

Article

Understanding Visitors at an Urban Park by Profiling of Destination Attributes

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Abstract: A park has a variety of attributes, providing beautiful natural scenery and a place to rest as well as a cultural space in which performances and events are held. This study aimed to examine the various destination attributes that a place has, specifically, the resources of an urban park, by profiling visitors according to these destination attributes. The study setting, Gwanggyo Lake Park (GLP), is located in Suwon City and is in the limelight as an eco-friendly leisure and tourism destination in South Korea. As a result of profiling 595 visitors through an application of Latent Profile Analysis (LPA), three types of profiles were obtained: “Relaxation Leisure Seekers (RLS),” “Nature Environment Seekers (NES),” and “Ecological Experience Seekers (EES).” There were differences by type in visiting patterns, environmental propensity, distance from residence, and income. The results allow a better understanding of the various attributes of the park as an ecological tourism destination by visitor profile and profile-specific characteristics. Due to COVID-19, more people are visiting parks, which are natural outdoor spaces. This study provides implications for both theoretical and practical aspects of natural resource management in that it profiles visitors by highlighting parks as both leisure and tourism destinations.

Keywords: urban park; destination attributes; ecological tourism destination; latent profile analysis; natural resource management



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1. Introduction

As interest in the quality-of-life increases, the importance of green space for health and well-being is increasing [1–4]. Parks, one of the types of green space most closely related to our lives, provide beautiful natural scenery and recreational activities including walking, sports, social gatherings, and events for physical and mental health [5–8]. Depending on the characteristics and status of the park as a green space, the attributes that users require of the park differ, and the range of users becomes wider according to the attractiveness of the resources within the park [1,9,10]. For example, a local park focuses on basic functions, such as being used as a place for scenery appreciation and health promotion. Conversely, parks such as Central Park in the United States and Summer Palace in China, which are recognized as tourist destinations, provide various attractions based on ecological and environmental resources [11–15]. As more people visit these destination parks rather than general parks, the convenient use of restaurants, cafes, and facilities becomes a destination attribute. On the other hand, ecological parks where learning is conducted through observation of ecosystems display different attributes from general parks and tourist destinations [16–18]. Therefore, it is necessary to examine more diverse destination attributes, in addition to the basic attributes of parks.

Attributes are the characteristics or qualities of an object, and destination attributes are the sum of attractions that can satisfy the needs of visitors to a particular place [10,19,20]. Destination attributes that affect the choice of place and activity are also important factors

to consider in destination management [11,21]. However, existing park research has been limited to simple classification studies based on the basic purposes of park visits, such as rest/walking, health promotion, and nature appreciation [10]. Various profiles of visitors can be found at a destination, and the target varies depending on the attributes and level of the destination. Due to COVID-19, parks are becoming increasingly popular and important in terms of protecting physical and mental health [22]. As Ayala-Azcárraga et al. [1] pointed out, if visitors' well-being depends on their perception of the park's spatial (i.e., size and distance to the park) attributes, infrastructure, and environment, the management strategies may vary depending on such characteristics and functions. Furthermore, people desire to seek leisure and tourism in nearby parks rather than far away to reduce social contact with complete strangers [23]. Although the range of visitors has changed depending on the characteristics and functions of the park based on this shift in paradigm, there is a limit to utilizing basic destination attributes such as natural resources, landscape management, and convenience facilities in identifying the needs of the various visitors to the park. Therefore, in this study, preferences for more diverse attributes were analyzed targeting a concept of parks that has been expanded to include tourist destinations and ecotourism sites.

Gwanggyo Lake Park (GLP), the subject of this study, is built around a lake, and provides ecological/nature experiences and education/interpretation based on well-preserved and managed ecological and environmental resources. As a leisure and tourism destination, both residents and tourists visit the park for a variety of purposes, including the nearby convention center and Suwon Hwaseong Fortress, designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. In addition, Suwon City, where GLP is located, is known as an environmental city and as a place providing various ecological experiences. Thus, the study site has not only the attributes of a basic park, but also those of a tourism destination or ecotourism site. The purpose of this study is to explore the destination attributes of an urban park in order to classify visitors and establish relevant resource management based on the characteristics of each visitor profile. First, we establish criteria for the evaluation of destination attributes through an examination of the existing literature regarding park research and attribute evaluation in the leisure and tourism context. Second, we classify visitors based on the evaluation of destination attributes for GLP. Third, we compare and analyze differences in visitor characteristics by each profile. Fourth, we provide policy and management implications for each profile for the sustainable management of urban parks.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Destination Attributes and Profiling

Destination attributes provide various benefits and values to visitors and influence destination selection [21]. Destination attributes refer to the features and attractions of the destination itself, and consist of nature setting/resources, facilities/amenities, activities/programs, and accessibility/information [10,19,20,24,25]. Each attribute varies depending on the type and level of the destination, such as culture- versus nature-based, and the experiences visitors seek [26]. For example, a destination that emphasizes relaxation and entertainment as its main destination attributes may be more attractive to a leisure or tourism seeker, whereas destinations that provide nature observation and experiences may be more attractive to ecotourism seekers. As such, the usage behavior of visitors varies in that behaviors are either induced or restricted depending on destination attributes [27]. The various levels of an attribute further segment and diversify visitors [28]. For destination managers, destination attributes indicate how current and potential visitors view the destination [25,29]. As such, attributes are useful as an index for evaluating a place [11]. Thus, it is important to identify which attributes distinguish one destination from other competitive destinations [27,30].

