

Book of Abstracts



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Contribution of tourism to the achievement of the SDGs - A methodological study on the measurement of tourism contribution: GSTC Destination Criteria and the SDGs

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Abstract

A national sustainable tourism standard (JSTS-D, or the Japan Standard) was launched by Japan Tourism Agency in 2020 based on a global standard GSTS-D 2.0 to facilitate sustainable destination management nationally. Development of the Standard was to counteract the pre-COVID intense and significant growth of especially inbound tourism that was being felt in some of the major destinations. The Standard is now being implemented nationally. For a future, and long-term development of JSTS-D, it is important to place it within a wider framework of sustainability promotion, which can be done by identifying its relationship with SDGs as one strong driving force for sustainability in Japan and globally. With this purpose, a series of interviews were conducted (online) with sustainable tourism experts focusing on the role of tourism in promoting sustainability, and its benefits and challenges, including human resource development eg sustainability coordinators in destinations. Experts were selected from those involved in development and management of GSTC standard, as well as localization of SDGs and other global standards in countries such as Indonesia, Thailand, and Slovenia. Organisations that manage certifying systems were also contacted. Result indicates that it is important that the standard as a whole should address the SDGs - although with GSTC and thus the Japan Standard, each criteria is related to specific SDGs, mutuality as well as contradiction between criteria should be understood. Common challenge pointed out is the human resource development, and the role definition of persons in charge (eg sustainability coordinator), whose duty often includes diverse range of jobs other than sustainability promotion. The study has some useful implications to the future management of the Japan Standard.

Keywords:

Sustainable tourism standard, Destination management, Japan Sustainable Tourism Standard for Destinations, SDGs

Study of sustainable destination management and tourism films as part of ecosystem

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Abstract

Tourism films are increasingly in the interest as tools to intuitively and emotionally convey the attraction of tourist attractions. Nevertheless, many tourist destinations are still producing the wrong kind of tourist film. For example, tourism films about Kyoto. Before the covid-19, in Kyoto, over tourism was becoming a big issue. Too many tourists came to Kiyomizu Temple and Fushimi Inari, because they were attractive from the viewpoint of visual images. Based on the conventional Japanese image on FUJIYAMA GEISHA (Mt. Fuji and Geisha), Maiko in Kyoto became famous and been icon as a Symbol of Kyoto; even though, Maiko are not public entertainers who can be met by all Japanese people. Therefore, the approach of foreign tourists to the streets and their requests for photo sessions with Maiko were one of the major problems in Kyoto. In tourism films, the image of Kiyomizu Temple, Fushimi Inari and Maiko had been appearing in them; because, they had been Kyoto's images and Kyoto relied on the existing images. However, should we remain reliant on existing images for future tourist attractions? We suggest in this study to think of tourism film not as tool for promotion using existing images, but rather as an embodiment of an ideal form that shows a better future relationship between tourism and people, and as an instruction manual for better tourism. In Japan, the goal of attracting foreign tourists is the revitalization of local areas. In order to get them to visit local areas, it is necessary to show the ideal form of Japan, including the trends of such tourists, and to get the approval of many travelers. Tourism films for such a role will be discussed in this presentation.

Keywords:

Tourism Film, Kyoto, Revitalization of local areas

The possible role of international sister-city arrangements in future tourism recovery and development: Project update and future directions

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Abstract

Many cities, both in major metropolitan and regional areas in Japan and other countries, have developed international sister-city arrangements for several decades. These agreements were made for a variety of reasons, such as cultural ties, trade promotion, and educational exchanges. Although the concept of sister cities has been researched from various aspects, their contributions to tourism development, especially in the Asia Pacific region, remain under-researched. This presentation first provides a brief background of the two-year (FY2020–2021) research project supported by the Center for Tourism Research, which focuses on sister-city arrangements and explores their capability to encourage tourism recovery from the current pandemic, as well as future tourism development in Japan and internationally. Some key research activities conducted in the first and second project years, including the online survey data collected from residents of Japan's major cities, will be outlined, and initial survey findings will also be shared. The presentation then concludes by offering the project's research agenda, including an edited book project on this topic. The book seeks to fill the gaps in the literature on the nexus between tourism and sister-city arrangements by providing a range of topics (both in empirical and conceptual studies) from Japan and other Asia Pacific region countries. Current research project members and other global scholars are expected to contribute to the book.

