Yanling Zhang (Ed.)

Proceedings for the 4th Euro-Asia Conference on Environment and Corporate Social Responsibility: Tourism, MICE and Management Technique Session (Part II)

September 20-21, 2008 Tianjin, China
Acknowledgement

“The 4th Euro-Asian Conference on Corporate Social Responsibility and Environmental Management – Tourist, MICE and Management Technique Session” was jointly organized by TU Bergakademie Freiberg, Germany and the Tourism Management College of Tianjin University of Finance and Economics. The conference was sponsored by the German Academic Exchange Service Foundation (DAAD), and the German Embassy in China.

The edition of the proceedings was partially supported by DAAD, Germany; and the Tourism Management Department from Tianjin University of Finance and Economics. In representation of the Conference Commission, we would like to show great appreciation to the above institutions and organizations. Moreover, we would like to thanks for all people who contribute for the publication of this book, especially Professor Udo. E. Simonis from the Science Center Berlin, Germany and Professor Jan. C. Bongaerts from the IMRE program TU Bergakademie Freiberg, Germany.

ZHANG Yanling
March 12, 2008
Tianjin China
Contents.............................................................................................................. 1
Foreword............................................................................................................... 1
1. A Study on the Risk Management of MICE Based on the BP Neural Networks  JIANG Hua; CUI Zhenxing................................................................. 2
2. Livestock Tourism: An Integrated Farming and Tourism Development towards Agro-Ecosystem in the Rural Area Budi Guntopo......................... 10
3. A research on CSR and Harmonious Development of the Chinese Ecotourism Industry XI Ning ................................................................. 17
4. On the Application of the Product-industry-regional Integrated Innovation Model YIN Xiangzhou............................................................ 24
5. Creating Value through Strategic Corporate Social Responsibility in Tourism Industry ZHENG Ruojuan; LIN Jianzong......................................................... 30
7. The Integrated Marketing Communications Mode of Chinese MICE Enterprises SHIN Kwang-Yong; OH Seon-Young; MA Yue-Ping........... 40
8. Analyses on the Cooperation of International Tourism in Northeast Asia Li Gang; Zhen Yuechao........................................................................ 47
9. An Analysis of Eco-tourism Sustainable Development in China -Taking HuaShan as an Example QIAO Hong; DONG Xuechen; LIU Na...... 53
10. Analyses on the Sustainable Development of the Tourism Industry in Henan Province LI Chuang............................................................... 57
11. The Role of the Travel Agencies Association: Perspective of Industry Rent Protection ZHOU Bo; XU Wenjuan............................................... 62
12. The Feasibility Analysis of the Development of Xiqu Tourism BI Jian................................................................................................. 68
13. The Status Quo and Developmental Direction of Tourism History Researches in China QU Dafeng............................................................. 72
14. A Research on the MICE Administration in China WANG Dongqiang; TIAN Shuqin................................................................. 77
15. A Research on Ecological Compensation on the Exploitation of Reservoir Tourism Resource TANG Zi..................................................... 81
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Authors</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>A Research on Tourism Environmental Carrying Capacity in China</td>
<td>LI Lijun; LI Ling; LI Yanli</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>The Interpretation of Corporate Social Responsibility from Economic Ethics’ Perspective</td>
<td>Guo Junhua</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>A Study on Economic Attributes of the Resource-based Tourist Attractions in China: Based on the Public Goods Theory</td>
<td>Guo Chunfan</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Tourist Information Search: Overseas Studies and Its Enlightenment</td>
<td>LI Shuang</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Analysis on the Current Status of Human Resources Management in Chinese Hotels</td>
<td>ZENG Qi; FU Bin</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>A Research on Local Government Officials’ Environmental Protection Performance Management in China</td>
<td>ZHOU Jingkun; CHEN Jihua; LIU Zhonggang</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Ethical Norms in the Corporate Governance for Tourism Enterprises Based on Corporate Social Responsibility</td>
<td>XIE Fang</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Ecological Ethics: the Moral Guarantee of Ecotourism Development</td>
<td>LI Suying; WU Yongli</td>
<td>124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>A Research on the Exploitation and Protection of Eco-tourism Resources in China based on the Synergetic Resonance Theory</td>
<td>ZHANG Yanling</td>
<td>128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>A Study on Sustainable Eco-tourism Development in China</td>
<td>CHEN Xinyu; YANG Mingduo</td>
<td>134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>A Research on the Sustainable Tourism System Based On the Chaos Theory</td>
<td>QIAO Hong; DONG Xuechen; LIU Na</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>A Study on Customer Complaint Management Strategies from the Perspective of Psychological Contract Violation</td>
<td>YANG Lin</td>
<td>145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>An Empirical Research on the Consumption of Urban Chinese Tourists</td>
<td>SUN Yanhong</td>
<td>151</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>A Research on the Current MICE Education in China</td>
<td>ZHANG, Yanling</td>
<td>156</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Problems and Developing Strategies for China’s Port Logistics</td>
<td>DU Lijuan; LIU Fei</td>
<td>160</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Livestock Tourism: An Integrated Farming and Tourism Development towards Agro-Ecosystem in the Rural Area