Visitor research based on various destination attributes of parks has tried to examine visiting behavior types based on visiting patterns, environmental propensity, distance from residence, and demographic characteristics that have mainly focused on nature settings, social/cultural settings, facilities/amenities, and activities/programs. First, at

the social/cultural level, park visitors were surveyed as nearby residents who visit for socializing or refreshment. They enjoy taking light walks outdoors with family and friends, but do not regard the natural setting as important. The park was considered to be a place for social meetings or events, providing valued rest areas. They live close to the park and tend to visit frequently [31,32]. Marques et al. [33] found that certain visitors regard restaurants and nearby events/festivals as important attributes of parks, but do not value their natural resources. These visitors are not very interested in the park itself and enjoy instead the nearby eateries. On the other hand, a group of visitors that highly evaluated the facilities/amenities attribute showed similar behaviors to those of mass tourists. They value the reputation of the site and visit because of the presence of famous resources such as specific scenery/views or attractions that become the signature features of a site [32,34]. Facilities/amenities that increase the convenience of visiting are considered to be important by this group. They show interest in general recreational activities rather than in festivals/events or ecological experiences at the site [33]. They travel a long distance, want various experiences within the site, and tend to visit nearby attractions as well. Lastly, the type that prefers activities/programs in a nature setting showed high involvement in the ecology/environment. They can be understood as ecotourists who prefer environmental education and interpretation in addition to appreciation of the natural landscape [35–37]. This group includes many highly educated/high-income people who seek self-growth through understanding and learning about nature. They are not only willing to visit from a long distance, but they also have a high frequency of visits, and spend a long time on site [32,37]. In short, there are various profiles depending on the destination's attributes and their levels.

2.2. Destination Attributes of Parks, Tourism Destinations, and Ecotourism Sites

As the attention on pleasant environments increases, so does the importance of ecosystem services (ES) [38,39]. Ecosystem services are defined as benefits from nature's diverse ecosystem functions [40]. Cultural Ecosystem Services (CES), one of the ES dimensions, are intangible benefits that people derive from ecosystems (e.g., cultural diversity, spiritual religious values, educational values, inspiration, aesthetic values, social relations, cultural heritage values, recreation, and ecotourism) [38,40–42].

Parks with natural resources are recognized for having important CES with various benefits [42–44]. Especially, parks with various attractions become famous as tourism destinations and ecotourism sites by utilizing the ecological environment. Whereas tourism destinations emphasize wide uses of the ecological environment (e.g., activities, experience, and events) [45], ecotourism sites focus on deep uses of ecological/environmental resources such as observation, interpretation, and education [46]. At tourism destinations, improvements in convenience such as accessibility and quality of facilities becomes a particularly important attribute [14,15]. Accordingly, the destination attributes of general parks, tourism destinations, and ecotourism sites were examined by focusing on the utilization of the ecological environment.

The attributes of parks included in these studies were trees, degree of maintenance, scenic views, and natural resources such as water fountains, landscape management, and waterside resources [47,48]. Other attributes included convenience facilities such as toilets, benches, parking lots, and coffee shops [16,17]. Within parks that included elements such as castles or public art, historical and cultural resources consisting of heritage features and aesthetics were also included as park attributes [17,18]. In the study of Said and Touahmia [18], signboards were included as an attribute, which is in contrast to previous park studies. This is because the size of the eight parks within the study site was large, and it was judged as necessary to evaluate the presence or absence of signboards.

Most of the attributes of parks are also found in general tourism destinations; however, the levels of these similar attributes were found to differ slightly. Nature and waterside attributes, such as the population of wildlife, biodiversity, and rivers and oceans, covered a wider range of resources [20,49,50]. The size, number, and types of convenience facilities,

including the size and number of resting places, picnic areas, and visitor centers, were also dealt with in a variety of ways [49,51], and consisted of accessibility through various routes, for example, a good bus system and convenient transportation [12,26]. Additional attributes of general tourist attractions were the expected number of visitors, signposts, and displayed maps [15,49,52]. Cultural and ecological experiences, such as special events/festivals, special exhibits, and bird watching opportunities, also emerged as attributes [11,12]. The attributes of nearby tourism, entertainment, and accommodation were also added to those of attending sporting events, visiting religious sites, visiting surrounding city/villages, shopping, and accommodation [14,20]. In Shahrivar [15], attributes related to interpretation, such as local tour guides, were included. Interpretations at tourism destinations play a very important role in connecting visitors and destinations. For this reason, interpretations have been studied as an attribute that provides knowledge about tourism destinations and allows meaningful experiences [53].

