



# Thathe Vondo: is this a missed opportunity for Adventure Tourism development?

Ndivhuwo Tshipala\* and Johannes Chauke  
Centre for Sustainable Tourism, Department of Tourism Management  
Tshwane University of Technology Pretoria  
Private Bag X680 Pretoria 0001, South Africa  
E-mail: [tshipalann@tut.ac.za](mailto:tshipalann@tut.ac.za)

## Abstract

Adventure tourism, adventure recreation and outdoor recreation, the industries interrelated, are one of the promising industries across the world with their exponential growth rate, particularly in Africa, where the fame of adventure is rapidly increasing to prove the success of this industry. Many people seek to visit distant rural or wilderness areas to participate in adventure activities. The purpose of their participation is to learn how to survive in a natural area through engaging in activities that are physically, emotionally and psychologically challenging. This study explored a possible missed opportunity for adventure tourism development in the forest of the Venda tribe of South Africa called Thathe Vondo. The study constructed a comparison between Thathe Vondo and a few of the successful adventure destinations to view the similarities which can determine whether Thathe Vondo is a missed opportunity for adventure tourism development. This was done using a content analysis approach where literature was accumulated to compare Thathe Vondo and other destinations. The findings presented the similarities with regards to the features Thathe Vondo (possible missed opportunity for tourism development) has, compared to that of Dullstroom, Clarens, Tsitsikamma and Isle of Skye (developed adventure destinations), which according to the comparisons, Thathe Vondo is a possible missed opportunity for adventure tourism development.

**Keywords:** adventure activities, adventure recreation, adventure tourism, outdoor recreation, Thathe Vondo, South Africa.

## Introduction

Adventure tourism or adventure travel is one of the fastest-growing industries in the world (Ungureanu, 2014; Giddy, 2016). Adventure Tourism Market Study (2013) as quoted by Michela, Gos and Moretti (2017) denotes that America and Europe are worth \$263 billion, which is a 63% increase from 2009 to 2012. According to Ungureanu (2014), adventure tourism makes an annual turnover of about \$1 trillion worldwide. Looking in the continent of Africa, there is a promising success of adventure tourism, for instance, in 2009, a prediction was made that adventure travel is expected to have a 70% growth in the coming years (Christie, Fernandes, Messerli & Twining-Ward, 2014). Adventure Travel News (2013) also acknowledge that Africa is booming concerning adventure tourism. African countries such as Namibia, Botswana, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Kenya, Tanzania, Rwanda, Uganda, and South Africa are amongst other countries prove of Africa's success in adventure tourism (Adventure destinations, 2015; Mlozi & Pasamaa, 2013).

Adventure recreation, the industry at the heart of adventure tourism (Pomfret & Bramwell, 2016), is a growing industry, for instance in recent years it has shown much of a growth driven by increased commercialisation, use of adventure imagery in retail advertising, and an increased desire to experience thrills and risks in leisure pursuit (Hardiman & Burgin, 2011). The growth of adventure recreation and outdoor recreation includes the growth in volume, geographic coverage and the range of products offered (Buckley, 2005). Therefore, the industry of outdoor adventure recreation contributes in large amounts to the economy whereby it powers a vast economic engine which creates billions of spending and millions of good-



paying Jobs (Outdoor Industry Association, 2017). Outdoor recreation activities are becoming popular as the rate of participation is increasing and varieties of activities are developed (Plummer, 2009). The participation rates in outdoor recreation increased by 25% from 2009 to 2013 (Ewert, Gilbertson, Luo & Voight, 2013). Hence in years to come, there is likely to be an increase in the number of people, leisure time, travel, opportunity for individual choice and growth, and activities in general which will contribute to the maturity of outdoor recreation (Clawson & Knetsch, 2013).

## Literature review

### Adventure tourism

Scholars define adventure tourism as a multidiscipline concept, which involves travel, outdoor recreation and sports, and excites adventure travellers because of participation (Beckman, 2013). This concept is about moving away from a normal lifestyle and pursuing adventurous recreation (Duffy & Overholta, 2013). Some qualities result in tourism to be adventurous namely novelty, challenge, stimulation, excitement, risk and danger (Beard, Swarbrooke, Leckie & Pomfret, 2012; Ungureanu 2014). These qualities, but not limited to, challenge the adventure traveller physically and the adventure tourism activities occur in the outdoors such as mountains, lakes, oceans and in the wilderness (Michela, Gos & Moretti, 2017).