Budi Guntoro

Abstract

This study aimed to determine the problems and challenges in the sustainable tourism development and discover the potential strategies to develop local community. Qualitative method by participant observation was employed to analyze the data. “Mandiri” group was chosen as a sample of tourism development which operates livestock tourism. The result showed that the main problems of local people in Mandiri were low education and lack of skill in tourism management. Several challenges of sustainable tourism lay on how the village could keep authenticity in order to sustain their specific type of tourism. They have accepted a tourism industry based on their characteristic in maintaining goat. Some creations of village attraction based on their potential would be the alternative to attract tourists.

Keywords: Livestock Tourism, Integrated Farming, Agro-ecosystem

1. Introduction

Agricultural tourism (also known as agritourism and agrotourism) is the crossroads where agriculture and tourism meet and is currently one of the fastest growing segments of tourism in the world. Agritourism activities may include tours of farms and ranches, wildlife recreational activities, hiking, horse riding, animal farming, wineries, hay rides, etc. People visit farms, ranches, vineyards, or wineries to buy products, enjoy entertainment, participate in activities, eat a meal of just spend the night.

Agritourism included livestock tourism can have significant benefits for farmers and communities in both agricultural-rural and urban. Results from visitor study indicate that agritourism has substantial economic impacts on local communities. In addition, agritourism provides opportunities for diversification and economic incentives for growers, promotes economic development and helps educate the public about the important contributions of agriculture to the county’s economy and quality of life (Lobo et al., 1999)

Livestock tourism is defined as any business conducted by a farmer for the enjoyment or education of the public, to promote the products of the farm and to generate additional farm income. It includes a variety of facilities and activities such as animal/livestock festivals, farm visits, farm tours, demonstration farms, farm stays, and animal museums. The potential benefits of livestock tourism for local are varied. First, livestock tourism may generate diversification

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1 Faculty of Animal Science, Gadjah Mada University, Yogyakarta, Indonesia 55281, e-mail: bguntoro@gmail.com
opportunities for local farmers to increase revenues and enhance the viability of their operations. Second it may be an excellent tool to educate the public about the importance of livestock and its contribution to the rural’s economy and quality of life. Third, it may provide economic incentives and reduce friction in the agricultural-urban interface. Finally, livestock tourism may enhance the appeal and demand for local products, foster regional marketing efforts and create value-added and direct-marketing opportunities that may stimulate economic activity and spread the benefits to various communities in the rural area.

Livestock tourism in Indonesia is still less developed than agritourism in general. Many projects regarding agritourism development focused on private sectors that developed more specific commodity of agriculture. Several projects tried to develop animal and livestock as tourism attraction in tourism activities, one of them is in Girikerto village, Sub-district of Turi, Sleman Regency, Yogyakarta Province. This study therefore to analyze the potentials and challenge the livestock tourism development towards agro-ecosystem in the rural area.