Whereas various entertainment and experience activities are emphasized at general tourism sites, experiential activities that can be performed with natural resources (e.g., authentic interactions with nature, activities with live animal) and waterside experiences (e.g., canoeing, fishing, kayaking) are emphasized at ecotourism sites [25,35]. Interpretation conveys knowledge and increases visitors' eco-friendly behaviors [54–56]. Given that various studies are being conducted on interpretation design and training, and given the relation between interpretation and satisfaction, it is evident that interpretation is a major attribute of ecotourism sites [34,57].

In short, the common attributes of parks are natural and ecological resources, landscape management, waterside resources, cultural and historical resources, convenience facilities, accessibility, and simple eateries. For general tourism destinations, even though attributes were of the same kind, all attributes differed by level. For example, in terms of food-related attributes, whereas cafés would apply to parks, at tourism destinations this aspect would be designated as variety of cuisine. Similarly, accessibility encompassed a wider range of convenient transportation at tourist destinations compared to the parking lot attribute in parks. This is because tourist destinations must have well-equipped accessibility, since various visitors arrive in different ways, and convenient transportation that links to nearby tourist attractions is essential. As places that many people visit, they should also have various eateries. Additional attributes that appeared at general tourist attractions were signboards, congestion, various experiential activities, and nearby entertainment. Among them, experiential activities and nearby entertainment were emphasized. Resources are needed that motivate visitors to travel long distances and spend long hours on site. It seems that links between destinations and various experiences and nearby entertainment are emphasized to make visits feel worthwhile. On the other hand, ecological experiences and interpretations are emphasized more at ecotourism sites than at general tourism destinations, because improved awareness and knowledge transfer through experiences and interpretation is essential for environmental preservation and education [58], the basic principles of ecotourism.

3. Materials and Methods

3.1. Study Area

Gwanggyo Lake Park (GLP) is located in Suwon City, a core area of South Korea, and the distance from Seoul to Suwon is about 32 km. GLP has green space that preserves existing nature as much as possible, and various waterside facilities. As the largest lake park in Korea, its total area is 2,025,418 m² with the lake area being 653,003 m² accounting for about 32% of the total park area [59]. GLP offers a variety of waterside resources and landscape facilities, and is well equipped with convenient facilities, providing rest and outings for residents. As a large-scale park, it attracts tourists on the weekends through its provision of entertainment and experiences. There are cultural facilities such as a multi-purpose experience center and an outdoor performance hall within the park in which various performances, events, and festivals are held. Related to nature, there are ecological

programs such as wildlife exploration, bird watching, natural dyeing, and woodworking classes with interpreters [60]. Visitors who want to enjoy nature can be satisfied through the park's eco-friendly facilities such as an ecological observatory, an ecological environment experience education center, and the Green Forest Library.

Commercial facilities including a convention center, aquarium, restaurant, and cafe street are within just 1 km of GLP. Various attractions can also be enjoyed in Suwon City (see Figure 1), especially, Suwon Hwaseong Fortress which is only 4.6 km away from GLP. Suwon Hwaseong (meaning “beautiful castle”) is a representative tourism destination in Suwon City that is selected by CNN as a beautiful place to visit in Korea. It was registered as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1997 in recognition of its high architectural value as a prototypical example of walls and angle towers to prevent enemy invasion and bombs [61]. Tourism resources such as various cultural assets e.g., Angle Towers, Beacon Fire Station, and Haenggung (a temporary palace), museums, art galleries, performance halls, and traditional marketplaces are also available.

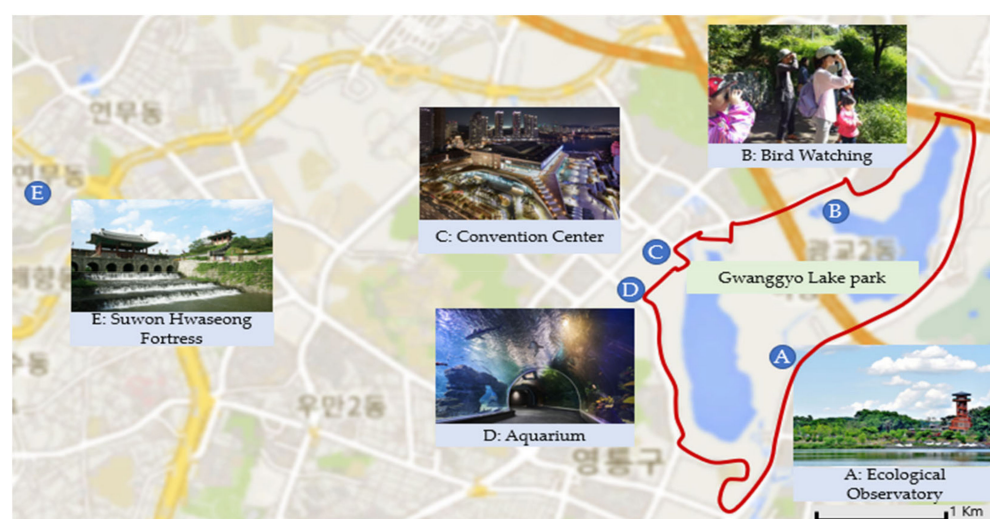


Figure 1. Map of Gwanggyo Lake Park and nearby attractions. (Source Indication: (A,C,E): <https://www.scc.or.kr/en> (accessed on 15 February 2021), (B): <http://www.gglakepark.or.kr> (accessed on 15 February 2021), (D): <https://www.aquaplanet.co.kr> (accessed on 15 February 2021).

