

# Effects of experience engineering on regional economy in protected areas

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Derived from profit-oriented types of tourism, attractions also stimulate travel to rural destinations. Therefore, they are vital components of tourism. Without attractions, touristic development of any region often will not be successful. Besides the evident objectives of conservation and development of regional distinctions and indigenous nature, protected areas are an instrument to develop tourism in structurally weak areas and are suited in an optimal way to fulfil the part of an attraction.

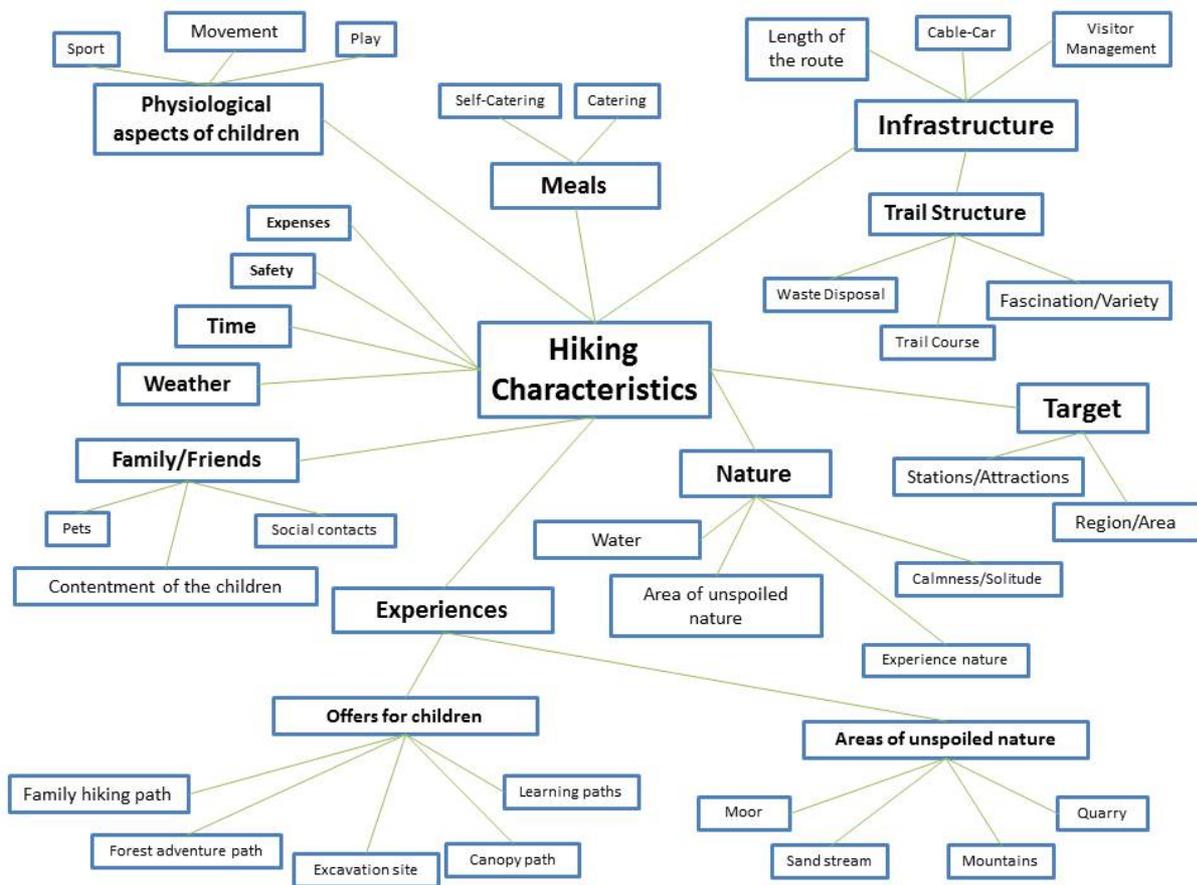
Many different phenomena and installations may attract tourists and have boosting effects on touristic development. They belong to three distinct groupings - environmental, historic-cultural and entertainment. Regarding the first of these three pillars, the variety and uniqueness of nature are dominant factors for travel to certain regions. Regarding many travel analyses, reasons, which are directly affected by experiences in and through nature are mentioned most by the German population. "Experience nature" and "fresh air, clean water and non-polluted environment" are examples for these motives.

Protected areas notably offer many possibilities to preserve and develop these natural potentials for advancement of tourism. Not exactly knowing the diverse objectives of different types of protected areas, each of these areas is considered by general public as synonyms for intact nature and protected areas effectively offer perfect conditions to serve the motives mentioned above.

Natural attractiveness of protected areas is a touristic pull-factor, which obviously generates effects on regional economies. These effects have become more and more object of investigation of economic analysis of nature-based tourism.

Experience engineering is an appropriate tool to manifest and manage these economic effects. From an activity-oriented view, hiking generates one out of the five biggest business volumes and seems to be feasible in nearly every rural area. In addition, hiking is an activity large parts of the population are able to pursue. Therefore, hiking-oriented experience engineering promises validation of touristic impact in structurally weak areas.

Visitor interviews are currently the most used academic method of analysing installations for experience engineering and its economic impacts. Figure 1 indicates the importance of diverse items mentioned by hikers in "Natur- und Geopark TERRA.vita" and "Naturpark Teutoburger Wald".



**Figure 1: categories of hiking characteristics (own diagram following Judt, 2014)**

Following expectations expressed by their tourists, the management of protected areas will generate more consumer satisfaction and consumer loyalty.

Besides visitor interviews, visual-based methods can give information about the fulfilment of experience engineering installations as attractions. Objects of investigation of visual-based methods are tourist cognition and perception towards natural attributes during their stay in a protected area. Perceptions and cognitions differ among unequal types of tourists. Different perceptions and cognitions of especially hikers, runners and mountain bikers can be identified by using methods which concern the visual impressions of each group.

These differences can be identified by using the analyses method of participating observation. This kind of observation allows researchers to identify behaviour of different types of tourists attending attractions.

The knowledge of dissimilar tourist behaviour allows further analyses. The interconnection of the output of visitor interviews and the output of participating observation will identify the impact of different tourist behaviour among dissimilar types of tourists on regional economy based on it. Investigating different kinds of protected areas, diverse tourists can be considered and more detailed conclusions of effectiveness of touristic installations can be drawn and the effectiveness of experience engineering in protected areas can be accurately analysed. In addition, identified and differentiated economic effects resulting from dissimilar tourist behaviour offer a variety of possibilities for the management of protected areas to consider the needs of target groups for the process of managing outdoor recreation and product development.