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Abstract

This study aimed to analyze development factors and prioritize marine leisure sports in small and medium-sized cities. The research methods used in this study were a Delphi survey and hierarchical analysis. The results were analyzed based on the research methods and procedures, and conclusions were drawn based on the results. First, the top factors for marine leisure sports development in small and medium-sized cities were identified as price, facilities, programs, environment, and human resources. Second, the program factors identified as sub-factors of marine leisure sports development in small and medium-sized cities were identified as diversity, expertise, safety, segmentation, and program development. The price factor included lesson fees, ancillary facility fees, package product development, membership system, and coupon system. The human resources factor included employee friendliness, employee conscientiousness, employee initiative, instructor friendliness, and instructor expertise. The environmental factor included business accessibility, well-organized facilities, accessibility to tourist attractions, cleanliness/hygiene, and convenient public transportation. The facility factor included showers, restrooms, parking, amenities, and equipment replacement. Third, among the factors contributing to the development of marine leisure sports in small and medium-sized cities, safety was the most important program factor, followed by tuition fees for pricing, instructor friendliness for human resources, accessibility to business sites for environmental factors, and equipment replacement for facilities. As this study suggests, the development of marine leisure in small and medium-sized cities requires a stronger focus on securing pricing, facilities, programs, environment, and human resources than in large cities.

Keywords: *Medium-sized cities, Prioritize, Marine leisure sports, Program factor.*

1. Introduction

One of the most significant changes and developments in our lives today is the growing interest in leisure sports culture. Marine leisure sports consumers have diverse tastes, preferences, and needs, leading to a surge in the industry despite challenging conditions. To meet this diverse consumer base, managers must differentiate their marketing strategies.

Representative examples of marine leisure sports include water skiing and wakeboarding. These sports are generally categorized as adventurous recreational activities and adventure sports. Water skiing satisfies the human desire for challenge through free movement on the water. Its combination of speed and thrills has earned it continued popularity among the general public. Wakeboarding, along with snowboarding, a winter sport, is growing in popularity among younger generations. Wakeboarding, which can be enjoyed on rivers and lakes, is gaining popularity as a healthy leisure sport that connects with nature. These marine leisure sports, including water skiing and wakeboarding, significantly contribute to national leisure demand and tourism development. Furthermore, they possess high-value-added characteristics

that can greatly contribute to the development of the sports industry.

Marine leisure sports are a crucial factor in community development. However, the industry focuses solely on expanding facilities, failing to meet the needs of users. Therefore, for marine leisure sports to generate high added value, they must be able to satisfy user needs. Furthermore, they must possess high market competitiveness and implement systematic and specific marketing strategies. South Korea possesses a regional advantage ideal for marine leisure sports activities. However, diverse research aimed at leveraging these strengths is lacking.

Recently, numerous studies on development have been conducted across the leisure sports industry. From a modern perspective, user development, which manifests in usage behavior, is gaining importance from business, social, and economic perspectives, and is developing into an independent academic discipline. Research on user development differs from traditional research models. First, unlike economic models, it focuses on the customer decision-making process and psychological activities. Second, the various variables and their relationships are largely based on theories developed in behavioral science. Third, modern models focus on the consumption decision process. Consequently, their formats are largely a mix of workflow diagrams.

The development of marine leisure sports lies in the characteristics perceived by users. These developments can be dynamic or fixed. Fixed factors cannot be determined once, but dynamic factors can change depending on the situation. These developments provide crucial clues for users to determine their behavior. For managers, they serve as fundamental data for analyzing user behavior. Previous research on the development of leisure sports includes studies on ski resort development [4, 5] and on motivations and satisfaction with marine leisure sports [6, 7]. These studies extracted development factors and analyzed motivations, satisfaction, and repurchase intentions. However, the factors identified in existing studies alone are not sufficient to explain the behavior and attitudes of users with diverse needs.

Therefore, this study sought expert input to promote the development of marine leisure sports in small and medium-sized cities. Through this insight, we aim to understand the diverse needs of users. Understanding these needs will help predict the development of marine leisure sports users. This process will provide an opportunity to explore ways to improve marine leisure sports and increase user satisfaction. Therefore, this study aims to determine priorities for establishing effective strategies for the development of marine leisure sports.