There are also nearby opportunities for ecological experiences that utilize ecological resources, including Gwanggyo Mountain, which is located near GLP, and Chilbo Mountain, which is well known as an ecological learning center. In addition, the Climate Change Experience Center, the Ecological Art Experience Center, the Environmental Disease Atopy Center, and the Agricultural Theme Learning Center are related places which visitors interested in nature and ecology can visit [62].

Although parking facilities make it convenient to visit GLP by car, one can also visit by public transportation as there are many bus stops surrounding the park as well as a subway station within 1 km. Most of the buses and subways are connected not only to Suwon City's parks, but also the city's other various tourism and ecological resources. GLP is included in the city bus tour and walking tour promoted by Suwon City, so sightseeing in various forms can be enjoyed [63]. As such, GLP not only plays a role as a simple neighborhood park, but also boasts its status as a tourism destination. To understand the level of the destination, Table 1 compares the attributes of park sites, tourism sites, and ecotourism sites in previous studies with the attributes of GLP. The attributes are marked with O/X (present/absent).

Table 1. Attribute comparisons of natural resource sites and Gwanggyo Lake Park (GLP).

Attributes	Site				GLP Attribute Examples
	Park [16–18]	Tourism [11,12,14,15]	Ecotourism [35,54–56]	GLP [60,62]	
Natural and ecological resources	o	o	o	o	Plants, animals, birds, insects
Landscape management	o	x	x	o	Trees, shrubs, flowering plants
Waterside resources	o	o	o	o	Lakes, ponds, etc.
Convenience facilities	o	o	o	o	Restrooms, rest areas, picnic areas.
Accessibility	o	o	o	o	Parking lots, bus stops
Nearby eateries	o	o	x	o	Restaurants, cafes.
Signboards	x	o	o	o	Milestones, maps.
Cultural experiences	x	o	x	o	Festivals, performances, events
Natural and ecological experiences	x	o	o	o	Wildlife/bird/ecological plant observations
Nearby entertainment	x	o	x	o	Hwaseong Fortress, Convention Center, Aquarium, hotel
Interpretation	x	x	o	o	Nature/ecology

Source: Reorganization of previous research findings.

GLP is equipped with ecological environment resources, landscaping, and convenient facilities, which are the basic attributes of a park. It also has characteristics as a tourist destination, including entertainment, experience programs, congestion, and signboards, which are attributes of tourist destinations. In addition, ecological experiences and interpretation emphasized at ecotourism sites indicate that the park even has characteristics of an ecotourism site. In short, GLP not only has the attributes of a basic park, but also those of a tourism destination or ecotourism site.

3.2. Data Collection and Measures

A one-on-one interview using a structured questionnaire was adopted as the survey method, and the interviewer who was trained in advance directly explained and conducted the questionnaire. The survey was conducted in August 2019. Most Koreans go on vacation in August, so there are many tourists in the park during this period of time. The study sample was selected from visitors to the study site using a random sampling method. Of 650 questionnaires received, 595 responses were included in data analysis, excluding invalid questionnaires.

Considering the characteristics of the study site, the concept of destination attributes was based on previous research on general park sites, tourism sites, and ecotourism sites that emphasize services, programs, and surrounding connections, and large-scale national parks that emphasize ecology and nature [11,12,14–18,35,54–56]. As a result, the following 11 items were included as variables: diversity of natural and ecological resources, landscape management, signboards, waterside resources, interpretations (ecology/nature), cultural experiences (performances/festivals/events), ecological and nature experiences, convenience facilities (toilets/benches), accessibility (parking/public transportation), nearby entertainment (performances/festivals/tourism), and nearby eateries (restaurants/cafes).

In order to describe the implications of each type, the relations with influencing variables such as typical travel patterns, ecological/environmental interest, and sociodemographic characteristics were examined by type. To determine typical travel patterns, visitors were asked about the general theme of their travels in the past year, and the purpose and number of visits to GLP. The degree of environmental propensity was examined using 13 items (i.e., number of visits, amount spent, & involvement) based on the prior research

of [35,64], and sociodemographic characteristics (gender, age, residence, education level, average monthly household income).

3.3. Analysis

Latent Profile Analysis (LPA) was used to categorize visitors to GLP according to destination attributes. This analysis is a person-centered approach, allowing the identification of latent profiles that exist within a sample by clustering according to different characteristics [65,66]. Unlike in regression analysis, it is possible to identify variances within groups in addition to linear correlations that are all low or all high [67]. Destination attributes that visitors feel as attractions vary according to their needs. Thus, this analysis is useful for examining the destination attributes of GLP that has various attributes based on the ecological environment, as a combination of a park, tourism destination, and ecotourism site. In addition, as a type of cluster analysis, LPA classifies groups according to statistical criteria and is useful for deriving implications for each group by examining their relations with other variables [65–67]. In the field of leisure/tourism, LPA is widely used to examine the purpose of visit [68], motivation [69], attitude [70], and value [64]. In this study, LPA was used to categorize visitors to GLP according to destination attributes. In addition to sociodemographic characteristics of each type, this study aims to examine differences in typical travel patterns, purpose and frequency of visits to GLP, typical ecological/environmental interest and spending, and place of residence. For this, cross tabulation and one-way ANOVAs were performed.