Adventure tourism and adventure recreation are concepts which link together and to understand the former, one must understand the latter (van Onselen, 2010). Adventure recreation originates from the traditional outdoor recreation and it is understood as the process of deliberate seeking of risk and uncertainty (Tshipala, 2013). Hardiman and Burgin (2011) define adventure recreation as outdoor activities which contain natural environmental hazards that cannot be controlled, however, these hazards are challenged deliberately by adventure seekers utilizing participation through applying their skills and judgment. According to Ewert et al. (2013), adventure recreation is activities that challenge humans in their aspect of life such as physically, emotionally, and psychologically, and it involves taking some risk to challenge these aspects of human life and the participation occurs in the outdoors whereby participants interact with nature.

Adventure recreation is at the heart of adventure tourism (Pomfret & Bramwell, 2016). Hence, there are many similarities between these two concepts and participants experience the same results (Lötter, Geldenhuys & Potgieter, 2012). Some of the similarities of adventure recreation and adventure tourism are listed in the following (Table 1).

| Adventure tourism   | Adventure recreation   |
|---|--|
| Activities involve the element of risk (Van Onselen, 2010:1)  | The risk involved (Ewert et al., 2013:92)  |
| Uncertain outcome (Tshipala, 2013:31)   | Uncertain outcome (Ewert et al., 2013:92)  |
| Interaction with nature (Ungureanu, 2014:44)  | Interaction with nature (Ewert et al., 2013:92)  |
| Examples of adventure tourism activities: caving, mountain/rock/ice climbing, trekking (Ungureanu, 2014:45) | Examples of adventure recreation activities: rock climbers; whitewater boating; kayaking; trekking; mountaineering (Ewert et al., 2013:92) |
| Activities occur in an outdoor setting (Giddy, 2016:451)  | Activities occur in an outdoor setting (Ewert et al., 2013:92)   |
| Real or perceived risk (Giddy, 2016:451)  | Real or perceived risk (Mullins, 2014:132)   |

**Table 1. Similarities between adventure recreation and adventure tourism**

An increasing number of people want to visit distant rural or wilderness areas not only to observe nature and culture but also to participate in a diversity of extreme sports, local impacts, and expectation of tourism shift accordingly (Buckely, 2005). More people seek the experience of adventure whereby they participate to learn how to survive in an outdoor environment by engaging in emotionally and physically challenging activities (Ewert, Sibthorp & Sibthorp, 2014).



The adventure consists of elements such as risk or perceived risk (Van Onselen, 2010; Mullins, 2014), uncertain outcome (Ewert, 2013), danger, challenge, stimulation, excitement and contrast emotion (Ntanjana, 2016). Although adventure can be educational, it is about enjoying the trip in a natural environment such as an exciting stretch of river or some backcountry powder without a real understanding of the inherent hazard of the environment (Ewert, Sibthorp & Sibthorp, 2014). For instance, the developed world regarding adventure tourism treats outdoor adventure recreation as a short-term holiday experience rather than a skill that is acquired for life (Buckley, 2007).

### Adventure activities

Outdoor adventure tourism activities are divided according to their basis namely land, air and water (South African Outdoor adventures 2018) and these activities can also take place in all the settings simultaneously (Bentley, Page, Meyer, Chalmers, & Laird, 2001; Michela, Gos & Maretti, 2017). The following (Table 2) illustrates the examples of these activities.