2. Research Method.

2.1. Research subjects

This study selected participants who were deemed capable of contributing to the development of marine leisure sports in small and medium-sized cities. The selection criteria were experts with experience, specialized knowledge, and expertise related to marine leisure sports. Purposeful sampling, a nonprobability sampling technique, was used for the sampling method. Based on previous research on the Delphi technique [9], which suggests that a consensus group of around 20 experts is appropriate, a total of 17 individuals were ultimately selected. All participants voluntarily agreed to participate in the study, and <Table 1> shows the composition of the expert group.

Table 1. Composition of the expert group

Group	Selection criteria	Care er	N
Profes sor	Marine Leisure Sports Major	11.3	3
Doctor	Marine Leisure Sports Major	4.8	3
Operat or	Marine leisure sports facilities	7.0	3
Hobby ist	More than 10 years of experience in marine leisure sports	16.4	5
Leader (coach)	More than 10 years of experience in marine leisure sports	21.5	3
total			17

2.2. Survey Tool

This study used a questionnaire as its research tool. The draft questionnaire was developed based on various prior research materials to identify development factors and priorities. The Delphi technique was then used to identify development factors. The questionnaire comprised five development factors: program, price, human resources, environment, and facilities. Question descriptions and examples provided clues to help experts develop their own ideas. Previous studies [5, 6, 7] specifically identified five factors: program, price, human resources, environment, and facilities.

2.3. Research Procedure

The procedure for this study to identify and prioritize key factors for the development of marine leisure sports in small and medium-sized cities was as follows.

In the first stage, we surveyed and collected relevant concepts, policies, and prior research on marine leisure sports. In the second stage, we used the Delphi technique with a group of 17 experts to identify key factors necessary for the development of marine leisure sports in small and medium-sized cities. The Delphi survey was conducted in stages. In the first stage, an open-ended questionnaire was used. The second and third stages utilized structured questionnaires. In the third stage, we used hierarchical analysis to determine the final priorities for the factors identified through the Delphi survey analysis. To this end, we conducted a pairwise comparison questionnaire on key factors with the same group of experts.

2.3.1. First Delphi Survey

Prior to conducting the first Delphi survey, the research purpose, methodology, and future schedule were fully explained to the 17 selected experts via email, phone, and face-to-face. Their consent was then obtained for participation.

The first Delphi survey questionnaire was sent to the 17 experts via email, and all 17 experts

responded. The responses collected from the first Delphi survey were analyzed through a content analysis process, categorizing similar content into subcategories. Based on this analysis, a structured second Delphi survey instrument was developed.

2.3.2. Second Delphi Survey

The second Delphi survey categorized the factors identified in the first Delphi survey into categories by domain through a meeting of experts [9]. The categories were developed by referencing factors for development presented in prior research on marine leisure sports. Related experts were consulted for review, and similarly meaningful items were revised and supplemented, categorizing them into higher-order and lower-order factors.

2.3.3 Third Delphi Survey

The third Delphi survey reexamined the factors explored in the second Delphi survey, and was structured to include factors for addition, modification, and deletion. The results of the second Delphi survey, based on a 5-point Likert scale, were presented for each question: mean, standard deviation, median, agreement, convergence, and content validity ratio (CVR). The consensus among experts was confirmed, and the identified factors were categorized by domain after a re-conference with the relevant experts.

2.4. Hierarchical Analysis

The questionnaire used for hierarchical analysis was a two-way factorial comparison questionnaire with a 9-point ratio scale. Feedback was collected from the same expert group that participated in the consensus Delphi survey. The hierarchical analysis questionnaire was provided with sufficient explanations and examples in advance to guide the process. The hierarchical analysis process involved a 1:1 pairwise comparison of each factor to determine its relative importance, and then a final priority was derived.

2.5. Data Processing

To identify development factors for marine leisure sports, the relative importance of these development factors was compared and assessed. Since the consistency index (CI) was insignificant for respondents without specialized knowledge, only experts were sampled and extracted. For this study, reliable data were coded and statistically processed. Stratified analysis of the input data was performed using EC-2000. Prior to conducting the stratified analysis, Excel was used to identify cases with a geometric mean (GeoMean) value of 1 or less.

