

Elevating Rural Development through Ecotourism and English in Kuma Village, Hitoyoshi Kuma Region, Kumamoto, Kyushu, Japan

Jeffrey Morrow

Abstract

Ecotourism has been flourishing in many parts of Europe and Asia for several decades. In Japan, the Japan Ecotourism Society has assisted in allowing the public to have a better view of the nature and beauty of little-known rural areas that exist all over the Japanese archipelago. One of these areas lies in Kumamoto Prefecture on the island of Kyushu. Called Hitoyoshi Kuma, it is home to the Kuma and Kawabe Rivers, Mount Ichifusa, Japanese spirit distilleries, and museums of Manga and folklore. After being devastated by a major flood in 2020, the area has been bolstering its revitalization efforts. Because little studies have been done in English regarding both ecotourism and English in the area, the author decided to complete a study on developing ecotourism with English for further revitalization. In the study, results found that the majority of respondents strongly agree that they want to study English for the future, and many agree that ecotourism can be achieved in Kuma Village, Kyushu. Many respondents also feel that local obstacles, such as inadequate communication and a lack of information can be overcome.

Keywords: English ability, ecotourism, rural tourism, environmental awareness, conservation

1. Introduction

Ecotourism has taken shape both globally and country-specific over the last decade. Japan is no exception; in fact, since the inception of the Japan Ecotourism Society established in 1998, ecotourism in Japan became more of a household word and grew dynamically. International travelers largely do not associate ecotourism with Japan; when they do, they think of Mount Fuji the highest volcanic peak and Hakone, both near Tokyo; Nagano, containing ski slopes and a portion of the northern alps, an hour's trip from Tokyo; Yakushima, a mountainous island famous for hiking and diving to the south of Kagoshima in Kyushu; and Okinawa, an island chain well known for diving and other eco activities,

south of Kyushu. These tourist destinations are well-known and can be found on tourism-related websites in Japan; however, they comprise a small number of the total natural destinations worth visiting in Japan. More world-renown famous eco-related destinations, such as Mount Fuji, are continually promoted because they are well-known and near urban areas; the same can be said for cultural destinations such as Kyoto and Nara. Upon investigation, however, one can see that in more rural areas of Japan there are many rural eco-related and green friendly locations with ecotourism potential that have not been fully developed.

One area that is lesser known is the Hitoyoshi Kuma Region, in the south portion of Kumamoto Prefecture in Central Kyushu, Japan. The area contains white-water, nearby hiking and cycling trails, and forested areas, and the locally produced alcoholic beverage, shochu.

This area is home to white water rapids of the Kuma River, which affords it rafting and canoeing opportunities; the area also offers challenging outdoor activities such as cycling, hiking, and camping. The region lends itself to providing rich eco activities and chances to learn about the nature and culture of rural Japan and Kyushu. However, while there has been some research on general tourism in the area, as well as research into the flood disaster of 2020, it is quite limited but does offer a plentiful glimpse into the potential of the area at large. Because of the lack of data, the author decided to conduct a study on the environmental awareness of tourism related employees and local citizens in the region to assess the feasibility of using ecotourism with English ability to elevate the Hitoyoshi Kuma region post-flood 2020.

This paper will share observational data examining some offerings of each town of Hitoyoshi Kuma and will specifically focus on Kuma Village. It will also share data collected from answers to questionnaires conducted by the author on environmental awareness, ecotourism and English ability among ecotourism employees and local citizens in Kuma Village.

2. Background of rural tourism and regional development

Mainly, there is a difference between tourism and rural tourism. Lane (1994 in Nue-meier, 2014) defines rural tourism as that tourism which occurs in rural areas among areas with populations less than 10,000, wide open spaces, and containing large farms, forests, and natural areas. Rural tourism is connected to the area in which activities take place,

where tourism demand is related to the natural attributes of the area in question. Tourism on the periphery such as this offers, which may attract few tourists, affords more opportunity for day trips or micro-tourism.