| Air                | Land                  | Water                 | Mixed (land, water and air) |
|--------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------|
| Hang Gliding       | 4x4 Trails:           | Board Sailing         | Adventure racing            |
| Helicopter Flips   | Abseiling             | Canoeing              | Charity challenge           |
| Hot Air Ballooning | Bird Watching         | Crocodile Cave Diving | Conservation expeditions    |
| Parachuting        | Bungee Jumping        | Deep-Sea Diving       | Cultural experiences        |
| Air                | Land                  | Water                 | Mixed (land, water and air) |
| Paragliding        | Canopy Tours          | Fly Fishing           | Gap year travel             |
| Sky Diving         | Caving                | Kite Surfing          | Hedonistic experiences      |
| Micro lighting     | Clay Pigeon Shooting  | Paragliding           | Spiritual enlightenment     |
| Bungee jumping     | Cycling               | Parasailing           | Wildlife watching           |
| Cliff jumping      | Elephant Back Safaris | Power Boating         |                             |
| Ballooning         | Game Viewing          | River Cruises         |                             |
|                    | Hiking                | Sailing (Yachting)    |                             |
|                    | Horse Racing          | Scuba Diving          |                             |
|                    | Horse Riding          | Sea Kayaking          |                             |
|                    | Kloofing              |                       |                             |
|                    | Mountain Biking       |                       |                             |
|                    | Mountain Climbing     |                       |                             |
|                    | Ostrich Rides         |                       |                             |
|                    | Pony Trekking         |                       |                             |
|                    | Quad Biking           |                       |                             |
|                    | Rapp Jumping          |                       |                             |
|                    | Rhino Tracking        |                       |                             |
|                    | Rock Climbing         |                       |                             |
|                    | Running               |                       |                             |
|                    | Sand Boarding         |                       |                             |
|                    | Skateboarding         |                       |                             |
|                    | Steam Train Rides     |                       |                             |
|                    | Turtle Tours          |                       |                             |
|                    | Walking Safaris       |                       |                             |
|                    | Whale Watching        |                       |                             |

**Table 2. Outdoor adventure activities** (Data source: South African Outdoor adventures, 2018; Michela, Gos and Maretti, 2017)



Adventure tourism activities are attractive because of their potential to explore most distant or remote places and their attraction leads to the increase in adventure seekers visiting protected areas, especially those offering wilderness settings such as Dullstroom (South Africa), Clarens (South Africa), Tsitsikamma (South Africa) and the Isle of Skye (Scotland) (Hardiman & Burgin, 2011).

These activities might be different in terms of their names but they possess the same elements (Tshipala, 2013), and they can be classified as hard adventure activities or soft adventure activities based on the experience of the adventure seeker (Van Onselen, 2010). Soft adventure activities according to Beckman, Whaley and Kim (2017) consists of less risk than hard adventure activities because these activities are facilitated by a professional adventure guide and they don't require a certain skill to participate but the safety equipment. Some activities which are classified as hard adventure can be changed into soft adventure because of the adventure guide who can minimize their level of risk by facilitating them and making them easy for adventure seekers (Beckman, 2013).

Examples of soft adventure activities include, but not limited to, archaeological expeditions, backpacking, birdwatching, camping, canoeing, eco-tourism activities, fishing/fly-fishing, hiking, horseback riding, hunting, safaris, surfing and scuba diving (Graham, 2016; Ntanjana, 2016). Most of the time the participants for soft adventure activities are families whereby they travel to unusual places to obtain the feeling of excitement, the need to escape from routine life, novelty and the opportunity to socialize in a controlled environment (Tshipala, 20113).

Hard adventure activities, however, take the participants out of their comfort zones by means of challenging them physically as a result of personal risk, danger and participation and these activities require certain skills such as technical climbing, psychomotor, skydiving, surfing, gliding, kayaking, endurance, jumping and good physical training (Beard *et al.*, 2012, Michela, Gos & Maretti, 2017; Ungureanu 2014). Before engaging in hard adventure activities, a warning is given regarding the high level of risk involved in these activities and that one should be highly skilled in order to minimize chances of being injured but activities do not always have an adventure guide to supervise the participants, thus a great level of responsibility lies on the participants (Beckman, Whaley & Kim, 2017).

The examples of hard adventure activities include sky-diving, white-water rafting, kayaking, rock climbing, exploration, survival games and mountaineering, abseiling, bungee jumping, hot air ballooning, hang and paragliding, mountain biking, river rafting, wilderness backpacking (Graham, 2016; Terblanche, 2012). According to Beard *et al.*, (2012) and Graham (2016), adventure seekers are those who are involved in hard adventure activities in order to gain adventure experience, a feeling of confidence and competence (knowledge, skills and commitment) in adventure because of the risk, danger and uncertainties involved in the activities.