Keywords:

Pandemic, Sister cities, Tourism development

Empowering women entrepreneurs in developing countries' tourism industries through a tourism business ecosystem

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Abstract

The tourism industry in developing countries is one of the most significant contributors to economic growth and provides the best opportunities for self-development, especially for women (Kimbu & Ngoasong, 2016). Women's empowerment in the tourism context has received increasing attention in academic research since the 1970s (De Vita et al., 2014). While previous studies on women entrepreneurs have given substantial attention to the microscopic constraints that women entrepreneurs face, they have tended to neglect the macroscopic constraints (Panda, 2018).

To fill this research gap, this project counteracts the lack of academic research on women's entrepreneurial efforts and opportunities by applying the concept of the tourism business ecosystem (TBE). Serving as the project's theoretical foundation, TBE allows the researchers to approach women's entrepreneurship from a macroscopic perspective. The Republic of Uzbekistan, a developing country in central Asia, is selected as the research target because the number of women entrepreneurs is increasing with the fast growth of the country's tourism industry.

This project will employ both qualitative and quantitative methods. To identify the constraints that negatively influence the empowerment of women entrepreneurs, a systematic literature review has already been conducted. In addition to the microscopic constraints examined in past studies, the current project has identified macroscopic constraints, categorized as economic, social, political, and cultural constraints. Based on the systematic conceptual framework, in-depth interviews and group discussions will be conducted to better understand the limitations that Uzbek women entrepreneurs face. This project not only extends the TBE concept found in women's entrepreneurship literature from a macroscopic perspective but also empirically examines the framework proposed by Panda (2018), providing a practical index for sustainable human capital management (HCM) in developing countries. Moreover, this project contributes to gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls (Goal #5, Sustainable Development Goals).

Keywords:

The Republic of Uzbekistan, Women Entrepreneurs, Tourism Industry, developing country, Constraints, Tourism Business Ecosystem (TBE)

**Basic research of space and astronomy education in general including tourism:
Past and Future of Astro-tourism**

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Abstract

Astrotourism has been expanding rapidly in recent years. Therefore, it is important to conduct basic research on astrotourism. Research led by Sawada and Okyudo defines astrotourism as “various activities that involve leaving place of residence to see the beautiful starry sky and astronomical phenomena.” Astrotourism has been referred to in various ways: from the perspective of development, since it contributes to the social and economic development of local communities; from the perspective of the SDGs, since it also considers the preservation of dark and quiet skies and the preservation of locations for starry sky observation; and from the perspective of environmental protection for astronomical research, since it prevents light pollution. A review in this regard is needed first. As astrotourism progresses, various issues have emerged that need to be considered. For example, there has not been much collaboration among practitioners between astro-tourism and astronomy education in school education and social education. Ironically, as astrotourism progresses, the dark and quiet skies can be threatened. On the other hand, astrotourism itself will not happen if it is not harmonized with improving the quality of life through development. In addition, borrowing from the phrase “Nothing About Us Without Us,” how we can work together with the residents of astrotourism sites is also a major

issue. However, these should not be seen as problems, but rather as new challenges that we should take on. This year, our research group is planning to invite a keynote speaker, a Japanese practitioner who is active overseas, a pioneer and a leading person in astrotourism, to deepen the discussion under the title of Past and Future of Astrotourism. It will be held online this winter.

Keywords:

Astro-tourism, Dark and quiet skies

Nature conservation and sustainable tourism initiatives in Yakushima UNESCO World Natural Heritage

