October 2022 and October 2023 in Nepal. The survey was sent out on November 28th to a population of 35 people and a reminder was sent two weeks later. 25 people submitted their answers before the proposed final date, which equals of 71 percent of the research population. It can be assumed that the holiday season affected the participation in a negative way. The interviews were conducted between November 30th and January 9th, two of them face to face, two via Zoom and one over the phone. One interview was eventually cancelled due to clashing schedules. For convenience and clarity, both the survey and the interviews were conducted in Finnish and then translated to English for the purpose of this thesis.

5.2. Main observations results

Observing the trekking groups on Lobuche East in 2022 and 2023 and on Island Peak in 2023 laid the basis for the research questions of the survey and the interviews. Spending a total of 9 weeks with the clients in the Himalaya, there were several frequent actions and conversation topics that surfaced during all expeditions, of which the most discussed were the natural surroundings, the physical and mental challenges experienced, sustainability issues and religious and spiritual views. The expeditions include a lot of killing time in the evenings sitting around the tea houses used for accommodation that allow excellent conversations and reflective discussions to arise.

I've observed a process that goes through almost every participant during an expedition regarding challenge. In the early stages of the expeditions concerns are about the physical challenge that awaits. The upcoming task of climbing a 6000 meter mountain springs anxiousness, no matter what the physical condition and training routine is, as people simply can't know how they'll cope. This uncertainty, as shown by Priest, is a vital part of the adventure. (Priest 1999, 112.) But during the days approaching the mountain, as members get comfortable with their bodies at altitude and learn to know the group around them, the focus shifts more to the

mental challenges of the expedition. Three weeks is a long time to be away from home and a comfortable western lifestyle while at the same time pushing yourself physically daily. Everyone, one way or another, gets sick of it all at some point of the expedition and it requires active mental strength and mind force to deal with the daily bad brains. But eventually, no matter what the result of the climb has been, once returning to Kathmandu, everyone feels pride of their achievement and the fact that they had the guts to face the challenge. When personal senses of achievement start surfacing, I tell the clients this is the point where "just a climb" becomes a "lifetime experience" and that it was never about only reaching a summit but more about reaching one self. This can be considered bridging, which, as mentioned in the knowledge base section, refers to making abstractions and explaining connections between experiences. (Perkins & Salomon 1992.)

Sustainability constantly arises in conversations in two ways: Sustainability towards nature and towards the local community. The common narrative is that we live in an earth crisis and that the Nepali mountains are covered in trash because of the western tourist. Often the members want to distant themselves from that narrative and take agency and responsibility of their actions in being the "good ones". Every expedition observed included a visit to the Sagarmatha Next Information Center in the village of Namche Bazar, where the group learned about the local processes in keeping the area clean and how they themselves can help in sustainable travel. As a result of the visit, the leave-no-trace policy was usually surveyed and executed in high detail for the rest of the expedition and the clients for example took on the habit of collecting trash found on the trails.

Sustainability towards the locals is a continuous topic through all expeditions and usually refers to especially financial and social justice. Participants want to know that the locals are getting paid accordingly, are voluntarily attending the activities and are treated fairly. The welfare gap between the western and Nepali life is constantly debated and phrases like "this puts our own lives into perspective" are repeated throughout the trips. Senses of guilt towards the locals are not uncommon, but they tend to be personal-built, since for example the Sherpas working with the groups rarely express any senses of inequality or dissatisfaction of their position.

The Khumbu valley, where the Aventura expeditions take place, is populated by the Sherpa people who are deeply Buddhist. Religion is a huge part of the local culture and can't be avoided during the expeditions. While a sensitive and very personal topic some might even consider bad, religion surfaces often in the interaction with locals and thus makes many expedition members reflect on their own spirituality. This arises in conversations usually especially towards the end of the expeditions and is often even visible, when members start for example wearing prayer flags on their backpacks and taking breaks at stupas, the local temples, for moments of silence.

Other repetitive observations included growth in resilience as the expeditions go on, witnessing team-building towards a common goal and discussions of the effect in values the days on the trail bring about.

5.3. Survey results

The survey was answered in requested time by 25 people, which equals to 71 percent of the research population. The 10 people choosing not to answer did not specify any reasons for not attending.