Rural tourism and regional development research have been conducted globally for decades, but often have had little fanfare. Naghiu et. al. (2005) examined rural tourism and local development in Romania by creating a conceptual framework for a strategy of rural tourism implementation that includes both small business opportunities (restaurants, shops) intertwined with extra rural additives (hiking, camping). These include nature and eco related activities such as walking, hiking, riding, along with educational traveling, arts or heritage, and ethnic aspects such as history and food. They have found that tourism contributes to rural development in that it extends beyond the original region and braids an economic relation between cities, surrounding countryside, and nearby small towns and villages. Eco and rural tourism related activities can also provide alternative income for farming households by offering accommodations, food, and an opportunity for environmental stewardship. Tamaki (2019) examined the recent trend from mass tourism to more individual travel. In fact, regional tourism appears to move away from GIT (group inclusive tourism) recently towards FIT (foreign independent tours), SIT (special interest tours), or VFR (visiting friends and relatives), most likely due to the fact that smaller, more rural areas do not have the carrying capacity to accommodate larger groups. The trend towards more customized, specialized tours has created a need for local and regional governments and organizations to step in to assist in planning destination-based tourism. This may be for the better in the long term, especially after the Covid-19 pandemic; however, it requires local community members to work towards common goals and ensure their roles in tourism are sustainable, rewarding, and economically viable. Tamaki assigned specific SDGs to tourism relationships in a rural paradigm. For example, regional, planned tourism destinations are given goal 8 (promote sustained economic growth and decent work for all); protecting natural and cultural heritage is assigned goal 11 (make cities safe, resilient, and sustainable); regional linking of urban and rural areas is also assigned goal 11 (same as above), and regional revitalization is assigned goal 12 (ensure sustainable production and consumption). This is unique because it incorporates SDGs into the research and encapsulates the necessity for local businesses and stakeholders to realize the necessity of the shared environment, but also to guarantee that it is sustainable long into the future.

The above research makes it clear that rural tourism is important, can generate in-

come in much needed areas, and can be used to look at tourism in a new and viable way. In order to build on implementing ecotourism into rural development, the author is involved with the governmental group JST (Japan Science and Technology) which researches scientific aspects in response to redevelopment post-flood, such as deforestation and water diversion. As such, he decided to create a study to examine the feasibility of implementing a regional cultural and ecotourism-related travel itinerary utilizing ecotourism employees with English ability in the Hitoyoshi Kuma Region, Kumamoto, Japan.

3. Background of Hitoyoshi Kuma



Fig. 1 Location of Hitoyoshi Kuma (Southeast)

Source: <https://8246.kinasse-yatsushiro.jp/kumamoto-minami/en/>

Located in southern Kumamoto Prefecture, the Hitoyoshi Kuma Region is situated to the south of Fukuoka and east of Nagasaki, well-known for being bombed during World War II. It is on the island of Kyushu and borders Kagoshima to the south and Miyazaki to the east (Fig. 1). Hitoyoshi Kuma consists of a large collection neighboring towns and villages that are located around the main local city of Hitoyoshi and lie along the Kuma River, or the white water of Kumamoto. The land area of Hitoyoshi Kuma totals 1,540 km² (Hitoyoshi-Travel.com, 2024) and the area of the area's main metropolis of Hitoyoshi City is 210.55 km² (Hitoyoshi City Website, 2024). Fig. 2 displays the entire area of Hitoyoshi Kuma, which is rests between Minamata (well-known for Mercury poisoning in the 1950s), Yatsushiro City, and Miyazaki Prefecture. The population of Hitoyoshi City is 30,752 as of the 2020 census. This figure rests above the 10,000 number seen to be classified as rural tourism as seen above; however, the population of Kuma Village is 2,723, well

below that (Japan: Kuma Village, 2024). The population of the entire area of Hitoyoshi Kuma is 48,339 (citypopulation.de, 2024). De-population, or the exodus of young people from the area, is massively spreading in the region; one reason is that many younger people have been leaving the area for economic opportunities provided in larger cities, such as Kumamoto, Kitakyushu, and Fukuoka.