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Abstract

Yakushima was registered as a World Natural Heritage Site (WNHS) in 1993; one of the first entrants on the World Heritage List from Japan. At around the same time the area witnessed a visitation peak that led to several problems. Over the years, the island destination has recovered somewhat from the most visible forms of disturbance, even though subtler forms of anthropogenic change remain. There are several ecotourism/nature-based tourism initiatives that seek to educate visitors about the importance of the natural environment and strive for low impact travel. However the stress from intense visitation and prior deforestation/intensive land use ensures that natural ecosystems remain fragmented. In addition there are contending agendas in the local level that pertain to exploitation of the natural environment for financial ends. What is particularly important for this case, and for other WNHS as well, is to what extent the current Protected Area (PA) mechanism (in this case, the National Park designation) is able to safeguard vulnerable elements of the environment from intense visitation pressure, economic exploitation, and other forms of anthropogenic impact. This research presents a holistic picture of the issues faced by the PA, the island's natural ecosystems in general, and popular visitor attractions from field surveys in multiple locations, interviews with stakeholders, and participant observation of tours. The findings are instructive not only for the immediate context of Yakushima, but for WNHS and sustainable tourism management in general.

Keywords:

World Natural Heritage, Fragmentation, Ecotourism, National Park, Holistic account.

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Exploring digital collaboration for destination management

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Abstract

The tourism industry has seen a significant shift in the advancement of technology over the last few decades. Such advancements have provided new technologically-supported opportunities as well as challenges for all involve. However, despite the important role of Destination Management Organizations in the tourism sector, they have yet to fully take advantage of the various technological developments which can better support the management of their destination. For example, while collaboration has been an integral aspect in destination management, partnerships and collaborative initiatives have rarely been facilitated using the support of digital technology. Therefore, this research explored how Destination Management Organizations can better collaborate using online means. The research adopted a more technologically driven research method. A design-based research approach with three phases was used (i.e. exploration, prototyping, and testing). With the support of industry partners, a trial digital platform with two distinct sides was developed. Business stakeholders and visitors represented the key users (i.e. research participants) of the two-sided digital platform. Data were collected primarily through qualitative methods (interviews and focus groups) with the support of quantitative and visual methods using an eye-tracker device. The presentation will offer some ideas and key learnings on how biosensors (specifically eye-tracking) can be used in research as an opportunity to gain greater insights and understanding within digital platform development and online user behaviors.

Keyword:

Destination Management Organization, DMO, Digital platform, Eye-tracking, Design-based research, Digital collaboration

Challenges and opportunities for religious stakeholders in tourism

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Abstract

The practice of pilgrimage is a travel practice present throughout history in different cultures across the world, and still plays an important role in our contemporary tourism industry. For example, according to estimations by the UNWTO (2011), a worldwide total of 600 million domestic and international travelers related to religion and spirituality, with around half of them taking place in Asia and the Pacific. In Japan, a country with a rich pilgrimage tradition, this context has led to the increasing participation of religious stakeholders such as Buddhist monks and yamabushi ascetics in tourism development. In part, this presence has been valuable for religious institutions seeking to find their place in contemporary society, obtain additional sources of income and further collaborate with the economic revitalization of the rural periphery, where religion-related tourism sites are often located. On the other hand, different challenges are present, including the lack of know-how and expertise of tourism management, unequal adoption of technology, absence of service quality schemes and conflicting viewpoints with non-religious stakeholders. The effects of the COVID-19 pandemic have further intensified these trends, as religious stakeholders found themselves in a new tourism context that required the rapid adoption of new policies and technologies. This presentation aims to discuss these points through different examples.

Keyword:

Religious tourism, COVID-19, Pilgrimage, Rural tourism, Wellness

Therapeutic Landscapes: A Novel Approach to Rural Tourism Development

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Abstract

Therapeutic landscapes are defined variously and in essence refers to the healing and regenerative powers embedded in landscapes, mediated by physical, human and social drivers (Gesler, 1992). Gesler frames therapeutic landscapes as providing “a means for interacting with the other social sciences, borrowing ideas such as symbolic cultural forms and class struggle on the one hand and demonstrating the unique contribution of geography on the other.” I evoke therapeutic landscapes thinking and apply two theoretical frameworks, social-ecological resilience (Cheer & Lew, 2017; Cheer, Milano & Novelli, 2019) and human flourishing (Cheer, 2020) to contextualise the emergent tourist gaze at the periphery, and for the post pandemic rural tourism milieu. *Onsen* as a vital assemblage of the therapeutic landscape of rural Japan is discussed.

Keywords:

Therapeutic landscapes, Tourism geographies, Human flourishing, Rural tourism, Regenerative tourism, Onsen



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