People need to learn how to live in uncertain circumstances and learn to survive at what life throws at them, and to do that adventure experience provides the learning to manage oneself in risky and uncertain environments (RSA, 2011). To perceive adventure experience as high quality, there are four components to be considered (Ewert, Sibthorp & Sibthorp, 2014). These components include:

1. A sense of freedom to choose adventure experience in terms of variables such as types, extent, and level of engagement.
2. An autotelic experience – that is, an experience done for its own sake or because it has intrinsic value to the individual participant.
3. A sense of competence and effectiveness (having the skills to be successful and effective in a particular environment)



#### 4. Optimal arousal (complexity, challenge and cognitive dissonance).

Adventure pursuit is generally considered a subset of outdoor recreation (Muratha, 2013) and according to Tshipala (2013), adventure recreation originates from the traditional outdoor recreation and it is understood as the process of deliberate seeking of risk and uncertainty (Tshipala, 2013). Hence it is important to look at outdoor recreation.

#### **Adventure tourism and the continent of Africa**

Before adventure tourism could be regarded as a leisure activity, it was a way of living and discovering new places across the world (Terblanche, 2012; Khanyile, 2017). Because of the demand for tourism products that contain the element of thrill and excitement, tour operators started combining activities as a package which contained these elements (Ungureanu, 2014).

The examples of some of the destinations and their adventure packages in the African continent include Swakopmund in Namibia, which is famous for its sandboarding and quad biking on the towering dunes of the Namib Desert (Ashanti, 2015), Swakopmund also provides skydiving club, desert track tours, and daredevil adventures (TripAdvisor, 2018). It is the largest coastal town with its propensity to draw merrymakers and vacationers (TripAdvisor, 2018).

Tanzania is a country in the Eastern side of Africa, which is surrounded by Kenya and Uganda (north); Rwanda, Burundi and the Republic of Congo (west); and Zambia, Malawi and Mozambique (south). On the Eastside, however, it has a border of the Indian Ocean (Nomad Africa Adventure Tours, 2018). Tourism (e.g. adventure tourism) in this country can create ample economic returns (Mlozi & Pasamaa, 2013). This destination is not only famous for its beautiful attractions e.g. wildlife of Serengeti, local traditions and cultures, rumba music, magnificent Mount Kilimanjaro, but it also provides some exhilarating adventure packages such as Mount Kilimanjaro day hike from Moshi Kilimanjaro- Marangu Route, Mikumi and Udzungwa Wild Animal and Adventure Guided Tour, 5 Days Tanzania Budget Camping Safaris, and The Kilimanjaro Machame Trek (TripAdvisor, 2018). In addition, Tourradar (2017) identifies other adventure activities that can be found in Tanzania. These activities include mountain trekking, Surfin' Tanzania, diving and snorkelling, horse riding, Bbike safari, quadbiking, chimpanzee trekking (Mahale Mountains), hot air ballooning, and wildlife safari.

Zimbabwe provides an impressive array of adventure activities such as white water rafting, bungee jumping, scenic flights over the falls, and swimming to the edge of the waterfall and getting your picture in the Devils pool or Angels' pool (Ashanti, 2015). Zimbabwe is one of the best examples of adventure tourism success in Africa as a result of its adventure activities taking place in the borders of Zambia and Zimbabwe (Zimbabwe Tourism, 2018). In 2013, this destination expected an 8% growth from its normal state (Adventure Tourism News, 2013). In support of this expectation, Zimbabwe Tourism (2018) reports that Victoria Falls, a Zimbabwe's most eminent tourism attraction area is receiving renovations which will result in it being a special economic zone. The greater development of this destination causes a positive impact to the nearby places. For instance, Zambia's Livingstone is rising as Africa's adventure tourism capital city (Rogerson, 2004:184). According to Tshipala (2013), there is adventure tourism product development in and around the Zimbabwean townships.