Fig. 2 Villages and Towns of Hitoyoshi Kuma

Source: <https://kumaguniguide.wordpress.com/maps/>

Hitoyoshi Kuma is full of interesting history and the environment itself is very worthy of mention. A portioned map of the small villages and towns around the area is offered in Fig. 2; in total, ten villages and towns, including Hitoyoshi City, Kuma Village, Mizukami Village, and Itsuki Village and others make up the Hitoyoshi Kuma region. Hitoyoshi City is located in the southeast of Kumamoto Prefecture, and is the largest and main city and the namesake of the region.

Examples of what some of the villages and towns offer will now be explained (see Fig. 2). Mount Ichifusa, one of the highest mountains in Central Kyushu, is located in Mizukami Village. It is a high climb with a slightly challenging rope section. The trek rewards the climber with a magnanimous view from the top that contains an interesting rock formation. Ichifusa Shrine, built over 3,000 years ago, was a main visitation site during pilgrimages for thousands of years. It is also a well-known hike for tourists and rests amid a sea of ancient cedar trees, some of which are over 1,000 years old.

Yunomae Town contains the Yunomae Manga Library, another renowned attraction for tourists interested in the Japanese art form of Manga. Also found in the area is the Yunomae Green Palace Park, a park situated near large, forested trees.

Itsuki Village contains many opportunities for river kayaking and has some of the

most beautiful parks in the area; it contains several power spots and rests along the Kawabe River, on which kayaking takes place yearly.

The neighboring town of Asagiri, also a valley, offers a much more easily accessible mountain than Mount Ichifusa called Shiraga Peak. It, too, contains a relatively easy slope and trail and is also rewarding in views, though not as challenging as Mount Ichifusa.

Nishiki Town accommodates a series of natural hidden caves used as shelters, barracks, and hangars during WWII. The caves were unknown for decades and have recently become re-discovered. The caves and other war memorabilia are now a museum open to the public. Called the Nishiki Secret Base Museum, it offers an audio guided tour with several languages such as Korean, Chinese, and English.

Yamae Village houses the Yamae Village History and Folklore Museum in which many historical items lost and re-found after the 2020 flooding of the area. Yamae Village also hosts Maruoka Park, once a castle site, with views overlooking the rural rice paddies that flank the valley below.

Kuma Village, the namesake of the Kuma River, contains some of the most noteworthy shrines and temples in Kyushu, including several shrines embedded in caves. Kuma Village also contains Kyusendo, a mammoth natural limestone cave formation and another the well-known tourist attraction.

Hitoyoshi City itself houses some of the area's most famous rice-fermented shochu (or alcoholic spirit) and shoyu (soy sauce) distilleries, and also contains rice wine breweries. Hitoyoshi City also boasts some of the area's most well-known traditional inns that offer unique local food items and hand-made crafts.

4. Background of the Hitoyoshi Kuma Flood

On July 4 2020, the Kuma and Kawabe Rivers in Hitoyoshi Kuma region overflowed their banks as well as a nearby dam due to heavy rain. This rain even also crushed several local levies in one of the most devastating floods in the history of the area. Hitoyoshi Kuma has seen flooding for decades; flood records display that between 1965 and 2011, seven flood-events occurred from heavy rains that caused the local rivers to run amok. In this 2020 July flood, extreme hazard events (level 5) razed 3,026 buildings (Arbi, et. al., 2022). Shortly after this flood, citizens in the area began a major clean-up; from mud-laden and sludge debris historic statues, busts over one thousand years old, civil and world war artifacts, and priceless shrine relics were salvaged. Most of these were cleaned