5.3.1. Motives

When asked about the reasons for attending the expedition three main motives stood out. By far the most mentioned was an interest towards Nepal in general, the Himalaya and Nepali nature, which were mentioned by 35% of the population. For many traveling to Nepal had been a "longtime dream" and several people mentioned mountain views and "seeing Mount Everest" as motivators. The second most mentioned reason for signing up was mountain climbing, brought up by 17 percent of the submitters, which can be considered a surprisingly low number considering the trips are marketed as climbing expeditions. Also surprising was that several people mentioned they left for Nepal because they wanted to "try mountain climbing" which refers to not having any or very little previous climbing experience. Nepali 6000 meter peaks can be considered a pretty sublime venue to start. Totaling to the third most mentioned reason, only four people mentioned adventure or challenge as their reason for participating the expedition, which can also be considered a surprisingly low rate. But later, when asked if the expedition felt mentally or physically demanding, 92 percent agreed that the trip

was "challenging" or "a challenge" and 84 percent of the research population agreed or somewhat agreed that their expedition felt like an adventure.

5.3.2. Skills

Specific transfer and learning new technical skills were not on this study's gridiron and were asked about only to separate them from nonspecific skills. Of all the presented statements in the survey, the one about learning new technical skills divided the group the most with 16% not acquiring any, 24% not being sure and 60% confirming some or several new technical skills learned. This might also point to the fact that some members joining the expeditions had very little previous climbing experience while others were already familiar with the required techniques.

When asked about learning intra- or interpersonal skills such as resilience or teamwork skills, 64% agreed they had acquired some or many while 36% felt unsure, which suggests that learning personal soft skills and transfer is, as already argued by Beames and Brown (2016), difficult to recognize. But in the commentary boxes these skills were referred to by almost all participants. For example:

"At some point on all mountaineering trips you have to really stretch both mentally and physically to keep off the body count and this is the epicenter of resilience. Suffering for days of diarrhea, it would be so easy to just quit, but the stakes are so high that one really can bend to unbelievable accomplishments."

"These kind of trips always require the capability to adjust to quickly changing situations and to recover quickly from mentally stressing days."

"On an expedition you're pretty much 24/7 together with your group so social and teamwork skills are bound to develop as you have to constantly face new situations with unknown people."

"My resilience grew on pretty much every aspect of life during the expedition."

A great majority of the participants felt that the expedition had a positive effect in their self-confidence. 64 percent of the responders fully agreed their confidence had enhanced as a result of their trip and 32% somewhat agreed. The rise of self-confidence surfaced in the comments as well with mentions of pride and overcoming challenges. As one member put it: "Big experiences and exceeding oneself always have a positive impact for all aspects of life." As a

brilliant example, one young and quite shy member of the groups, after summiting his mountain, returned to Kathmandu almost as a conquerer with his confidence rocketing through the roof in a very visible way. He went out to get a new audacious haircut and racy clothes almost as a token of a new personality acquired from the mountain. His transformation was obvious to all, himself included, wearing new Gucci sunglasses indoors at the hotel bar on the night before flying back home.

5.3.3. Values

72 percent of the participants agreed or somewhat agreed that the trip to Nepal had an impact on their values. 24% were not sure and 4% didn't recognize any impact. For some their approach towards ecological sustainability changed, while others became more tolerant towards people with different moral views. One specific value stood up like a ten foot pole in the survey and was underlined by almost every responder: The poverty of local people and their way of "living a happy life despite" placed people's own lives under a magnifying glass. Many mentioned how "eye-opening" it was to witness the Nepalese simplicity, yet friendliness throughout the trip. Questioning the "western lifestyle" was mentioned in many of the comments and how the expedition put things into perspective like nothing before. To mention a few:

"The Nepalese poverty and misery combined with the endless positivity and friendliness of the locals makes me question the life of us westerners. We really have it all and still come up with something to nag about all the time."

"The western problems feel quite insignificant after witnessing life in the rural Nepali surroundings."

"Seeing the Nepalese standard of living vs. us privileged westerners."

Also personal life directions were examined. Several people mentioned how the trip made them think about life and what they hope for the future. Some even had started to deepen their knowledge in Buddhism. One comment declared that "the expedition taught me to live in the moment and appreciate the simple things in life." When asked about the tour leader's attitudes' and values' impact in their personal values, 84% of the responders confirmed they had an effect. One comment described how "the tour leader's example gave a lot to my own value

system” but most suspected their values with the leader were common to begin with and thus they more strengthened than added to their values.

5.3.4. Other survey points

One topic that stood up in almost all written answers was the importance and the impact of the team, referring to the expedition group and the people in it. Teamwork, group mentality and team spirit were highlighted in many comments, such as: ”Our team consisted of so many different personalities based on their age, life situation or home but yet still we became one” and ”Thanks to everyone’s input and positivity we achieved an incredible opportunity to experience the Himalaya at its best.” The peers seemed to be one of the most important things of the experience and acquiring new friendships, described as ”for life”, was one of the biggest assets of the whole expedition. Linked to the team, the role of the tour leader was highlighted in the success of the expedition as well. Especially in ”creating a mentally safe environment” and ”keeping the team together” but also in local knowledge, safety skills, positive attitude and equality towards the group, thus confirming Gass’ arguments on how the educator, or tour leader in this context, sits in a key role facilitating transfer. (Gass 1999.)