4. Results

4.1. Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

The sample of 595 respondents included more men ($n = 309$, 52.1%) than women ($n = 284$, 47.9%). The average age of participants was 32.3 years ($SD = 11.72$). College attendance/graduation was the most common education level ($n = 448$, 75.5%), and the average household income was \$5000/month, which indicated that a high proportion of participants were highly educated high-income visitors. 52.4% of respondents lived within 30 min from the study site, 34.1% within 30 min to 2 h, and 13.5% more than 2 h.

4.2. Selection of the Latent Profile Model

In order to classify visitors according to the destination attributes of GLP, LPA was conducted using 11 destination attribute items. The models including two to four profiles and their AIC, BIC, Entropy, and p -values are presented in Table 2. In the model with four latent profiles, the AIC (1914.67) and BIC (19406.51) were the lowest and Entropy was the closest to 1, when compared to the other models. However, in the case of the three-profile model, not only was it statistically significant, but when a profile was added from the two-profile to the three-profile model, the AIC and BIC also decreased sharply. In addition, the three-profile rather than the four-profile model was judged to better explain the attributes of GLP allowing various interpretations from a theoretical/practical point of view, and thus was selected.

Table 2. Latent profile model fit indices of destination attributes.

Number of Profiles (k)	AIC	BIC	Entropy	LMR LRT p Value
2	20,660.100	20,812.422	0.867	<0.0001
3	19,454.549	19,660.631	0.897	<0.0001
4	19,146.667	19,406.510	0.859	<0.0001

AIC = Akaike information criterion; BIC = Bayesian information criterion; LMR = Lo-Mendell-Rubin; LRT = Likelihood Ratio Test (comparison with a $(k - 1)$ class model).

4.3. Characteristics of Profiles by Destination Attributes

The profiles of 595 visitors to GLP according to destination attributes, derived through LPA, are shown in Table 3 and Figure 2. Destination attributes were evaluated on a scale

of 5 and were organized as shown in Table 4 by the average of all visitors to GLP. For relative comparisons within each profile, t-score values were also used and are presented in Figure 2.

Table 3. Sample characteristics by latent profile.

Destination Attributes ¹	RLS (17.0%)	NES (55.5%)	EES (27.5%)	Average
Landscape management	2.98	3.98	4.13	3.70
Waterside resources	2.79	4.07	4.04	3.64
Nature and ecological resources experiences	2.81	3.34	4.16	3.44
Convenience facilities	2.81	3.39	4.02	3.41
Signboards	2.97	3.54	3.67	3.40
Natural and ecological resources	2.96	3.64	3.53	3.38
Accessibility (parking, public transportation)	2.58	3.20	4.10	3.30
Nearby entertainment (festivals & tourism)	2.42	2.41	3.86	2.90
Interpretation (nature, ecology)	2.61	2.66	3.36	2.88
Cultural experiences (festivals & events)	2.63	2.61	3.26	2.83
Nearby eateries (cafés, restaurants)	2.58	2.31	3.31	2.73
Average	2.76	3.21	3.78	3.25

¹ Rated on a five-point scale from 1 (not at all agreed) to 5 (strongly agreed).

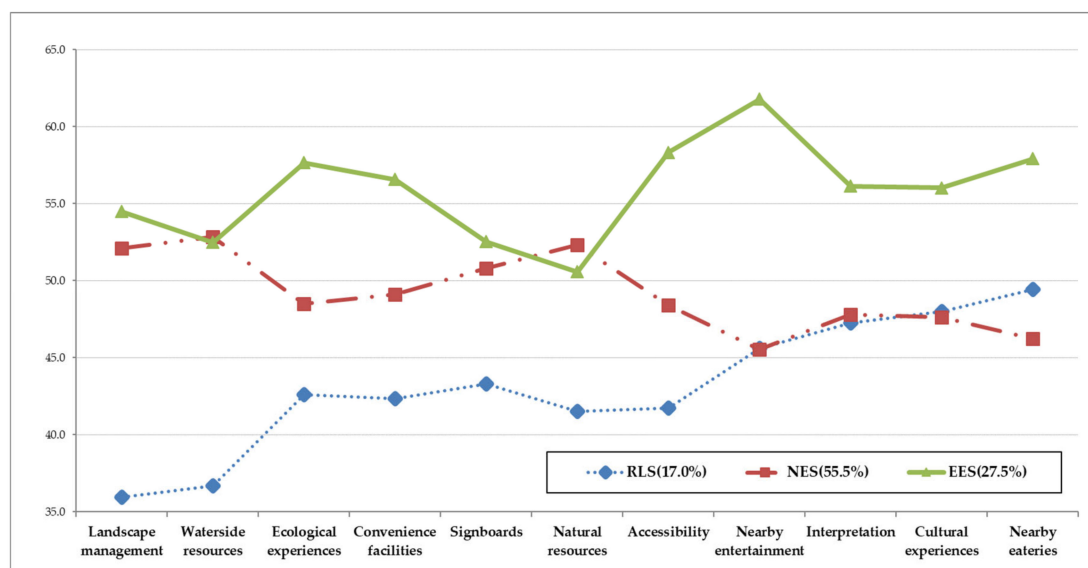


Figure 2. T-scores of destination attributes for each profile.

