

Ecotourism Study on the Chunsuman Bay Birdwatching Festival

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The purposes of this study were to investigate visitors' environmental attitudes of educational tourism, environmental preservation, and regional economic benefits satisfaction through the Chunsuman Bay Birdwatching Festival.

The results of this study were as follows: First, the degree of educational satisfaction was high and this festival provided environmental preservation mind for visitors and local residents as well. The festival participants had a positive attitude toward migratory birds. Especially, the residents who had negative perceptions toward migratory birds due to physical harms of agricultural crops was positively changed after visiting this festival. So there should be prepared for more strategic approaches for residents' visiting and participating this birdwatching festival.

Second, while the number of tourists was increased, it did not make a practical contribution to residents' income. Particularly, farmers' satisfaction was low. So there should be more strategic programs to improve residents' economic rewards for sustainable development.

Key Words : Ecotourism, Birdwatching festival, Chunsuman Bay, Sustainable development

1. Introduction

1.1. The Necessity of Study

Birdwatching tourism is a bird resource activity and a popular tourism attraction. The participants of birdwatching tourism will increase from 82 million in 1990 to 101 million in 2025¹⁾. It was found that birdwatching tourism had a positive influence on environmental preservation, and brought economic benefits to local residents. The number of birdwatching-related festivals have increased from 12 in 1993 to 120 in 1998²⁾. Kim et al³⁾ conducted the economic survey of HUMMER/BIRD celebrations in Rockport and Fulton, Texas. They found the local economy was boosted by \$2.5 million dollars and it created 73 new jobs.

Most event research was related to the economic development and the impacts of general management

administration, logistics, community impacts, event tourism, etc. But events related to environmental issues were very few⁴⁾. Three of ecotourisms' goals are providing educational tourism, generating environmental preservation, and economic benefits for the residents. This study investigated those goals of ecotourism with the Chunsuman Bay birdwatching festival which is one of the most well known ecotourism festivals in Korea. While most studies about birdwatching tourism consisted of the importance of birdwatching tourism²⁾, birdwatching tourists' characteristics,⁵⁾ and birdwatching tourists' economic effectiveness^{3,6)}, birdwatching tourism researches which investigated ecotourism goals are few.

The purposes of this study were investigating visitors' attitude toward educational tourism, environmental preservation, and regional economic benefits satisfaction based on the Chunsuman bay birdwatching festival.

2. Related Literature Review

2.1 Brief Understanding Ecotourism

The goals of ecotourism consists of providing educa-

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tional tourism, generating environmental preservation, and residents benefits. Environmental education of ecotourism was emphasized by Butler⁷⁾, Anderson⁸⁾, Buckley⁹⁾, Kim et al³⁾, Jeong and Roh¹⁰⁾. Its importance was originally discussed by Boo¹¹⁾, then, by Buckley⁹⁾, Ross and Wall¹²⁾. The residents' benefits in particular were emphasized by Anderson⁸⁾, Buckley⁹⁾, Kim et al³⁾, Jeong⁶⁾, and American Birding Association²⁾. In this study, environmental education, preservation of nature, regional participation and experience oriented tourism will be evaluated based on residents and /or visitors.

2.2. Importance of Birdwatching Tourism

The birdwatching tourism events are held as an ecotourism in the U.S. Vaske et al¹³⁾ defined birdwatching tourism as non-consumptive outdoor leisure activities which provide experiences rather than products. Birdwatching tourism is a bird resource activities. The tourism activities include feeding, taking photographs and field trips. It was found that the birdwatching positively influenced local economies and preserved environments. The number of birdwatching festivals has increased from 12 in 1993, 18 in 1994, 23 in 1995, 48 in 1996, 70 in 1997, and 120 in 1998 which increased 10 times from 1993²⁾.

Jeong⁶⁾ reported that Lake Ontario Bird Festival which started from 1997 generated \$219 million for 6 years. The festival provided knowledge and interest about birds among residents and visitors. He found that the satisfaction rate was more than 98% and 98% of visitors wanted to revisit the festival.

Many of the festivals had only 5 to 6 thousand visitors but visitors' total expenditure was billions Won in Korean exchange. It means the birdwatching events become an economically effective and a quality tourist attraction.

The ABA²⁾ conducted a survey of American leisure activities of people over 16 years old. It was found that U.S. birdwatching visitors increased 155% in 10 years after comparing 1982-3 and 1994-6. This is the highest growth and it was two times faster than the growth in travel, participating sports, and watching sports and cultural activities. While there are 120 birdwatching tourism events in the U.S, 30% of the events are about migratory birds. Of 85 events, 71% used festival and 29% use celebration, and bird names. 69 bird events, 58% of them are usually held April

and May¹⁴⁾.

Little research of birdwatching has been done in Korea. Therefore, more emphasis has been placed on this study which investigated visitors' educational awareness of, environmental preservation, and regional economic benefits satisfaction based on the Chunsuman Bay birdwatching festival.