2. Material and Method

This research as part of a larger study livestock tourism development in Yogyakarta. Mandiri group of Nganggring subvillage was chosen as a focal area because this area is pioneer in developing area which concern of environmental and agriculture including livestock development. Up to date for the research describes how local people are involved in the development of livestock tourism. Participant observation method was used in this study. The data were gathered during May - August 2008 which also through in-depth personal interview of the key informants who were head of group, head of local government and other informal leaders, aside from local community as grassroots.

3. Result and Discussion

3.1 Nganggring Condition

Geographically, Sleman Regency lies between 107° 15’ 03” and 107° 29’ 30” East Longitude, 7° 34’ 51” and 7° 47’ 30 South Latitude. It adjacent to Boyolali Regency in north, Klaten Regency in east, Kulonprogo and Magelang Regency in west, and Yogyakarta in south. Sleman Regency has area width as 57,482 ha or 574.2 km² or about 18% of Province of Yogyakarta width as 3,185.80 km². Administratively, it consists of 17 subdistricts, 86 villages, and 1,212 subvillages.

Turi Sub-district is in north of Sleman capital, with distance is 8 km. It has area width as 4,309 ha. Its administrative territory includes Bangunkerto, Wonokerto, Donokerto, and Girikerto villages. Nganggring Sub-village, Girikerto Village, has population about 850. It lies only 10 km from Mount Merapi and in west of Kaliurang resort. It lies at altitude 850 m of above sea level, its temperature is 18.-29°C and has 134 hectares area. Ninety percent of area consists of sandy stones with precipitous slopes. In dry season, almost 75% plants died. Hard life in dry land doesn’t make its inhabitant despondent, it exactly becomes motivation to be
cooperative and form an autonomous farmers group.

At the beginning, prior to “Mandiri” goat farmers group existed, many Nganggring inhabitants had raised goat. They raised goat individually and the goat house still joined with its owner’s house. This was very dangerous for health. In the end of 1989, Faculty of Animal Science and Faculty of Veterinary held training on good animal raising in there for 3 months. Given results of training followed by 42 participants, an idea to form “Mandiri” goat farmers group arose. After it has been agreed, people cooperated to make group by using village property land, becoming livestock localization area. Involving all families, they moved their livestock to be placed in their group stables simultaneously. Finally, infertile area as 1,750 m² has been used for goat house location and livestock greenery feed. As yet “Mandiri” goat farmers group has had approximately 600 Etawah Cross goats, 57 members, and 80 goat houses.

Success factor of this group lies at mature planning and discipline to implement programmed plan. Besides that, if they face a problem, they have an open attitude and discuss it to get best solution. Chairman also always invite the young generation and make them believe that raising cattle can give many advantages, so they participate within. The expectation is they are able to create their employment themselves by utilizing available local resources, so they do not depend an occupation on others. With strong motivation and spirit to participate in developing community economy, the group still develops itself for the sake of realizing its vision and mission. Main activity of “Mandiri” goat farmers group is Etawah Cross goats raising, in which they are crossbred of Jamnapari and Kacang/local goats. Its characteristics are folded, flexible, and long ears; Bligon shape. In order that plant remains grow and survive in dry season, group in 1997 self-supportly did pipes installation along 3 km to take water from Krasak River. Water is also used for filling daily necessities such as drinking, taking a bath and washing for 100 heads of household. Success of this activity furthermore invited support from local government and related agencies, as well as universities.

Now on land as 115 hectares, there are approximately 707,000 pondoh zalacca, melinjo, petai, sengon, mahogany, caliandra, and glicerideae trees as feed sources for livestock. For animal raising, Mandiri group has had livestock settlement as 2,75 hectares with livestock amount as 650 owned by 80 heads of household. This group has also reclaimed class C ex-mining area as 6 hectares and planted 940 mangosteen, avocado, lanseh or zalacca trees on it (Anonimous, 2007). Another great success is growing community consciousness, particularly in Turi Subdistrict, about significance of popular forest preservation. People who formerly mined the sands, they stop it totally now. Growing solidarity also encouraged local wisdom/social norms enforcement giving social sanction to community.