As in the observation section, religion and spirituality was brought up in the survey answers notably. Personal spiritual experiences in connection to the local lifestyle and Buddhism were described for example as a ”growth experience” and for many a spiritual connection to nature was described to be connected to the religious surroundings. Terms like ”hope” and ”gratitude” were expressed by several respondents. Interacting with the locals enhanced the spiritual experience for many.

Even though not directly asked about, ”change” came up in the survey answers repeatedly. It was mentioned in regard of values but also life in general. The participants explained how the trip had changed them for example into ”more calm and patient” and ”more positive” than before.

An interesting result was that 92 percent of the responders had planned or booked a new similar trip after returning home. Considering the financial investments such expeditions require and the short time passed from the previous trips, the number can be considered very high. The only black flag mentioned continuously in the survey was the impact on participants’

working life. Many mentioned how recovering and bouncing back physically and mentally after the trip was much harder and took longer than expected and it affected their return to work. To end the section of the survey results, there was one given hypothesis that gathered a 100 percent "agree" from the participants and stated: "The trip to Nepal had a positive impact on my life".

5.4. Interview results

The interviews were originally intended as a method for gathering quotes and stories to be added to the results but as it turned out, the survey participants used their opportunity to write their thoughts in the comment boxes with such enthusiasm that eventually the interviews lost their main significance. They merely added some depth and additional thoughts to the analysis, but the main results were drawn already from the surprising amount of data the survey answers provided.

The five interviews conducted confirmed and triangulated many of the observation and survey results, especially regarding resilience and self-esteem, the importance of teamwork, strengthening life values and the impact of Buddhism and spirituality to the experience. Spirituality especially was brought up in the interview sessions but when asked about what the interviewees meant by it and how they would describe it, it turned out to be difficult. "It's hard to explain. It's a feeling of an existence of something larger" explained one. Two members talked about how being around the largest mountains in the world makes you realize your own insignificance and, curiously, all interviewees mentioned a "swirling peace" experienced during the trek. "The spirituality affects you in the way that only when you return home you realize it's gone. You want to go back. Nepal is a good place to be mentally" described one participant explaining the spirit world.

One topic that lacked from the survey material was surprisingly brought up in three of the five interviews: The significance of the timing of the expedition in one's personal life. What I have experienced personally on Elbrus and later observed on expeditions – also on the expeditions studied for this research – people who have lately been going through significant life changes seemed to find the weeks in Nepal as some sort of catharsis or turning point. One interviewee for example explained how he had been struggling with substance addictions and since star-

ting rehab, he had been "looking for his place in this world" before entering Nepal and how he "grew up during the trip and managed to let go of all the slag he was carrying". This adds to what Allison and Von Wald (2010) suggest, that attending an expedition as a teenager has transfer effects because experiences are happening at crucial times in life when metaphysical questions dominate. I believe the same applies to adults at times of major life changes. Another interesting story was one of the interviewees attending a local Hindu funeral in Kathmandu after returning from the mountains and how he described the experience as one of the strongest he had on the trip. The event has a strong resemblance to the Cavanaugh et al's (2015) study about a group climbing Kilimanjaro and how they found significance to their experience in visiting a local school.

5.5. Analysis of the results

A classification analysis was used to analyze the results. After reviewing the numerical data, the many answers and comments written in the commentary boxes were waded through and divided into categories under five major transfer related topics addressed by the responders. The categories were soft skills, life values, spirituality, the expedition team and physical challenge. The results were then reflected to my observations and completed with the interview results. Once all three methods were combined and categorized, the results presented five clear trends and similarities:

5.5.1. Personal skills

The three transferred intra- and interpersonal skills confirmed the most in the results were resilience (intrapersonal), boost in self-confidence (intrapersonal) and better teamwork skills (interpersonal). Basically all participants confirmed improvement in all these skills after the expedition, regardless of the amount of time passed from their trip. Despite the variety within the groups in age, background, experience etc., the expeditions seemed to affect all participants in similar ways. The transfer was not dependent of the various motives for attending an expedition either but seemed to be a product of the adventure itself. The skills transferred were generally unexpected and not connected to the original personal goals set for the expedition. But if not by the participants, what is notable is that the three surfaced skills were still planned outcomes of the tour leader. As explained in the introduction, since my personal ex-

perience I have aimed to offer my clients an opportunity for transfer. Through pedagogical guidance, abstraction, facilitation and promoting agency, transfer results can be confirmed. The result supports Gass' (2010) arguments on the importance of the educator's role in promoting transfer and his 10-point list of techniques presented in the knowledge base chapter. It also supports Beames' and Brown's argument that focusing on the learners instead of the activity promotes transfer. (Beames & Brown 2016.)