South Africa is one of Africa's top adventure tourism destinations which offers 3000 kilometres of coastline along with breath-taking mountains, the diverse terrain with an ideal climate for outdoor activities, the best place for adrenaline seekers (Brand South Africa, 2012). There is potential growth for adventure tourism in South Africa – as discussed in the following section - if it receives more marketing (Southern and East African Tourism Update, 2016).



Due to the development of adventure tourism in Africa, adventure travellers from overseas travel into the continent for an adventure experience. The following (Table 3) indicate that Africa is receiving a vast number of adventure travellers.

| Destination                       | %     |
|-----------------------------------|-------|
| Europe                            | 8.7   |
| Europe – Med                      | 2.17  |
| Europe – UK/Ireland               | 1.09  |
| Middle East & Northern Africa     | 2.17  |
| Africa                            | 18.48 |
| North America                     | 2.17  |
| Central America and the Caribbean | 4.35  |
| Latin America                     | 14.13 |
| Asia                              | 11.96 |
| South-East Asia                   | 6.52  |
| South Pacific                     | 0.0   |
| Australia/New Zealand             | 7.61  |
| Antarctic/Arctic                  | 1.09  |
| Specific country                  | 19.56 |

**Table 3: Favourite travel destinations of adventure travel show visitors, 2007**  
(Data source: Dunford, 2008 as quoted by Tshipala, 2013)

### Adventure tourism in South Africa

Adventure tourism is a new sub-sector of the tourism market in South Africa and it has a considerable amount of growth (McKay, 2016). According to Giddy and Webb (2018), South Africa is an adventure destination that is growing. This growing trend is promising, for instance, in 2016 Virtuoso Luxe Report named South Africa as a top adventure destination for active travel and the third global destination (Belles & Winternberg, 2015; Shandwick, 2016). In 2017, South Africa moved to second place as a global destination (Nguyen, 2018).

This report expresses the commitment South Africa has in providing exceptional adventure experience and memorable holiday to travellers across all segments (Shandwick, 2016). According to Giddy (2018), South Africa is a record-holder regarding commercial adventure tourism products, for example, it has world records of highest bungee jumping (Face Adrenalin, 2020), fastest zipline (Zip2000, 2020) and tallest single abseil descent (SA-venues, 2020), which are situated in Western Cape; North West; and Western Cape respectively. This is the result of the economic development and the established infrastructures in the country under the adventure tourism umbrella (Giddy, 2016). The robust domestic market and the growing streams of international adventure tourists are according to McKay (2013) the strength of the South African adventure tourism industry. Also, as the tourism market is sought to be developed by the South African government, according to McKay (2016), adventure tourism is one of the ways of doing so.

The success of adventure tourism in South Africa is dependent on the natural landscapes found in the country that provide a new and unique experience for tourists (Giddy, 2016). South Africa, although is not a large country, it possesses the geographical features that make



adventure tourism in South Africa one of the best in the world. These geographical features include deserts, wild places, mountains, lakes and oceans (Dirtyboots, 2017; Michela, Gos & Maretti, 2017). McKay (2016) concurs that climate and physical geography are South Africa's resources for adventure tourism to proliferate. Although South African adventure tourism is promising concerning growth, it faces challenges such as training of guides, regulation of safety standards, marketing and product development, the impact of on local communities and environmental management concerns (Giddy, 2018).

Below is a discussion of Thathe Vondo, a village situated in Venda, Limpopo province in South Africa. The discussion is about identifying the qualities and characteristics of adventure tourism in the village to seek to find out if this village is a missed opportunity for adventure tourism development. Further below is the discussion of few of the developed villages in South Africa (Dullstroom, Clarens and Tsitsikamma) and one village in Scotland (Isle of Skye) to seek to identify adventure features that are comparable to that of Thathe Vondo.

### **Study site: Thathe Vondo**

In 1949, the Tshidzivhe chief asked the department of forestry to preserve a part of the forest in Venda during afforestation; this place is today called Thathe meaning 'chase away' (Netshlungani, 1981). Also known as, the Holy forest, Thathe Vondo is a tropical forest which is situated in Limpopo province in South Africa (ShowMe, 2012). The Tshidzivhe family initially used this place to bury their chiefs and to render worship to their ancestors, as a result, it remains one the Southern African patches that remain protected and undisturbed (Netshlungani, 1981).