What “Mandiri” group did can be followed by other farmers group, especially who have similar geographical condition with Nganggring Village. Inhabitants felt benefit of forest preservation directly. Besides maintaining water and livestock
feed availability, they indirectly open road for animal tourism business. Etawah Cross goat cultivation business produced milk with high selling price, their dung became high quality fertilizer. Unrealized, this group actually has an effort to maintain existence of forest, save spring sources, and prevent erosion. Besides that, simultaneously, living standard of group has increased.

3.2 General Condition of Mandiri Farmers Group

Mandiri farmers group was founded on January 14, 1988, with main activity is Etawah Cross goats raising. It has got some achievements in many competitions. Achievements that it ever won are First Winner of local farmers group competition in 1990, First Winner of provincial goat farmers group competition in 1990, First Winner of national goat farmers group competition in 1991, etc. Mandiri farmers group also got Kalpataru prize (prize for environmental concern) in national level 2007 in category of Environment Rescuer. Prize was delivered in summit event of world environment day, on June 6, 2007, by president of Indonesia.

Formal announcement of Etawah Cross goats market in Nganggring, Girikerto Village, Turi, managed by Mandiri farmers group was carried out on March 7, 2007 and got some positive reactions from related parties. Traders not only came from Yogyakarta, but also outside region such as Central Java, West Java, and East Java. This market is equipped with animal tether with capacity 1,000 goats, goat's showroom, canteen, and fruits kiosks. Price of Etawah Cross goat is determined by its quality. Good quality goat has long folded ears, bended head, nice color, that is black on head and white body. Idea of Etawah cross goats market making came from large number of traders and buyers in Mandiri farmers group from many regions in Indonesia. Now Etawah Cross goats population in Nganggring is 1,500. Besides that, this business gives job opportunities for Nganggring community, particularly to increase their income and welfare. Etawah Cross goats market opens twice a week, every Wednesday and Sunday.

3.3 Group Facilities

Facilities in goat farmer group are held autonomous, but some are assistance from private and government. Received assistance includes showroom building by agriculture agency, animal market provision, and electricity from State Electricity Enterprise. Showroom is a place for trading goats beyond five-day week, that is out of Wednesday and Sunday. Received electricity uses 30 mercury vapour lamps. Other assistances that will be given are road building to goat house and parking lot for visitors. Besides those facilities, there are goat house owned by farmers, gathering room for welcoming visitors, security post, dairy farm, canteen, and toilet. The head of the group also has a plan in developing the group as an livestock tourism destination area by performing Etawah Cross goat attractions such as pulling craft and goat race. These really make people curious and attract them to see, so it can attract more visitors.

In supporting economic development of Nganggring community in particular and
Turi in general, as well as surrounding areas, existence of Etawah Cross goats market can be synchronized and unified with tourism potential in Turi. In attracting visitor interest, it should be provided any products supporting Etawah Cross goats farming. In coming future, it is possible to be provided artificial insemination service for visitors who want to raise Etawah Cross goat. Its population in Sleman Regency is about 5,000 dispersed in many regions, particularly in Mount Merapi slope area, but the most dominant is in Turi Subdistrict. Prospect of Etawah Cross goat is very promising.

4. Challenges

Some challenges faced by Mandiri farmers group in developing goat farming as a livestock tourism object in Sleman Regency, are: not all member of Mandiri farmers group has realized yet about the prospect as a tourist attraction in their group. They, in general, raise their livestock for getting profit from production, which is from weight increase or milk products.

This is rooted from livestock management which is less serious in developing livestock as a tourism commodity. Mandiri group which succeeded in getting Kalpataru prize from national government in developing its area to be success area in nature and environment management, psychologically is actually easy to be directed in developing its business into a development that doesn’t rely on weight and milk products achievement, but in more extensive scope as a tourism object and an education and research center.

Besides that, term of livestock tourism is not popular yet, particularly in community/agents involving in tourism sector in general, thus it needs greater introduction and promotion. This is hard to be implemented if these challenges are only delivered to Mandiri farmers group. It needs private and local government involvement in promoting its region as an alternative tourism destination.