Prior to the classification by destination attributes, the perception of the destination attributes of GLP by all visitors was examined. Results indicated that the study site was recognized as an ecological green space due to high ratings for park landscape management (3.70), waterside resources (3.64), nature and ecological experiences (3.44), and diversity of natural and ecological resources (3.38). On the other hand, ratings were low for nearby eateries (2.73), cultural experiences (2.83), interpretations, and nearby entertainment (2.90). This indicates that visitors to the park regard basic functions of the park, such as landscape, as more important than additional functions such as eateries and experiences. However, an examination of each profile shows different perceptions.

Table 4. Visiting pattern by latent profile.

	Latent Profile			Chi Square or F
	Relaxation Leisure Seekers (RLS)	Nature Environment Seekers (NES)	Ecological Experience Seekers (EES)	
Typical travel pattern	Outings/entertainment (67.3%/65.7%)	Historical and cultural exploration (4.3%/3.9%)	Ecological experiences (48.1%/30.5%)	35.717 *
Purpose of visits	Picnics (40.0%/27.1%)	Rest/walking (62.6%/64.5%)	Ecological experiences (4.4%/2.4%)	46.046 *
Frequency of visits	9.7 times	4.7 times	8.5 times	4.081 **

* $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$.

The results of the latent profiling according to destination attributes indicated that the first profile rated the attributes of GLP the lowest, with an average of 2.76. Within the group, it was found that nearby eateries (cafes restaurants) and cultural experiences (performances/events/festivals) were rated relatively higher. On the other hand, they did not rate landscape management and natural resources such as waterside resources highly. This group was interpreted as perceiving the park as a space for outings for light relaxation and social gathering, rather than as an ecological green space, and was named the “Relaxation Leisure Seekers (RLS)” or those who pursue leisure in everyday life. The second profile rated the attractiveness of the natural environment of GLP highly, including waterside resources, diversity of natural and ecological resources, and park landscape management. Since GLP has a reputation for landscape management and lake scenery, it can be said that this group places a high value on the signature attractions of GLP. That is, when this profile visits a place, they pay attention to the things that must be seen. However, they did not rate the entertainment or eateries around the park highly. Whereas this profile evaluates the natural environment itself as attractive, it is not seen to have the infrastructure to provide pleasure and convenience within itself. Accordingly, the profile was named the “Nature Environment Seekers (NES).” The last profile knows the various charms of GLP because they have high ratings for cultural experiences (festivals/tourism), nearby eateries, and nature and ecological experiences surrounding the lake park. As a profile that rates the attributes of the place relatively highly, particularly the ecological experiences and interpretation of GLP, and is sensitive to the entertainment, congestion, and accessibility of the surrounding environment, it was named the “Ecological Experience Seekers (EES)”.

4.4. Comparisons of Latent Profiles

In order to derive the characteristics of each profile, differences according to visit patterns, ecological and environmental propensity, distance from residence, and household income were analyzed to examine differences in interest in the ecological environment and demographic characteristics.

First, visit patterns were examined through typical travel patterns, the purpose of visiting GLP, and the number of visits. In order to derive the salient characteristics of each profile, the focus was placed on relative differences. For example, the overall preference for historical and cultural experiences was low at 3.9%, but among the profiles, the NES was highest at 4.3%, showing the corresponding result in Table 4. The RLS was found to prefer outings/entertainment, the NES preferred historical and cultural exploration, and the EES preferred natural scenery/nature experiences.

Regarding the purpose of visiting GLP, results showed that the RLS visited GLP mainly for picnics, the NES for rest/walking, and the EES for nature and ecological experiences. For the number of visits to the park in the past year, the RLS reported the most visits and the NES the least.

The characteristics of ecological and environmental propensity are shown in Table 5. As for visiting attractions related to the environment and ecology, the three profiles mostly visited forests or mountains (3.94 times) and domestic waterside parks (10.14 times) that

were more than 1 h away, during the last year. When comparing RLS and NES, RLS had more experience visiting forests and mountains, and NES had more experience visiting waterside parks. In terms of interest in the ecology and environment, RLS had the least investment in purchasing books or travel related to ecology, and the degree of involvement in the ecological environment was the lowest. On the other hand, EES, in particular, spent the most on books, lectures, and traveling relating to ecology/environment, and the degree of involvement in exploring ecological resources was the highest (3.37).

Table 5. Ecological and environmental propensity by latent profile.

		Latent Profile			F
		RLS	NES	EES	
Number of visits to ecological attractions	National forest, mountains (1hr or more away)	2.86 times	2.41 times	3.94 times	4.684 **
	National waterside parks	6.23 times	6.37 times	10.14 times	3.041 *
Ecology/environmental interest	Amount spent	32.2 USD	53.5 USD	241.7 USD	3.818 **
	Involvement ¹	2.75	2.98	3.37	52.801 *

¹ Rated on a five-point scale from 1 (not at all agreed) to 5 (strongly agreed); * $p < 0.01$ ** $p < 0.05$.