Thathe Vondo is believed to be a protected area by a half-man, half-lion creature called Nethane and a lightning bird called Ndadzi (ShowMe, 2012). This area covers a land of about 6000 acres whereby 4000 acres is used for commercial purposes (planting pine trees) and the remaining 2000 acres is for indigenous and grassland (Coetzee, 2011). Additionally, there are eight villages which are in and around Thathe Vondo whereby this area (Thathe Vondo) form part of the 100 000 people who are living in Venda area in Limpopo (Coetzee, 2011).

There are ferns, creepers and plants that flourish in the climate which makes the forest to be impenetrable physically on foot and ordinary Venda people and visitors are not allowed to hike inside the forest unless they are accompanied by a local guide through a forest track (Night Jar Travel guide South Africa, 2017).

### **Thathe Vondo Attractions**

The village Thathe Vondo is not only about the mysteries occurring in the place (the protection of the area by half-man, half-lion and a lightning bird), but there are adventure tourism activity characteristics in the area such as the walking and the hiking trails with some picnic areas and overnight huts; a variety of sub-tropical forest and savannah bird species; a Lake Fundudzi which carries crocodile species (ShowMe, 2012). According to Tshipala (2009), this lake is known for a python god and mysterious dithudwane. Thathe Vondo is situated in the mountain above Lake Fundudzi (Night Jar Travel guide South Africa, 2017), and it is where the river Mutale originates, whereby it springs in the centre of the forest (Netshlungani, 1981). From the lake, one can drive to the top of the Soutpansberg and the stunning Mahovhovo waterfall (SA-Venues, 2018). The forest also has a dam named after the place, Vondo dam (Google maps, 2018).



## Dullstroom

One of the highest village in South Africa with about 2100m above sea level, Dullstroom is the Mpumalanga attraction famously known for its crystal clear dams (Dullstroom accommodation, 2018). The village was discovered during the 1880s when the Dutch settlers came into the place called 'eternal mist'; Dullstroom is a place situated in the heart of Highlands Meander and it contains beautiful clear streams, lakes and breathtaking scenery (Proudly Dullstroom, 2012).

There are different outdoor adventure activities at Dullstroom such as superb trout fishing, hiking, mountain biking, horseback riding, clay pigeon shooting, walking trails, hunting Safaris and golf course (Dullstroom accommodation, 2018), zip-lining, abseiling, rock climbing, Canyoning, Rappelling Tours (TripAdvisor, 2018), and picnic spots besides breathtaking waterfalls (Proudly Dullstroom, 2012).

Visiting Dullstroom, one will come across the nature of various venues, where visitors will come into contact with South Africans from all walks of life, sharing in the rich tapestry of cultures of people that make South Africa the 'Rainbow Nation' (Proudly Dullstroom, 2012).

Dullstroom – Emnotweni (which means Dullstroom the place of prosperity) has seven claims of fame:

- It is one of the coldest villages in South Africa,
- It is South Africa's premier trout fishing area,
- It is the home of the highest railway station, 2076m above sea-level,
- It is the only place where elm and beech trees grow in any number,
- It is also the only region in South Africa where you will find the endangered blue crane, crowned crane, as well as the wattled crane which is critically endangered,
- It hosts a whiskey bar with the largest collection of whiskeys in the southern hemisphere,
- It is also the host of a specialised clock shop with the largest collection of clocks in the southern hemisphere (Proudly Dullstroom, 2012).

## Clarens

Clarens, a small town in the Free State was first established in 1912, and is a town situated at the foothills of Maloti Mountains bordering Lesotho and its attractive features (Clarens, 2015). The town also contains beautiful natural features including the Rooiberge mountains (another of its famous mountains), a waterfall, pristine dams, rivers and streams that are ideal for fly fishing and apparently the best trout fishing spots in South Africa and great grade 3 and 4 water rapids when white water river rafting in the ash river (Clarens, 2015; TripAdvisor, 2012). There are numerous adventure activities in Clarens town including horseback riding, playing golf, archery, hot-air ballooning, 4X4 trails, hiking, abseiling, mountain biking, quad riding, and bird watching (Clarens, 2015; SA-Venues, 2018). Clarens also boasts a number of art galleries offering works by some of the country's most famous artists such as the late Frans Claerhout and William, Dobbelaere, to name but a few. The best times to visit Clarens is during autumn and spring seasons where the place is covered with beautiful colours of the plants (spring: green colours and autumn: oranges, red and rustic brown). During these seasons, it is the best time to engage in the cultural activities of Clarens such as the towns Country Market, Surrender Hill Marathon and Clarens Craft Beer Festival, an annual event which is dubbed as the best in South Africa (Clarens, 2015).