5.5.2. Values

An expedition's impact on personal values seems to be highly connected to the surrounding nature and interaction with the local people and culture. Being surrounded by the highest mountains in the world in still relatively untouched nature makes members reflect on sustainability issues and their personal views on for example consumption and the trace they leave behind. Authentic surroundings strengthen the will to act sustainably and leads to for example the members carrying all their trash, personal and collected from the trails, all the way back to Finland for sorting.

Interacting with the locals and connecting with the Nepali way of life ignites thoughts about the participants' privileged status. Passing through local villages and spending time with the Sherpas accompanying the group makes the gap in living standards to hit like a slapshot, which seems to spur conscience issues that then impacts values. As suggested by Laing and Warwick (2014), exploring exotic cultures and interacting with traditional communities is an essential part of adventure tourism and, as shown in this research, it seems to be a vital mechanism in promoting some sort of awakening and reflection on life values. As one comment stated, "Westerners' problems seem pretty insignificant all of a sudden after witnessing much simpler life in Nepal". For perspective, the Sherpa people populating the Khumbu area are considered relatively wealthy in the Nepali society as tourism brings them prosperity and has improved their living standards extensively in the past decades. So the locals the expeditions mostly interact with are relatively happy with their lives and rarely to never express any kind of discontent. It's healthy to recognize that, even though carrying emotions of guilt, the team members are actually the reason of the well-being of the Sherpas and contribute to their happiness.

5.5.3. Spirituality

Even though difficult to exactly define, the local spirituality and the "dwelling peace" in Nepal seemed to affect all participants. It's much connected to the interaction with locals who without exception in the Khumbu valley are Buddhist. Religion surrounds many daily routines and actions and is very visible on the trail with prayer flags, prayer wheels, temples and monuments. Even if not religious themselves, not to mention Buddhist, the spiritual atmosphere seems to both attract and affect the expedition members and is considered to be a vital part of the experience. It was mentioned for example to "deepen the personal connection to nature" and "help get closer to humanity". If allowed to speculate, I believe, and have observed, that spending long days on the trail without a phone connection and social media, far from everything normal and with potentially a lot of self-time, it allows the mind to work and reflect in more peace than anywhere else, want it or not. Being surrounded by a very philosophical and visible religious culture adds to the self-reflections and forms a basis for strong spiritual feelings experienced.

5.5.4. Peers

The role of the expedition team, including other members of the clientele, the expedition leader, porters and accompanying Sherpa guides, has an important effect to the experience of adventure. The feelings of facing a challenge together with a group of unknown people impacted the members heavily and interacting with different personalities added to the transfer effect. Having to cope with stressful situations, uncertainty and personal hard days in a team built resilience, teamwork skills and social tolerance, to mention a few. As suggested in Gass' (1999) list, including other people and successful alumni to the experience promotes transfer. The peers are what the expeditions seem to be best remembered by after returning home and facing a mountain together with previously unknown people forms bonds that would unlikely come about in 'normal' settings. This adds to the depth of the relationships made.

The importance of having a Finnish tour leader was confirmed to add to the overall experience and especially to the team-building process and mental safety. Without diminishing the role of the local guides, it was clearly expressed that having a leader who speaks the same language, is willing to put himself on the line and open himself to the group made members

feel safe and "able to be themselves" on the expedition. The results support Beames' and Brown's (2016) argument that educators need to stop being "guru-like figures", step down from their thrones and position themselves with the group members as equals. Having local Sherpa guides accompany the group through the expeditions as kind of representatives of their culture also adds to the overall experience. Their presence seems to play an important role regarding the members' spirituality and value experiences. This, again, supports the findings of Leigh and Warwick (2014) that interacting with the locals has an impact to meaningful results.

What is interesting about the deep impact of the expedition team is that it's the one thing no-one can plan in advance. Everyone who's joining a certain expedition happens to be there at that certain point in time by coincidence and the combination of personalities can not be selected in any way, not by other members nor Aventura. This points to the results of the NOLS transfer survey that suggested that a number of the transferrable lessons experienced on various adventurous programmes were more tied to occurrences than the programme curriculums. (Gookin et al. 2011.)

5.5.5. Physical challenge

The physical challenge the Nepal expeditions present is obviously very personal but still equally important for the members' sensations of adventure. In a way, transfer is born from pain and the physical push is one of the most reflected topics during the expeditions. Challenge is the origin for the feeling of uncertainty and in the beginning of the treks it often spurs almost terror-like anxiety that then transforms into sensations like pride and self-confidence once overcame. The physical challenge is also related to the transfer of resilience, when every step at altitude is a battle of thoughts between quitting and keeping on. Once the adventure is over, the emotions seem to be the strongest for those for whom the battle was the hardest.