3. Research Results

3.1. Factors for the development of marine leisure sports

Factors affecting the development of marine leisure sports were first identified through literature. For example, the development of leisure sports consumers was categorized into facilities, programs, atmosphere, cost, and service [6]. The development of marine leisure sports was categorized into five categories: programs, staff (instructors), facilities, and environment [11]. Factors affecting customer satisfaction in marine leisure sports were categorized into five categories: programs, staff, instructors, main facilities, and auxiliary facilities [7]. Factors affecting college golfers' service satisfaction were categorized into seven

factors: price, staff, caddies, courses, reservations, transportation, and restaurants [12]. The selection factors for windsurfing clubs were categorized into five factors: convenience of transportation and facilities, instructors' educational skills, camaraderie, natural conditions, and annual membership fees [13]. The development of ski resorts was categorized into four categories: sales promotion, location, price, and facilities [4]. Examining the development factors of previous studies revealed numerous factors, including transportation, facilities, instructors, fellowship, natural conditions, annual membership fees, price, staff, sales promotions, location, and auxiliary facilities. However, this study focused on extrinsic rather than intrinsic motivation to identify which factors users prioritize as development factors before engaging in marine leisure sports. This study categorized these factors into five: price, program, facilities, human resources, and environment.

In the process of gathering information on marine leisure sports development from experts, the Delphi questionnaire items were explained and exemplified based on previous research. Specific questions or alternatives were presented as cues or stimuli to stimulate the experts' thinking and ideas. To assist the experts in responding to the Delphi survey, the questionnaire asked them to respond to any factors other than the five listed. However, after completing three rounds of Delphi, the responses were reviewed and the five most important factors in marine leisure sports development were determined to be price, program, human resources, environment, and facilities.

3.2. Sub-factors of marine leisure sports development

The first Delphi survey asked whether, beyond the five factors of program, price, human resources, environment, and facilities, other factors influence the selection of marine leisure sports. The sub-factors of the first Delphi survey are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Subfactors from the first Delphi survey

Development	Subfactors
Program	safety, diversity, expertise, segmentation, operational capabilities, differentiation, interest, uniqueness, fun, development of programs differentiation .
Price	initial usage fees, course fees, auxiliary facility fees, accommodation fees, coupon fees, deductions, restaurant usage fees, amusement ride usage fees, diversification of rate plans, group discount rates, package product development, membership operation efficiency, and overall price appropriateness.
Human Resources	employee friendliness, leadership integrity, customer understanding, leadership expertise, appearance, friendliness, proactiveness, leadership qualities, store management cleanliness, employee image, employee safety training, customer-tailored training, and employee salary and welfare improvements.
Environment	Business accessibility, convenience, layout of exercise facilities, safety, cleanliness, atmosphere, rest area, door-to-door access, friendly instructors, sincere management, well-organized facilities, calm waters, professional instructors, walking distance, view of surrounding environment, modern facilities, clean water, connectivity of exercise facilities, ease of access to facilities, availability of auxiliary facilities connected to facilities, repair of aging facilities, efforts to promote marine leisure sports, clean atmosphere

Facilities	awareness, amenities, parking lot, restrooms, rental equipment, equipment condition, convenience, cleanliness, aging, equipment availability, dock facilities, showers, restaurants, lodging, nearby transportation, safety equipment, lodging, restaurants, auxiliary facilities, drop-off facilities, safety facility reinforcement, smoking facilities, changing rooms, replacement of aging equipment, interior design, rest area
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As shown in <Table 2>, the first Delphi survey revealed a total of 10 program factors, 13 price factors, 13 human resource factors, 22 environmental factors, and 25 facility factors. These extracted factors were manually analyzed by three professors specializing in marine leisure sports and three doctoral students in marine leisure sports, integrating and eliminating similar and less important items. This process led to the adjustment of development factors. As a result of the survey, 28 factors were listed by grouping overlapping factors and organizing factors with similar concepts. As shown in <Table 3>, six program factors, six price factors, six human resource factors, five environment factors, and five facility factors were listed. <Table 3> shows the results of the second Delphi survey.