3. Methods of Research

The Chunsuman Bay is one of the biggest resting places for migratory birds in Korea. It is located in Chungnam Province, southwest from Seoul, the capital city of Korea. The city has been hosting one of the biggest birdwatching festivals in Korea since 2002.

This study was conducted with the ecotourism goals based on the festival visitors in 2002. A self-administered questionnaire survey and interview were conducted. The collected samples were analyzed by the SPSS statistical package including 7 Likert scale. The one-way ANOVA and Duncan Multiple Comparison Test was used to compare residents and visitors.

4. Results

4.1. Demographical Information (N=201)

It was found that 53.7% were male visitors and 46.3% were female visitors. In terms of visitors attendance Chungnam Province had 30.6%, and Sosan

Table 1. Demographical characteristics

Variables		N (%)
Gender	Male	112 (53.7)
	Female	89 (46.3)
Visiting Pattern	Family	119 (57.8)
	Friend	72 (18.1)
	Group	26 (13.2)
	Alone	2 (1.2)
	Couple	16 (8.2)
	etc	2 (1.5)
	Region	Chungnam
Sosan		59 (29.8)
Seoul		34 (16.5)
Gyunggi		27 (13.6)
Inchon		3 (1.7)
Chungbug		33 (1.7)
Junbuk		3 (1.7)
etc		9 (4.5)

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city was 29.8%. In the Chungnam province visitors' case, they came to Anmyondo island with their family and they heard about this festival by accident. That's the reason of visiting there according to interview. Most of Sosan visitors came here on the recommendation of friends, relatives (word of mouth) and reference groups including schools. Most of the visitors came to this festival with family, 57.8%. The core visitors were family groups. So they are the target of advertising and publicizing of this festival. Next was with friends which was 18.1%. The main information was by accident, 31.6% and word of mouth (friends and relatives), 20.9% and internet was 10.3%. The motivation of visiting was to see migratory birds was 34.5%, by accident 23.8%. Next was to be with family (15.7%), and educational purpose (15.3%).

4.2. Educational Effectiveness

The educational satisfaction of this festival was high with 6.06 on 7 Likert scale and positive rate was 94.7% which was one of the highest points in this study. Providing professional bird interpreters and notebooks for birdwatching also positively influenced ideas toward protecting and using ecotourism resources. The migratory bird protection programs including migratory bird interpretation was positive among visitors by interview. Especially family group visitors who brought children evaluated this festival programs as environmentally sound education and a nature based educational program.

The Chunsuman eco-center also increased visitors' satisfaction and interest. Visitors had the chance of watching rare insects and plants which live in the bay water. Visitors had positive attitudes about watching birds and appreciating birds sounds. It was found that the

Table 2. Satisfaction % of educational effectiveness

Level	High	Medium	Low
%	94.7	4.9	0.4

(N=201 Missing=1)

Table 3. Satisfaction points of educational effectiveness

Item	Satisfaction Points
Education	6.06
Event interesting	5.83
Uniqueness of Theme	5.78

the visitors' number was small. This showed this birdwatching festival was quality oriented educational tour event. 55.8% of visitors found that the Chunsuman Bay birdwatching festival was a quality educational event. (. Some visitors perceived that the exhibitions of migratory birds and protecting wetland activities of environmental NGO were educational, too.

4.3. Environmental Preservation

As the above table showed, the visitors of this festival perceived that this festival found that the festival increased the environmental awareness of visitors and local residents. The average rate was 6.05 and visitors' rate was 6.02 and residents' rate was 6.10. There was no significant difference between the two groups.

4.4. Positive image toward migratory birds

The festival visitors showed positive attitude toward migratory birds. Before visiting the festival, the local residents had negative perceptions toward migratory birds due to harm of agricultural crops. This is a changing of perception of residents after they visited this festival. Strategic plans are necessary to let them more participate this festival and have positive attitudes about this festival. It was found that there was no significant differences between two groups.

4.5. The Regional Image as a Migratory Bird Resting Place

It was found that this festival contributed to a positive regional image. Visitors had the perception

Table 4. Satisfaction of environmental preservation (N=201)

Tourist	Residents	Average	T(P)
6.02	6.10	6.05	0.521(0.603)

No Significant difference between tourists and residents

Table 5. Positive image toward migratory birds (N=201)

Tourist	Residents	Average	T(P)
5.83	5.76	5.82	-0.4040(0.687)

No Significant difference between tourists and residents

Table 6. Satisfaction of regional image (N=201)

Tourist	Residents	Average	T(P)
5.73	5.79	5.76	0.287(0.774)

No Significant difference between tourists and residents

that Sosan is the home of migratory birds. Tourists and residents positively evaluated with 5.76 average point. This festival gave the opportunity of connecting migratory birds with tourism, fisheries, and agricultural products for the medium and long term residents' benefits through positive images.