Above I have described the main trends and similarities surfacing in the research material regarding the mechanisms of transfer effect. The results and the analysis can be considered reliable, which refers to the consistency of a measure of a concept and is ensured by consistency in procedures and evidenced by consistency in the reactions of research participants. If a research finding can be repeated, it is reliable. (Bradford & Cullen 2014, 39.)

To sum the findings up for conclusions, it is evident that while many different topics were brought up in the material, the main overall effects of the Nepal expeditions in the participants were similar. Several experiences of transfer were universally repeated in the population of the research and all these experiences were bound to impact the participants' lives in positive ways. The biggest impacts were recognized in applying and/or improving personal soft skills, investigating personal values, in the spirituality of events, in overcoming physical challenges and in creating new relationships within the peers. It can be considered that removing any of the trends mentioned from the composition of an expedition, it would affect other experiences as well and thus are all vital for considering an expedition as a success. The results and the analysis are supported by several previous studies on the subject and replicate existing findings that are presented in the following chapter.

6. CONCLUSIONS

The main research question of this study was what kind of transfer is recognized by the Aventura clientele after their expedition to Nepal. The results gathered and analyzed above present in detail various kinds of transferred learning recognized and as such the research can be considered successful and valid. Validity is weighted by whether the research instruments measure what they are intended to measure and the goal of validity is reached when the statements or conclusions about empirical reality are correct. (Bradford & Cullen 2012.) Even though a limited scale research, the results confirm the original hypothesis's that were presented and the measures reaching the confirmation were valid.

When booking a trip to Nepal, participants have many different reasons for joining. The groups are diverse in age, background, objective and goals but through a three-week period of trekking and experiencing senses of authenticity, agency, uncertainty, challenge, and mastery they emerge into an adventure team. The mutual adventure, when conducted professionally and pedagogically, creates nonspecific transfer in especially personal soft skills, social skills and resilience. The experiences on an expedition lead to reflections in personal values and generate senses of spirituality and inner peace. Facing and overcoming challenges creates sensations of achievement and improves self-confidence. Overall, according to 100 percent of the research population, participating on an Aventura expedition to Nepal made their life better after returning home. One quote from the survey sums it all: "Thank you for organizing these trips, they can sometimes change the whole direction of life."

6.1. Implementation for Aventura

The goal for this development plan was to gather feedback and reliable data for the commissioner regarding the impact of their products to their clientele that could then be implemented into their operations. Based on the research results and analysis, next I will present five development points to be considered by Aventura. As a disclaimer, considering the scale and population of this research and the apparent effect of Nepal itself as a travel destination, I suggest the following development propositions should be approached with caution when scaling them to other products. Even though the results might suggest universality, the Nepali culture

as a factor made a huge difference in transfer experienced and thus can't be expected to be completely similar for all destinations.

6.1.1. Vital elements for success

Following the results of this research, Aventura should consider revising their adventure travel portfolio for details. Without implying that the existing quality is not sufficient, all products should be browsed for authenticity, the possibility for local encounters, cultural inclusion, possibilities for transfer, placing responsibility to the clients for agency and for competent DMC's and tour leaders. Despite their character or destination, all expeditions should offer an opportunity to re-visit ones values and promote transfer. These elements and Gass' (1999) 10-point list of educator's tools for promoting transfer should be added to Aventura's values and be presented for all personnel and freelancers working for the company.

6.1.2. Investing in locality

As presented in the results and as Laing and Warwick (2014) and Cavanaugh et al (2015) have suggested, interaction with the local community should be an integral element of every expedition. It is to be considered one of the main generators for transfer and should be in the epicenter of planning itineraries. Including and facilitating planned local and cultural encounters during the Nepal expeditions would promote positive impact for the trips. Using the large amount of down-time on the treks for more optional visits to for example museums and temples and maybe joint operations with local NGO's should be considered.

The role of the Sherpa guides and porters is seen as a vital part of the experience, so making sure the locals accompanying the group have sufficient communication skills makes a difference. Decent spoken English should be a requirement for the guides offered by the DMC's. to make sure the group members share a language. Also acquiring regular personnel for each expedition should be aimed for. It would improve teamwork between the local crew and the tour leader and make the processes familiar to all, which results to better conducted expeditions for the clients.

6.1.3. Educated tour leaders

As suggested by Gass (1999) and Beames and Brown (2016) and also confirmed in this study, the pedagogical competence of the tour leader improves the overall experience of the trip for its members. Aventura tour leaders are all hand-picked professionals and can already be considered top of their league, but come from very diverse educational backgrounds that are mostly connected by a passion for the sport. Crafting and arranging educational workshops for the current and future tour leaders would expand the pedagogical knowledge base of Aventura representatives which would lead to a better client experience. The workshops would also serve as a great opportunity to discuss and create mutual values, processes and approaches within the expedition leaders. Including not only tour leaders but all Aventura personnel in these pedagogical workshops would help the company understand their clientele better, which would improve their product design in the future.