Table3. Subfactors from the second Delphi survey

Development	Subfactors
Program	diversity, expertise, safety, segmentation, uniqueness, program development
Price	tuition fees, facility fees, package product development, membership system, coupon system, group discount rates
Human resources	employee friendliness, employee sincerity, employee initiative, leader friendliness, leader expertise, and improved employee welfare
Environment	accessibility to business locations, well-organized facilities, accessibility to tourist attractions, cleanliness/hygiene, and convenience of public transportation
Facilities	shower room, restroom, parking lot, convenience facilities, equipment replacement

<Table 4> shows the results of the third Delphi survey, which removed sub-factors with a mean value less than 4.0 and a coefficient of variation (CV) value greater than 25%.

Table 4. Descriptive statistics of subfactors from the third Delphi survey

Development	Subfactors	Result		
		M±SD	coefficient (CV%)	Adoption status
Program	diversity	4.06±.73	17.9%	○
	expertise	4.56±.62	13.5%	○
	safety	4.67±.77	16.4%	○
	segmentation	4.44±.62	13.8%	○

Price	uniqueness	4.06±1.14	28.4%	×
	program development	4.33±.69	15.8%	○
	tuition fees	4.56±.62	13.5%	○
	acility fees	4.67±.48	10.4%	○
	package development, product	4.06±.81	19.8%	○
	membership system	4.61±.70	10.9%	○
	coupon system	4.61±.50	15.1%	○
	group discount rates	3.94±1.11	28.1%	×
Human resources	employee friendliness,	4.50±.62	13.7%	○
	employee sincerity	4.67±.59	12.7%	○
	employee initiative	4.50±.62	13.7%	○
	leader friendliness	4.61±.50	10.9%	○
	leader expertise	4.50±.51	11.4%	○
	improved employee welfare	3.78±1.06	28.1%	×
Environment	accessibility to business locations	4.06±0.94	23.1%	○
	well-organized facilities	4.56±0.51	11.2%	○
	accessibility to tourist attractions	4.39±0.69	15.9%	○
	cleanliness/hygiene	4.44±0.70	15.9%	○
	convenience of public transportation	4.39±0.78	17.7%	○
Facilities	shower room	4.50±0.52	11.4%	○
	restroom	4.17±0.62	14.8%	○
	parking lot	4.11±0.58	14.2%	○
	convenience facilities	4.33±0.59	13.7%	○
	equipment replacement	4.50±0.62	13.7%	○

3.3. Prioritization of factors for the development of marine leisure sports

3.3.1. Priority among program factors

As shown in <Table 5>, the relative importance and priority of programs among the development factors for marine leisure sports in small and medium-sized cities were examined. Safety ranked highest at 26.3%. Next came expertise at 16.8%, diversity at 14.1%, program development at 11.3%, and segmentation at 9.9%. The consistency index (CI) was .01,

indicating consistency.

The program subvariables, uniqueness, group discounts, and employee welfare improvements, all had a mean value below 4.0 or a CV above 25%, leading to the deletion of three factors. This study ultimately selected 25 subfactors through the first, second, and third Delphi analyses.

Table 5. Priority among program factors

primary factor	Weight	Adoption
Diversity	.141	3
Expertise	.168	2
Safety	.263	1
Segmentation	.099	5
Program Developmen	.113	4
CI(consistency index)=.01		

3.3.2. Priority among price factors

As shown in <Table 6>, price was ranked as the most important and prioritized factor in the development of marine leisure sports in small and medium-sized cities. Lesson fees ranked highest at 20.6%, followed by package product development (17.7%), coupons (15.0%), membership (14.3%), and ancillary facility fees (13.9%). The consistency index (CI) was .01, indicating consistency.