As for sociodemographic characteristics in Table 6, RLS's household income was the highest and EES's was the lowest. As for the travel distance between the study site and residence, EES had the shortest distance, and NES had the longest distance.

Table 6. Sociodemographic characteristics by latent profile.

		Latent Profile			Chi Square
		RLS	NES	EES	
Household income	More than 7000 USD (26.0%/17.0%)	5000~7000 USD (65.1%/55.5%)	Less than 5000 USD (36.0%/27.5%)		25.342 *
Distance from residence	1~2 h (39.6%/34.1%)	More than 2 h (16.1%/13.5%)	30 min or less (65.0%/52.4%)		15.660 *

* $p < 0.001$.

5. Discussion

This study aimed to classify the profiles of visitors according to the various attributes of a park and to examine the characteristics of each profile, from a destination perspective. Accordingly, various destination attributes ranging from natural resources to convenience facilities, entertainment, and ecological experience were identified for parks, tourism sites, and ecotourism sites. In particular, this study aimed to categorize visitors based on the various attributes of a park that have not been dealt with in depth in previous park research, moving away from the simple dichotomy of visitors as residents and tourists. The results and implications of this study are as follows.

First, it was possible to confirm the status of GLP. The destination attributes of parks, tourist attractions, and ecotourism sites were also found for GLP. Although the level of attribute varies, natural and ecological resources, waterside resources, and convenience facilities are common in parks, tourism destinations, and ecotourism sites [15–18,55,56]. These attributes were evaluated as strengths of GLP, and as being at a high level. In addition, ecological and nature experiences, signboards, and accessibility, which are found in general parks [16–18], were rated relatively highly in GLP, indicating that GLP is not just regarded as a simple park. On the other hand, the ratings were lower for nearby eateries, entertainment inside and outside the park, and interpretations, unlike for tourism destinations [11,12,14,15] and ecotourism sites [35,54–56]. This suggests that, although the

park has attributes as an overall leisure and tourism destination, more effort is needed to raise its level.

Second, various types of visitor to the park were confirmed through LPA. As a result of categorizing visitors according to the destination attributes of GLP, three types were derived: “Relaxation Leisure Seekers (RLS),” “Nature Environment Seekers (NES),” and “Ecological Experience Seekers (EES).” In existing studies of destination attributes, the attributes of target sites are averaged and classified into high, medium, or low [14,17,35,54–56]. Visit motivation and preferences for destinations are not simple but complex and dynamic in nature. Previous studies [68–71] have identified multi-level and co-occurring needs of visitors through LPA. Likewise, LPA makes it possible to understand the various destination attributes by allowing the identification of variations within a group. The results indicate that the 11 destination attributes of GLP were fully identified using LPA. In addition, the various levels of destination attributes were displayed even within each profile, whereas linearity used to be assumed using regression analysis. Of note, this study deepens and diversifies the attributes of parks according to park status, going beyond existing park research which simply categorizes visitors based on basic park attributes. For example, by considering the nature of ecotourism sites, natural and ecological resources are presented through eco-natural experiences and explanations according to their utilization. Also, considering the park’s properties as a tourist attraction, entertainment that can be provided inside and outside of the park has been diversified. This study confirmed the usefulness of LPA in park research by considering various attributes beyond the basic attributes of parks and showing diversity within types rather than simple linear results.

Third, the understanding of park visitors was improved by categorizing them according to destination attributes, moving beyond a simple categorization based on visit purpose and demographic characteristics [10]. Destination attributes are elements that attract visitors to travel destinations. Thus, they are the most important factor in making decisions regarding visits, and visitors’ evaluation of the travel site is essential for establishing a management strategy. Among the derived profiles, the “RLS” had an overall low evaluation of the attributes but regarded entertainment and eateries in the park highly. On the other hand, the “NES” evaluated natural and biological resources, park landscape management, and waterside resources highly, the core attractions of GLP, but had low ratings for entertainment and eateries. The third profile, the “EES,” rated all of the attributes highly, but nature and biological resources, park landscape management, and waterside resources were rated relatively lower. In this way, this study improves the understanding of visitors to the study site by categorizing destination attributes with consideration of the status of the park, and contributes to establishing a clearer management strategy.

Fourth, the understanding of park visitors was deepened by comparing the visit pattern and environmental propensity by visitor type based on destination attributes. The RLS usually visit in the form of outings, and mainly visit GLP for picnics. They are the most frequent visitors of the three types, but the least interested in the ecological environment. In contrast, appreciating and experiencing the natural landscape was the visit purpose for the EES in both their typical travel patterns and visits to GLP, and this type was found to be highly interested and invested in the ecology and environment. Although relatively less than the RLS, they visited the study site many times. The NES showed a higher preference for historical and cultural exploration compared to the other types, and they visited GLP mainly for resting and walks. Among the three types, NES showed the lowest frequency of visits. Likewise, various needs with regards to the park were identified, and practical implications were provided for linking the study site and the surrounding areas.