## **Tsitsikamma**

Tsitsikamma is an area situated in the provinces Eastern Cape and Western Cape, South Africa (Giddy & Webb, 2016; [Tsitsikamma.co.za](http://Tsitsikamma.co.za)). This village is located on the garden route of South Africa, which runs along the coast from Mossel Bay to Port Elizabeth (Giddy & Webb, 2016). The word Tsitsikamma originates from Khoisan word and it means a place of much water ([Tsitsikamma.co.za](http://Tsitsikamma.co.za)). Giddy and Webb (2016) indicate the features that qualify Tsitsikamma as an adventure destination. These features include Tsitsikamma mountains, several rivers flowing through canyons and gorges into the Indian Ocean, and verdant forest, plants and animals.

According to Tsitsikamma Tourism Association (2019), there are various tourist attractions and the activities in the village. Tourist attractions include Beaches, National parks, Sightseeing, Wildlife and nature; whereas the activities include adrenaline sports, adventures, food experience, golf, hiking trails, horse riding, mountain biking, reserves and conservation, tennis, tours, and water sports. Tsitsikamma village consists of the third-most visited national park in South Africa, called Tsitsikamma National Park (Bothma, 2009). This national park consists of two camps with recreational and adventure activities that include birding, Otter trail and Dolphin trail hiking, abseiling, scuba diving, snorkelling, boat rides, Tsitsikamma coast hiking and canoeing (Bothma, 2009).

## **Isle of Skye**

The Isle of Skye is one of the developed international adventure tourism destination that the researchers sought to compare to a South African local village called Thathe Vondo. This is in order to determine if Thathe Vondo is a missed opportunity for adventure tourism development.

The 50 miles long Island of Skye ([Isle of Skye.com](http://Isle of Skye.com), 2018), connected to Scotland's northwest coast by the bridge is known for its rugged landscapes, waterfalls, picturesque fishing villages and medieval castles. The largest inland in the Inner Hebrides archipelago, it has an intended coastline of peninsulas and narrow lochs, radiating out from a mountainous interior. The town of Portree, a base for exploring the island, features harbourside pubs and boutiques (Travel guide, 2018, TripAdvisor, 2018). Whether the visit to the Isle of Skye can be for a few days or even longer, there are a lot of ways to attract the visitor utilizing mountains ranges, miles of dramatic coastline and captivating history (Scotland, 2018).

This village carries a lot of history in it from Dinosaur fossils, clan warfare, highlands clearances and the infamous 'Bonnie Prince Charlie' and the Jacobite Rebellion. The Clan of McDonald and McLeod have their clan castles on the island ([Isle of Skye.com](http://Isle of Skye.com), 2018).

There are many outdoor activities offered at Isle of Skye for all group sizes such as boating tours, wildlife watching (such as Sea eagles, Red deer, Otter, Dolphins, whales, Seals), photo tours, paintballing, walking and climbing in the Cuillin mountains, kayaking on the sea, archery, clay shooting, axe throwing, air rifle shooting, mountain bike, trekking, Swimming in the sea, ridges and rivers, wilderness safaris and fishing, canyoning, coasteering, gorge walking, cycling ([Isle of Skye.com](http://Isle of Skye.com), 2018; Scotland, 2018).

After exploring the Isle of the Skye and its attracting activities, there are towns and villages where one can relax either in the restaurants, pubs and bars and try a variety of food, beers and whiskies (Scotland, 2018).

