

THE EDUCATION UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG
FACULTY OF LIBERAL ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

Research Output/Impact Prize for the Dean's Research Fund 2017-18

**Brief Introduction of Awardee's
Research Publication/Study and Future Research Development**

Awardee (Dept): Dr. Cheung Ting On Lewis, Associate Professor (SSC)
Publication Title: Recreational Specialization and Ecologically Responsible Behaviour
of Chinese Birdwatchers in Hong Kong

A. Briefly introduce your research publication/study for which you have received the prize.

The research article has been published in the “Journal of Sustainable Tourism” in 2017. Published by Taylor and Francis, the Journal of Sustainable Tourism is a top-rank international refereed journal in the field of tourism research. The journal has high JCR SSCI impact factor in 2017 (2-year = 3.329 and 5-year 4.304) been ranked number 1 (Top 1%) and 5 (Top 15%) in the subject categories of “Green & Sustainable Science & Technology” and Hospitality, Leisure, Sport & Tourism” respectively in Journal Citation Reports (JCR). It has also been ranked 26/638 (Top 5%) and 8/84 (Top 10%) in the subject categories of “Geography, Planning and Development” and “Tourism, Leisure and Hospitality Management” respectively in Scimago Journal & Country Rank (SJR). Besides, it has been ranked as A* under the EdUHK Journal Ranking Lists.

The research article is to investigate the specialization, environmental attitudes and ecologically responsible behaviour of the Chinese birdwatchers. Birdwatching is regarded as a type of nature-based tourism, and the environmental attitudes and behaviour of birdwatchers can directly impact natural destinations. Studies have indicated that most birdwatchers tend to visit natural destinations that present a likelihood of viewing endangered and endemic bird species. Research has shown that such birds are vulnerable to threats posed by human activities, such as inappropriate behaviour by visitors. Therefore, an understanding of the environmental attitudes and behaviour of birdwatchers is needed to develop relevant guidelines and regulations to minimize inappropriate behaviour and negative impacts in bird conservation areas.

The findings of this research demonstrated that birdwatchers' specialization is generally a

reliable predictor of pro-environmental attitudes and ecologically responsible behaviour, which has not been clearly identified in previous studies. The findings validate the theoretical framework that describes the associations between birdwatchers' specialization and pro-environmental attitudes and ecologically behaviour offering both theoretical and practical contributions to the field of sustainable tourism, particularly nature-based tourism. The findings can offer important reference for protected areas manager to develop visitor management strategies. Through understanding birdwatchers' specialization, protected areas managers could estimate the likelihood of ecologically irresponsible behaviour at birdwatching sites and devise effective strategies for managing visitors and preventing unsustainable practices.

B. How you used/will use your prize and perhaps its usefulness to your research development?

The funding of the prize will be used for further data collection on relevant research and purchase a more powerful computer for data analysis. The survey data will be important for further exploration the nature-based tourist's environmental attitudes and behavior in the protected areas in China.

C. Expected research outcomes/outputs/impacts arising from this prize.

The questionnaire data collected in mainland China allows me to have a preliminary study and offer some results for my upcoming GRF proposal preparation. This will be useful for my GRF proposal writing. A GRF proposal will be submitted in 2019-20.