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Chung, Seungah and Day, Jonathon G., "Implementing Sustainable Tourism: The Case of Fair Tourism in Korea" (2021). *Travel and Tourism Research Association: Advancing Tourism Research Globally*. 5.
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Implementing Sustainable Tourism: The Case of Fair Tourism in Korea

Introduction

Sustainable tourism has been widely embraced as an important set of beliefs for the sustainable development of tourism (Berry & Ladkin, 1997). Industry and customers, however, seem to have paid less attention and been less outspoken, while academia and government have shown significant interest (Murphy & Price, 2005). It has also been criticized for being "intellectually attractive" and having no practical application (Wheeller, 1993, p. 122).

Thus, this thesis deals with Fair Tourism, which is a good example of implementing tourism practices sustainably. Fair Tourism is one realm of sustainable development, and it was developed in South Korea (Lee et al. 2015; Park 2010; Jang et al 2010). It was initiated to promote the ethical tourism industry from the critical perception of mass tourism (Im, 2009). Fair tourism has been accepted by many fair tour operators and practiced because it ensures the economic benefits of tourism can go to the locals (S. gil Lee, 2016; Oh, 2011). This means the spending of travelers stays in the local destination.

Since the concept has been initiated quite recently, research about Fair Tourism has been little, and it has usually been written from the perspective of tourists. There has been researching about the concept of fair tourism (Byun, 2016; H. Hwang & Lee, 2011; Im, 2009; S. Y. Kim, 2011; S. C. Lee & Jeong, 2013); research that has been focused on the demand side instead of supply-side (Cho & Jeong, 2012; Jang & Lee, 2010; Jung, 2011; M.-K. Kim & Cho, 2019; Oh, 2011; J.-H. Park, 2014; M. Park, 2010; Shin et al., 2018; Song, 2015).

Despite these studies, there are no standardized and commonly accepted theoretical concepts of Fair Tourism (Hwang et al., 2013). Therefore, the definition of Fair Tourism and practices are different from tour operators to tour operators. Moreover, there are only a few studies from the viewpoint of the supplier side (K. H. Kim et al., 2014; K.-H. Kim & Kang, 2015; J. lee, 2018). Thus, the purpose of the study is to organize the concept of Fair Tourism and the current status of Fair Tourism. Given that little is known about Fair Tourism from the suppliers' perspective, this study is guided by the following objectives:

- Define the concept of Fair Tourism
- How Fair Tour operators in Korea implement sustainability in their businesses
- Examine how they manage their sustainable supply chain based on the SCOR model

In this context, this thesis is laid out as follows: First, the concept of Fair Tourism with the definition of Fairness and Fair Tourism are presented. Second, the researchers study foundational concepts that influence the growth of Fair Tourism such as Sustainable Tourism, Responsible Tourism, and Fair Trade in Tourism. Third, we research the development of Fair Tourism focusing on international and domestic movement. Fourth, this thesis investigates the current situation and how Fair Tour operators in Korea practice sustainability in their business. One of the distinctive features of Fair Tourism is that fair Tour operators operationalize Sustainable Supply Chain

Management (SSCM). To understand the supply chain of Fair Tour operators, the Supply Chain Operations Reference (SCOR) model has been applied as a framework of interview questions. Through this approach, implementing sustainable tourism as well as the concept and current situation of Fair Tourism in South Korea can be discussed further.

Literature Review

The definition of Fair Tourism has yet to be standardized (H. Hwang & Lee, 2011). Therefore, this study examines various studies and organizes the common traits of the concept based on the argument of Jang & Lee (2010): 1) Fair travel is based on fair trade between residents and travelers. 2) Through this, the aim is to maximize the economic benefits of residents and minimize negative economic, social, cultural, and environmental impacts. 3) In fair travel, travelers are encouraged to share tourism resources with residents through understanding and respect for the history, environment, society, and culture of the region.

Fair tourism has been introduced in Korea in line with practices and movements across the globe focused on sustainability that has emerged as opposed to mass tourism. In Korea, Fair Tourism, introduced by the book 'Travel Hope: Fair Tourism Guide Book,' (Im & Yi, 2009), was viewed and disseminated at a rapid pace as a critique of Korea's unethical structure of the tourism industry at that time (Byun, 2016; Jang & Lee, 2010; Lee, 2016). Now, many fair tour operators, NGOs, and organizations agree with the need for sustainability-focused Fair Travel and interpret Fair Travel in their way.