6.1.4. New destinations

A desire for new destinations in Nepal was expressed in the clientele. For many, Lobuche East and Island Peak or the EBC are their first glimpses of Nepal and a way of testing their physical and mental competence. Once successful, experiencing an adventure completed with the sentiments of positive transfer, the clients are looking for new similar opportunities with a linear upgrade in challenge. Aventura should look for new itineraries in Nepal to answer this desire. As Gass (1999) has suggested, experiences that promote transfer should include a possibility for continuance. Also, as argued by Zurick (1995) about the paradox of adventure, the more visited, the more a picturesque destination starts to lose its appeal and this is a threat to the Khumbu valley in the future. New, less roamed areas and mountains in Nepal will most likely be in demand in the following years.

6.1.5. Marketing points

Related to the desire for new destinations above, the study showed that over 90 percent of the research population booked a new trip relatively quick after returning home. I suggest it to be a result of positive transfer and the extraordinance of their experience. Being in a 'vulnerable' state of mind regarding future plans, I suggest the clientele should be approached with targeted marketing maneuvers shortly upon their return for new sale leads. Aventura can also add

the results, findings and quotes of this research to their customer promise and argue, that by research, their expeditions improve the participants' quality of life.

6.2. Implementation for the professional and educational field

The impact of this research to the educational field of adventure education lies in partly replicating and confirming several existing research results. And vice versa, previously conducted studies and theories in adventure, adventure education, adventure tourism and transfer supports the findings of this study.

The results add to the support of most major adventure and transfer theories presented by Gass (1999), Priest (2005), Beames and Brown (2016). These theories, explained thoroughly in the knowledge base section, can be considered as the stone foundation of current adventure education curriculums and were all recognized in this research. The importance of the role of the educator – or tour leader in this context – is also complemented in this study. All three groups often underlined how a crucial part of their experience the leader played.

Laing and Warwicks (2014) conclusions in their research of adventure tourism are authenticated in this study several times, especially on the importance of including local culture and people in the curriculums. In similarity, Cavanaugh et al's (2015) suggestion that interaction with the local community should be an integral element of any expedition is validated by this research. More or less all the participants of the expeditions described a major impact through connecting with the locals and how their presence made the expeditions more meaningful.

Allison and Von Wald's (2010) study on using expeditions in particular as tools for learning is complemented in this research, especially in their argument that longer expeditions provide the right environment for all involved to gain positive experiences that contribute to their personal growth and development. This was recognized both in the survey and the interview results as well as observed during the trips. The longer the expeditions are, the more opportunities people have to open themselves for learning, reflection and personal growth, much like Allison and Von Wald suggest.

This research presents similarities with the NOLS Transfer Study (2007) in for example that a lot of the transfer is tied to occurrences that happen outside the planned curriculums, the most obvious being the randomness of the peers who are all attending the same expedition by mere

accident. Many coincidental events happen on the trips, but things such as illnesses, weather changes or being evacuated from the climbs can lead to unplanned reflections and result in personal improvement and enlightenment.

Finally, an influence for both the educational and the professional field also lies in the nature of this study that implements adventure educational concepts to the frame of commercial guiding. Very often in adventure sports and recreational courses the guides are enthusiasts who hold strong technical skills in their chosen sport but lack any proper pedagogical knowledge. Findings of this research show that a pedagogical approach and adding educational tools into guiding enhances the customer experience and, in fact, the results suggest that pedagogical skills can be even more important than supreme technical mastery for a guide in promoting successful learning. The results of this study should be used in support of guide training and scaled to guide work universally.

6.3. Limitations and self-criticism

Identifying limitations is an asset to the research process that highlights opportunities for future research. When identifying the limitations of a particular approach to a study question, precise transferability is enabled and chances for reproducibility improves. (Viera 2023.) Several theoretical and methodological limitations have been presented in the text and they appear in the following order:

The original idea for this thesis was a personal one and only after planning what I wanted to do and how, was Aventura brought along as the commissioner. Hence the need was originally created by the author, not the commissioner, which might diminish the importance of this study for others than the researcher.

The research methodology included various limitations. First, the total population for the research was only 35 people, of which 25 attended, which means that the findings combine to a very limited scale research. Of the six planned interviews only five were conducted and all interviewees were chosen by the author, who personally knew the members. The observation process lacked of systematicity and the theoretical framework was only added afterwards as the topic for this thesis was decided a year after the first expedition was done.