Fifth, our understanding of ecological/environmental interests was improved. The EES showed a different trend from previous studies. The EES who live closest to the park showed a strong ecological and environmental propensity and exhibited the characteristics of ecotourists. According to Smith et al. [31] and Weaver and Lawton [34], groups who want a high-level ecological experience and nature learning do not hesitate to seek the target site even from a long distance. In addition, a comparison of household income

across types indicated that the RLS had the highest household income, whereas the EES had the lowest. The household income of the EES who are most similar to ecotourists was low. This seems to be in contrast with previous studies that show that ecotourists have high incomes [33]. However, despite their low income, the EES invest the most in the ecology/environment, make frequent ecological/environment-related visits, and seek out many ecological destinations. Rather than having a high absolute income, ecotourists' willingness to spend on the ecology/environment relative to their income is high.

6. Conclusions

The main focus of this study was to identify and articulate the profile of urban park visitors based on destination attributes. The practical implications of this study are as follows for each profile. First, the RLS rated the entertainment and eateries attributes of GLP highly. Rather than having interest in the natural/ecological environment, they visit often and perceive the park as a place for outings. Therefore, they visit GLP most often among the three profiles, and they perceive the park as a place for outings rather than as a place to enjoy nature, ecology, and the environment. They are similar to the "occasional visitors" in Marques et al. [33], who seek activity or performance at destinations and have little interest in the natural environment and landscape. They also value eateries like the RLS. For these visitors to GLP, it is necessary for them to be able to find fun in the park such as festivals and events. As a convention center was built at the entrance to the park in 2019, a department store, aquarium, and hotel were also added. In particular, various exhibitions as well as international conferences will be held at the convention center. Therefore, strategies to help the RLS find more fun inside and outside the park are needed, as these visitors have the highest household income among the visitor types, and make the most visits to the park.

Second, it is important to extend the staying time by enabling the NES to see more when they visit since they travel the farthest distance. This visitor type regards eateries and entertainment in and around the target site by this visitor type as less important. Similar to this type, the "structured ecotourists" in Weaver et al. [34] consider the reputation of a site as important. They evaluate the provision of tourist information and appropriate infrastructure as important attributes, and demand shopping and theme parks, and related attractions. In GLP, there is room for improvement in terms of surrounding eateries, due to the increase in infrastructure related to the building of the convention center. In addition, due to the nearby Hwaseong Fortress, designated as a UNESCO Cultural Heritage site, Suwon City as a whole is rich in historical and cultural resources such as museums and art galleries. Considering that the NES has a higher interest in historical and cultural resources compared to the other types, it would be necessary to provide information with linkages to historical and cultural resources.

Third, the EES group is highly interested in the ecology/environment and can be understood as typical ecotourists. The "Nature Experience Seekers" of Smith et al. [31] and the "Sociable Naturalists" in Marques et al. [33] show a pattern similar to that of the EES. They regard environmental education and interpretation as important, and show a high demand for places that offer observation and education, as well as information services. Park visitors are attentive to the richness of nature resources and well-managed landscape because of their beauty and effect on well-being [6]. Suwon City, where GLP is located, is famous as an environmental city. There are mountains around the park, an ecological experience center and a climate change experience center, and nearby natural and ecological resources throughout the city, such as an environmental disease atopy center, an agricultural theme learning center, and an ecological art experience center, providing many natural and environmental resources. Therefore, it is necessary to provide opportunities for deeper and more diverse experiences by creating linkages with surrounding ecological and environmental attractions. Probably due to living closest to the park and knowing it well, this group also evaluated signboards as less important. Signboards may not be useful to local residents, but are useful for people who do not know the park well. Therefore, it is

necessary to provide more than basic directions to include detailed information such as festivals/events in the park and surrounding resources.

This study is significant as it improves the understanding of how to strengthen the well-being of park visitors, in that the destination attributes of a complex place such as a park were evaluated, and visitors were classified according to those attributes. Parks with various attractions are visited by both residents and tourists. This study contributes to the literature as it examines the properties of leisure and tourist destinations such as linkages with nearby attractions, accessibility, and utilization of ecological and environmental resources that were neglected in existing park research. This study evaluated the attributes of an urban park consisting of living and cultural resources and natural ecological resources, with which cultural and historical resources can be linked. As the study site has a short history, and its utilization as a leisure and tourism resource is relatively low, there were limitations with regards to examining more diverse visitor types. For example, one can only appreciate the scenery of the lake in the park, as there is no provision of accompanying experiences or programs. In the future, efforts should be made so that nature is used more actively, and is well connected with surrounding areas, and more people from further distances are able to perceive the attributes of world-class attractions. This study has a limitation in that it overlooked the properties of rest and health promotion by focusing on destination attributes from the perspective of leisure/tourism destinations utilizing the ecological environment. It is necessary to deal with aspects of physical fitness and mental health care in future studies, in order to further enrich understanding of park visitors. Although this study focuses on one of Korea's urban parks, the results are potentially applicable more broadly to locations within a similar ecological park context.

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