4.6. Residents' Attitudes

4.6.1. Environmental preservations

This study conducted environment related questionnaires with residents. The average of environmental preservation necessity was 5.34 and the average of environmental condition suitability was 5.36 which was comparatively high satisfaction rate. The positive rate of environmental preservation was 75.9% which presented the necessity of Chunsuman Bay. The positive rate of environmental conditions was 78.4%.

Residents positively evaluated this festival's environmental condition suitability. It was found that agriculture industry related residents' satisfaction was slightly lower than non-agriculture industry residents. There was no significant difference between agriculture and non-agricultural residents toward the necessity of environmental protection and suitability of environmental conditions.

4.6.2. Birdwatching Festival

This study conducted the questionnaires about this festival interest rate among residents. The average satisfaction point of migratory bird place was 5.23 and its positive rate was 76.6%. The positive opinions of

holding the festival year after year was 5.15 and its positive percentage was 71.4%. The average of resident participation was 5.38 and its positive rate was 81.6% which concluded the attitude of residents were comparatively positive. The festival host place, Busok myon(sub- county) The local residents' satisfaction was lower than other place's residents.

4.6.3. Regional Benefits

In terms of regional benefits, residents evaluated income increasing with 3.83 on 7 Likert scale and positive rate was 37.6%. The average points about tourists' increasing was 4.80 and positive percentage was 67.3%. While tourists' number was increased, it did not contributed to residents' income increasing and farmers' satisfaction was low.

The shortage of accommodation facilities and short time staying and visitors' unplanned visiting were the reasons the accommodation business effectiveness was comparatively small. Overall, the early stage of festival and residents' business mind perception shortage were main reasons.

In terms of visitors' consumptive expenditure, food and beverage was 13.627 Won per person and it was twice more than accommodation and shopping. The Sosan residents' food booth's were the examples of the residents' participating festival programs. There should be more products related efforts for residents' economic benefits. So, development of residents' food and beverage products, birds related gift products, and

Table 7. Environmental Preservations of Residents' Viewpoints (N=201)

Item	Necessity of Environmental Protection	Suitability of Environmental Condition
Average(Positive Rate)	5.34(75.9)	5.36(78.4)

strongly disagree(1) ↔ strongly agree(7)

Table 8. Residents' attitude of necessity and suitability

Item/Industry	Agriculture	Non-agriculture	T(p)
Necessity of Environmental Protection	4.81	5.55	-2.417(0.034)
Suitability of Environmental condition	4.71	5.61	-2.541(0.012)

Table 9. Birdwatching festival satisfaction of residents

	Migratory Bird Place	Held Festival	Residents Participation
Satisfaction Point	5.23	5.15	5.39
Satisfaction %	76.6	71.4	81.6

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Table 10. Comparison based on residents' place

	Busok County Residents	Non-Busok Residents	T(p)
Migratory Place	4.68	5.80	-3.938(0.000)*
Held Festival	4.68	5.64	-2.967(0.004)*
Residents Participation	4.93	5.87	-3.112(0.002)*

*Significant difference between Busok and Non-Buson County Residents

other efforts should be planned for and developed.

5. Conclusions

The purposes of this study were investigating visitors' attitude toward educational tourism, environmental preservation, and regional economic benefits based on the Chunsuman bay birdwatching festival. The results of this study were as follows:

First, the educational satisfaction toward this festival was high with 6.06 and positive rate was 94.7%, the highest point in this study. It confirmed the role of the birdwatching festival as an ecotourism event which contributes the educational knowledge of the birdwatching tourists. It recognized academically and practically the importance of birdwatching festival as an educational tourism.

Second, this festival provided environmental preservation information to visitors and local residents. While total average satisfaction rate was 6.05, visitors' rate was 6.02 and residents' rate was 6.10. The festival participants had a positive attitude toward migratory birds. The residents who had negative perceptions toward migratory birds due to harm of agricultural crops were positively changed based on this study results. So there should more strategic plans for residents' participating to this festival. It was found that the residents' environmental preservation necessity average was 5.34 and the average of environmental condition suitability was 5.36 which were comparatively high. The positive rate of environmental preservation was 75.9% which presented the necessity of the Chunsuman Bay.

Third, while the number of tourists increased, it did not contribute to residents' income increasing. Especially, farmers' satisfaction was low. To increase residents' benefits, there should be more planning for developing tourism products including products which attract lost childhood reminiscence, diverse agricultural products, more human networking strategies, and more

for the visitors. It is also necessary to improve residents' benefits with accommodation facilities, food and beverage plans, birds related gift products, and producing revisiting customers.

This study only investigated the ecotourism goals based on the Chunsuman Bay birdwatching festival visitors. For the future study, it is necessary to investigate visitors' motivations, activities, and guides' interpretation, etc as expectations and performances, satisfaction and behavioral responses. It is important not only for visitors' satisfaction but also for the quality of the festival.

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