Finally, personal and confirmation biases need to be expressed. As a long-time Aventura tour leader I have a close relationship with the commissioner, and during the expeditions I have created personal relationships with the clientele, that were the population of this research. Both relationships, despite an attempt to objectivity, might result into personal biases regarding the approach of this study. I have also worked in guiding and tour leading for nine years and led dozens of expeditions, which might stem unrecognized confirmation biases in designing this research and its elements.

7. FINAL WORDS

This journey through the research process has been extremely rewarding and motivating. Diving deeper into the theoretical framework of adventure, transfer and adventure tourism has made me realize my limitations and my strengths both as a guide and a student. The Hindu proverb I quoted in the introduction some 40 pages ago regarding learning and understanding my topic has truly fulfilled itself. Through this research I have learned so much more of a subject I thought I was already a professional in and understood that I still don't know anything. It's an ever ongoing learning process.

I love my work guiding in the most beautiful and picturesque areas in the world. But as I tend to tell my clients, the scenery is merely a nice backdrop for what is *really* important in my work: the people. They are the subject of my motivation, who keep me pushing myself forward and the ones who make my job the best in the world. I have learned my impact to their success is bigger than I ever thought it was and it makes me humble. It also makes me want to keep improving and the work on this thesis was a step up that ladder.

I have made lifetime friends in my expeditions. Being together for weeks in primitive and visually exhausting surroundings while challenging ourselves towards a common goal has built deep connections with people I would probably never have met in ordinary settings. As showed in this research for the clients, the transfer from our experiences has also challenged *my* values, led to spiritual reflections and made my life better.

There is one detail in the survey and interview results left unmentioned: Curiously, literally no-one in the research data mentioned reaching the summit. Not once. Seems like the whole moment which during the expeditions was described as "life-changing" has been buried under everything else experienced. What for the first two and a half weeks of the trip felt like the most important thing in the world has suddenly transformed into an insignificant glimpse of an event in a larger experience.

I originally thought finishing this thesis would be the most important goal and the summit of my studies. But now I know it was everything I learned on the way.

A lot of coffee, candy and punk rock were consumed in the making of this thesis.

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APPENDICES

Appendice 1, links to the expedition descriptions in Finnish, retrieved 19/01/2024:

Aventura / Lobuche East description:

https://www.aventura.fi/vaellusmatka_nepal_lobuche-east_gokyo

Aventura / Everest Base Camp & Island Peak description:

https://www.aventura.fi/vaellusmatka_nepal_everest-basecamp_island-peak

Appendice 2, the survey questions:

First briefly explain what made you attend the expedition?

(Free comment box)

Please answer the following claims on the scale of 1-5.

(5 = totally agree, 4 = somewhat agree, 3 = don't agree nor disagree, 2 = somewhat disagree, 1 = totally disagree)

1. The expedition to Nepal was an adventure.
2. The expedition was physically and mentally challenging.
3. I learned new technical skills.
4. I improved my personal soft skills, such as teamwork or resilience.

If you answered yes, please describe shortly what?

(Free comment box)

5. The expedition had a positive effect to my self-confidence.
6. The values and attitudes of the tour leader affected my values and attitudes.

If you answered yes, please describe shortly how?

(Free comment box)

7. The expedition had an impact on my work life.

If you answered yes, please describe shortly what kind?

(Free comment box)

8. The trip to Nepal had an impact on my values.

If you answered yes, please describe shortly how

(Free comment box)

9. The trip to Nepal had a positive effect on my life.

10. I have planned / booked / been on a new similar expedition after the trip.

Yes / No

Here you can comment on your expedition freely:

(Free comment box)

Feedback for Aventura:

(Free comment box)

Appendice 3, the main interview questions:

Why did you travel to Nepal?

Did the expedition feel like an adventure?

What kind of challenges did you rise against during the expedition?

What skills did you learn?

How did the Nepal trip affect your self-confidence?

What kind of inter- and/or intrapersonal skills did you learn?

How did the Nepal trip affect your work life?

How did the expedition affect your values?

What was the role of the tour leader in your learnings?

Have you signed up for or attended a new similar trip and if yes, how long after the Nepal expedition was this?

Appendice 4, participant information sheet:

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Research title: ADVENTURE CHANGING PEOPLE - TRANSFER EFFECT IN ADVENTURE TRAVEL

Invitation to participate in a research study

You are invited to take part in a research study where I, together with Matkatoimisto Aventura, study the impact of our Nepal expeditions and the possible transfer effect in our clients. We think that you would be suitable for this research study because you took part in an expedition between 2022-2023. This information sheet describes the research study and your role in it. After you have carefully read this information sheet, you can ask questions if some have arisen. After that we will ask you to sign a consent form to participate in the study.