Table 6. Priority among price factors

Primary factor	Weight	Adoption
Tuition fees	.206	1
Facility fees	.139	5
Package product development,	.177	2
Membership system	.143	4
Coupon system	.150	3
CI(consistency index)=.01		

3.3.3. Priority among human resources factors

As shown in <Table 7>, the relative importance and priority of human resources among the factors contributing to the development of marine leisure sports in small and medium-sized cities revealed that leader friendliness ranked highest at 24.0%. Next in order were leader expertise (22.3%), employee friendliness (19.1%), employee conscientiousness (13.7%), and employee initiative (10.0%). The consistency index (CI) was .01, indicating that the criteria for

Table 7. Priority among human resources factors

Primary factor	Weight	Adoption
Employee friendliness,	.191	3
Employee sincerity	.137	4
Employee initiative	.100	5
Leader friendliness	.240	1
Leader expertise	.223	2
CI(consistency index)=.01		

3.3.4. Priority among environment factors

As shown in <Table 8>, among the factors driving the development of marine leisure sports in small and medium-sized cities, accessibility to business sites ranked highest at 26.8%. Cleanliness/hygiene ranked next, at 24.9%, followed by well-organized facilities at 19.1%, accessibility to tourist attractions at 14.9%, and convenience of public transportation at 14.2%. The consistency index (CI) was .01, indicating that the criteria for consistency were met.

Table 8. Priority among environment factors

Primary factor	Weight	Adoption
Accessibility to business locations	.268	1
Well-organized facilities	.191	3
Accessibility to tourist attractions	.149	4
Cleanliness/hygiene	.249	2
Convenience of public transportation	.142	5
CI(consistency index)=.01		

3.3.5. Priority among facilities factors

As shown in <Table 9>, among the factors contributing to the development of marine leisure sports in small and medium-sized cities, equipment replacement ranked highest at 21.0%.

ISSN: 1311-1728 (printed version); ISSN: 1314-8060 (on-line version)

Restrooms ranked next with 18.7%, followed by amenities at 18.2%, parking lots at 14.3%, and showers at 13.2%. The consistency index (CI) was .01, indicating that the criteria for consistency were met.

Table 9. Priority among facilities factors

Primary factor	Weight	Adoption
Shower room	.132	5
Restroom	.187	2
Parking lot	.143	4
Convenience facilities	.182	3
Equipment replacement	.210	1
CI(consistency index)=.01		

6) Prioritizing the importance of developing marine leisure sports

<Table 10> shows the results of analyzing the priority factors for the development of marine leisure sports in small and medium-sized cities, and price ranked highest at 27.1%.. This was followed by facilities (24.5%), programs (19.5%), environment (17.0%), and human resources (11.8%). The consistency index (CI) was .01, indicating that consistency was met.

Table 10. Prioritizing the importance of developing marine leisure sports

Primary factor	Weight	Adoption
Program	.195	3
Price	.271	1
Human resources	.118	5
Environment	.170	4
Facilities	.245	2
CI(consistency index)=.01		

4. Discussion

In this study, five factors were selected as important factors for the development of marine leisure sports in small and medium-sized cities: program, price, human resources, environment, and facilities. In this regard, [7] partially supported this study by classifying the attributes of marine leisure sports experience spaces into environment, accessibility, service, and perceived risk. Baek [13] extracted the selection factors of windshipping clubs as convenience, instructor training ability, social interaction, environment, and membership fees, presenting similar results to this study. [11] classified the selection attributes of marine resorts into human

services, cultural and recreational facilities, price, and natural scenery. These prior studies have confirmed important factors for the development of marine leisure sports in small and medium-sized cities with similar results to the program, price, human resources, environment, and facilities of this study.

Among the factors contributing to the development of marine leisure sports in small and medium-sized cities, program factors were found to be safety, expertise, diversity, program development, and segmentation, in that order. Marine leisure sports, unlike artificially constructed facilities, are activities that take place in harmony with nature. Due to this characteristic, the importance of safety accidents is higher than in other sports. Social interactions in marine leisure sports are diverse. Beyond sports activities, a diverse culture of social interaction emerges through the sharing of information gained from each person's life [14]. The development of diverse programs that foster mutual trust, strengthen emotional bonds, and foster interaction with others can lead to increased participation in marine leisure sports in small and medium-sized cities.