as well as possible and are currently stored in small nearby museums, including the Yamae Museum of Folklore. In June of 2022 the author visited the area and heard first-hand stories from residents about the traumatic situation of massive amounts of rain suddenly overtaking the area. The rain of course broke levies, overflowed riverbanks, seeped into houses and inns, and drenched nearby farmlands. In many cases, priceless privately-owned treasures rediscovered months after the flood were saved and are currently stored in a local community center-turned museum, waiting to be re-claimed by their original owners. The museums contain ancient busts, statues of Buddha, antique wooden garden and rice cleaning implements and furniture from schools, pictures from the era, army medals, old money, and soldiers' uniforms. Hundreds of personal pictures of local families were discovered after the flooding; residents and volunteers began visiting Hitoyoshi Kuma to take part in cleaning these priceless family pictures; however, waterlogged and mud-laden pictures are continually found washed up on the riverbank.

Since the flooding, the local prefectural government has relocated hundreds of people to temporary housing built in various places around the area. Business leaders, governmental officials, and residents in the area, have been continuing efforts to remodel and reconstruct devastated traditional Japanese inns, shops, restaurants, and roads that surround the area. One significant problem is that a very unique local train line, at one time linking Hitoyoshi City to other parts of Kyushu was greatly damaged in the flooding. Recent estimates say that it will take at least ten years if not more to fully rebuild and reconnect these important train lines. Because of the devastation to the railroad lines, access to the area became incredibly difficult; access is attained only by buses to and from other Kyushu cities, the highway operating on the Kyushu expressway connecting the area to Kumamoto City, and Fukuoka in the north. It also continues south to Kagoshima. Other methods of access include taxis from the neighboring metropolises of Yatsushiro City, Kumamoto City, and Kagoshima City, located in Kagoshima prefecture, rental cars available from nearby cities, and a personal car. Obviously, the lack of access definitely dampers tourism possibilities, and therefore negatively affects the local economy there.

Because of the rich opportunities for environmental learning and experiencing unique rural areas well-suited for ecotourism, and to help the area revive after the flooding, the author wanted to investigate the environmental knowledge and practices of environment related tourism employees in the area. Another goal of the author was to investigate the English language background of employees and to understand the impetus of tourism

related employees and guides to practice English more in the future.

5. Method and Materials

To explore the question the environmental awareness (including environmental conservation practices) and English ability of local ecotourism employees in the entire area as depicted above, survey questionnaires were conducted in May 2024 in situ in the respondents' businesses in Kuma Village. The method of data collection was as follows: the author asked items from the questionnaire directly to the respondents and wrote the answers, which were then checked to make sure the answers were correct. This was done to avoid any possible misunderstandings. Each business was first assigned a number which was randomly chosen to avoid bias, and the interviews were conducted at the respondents' places of business during working hours. One person from each place of business was randomly chosen to interview. The 26-item questionnaire contained general socio-economic questions such as age, gender, place of birth, highest educational level; environment-related questions such as environmental conservation practices, meaning of ecotourism, environmental activities; English related questions such as needs with English, desire to study English in the future, years and hours of English study in school, and individual English proficiency level. The author asked respondents to self-report their own English level on a scale from five (advanced ability) to zero (no ability). Because a roadblock was found to be local communication and decision making, rural development implementation questions were also asked, such as: What is the biggest obstacle with carrying out ideas in the area? What should be done more to elevate businesses, organizations, schools, travelers, business leaders, teachers, and other stakeholders? These questions were asked because the study was designed to check the feasibility of linking ecotourism with English ability and examine whether an interesting ecotourism itinerary, combined with English ability displaying environmental knowledge, can assist in further developing the area post-flood 2020. A complete questionnaire can be found in the Appendix.

6. Results

Table 1. Kuma Village Demographics

Total sample	12
Average age	43

Sex	F	4
	M	8
Marital	M	10
	S	2
Children	Y	10
	N	2
	No. of (Avg.)	1.6
Living Situation	W/ Family	9
	Dormitory	1
	Alone	2
Place of Birth	Hitoyoshi City	4
	Kuma Village	4
	Aso	1
	Tokyo	1
	Asagiri	1
Education	HS Grad	5
	Uni Grad	4
	Some Uni	3

Source: Compiled from survey data, 2024.