Voluntary nature of participation

The participation of this study is voluntary. You can withdraw from the research at any time without giving any reason. If you withdraw from the research or withdraw your consent, any data collected from you before the withdrawal can be used as part of the research data.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is to study the impact Aventura's products have on their clientele. The research data will be used in product development and training new personnel. Some aspects of the study might also be used for marketing purposes.

Who is organising and funding the research?

Involved in this study are Matkatoimisto Aventura as the commissioner, Teemu Suominen as the researcher and HUMAK university of applied sciences. The research is not funded in any way.

What will the participation involve?

This participation involves a face to face interview conducted by Teemu Suominen and agreed with the participant and will take a maximum of 2 hours. The interview is done anonymously and no personal data is going to be shared in the thesis work nor anywhere else. Recordings of this interview are to be destroyed immediately after transcripts.

The research is done by observation, a survey questionnaire and face to face interviews.

Financial information

Participation in this study will involve no cost to you. You will also receive no payment for your participation.

Informing about the research results

The search results are a part of a thesis work and the thesis will be published openly on the Theseus database. A link to the results will be sent to all who participated in the study.

Further information

Further information on the research can be requested from the researcher / supervisor in charge of the study.

Contact details of the researchers**Researcher / Student**

Name: Teemu Suominen
Tel. number: 040-573 3257
Email: teemu@metalheim.fi

Supervisor

Title: Team Leader / Outdoor and Adventure Education
Name: Tero Lämsä
Name of organisation: Humanistinen Ammattikorkeakoulu HUMAK
Tel. number: 0400-349 363
Email: tero.lamsa@humak.fi

Appendice 5, Participant information and consent sheet:

Research data protection privacy policy: the use of personal data in research

Within this study, your personal data will be processed according to the European Union General Data Protection Regulation (679/2016) and current national regulation.

Data protection privacy policy form is not needed for research / thesis whether the data collection is done completely anonymously:

Anonymized Information

Anonymization means processing personal data in such a way that individuals can no longer be identified from it. Data can for example be generalized on one level (aggregated) or processed into a statistical form in a way that the personal data of an individual person can no longer be identifiable. Identification processing must be made irreversible in a way that the register keeper or outside personnel can no longer with the information at hand change the information back into an identifiable form.

Anonymization must consider all ways information could be made identifiable again. The register keeper also must prepare for previous anonymization made weaker by time and technical developments.

Anonymization must consider that a person can be identifiable by other ways than just a name too. The research data can hold detailed information (for example a rare disease) that can make a participant indirectly identifiable.

Anonymized data is no longer considered personal data and thus data protection policies no longer apply to them.

Otherwise, a privacy policy statement must be added as an appendix to the research/thesis. Humak has created an easy to fill template for that. While filling out the privacy policy statement, you can contact Humak's data protection office security@humak.fi.

Title of the study: ADVENTURE CHANGING PEOPLE - TRANSFER EFFECT IN ADVENTURE TRAVEL

Location of the study: HUMANISTINEN AMMATTIKORKEAKOULU HUMAK

Researcher / Student

Name: Teemu Suominen
 Tel. number: 040-573 3257
 Email: teemu@metalheim.fi

Supervisor

Title: Team Leader / Outdoor and Adventure Education

Name: Tero Lämsä
 Name of organisation: Humanistinen Ammattikorkeakoulu HUMAK
 Tel. number: 0400-349 363
 Email: tero.lamsa@humak.fi

I _____ have been invited to participate in the above research study. The purpose of the research is to study the transfer effect and the impact of Matkatoimisto Aventura's products to their clientele.

I have read and understood the written participant information sheet. The information sheet has provided me sufficient information about the study, the purpose and execution of the study, about my rights as well as about the benefits and risks involved in it. I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study and have had them answered satisfactorily.

I have had sufficient information of the collection, processing and transfer/disclosure of my personal data during the study and the Privacy Notice has been available.

I have not been pressurized or persuaded into participation.

I have had enough time to consider my participation in the study.

I understand that my participation is entirely voluntary and that I am free to withdraw my consent at any time, without giving any reason. I am aware that if I withdraw from the study or withdraw my consent, any data collected from me before my withdrawal can be included as part of the research data.

By signing this form, I confirm that I voluntarily consent to participate in this study.

If the legal basis for processing personal data within this study is consent granted by the data subject, by signing this, I grant the consent for processing my personal data. I have the right to withdraw my consent regarding processing of personal data as described in the Privacy Notice.

Location and Date: _____, ____ . ____ . _____

Signature: _____

The original consent form signed by the participant and a copy of the participant information sheet will be kept in the records of the researcher. Participant information sheet, privacy notice and a copy of the signed participant consent form will be given to the participant.