## **Methodology**

A content analysis approach was chosen to gather information for this study because the study is about comparing the literature of different adventure destinations with Thathe Vondo, the destination chosen to conduct the study. According to Writting@CSU (2004), content analysis



is a research tool used to determine concepts within sets of texts. These texts include books, book chapters, essays, interviews, discussions, newspaper headlines and articles, historical documents, speeches, conversations, advertising, theatre, informal conversation, or any existence of communicative language (Writting@CSU, 2004).

The study sought to compare literature of adventure tourism (adventure recreation and outdoor recreation) of different established destinations with Thathe Vondo, a place that is not established in terms of adventure tourism. The destinations compared are from South Africa (domestic destinations) and one from Scotland (international destination). These destinations include Clarens in Free State province (South Africa), Dullstroom in Mpumalanga province (South Africa), Tsitsikamma in Western Cape and Eastern Cape (South Africa), and Isle of Skye (Scotland).

Information compared was gather from a web-based (internet) sources namely online books, dissertations, websites and journal articles. The web-based source is a research method used to systematically access the content of recorded communications in the online communities (Chen, Bao & Huang, 2014).

## Findings

According to the literature review, it can be noted that Thathe Vondo carries adventure characteristics which are found in the developed and successful adventure destinations that are discussed above. For instance, Clarens, Dullstroom, Tsitsikamma and Isle of Skye contain the feature bird watching as an activity and this feature is available in Thathe Vondo (ShowMe, 2012). The following (Table 4) presents a comparison of other features found in the above-mentioned adventure destinations and are also found at Thathe Vondo.

| Features        | Clarens | Dullstroom | Thathe Vondo | Isle of Skye | Tsitsikamma |
|-----------------|---------|------------|--------------|--------------|-------------|
| Bird watching   | ✓       | ✓          | ✓            | ✓            | ✓           |
| Hiking trails   | ✓       | ✓          | ✓            | ✓            | ✓           |
| Lakes           | ✓       | ✓          | ✓            | ✓            | ✓           |
| Dams            | ✓       | ✓          | ✓            | ✓            | ✓           |
| Mountains       | ✓       | ✓          | ✓            | ✓            | ✓           |
| Tropical forest |         |            | ✓            |              | ✓           |
| Myths           |         |            | ✓            |              |             |
| Culture         | ✓       | ✓          | ✓            | ✓            | ✓           |
| Waterfalls      | ✓       | ✓          | ✓            | ✓            | ✓           |

**Table 4. Comparisons of adventure destination characteristics**

Thathe Vondo village obtains hiking trails which is a feature that is found in other destinations. Lakes, dams, mountains, culture, and waterfalls are other features identified both in Thathe Vondo (undeveloped destination) and all the other destinations (developed destinations) as identified in Table 5. The tropical forest is found in Thathe Vondo and Tsitsikamma. Thathe Vondo comprise of some myths which are not identified in other destinations, and that can serve as an opportunity for tourists to be learning about these interesting myths.

There are other features on adventure tourism destinations discussed above that result in the destinations to be considered developed. These features may be used to develop Thathe Vondo. These features include access points to facilities, marked and named walking trails to different areas and activities in and around the destinations, route maps including GPS coordinates to different activities. Tsitsikamma, for instance, requires guest visitors to



complete the SANParks gate registration and indemnity form for accessing the facilities. The activities for these destinations are advertised using websites and brochures (Clarens Xtreme, 2019; Dullstroom Accommodation, 2019; Isle of Skye.com, 2019; South African National Parks, 2019; Tsitsikamma Forest, 2019).

## Conclusions and recommendations

Thathe Vondo is according to the above literature and the findings of this study, an undeveloped destination which has the features of the developed adventure tourism destinations. This proves the fact that Thathe Vondo is a missed opportunity for adventure tourism development which if taken into account may contribute to the economy of Venda, Limpopo province, community development, job creation and the like. The development of Thathe Vondo into an adventure tourism destination can possess a variety of benefit to small local enterprises and communities, government bodies, and the local tourism industry.

Small local enterprises and communities: adventure tourism development can help through providing new livelihood and employment opportunities.

Government bodies: the development will help the government by contributing to their goals of job creation and business opportunities for local communities.

The local tourism industry: lastly the development will help the local tourism industry by contributing to the development of Limpopo to be amongst the top adventure tourism destinations in South Africa and the African continent at large.

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