Table 1 contains general demographics in Hitoyoshi Kuma Region, Kuma Village, among the respondents in this study. The total sample size was 12. Of the total, eight (66%) were male four (33%) and were female. The average age was 43. The majority of respondents (five) graduated from high school and three had some university education but did not graduate from university, while 4 graduated from university. Of the total, four people were born in Hitoyoshi City, 4 from Kuma Village, one was from Aso, one from Tokyo, and one from Asagiri.

Table 2. Environmental Concerns and Ecotourism (in number, from questionnaire)

Main Env Concern	Water Pollution	3
	Air pollution	3
	Plastic	3
	Garbage	2
	No Food	1
Top Environmental Conservation Practice	Recycling	7
	Turn off Electric	2
	Use Less Plastic	2
	Proper Garbage Disposal	1

What does ecotourism mean to you?	Learning about nature	4
	Enjoying Nature	3
	Playing Sports Outside	2
	Traveling	2
	Eating Local Food	1
How important is the environment?	Very Important	8
	Important	4

Source: Compiled from survey data, 2024.

As for environment related questions (Table 2), the main concerns with the environment were water pollution, air pollution, and use of plastic. Two respondents felt that problems with garbage was a top concern, while one respondent felt that less food in the future would be a problem. The top conservation practice of employees was recycling (seven respondents). Two people always turned off electricity, two always tried to use less plastic, one disposed of garbage properly. This included recycling and no self-burning. Three respondents felt that ecotourism means to learn about nature, two respondents felt that ecotourism means playing sports outside, two responded that ecotourism means traveling, and one felt that eating local food encapsulated the meaning of ecotourism. Finally, of the total, eight felt that the environment is very important, while four felt it is important.

Table 3. English Ability (in number, from questionnaire)

Hours of English study per week	3 or more	0
	3	3
	2	5
	1	4
	1 or less	0
Years of English study in school	12	5
	9	4
	6	3
Your own English level	5 (Advanced)	0
	4 (Upper Intermediate)	1
	3 (Intermediate)	2
	2 (High Beginner)	4
	1 (Beginner)	5
	0 (No ability)	0

I want to study English for the future	Strongly agree	5
	Agree	5
	Neither agree nor disagree	2
	Disagree	0
	Strongly disagree	0
Native speaker visits (needs with English)	Once per week	1
	Once every two weeks	3
	Once per month	4
	Once every three months	3
	Once every six months	1

Source: Compiled from survey data, 2024.

Table 3 displays English communication-related information. The majority of respondents answered that they studied English for 12 years and for two hours per week in traditional school. Four reported that their own English level was four (high beginner), while five stated they were level five (beginner). Two reported an intermediate level of English. Of the total, 12 strongly agreed that English communication is important and five strongly agreed that they want to study more English in the future. Because English speakers visit the area, four stated that they needed English once per month, three needed it every two weeks and once every three months, and one needed it once every six months. One stated that they needed English once per week.

Table 4. Local Project Implementation Obstacles (in number, from questionnaire)

Top Implementation Concern	Inadequate communication	7
	Inadequate information	2
	Less know-how	1
	Less passion	1
	No concern with region	1
What should we do more?	Communication sessions	4
	Information newsletters	4
	Meetings w/ leaders	2
	Television promotion	1
	Guided tours	1
Local implementation challenges can be overcome	Strongly agree	2
	Agree	5
	Neither agree nor disagree	4
	Disagree	1
	Strongly disagree	0

Ecotourism can be achieved	Strongly agree	3
	Agree	4
	Neither agree nor disagree	4
	Disagree	1
	Strongly disagree	0

Source: Compiled from survey data, 2024.

Table 4 displays local idea implementation information, as there were obstacles in achieving goals. Of the total, seven felt that inadequate communication was the biggest problem with getting things done in the area. Two answered that obtaining adequate information was the biggest concern, while one each responded each that less know-how, less passion, and less concern with the area were the biggest problems they faced. Two strongly agreed that these problems can be overcome, while five people agreed, and four neither agreed nor disagreed with this.