Research [6] that found safety to be the most important factor in selecting marine leisure activities supports this finding. Marine leisure sports programs tailored to small and medium-sized cities should continue to be developed, including dynamic programs, diverse marine activities, accessible programs, and programs that prioritize safety. Among the factors contributing to the development of marine leisure sports in small and medium-sized cities, price was found to be the most important, in that order: lesson fees, package product development, coupon systems, membership programs, and ancillary facility fees. The fact that lesson fees were the most important factor suggests that the primary purpose of participating in marine leisure sports is to participate in marine leisure sports lessons. Most participants in marine leisure sports in small and medium-sized cities participate for two days or more. Therefore, this study confirmed the need for developing package products alongside lesson fees. A study [4] of ski resort visitors also found that fees were a significant factor in selecting a ski resort, and that active participation was facilitated by discounts such as discount coupons. Ultimately, small and medium-sized cities should seek ways to lower prices for users of marine leisure sports, such as by lowering rental fees or providing training support for instructors.

Among the factors contributing to the development of marine leisure sports in small and medium-sized cities, human resource factors were ranked in the following order: instructor friendliness, professionalism, and staff friendliness, sincerity, and proactiveness. Users of marine leisure sports in small and medium-sized cities constantly interact with instructors and staff. Therefore, instructors and staff must be friendly and professional. This result is likely due to the fact that instructor expertise is considered a key factor, similar to the fact that tuition fees were given the highest weight among price factors. A study [15] found that instructors are the most influential factor in sports centers, supporting this finding. Furthermore, a study [16] that found high satisfaction with staff friendliness and politeness also emphasizes staff friendliness and sincerity. Therefore, continuous instructor training programs and staff friendliness training should be implemented in conjunction to promote marine leisure sports in small and medium-sized cities.

Among the factors contributing to the development of marine leisure sports in small and medium-sized cities, environmental factors were ranked in the following order: accessibility to business sites, cleanliness/hygiene, well-organized facilities, accessibility to tourist attractions, and convenience of public transportation. This suggests that users in small and medium-sized cities prefer to experience marine leisure sports in the shortest possible time, rather than

spending extended periods of time there. Furthermore, because marine leisure sports involve direct contact with water, they prioritize cleanliness/hygiene. Kim [4] supported this finding by stating that skiers prioritize main facilities and accessibility. Users of marine leisure sports in small and medium-sized cities engage in a variety of leisure activities beyond just marine leisure sports. In other words, they prioritize accessibility to tourist attractions when they engage in marine leisure sports. Ultimately, it is believed that small and medium-sized cities will see increased participation only when they have a hygienic marine leisure sports environment and well-established systems that provide easy access to restaurants and tourist attractions. Among the factors contributing to the development of marine leisure sports in small and medium-sized cities, facility factors ranked in the following order: equipment replacement, restrooms, convenience facilities, parking lots, and showers. Marine leisure sports facilities often utilize expensive equipment. Operators consider replacing aging equipment, but are concerned about the cost. This is also closely linked to user safety issues.

Therefore, small and medium-sized cities need to conduct comprehensive equipment inspections and develop affordable replacement options for outdated equipment. In other words, small and medium-sized cities should secure specialized facility management personnel related to marine leisure sports and conduct regular inspections.

5. Conclusion

This study aimed to analyze development factors and prioritize marine leisure sports in small and medium-sized cities. The research methods used in this study were a Delphi survey and hierarchical analysis. The results were analyzed based on the research methods and procedures, and conclusions were drawn based on the results.

First, the top factors for marine leisure sports development in small and medium-sized cities were identified as price, facilities, programs, environment, and human resources.

Second, the program factors identified as sub-factors of marine leisure sports development in small and medium-sized cities were identified as diversity, expertise, safety, segmentation, and program development. The price factor included lesson fees, ancillary facility fees, package product development, membership system, and coupon system. The human resources factor included employee friendliness, employee conscientiousness, employee initiative, instructor friendliness, and instructor expertise. The environmental factor included business accessibility, well-organized facilities, accessibility to tourist attractions, cleanliness/hygiene, and convenient public transportation. The facility factor included showers, restrooms, parking, amenities, and equipment replacement.

Third, among the factors contributing to the development of marine leisure sports in small and medium-sized cities, safety was the most important program factor, followed by tuition fees for pricing, instructor friendliness for human resources, accessibility to business sites for environmental factors, and equipment replacement for facilities.

As this study suggests, the development of marine leisure in small and medium-sized cities requires a stronger focus on securing pricing, facilities, programs, environment, and human resources than in large cities.

6. Acknowledgement

This study was from the 2025 Academic Research Support Project of Hanseo University.

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