All fair tour operators run Fair Tour programs in general as well as other businesses such as campaigns, lectures, and workshops to increase public awareness of fair tourism (7th UNWTO Global Summit on Urban Tourism _Seoul, 2018; EKN, 2014; Fair Travel Korea, 2020; National Law Information Center, 2021; Sebasitalk, 2011). They also aim to spread fair tourism through consultation with prospective fair tour operators and a training program for fair travel instructors (Fair Trip Four Season, 2021; Good Travel, 2020). Another obvious characteristic in them is that they all label themselves as social entrepreneurs or potential social entrepreneurs (Fair Travel Korea, 2020; Go Busan, 2021; Hwasung City Tour, 2021; Mapo Walk, 2021; Moments, 2021; Good Travel, 2020; Imagine Peace, 2020; Travelers Map, 2020; Woorimirae, 2020). In this respect, they have made a social, environmental, and economic contribution. Few researchers have studied the business practices of fair tour operators and they have typically performed studies with a limited number of operators (Jang & Lee, 2010; lee, 2018). This research would thus like to develop a deeper understanding of fair tourism through 15 interviews with fair tour operators. Furthermore, as Fair Tour operators trying to run a business in accordance with the principles of Fair Tourism, which involve sustainability in supply chain management, this study explored the fair tour programs of operators by using a sustainable supply chain as a framework.

Linear SCOR Model

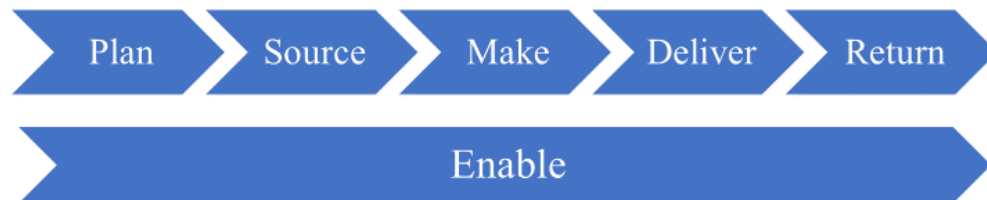


Figure 1. SCOR Processes (ASCM, 2020)

The supply chain operations reference (SCOR) model prescribes standard guidelines that unify thousands of activities within the supply chain (Huang et al., 2005; Kasi, 2005). The unified model offers a diagnostic tool for the supply chain processes and practices of business organizations to improve their efficiency and facilitate cooperation between stakeholders in the chain. (Golparvar & Seifbarghy, 2009; Lockamy & McCormack, 2004; Ntabe et al., 2015; Stewart, 1997; Supply Chain Council, 2010). SCOR described 6 management processes: PLAN, SOURCE, MAKE, DELIVER, RETURN, and ENABLE (Apics, 2017; Golparvar & Seifbarghy, 2009; Huang et al., 2005; Hwang et al., 2010; Lambert et al., 2005; Lockamy & McCormack, 2004; Ntabe et al., 2015; Stewart, 1997; Supply Chain Council, 2010; Vanany et al., 2005). The framework encompasses how the supply chain performs, and how they arrange all customer interactions.

Given the fact that the SCOR model has developed for the manufacturing industry (Zhang& Song& Huang, 2009), the model has a limit to fully apply to the tourism industry (service industry). To adopt the SCOR model into the service industry, this study modified to establish the model into the tourism industry and applied the SCOR process on developing interview questions. When designing interview questions applying the SCOR framework, we bear in mind that Service Supply Chain Management is the management of knowledge, procedures, resources, and service performance from the earliest supplier to the ultimate customer (Baltacioglu et al., 2007).

Methodology

As a methodology, we used a semi-structured interview as a qualitative case study. Expert referral sampling (Biernacki & Waldorf, 1981; Etikan et al., 2016) was applied and 15 Fair Tour operators

were interviewed. To analyze the data, the back translation has been done to prepare valid transcripts (Brislin, 1970). In this exploratory study, thematic analysis was used. Themes were generated out of the transcript that has been checked the validity through back-translation (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008). All themes were categorized manually.

Results/ Discussion/Implication

As Fair Tour operators provide guidelines for travelers to let them behave sustainable practices, there will be the guidelines that each tour operator makes to meet fair travel principles. Moreover, a deeper understanding of Fair Tourism is possible through this research. This study can encourage future social enterprises, which will grow as Fair Tour operators, and provide guidance to start their business. By increasing the number of Fair Tour operators, Fair Tourism can be spread all over Korea and let other countries be interested in, helping to promote discussion and research.

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