7. Discussion

In the tables above, it is evident that the majority of respondents felt that the environment is very important, and even though there are problems with implementing environmental conservation in the area, the majority felt that these challenges can be overcome. The largest percentage of respondents feel that water pollution, air pollution, and the plastic problem is their largest environmental concerns, showing that they have a large interest in the environmental maintenance in Kuma, again, paramount in upkeeping an interesting and fruitful tourist attraction like the Kuma River. To most respondents, ecotourism means learning about nature, which leads to maintaining a large ecotourism industry in the future that can bolster environmental education for not only citizens and children in the area, but also for travelers. Since the majority continually practice recycling, most-likely by law, but probably somewhat by their own volition, they obviously have some interest in keeping the area clean and are interested in maintaining the natural settings surrounding the area.

The goal of this paper was to discover if English along with environmental knowledge can create an ecotourism situation leading to further revitalization of the area post flood 2020. Since the majority strongly agree and agree that they want to study English for the future, and that many need English once per week or every two weeks, the author feels that there is some impetus for practicing English for guiding and environmental teaching purposes for tourist influx. Four of the total respondents agree that ecotourism can be

achieved, four neither agree nor disagree with this, and one disagrees. However, since five strongly agree that challenges can be overcome, it is possible that with more focus and action from the younger generation, ecotourism with English can be a stepping-stone to furthering an enlivened ecotourism industry in the future for local communities. This will not only bring attention to the area but also boost the local economy for a long time to come.

8. Conclusion

This research showed that many people in Kuma Village feel that the environment is important and that they are interested in studying English and believe the local community can overcome obstacles. Of course, the sample size of this research was incredibly small, and is but a small proportion of the total population of Hitoyoshi Kuma. Even so, the author feels that the answers gleaned from this research might be similar across other villages in the area. As such, it may be worth continuing this research into other villages and towns across Hitoyoshi Kuma.

Several infrastructure problems exist in the area, including a defunct train line and yet to be refurbished or remodeled businesses that were severely damaged in the flood. This makes access to the area and accommodation still somewhat difficult, especially for international travelers. However, that author has heard recently that international travelers have been accessing the area from Kagoshima airport, about an hour south of Hitoyoshi and taking buses into Hitoyoshi City. This shows that travelers are becoming more creative with being able to access the Hitoyoshi Kuma region. Perhaps this tells that local governments, citizens, and business owners should become more creative in finding ways to revitalize the area in the future.

*Acknowledgement: This work was supported by JST Grant Number JPMJPF2109.

References

- Arbi, Surya Satria Ridwan, et al (2022). Factor Affecting and Damage Mapping of Flood Inundation in Japan: A Case Study of Hitoyoshi City, Kumamoto Prefecture, Japan. *IOP Conference Ser, Earth Environ Sci* 989 012032
- Hitoyoshi City Land Area Data. (2024). Retrieved from: https://cityhitoyoshi.lg.jp/shisei_tokei, June 30 2024.
- Hitoyoshi Kuma Population Data. (2024). Retrieved from: cityppulation.de, June 17 2024.
- Hitoyoshi Kuma Demographic Information. (2024). Retrieved from <https://citypopulation.de>, October, 2024.

-
- Hitoyoshi Kuma Area Map. (2024). Kinnasse. Retrieved from <https://8246.kinasse-yatsushiro.jp/kumamoto-minami/en/> November 7 2024.
- Kuma Area Map. (2024) Japan: Kuma Village. Retrieved from the official website of Kuma Village, October 17, 2024.
- Lane, B. (1994, in Nuemeier, 2014). What is rural tourism? *Journal of Sustainable Tourism* 2(1&2) 7-21.
- Naghiu, A., et. al. (2005). Rural development strategies through rural tourism activities in Romania: chance for an internal demand? *International Review on Public and Non-profit Marketing*. Vol. 2 No. 1, 85-95.
- Tamaki, K. (2019). Sustainable tourism industry and rural revitalization on experienced nature and cultural tourism. *Journal of Global Tourism Research*. Vol. 4, No. 2, 111-116.