5. Problem of Participation and Sustainability of Livestock Tourism

5.1 Management

From the in-depth interview and observation, it can be clarified that some problems existed in the management of tourism. Management function are very important to reach the organization’s goal. Planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, and sharing of benefits are part of management functions which often operated in communities’ project. Although from the type of participation, the member of Mandiri group in genuine participation but their achievement is slow and not maintained well due to lack of knowledge and skills in management.

Problem in Planning. The most common limiting factor of the tourism development was the local community’s lack of skill and knowledge in tourism planning and more related to financial assistance. Other problem but not common were inadequate knowledge of problem analysis, setting the organizational/community’s objective, and setting the rules and regulations.
Problem in implementation. The most common problems mentioned by the members were poor coordination and communication among local community, tourism agency and tourists. Misconception among members in the same and different activities existed due to lack of skills in decision making process, and misunderstanding among members. Low commitment among members to the same activities was also one of the major problems in implementation, since there was no sanction for the one who broke the regulation.

Moreover, the activities which were done by members such as meetings and village development did not interest some of the members of community who seldom joined. Problem in monitoring and evaluation. There were problems in monitoring and evaluation activities appeared to indicated that lack of knowledge and experience about monitoring and evaluation due to lack of capability and skills, consequently, they hesitated to do monitoring and evaluation of their own activities. Management problems were mostly due to low education, skills and management experience. Local government and tourist agencies that always have good relation with and got benefit from the group should train the members of the group to rightfully manage their activity. Some trainings can be done by inviting potential members of the group to visit other tourist destination in order to get more experience in maintaining the tourism project.

5.2 Tour Guide

Tour guide is a key actor in the cultural process of concept formation. Some guides acted as intermediaries between the traveler and host, and offered themselves to strangers of quality to serve as guide in surveying the curiosities of the place (Hibbert, 1987). The modern role of guide consists of social mediation and social brokerage, the principal components of which are the leadership sphere and the mediatory sphere (Cohen, 1985). Generally, the members of the group are grateful to the guides who lead tourism to their area, without them tourism could not be developed as it has been today. Therefore, having a travel agency is one of important components in the marketing structure of tourism in Ban Ruanmit. However, many of the tourist guides still have inadequate knowledge and information of the area and the principle of tourism itself. Another problem is, tour guides having inadequate knowledge of the principle of tourism, that is, tourism should give benefit to local people. Many tour guides just bring tourism inside the village, brief them and let them take pictures without guiding them to the souvenir shop or even to food stalls. The tourism guides would even inform tourists not to food stalls.

5.3 Interaction between hosts and tourists.

The contact hypothesis state that social contact between individuals from different cultures result in mutual appreciation, understanding, respect, tolerance and liking. However, the same contact may also develop negative attitudes, stereotypes, prejudices and increase tension, hostility, suspicion and often violent attacks (Brochner, 1982).
It was strongly argued that contact between people from different cultural backgrounds lead to tension, misunderstanding and stereotyping. According to Hofstede (2001), contact between tourists and hosts different cultural backgrounds is “the most superficial from of cultural encounter”. Tourists’ and hosts’ perceptions of each other are highly distorted. Hosts develop their perceptions of tourists on the basis of symbols such as clothing or music. Tourists develop their opinions of hosts on basic of host’s working status, responsibilities and outcomes of their mutual commercial exchange. These perceptions are superficial and may create communication problems. In fact, tourist host contact may result in a negative change of attitudes (Anatasopoulos, 1992 cited by Reisinger and Turner, 2003). Moreover, in rural where cultural differences between tourists and local communities are greater, the negative effect of direct tourists host contact often generates exploitation, assault, victimization and numerous social problems. Pearce (1992) suggested that while all of these processes that are important elements shaping tourists’ and hosts’ perception of each other.

There were negative stereotypes of tourists to the hosts and vice-versa. The locals are negatively stereotyped as very poor, and under-privilege. Some tourists viewed the locals as a host and are capable of exploiting guests during economic transaction. While the hosts have negative stereotypes to the tourists, that the tourist is one who is rich, loud and insensitive to host community needs. Being devoid of human qualities, and faceless strangers. Those negative stereotypes are harmful because they create distrust, lead to discrimination and rude, hostile behavior, and impede social transaction.

References