Appendix. Questionnaire used in this Study

Research Questionnaire, Elevating Rural Development through Ecotourism and English

This questionnaire is for research purposes only. No personal information will be collected, and the names and exact locations will not be written or shared. The information will be used only for the purpose of compiling a research paper. Your participation is greatly appreciated.

1. Gender

- i. Female ii. Male

2. Age _____

3. Marital status

- i. Married ii. Single iii. Other

4. Do you have children?

0. No i. Yes (How many? _____)

5. Living situation

- i. Alone ii. With parents iii. With husband/wife/family iv. Other _____

6. City of birth

- i. Kuma ii. Hitoyoshi City iii. Town in Hitoyoshi Kuma _____ iv. Kumamoto City
v. Other _____

7. Living accommodations

- i. House ii. Apartment iii. Dormitory

8. Highest educational level

- i. High school graduate ii. Trade school graduate iii. Some university iv. University graduate
v. Other _____

9. What is your salary range per month?

- i. 100,000-150,000 ii. 150,000-200,000 iii. 200,000-

10. How many years of English education have you had?

- i. 12 ii. 9 iii. 6 iv. 3 v. 1 vi. Other _____

11. How many hours did you study English in school per week?

- i. 1 ii. 2 iii. 3 iv. 3 or more

12. How much money do you spend on English study per month?

- i. less than ¥500 ii. 500-1,000 iii. 1-2,000 iv. Over 2,000

13. What is your own English level?

0. No ability i. Low beginner ii. High beginner iii. Low intermediate iv. High intermediate
v. advanced

14. What is your main concern with the environment?

- i. Water pollution ii. Air pollution iii. Plastic waste iv. Garbage v. Other _____

-
15. What is your top conservation practice?
i. Turn off water when not used ii. Turn off electricity when not used iii. Recycling
iv. Garbage disposal v. Less plastic usage
16. What does ecotourism mean to you?
i. Playing sports outside ii. Learning about nature iii. Enjoying nature iv. Traveling
v. Eating local food vi. Other _____
17. What is the best area for ecotourism in Hitoyoshi Kuma?
i. Kuma Village ii. Hitoyoshi City iii. Asagiri iv. Nishiki v. Mizukami
vi. Other area in Hitoyoshi-Kuma
18. How important is the environment to you?
i. Very important ii. Important iii. Neither important nor unimportant
iv. Somewhat unimportant v. Not important at all
19. I want to study English more in the future.
i. Strongly agree ii. Agree iii. Neither agree nor disagree iv. Disagree
v. Strongly disagree
20. What is your top concern with implementing environmental activities in your area?
i. Inadequate communication ii. Inadequate information iii. Less know-how
iv. Less passion v. No concern with the area
21. What do you want to do to increase environmentally related activities in your area?
i. Hold meetings ii. Distribute newsletters iii. Meetings with stakeholders
iv. Guided tours v. Television and radio ads
22. How often do international travelers visit your establishment?
i. Once per week ii. Once every two weeks iii. Once per month iv. One every three months
v. Once every six months
23. What are your needs with English?
i. Once per week ii. Once every two weeks iii. Once per month iv. Once every three months
v. Once every six months
24. Ecotourism with English ability can help revitalize the area.
i. Strongly agree ii. Agree iii. Neither agree nor disagree iv. Disagree
v. Strongly disagree
25. Local implementation limitations can be overcome.
i. Strongly agree ii. Agree iii. Neither agree nor disagree iv. Disagree
v. Strongly disagree
26. Ecotourism can be achieved in the area.
i. Strongly agree ii. Agree iii. Neither agree nor disagree iv. Disagree
v. Strongly disagree