

Comparison of cinema tourism organizations in Japan and South Korea

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Abstract

While governments are implementing new policies for attracting tourists, the emergence of the cinema tourism industry is gaining wide attention. Cinema tourism is defined as a type of tourism in which people visit locations they have seen in films and television series. Cinema tourism has developed into a comprehensive industry that includes promotion of filming locations as tourist attractions. Governments are working out their own strategies for attracting inbound tourists in particular. This study investigates the organizations that take part in the development of cinema tourism-related strategies for attracting inbound tourists in Japan and South Korea, and the organizations that are involved in implementing these policies.

Upon closer analysis, it has become apparent that cooperation of organizations in charge of policies regarding tourism and movies, inbound tourists, movies, and filming locations is of uttermost importance. Nevertheless, findings indicate Japan currently lacks organizations in charge of movies.

Keywords: cinema tourism, inbound tourists, tourism policy, comparison of Japan and South Korea, policy-making process

1. Background and purpose of the study

According to the “Tourism Highlights 2018 Edition of the World Tourism Organization of the United Nations (UNWTO, 2018), the number of international tourists and the international travel balance of 2017 amounted to 1.34 billion people (+7% from 2016) and 1.326 trillion dollars (+5%) respectively. In particular, the number of tourists to Asia-Pacific regions accounted for 24% (approximately 323 million people) and thus makes Asia the second largest tourist resort next to Europe (51% with approximately 672 million people). With respect to the travel balance, Asia-Pacific regions account for 29% (approximately 39 billion dollars) of the above-mentioned overall international travel balance and comes close to Europe (39% with approximately 51.9 billion dollars) (See Figure 1) (UNWTO, 2018).

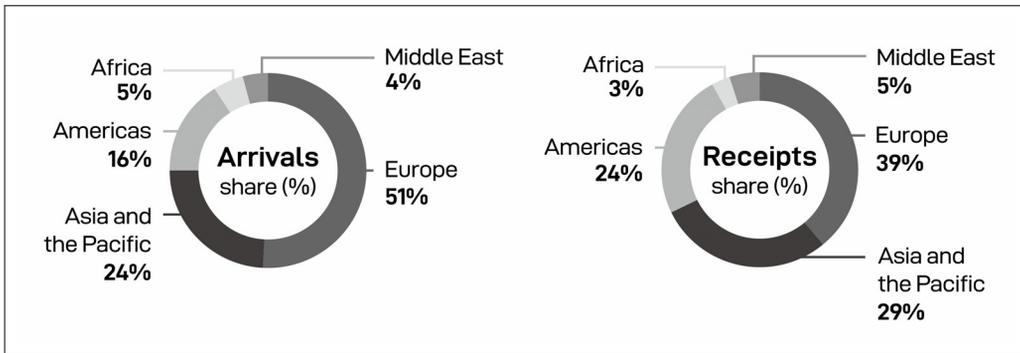
Analyzing these figures, it was found that tourists to Asia-Pacific regions spent more than those to Europe. Especially the number of inbound tourists to northeast Asian regions (Japan, China and South Korea) has increased largely thanks to the region's rapid (economic) development and abundance of historic and cultural assets. Since economic effects of tourism are attracting a lot of attention, competition among central and local governments of these countries for attracting tourists are becoming fierce.

The goal of this study is to compare government policies for attracting tourists using contents in Japan and South Korea under such circumstances. In particular, it focuses on movies with an increasing trend of Asian

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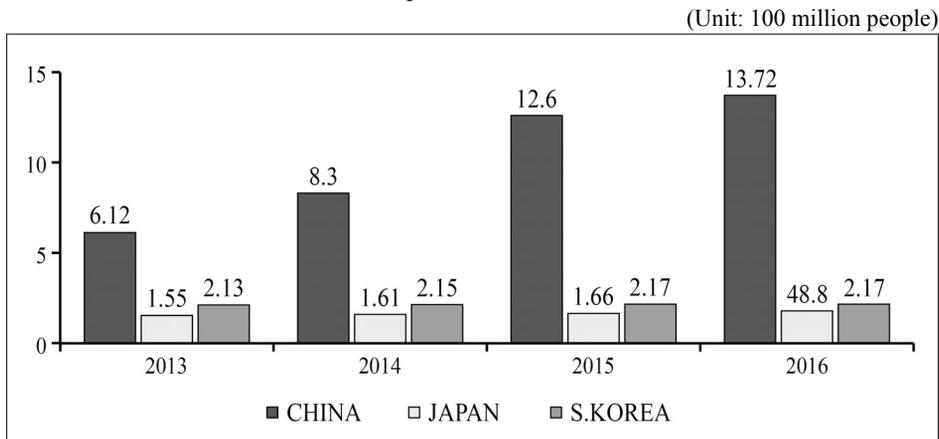
audiences as a whole (See Figure 2). According to UNESCO resources as of 2015, Northeast Asia enjoys a great number of movie visitors with China ranking No. 2, South Korea No. 5 and Japan No. 10 (UNESCO Institute for Statistics 2015). Thus, people are highly interested in domestic and overseas tourism through the medium of movies, and “cinema tourism” which counts on triggering effects of movies themselves is attracting higher attention.

Figure 1. Share of international travel balance (left) and international tourists (right)



Source: UNWTO (2018)

Figure 2. The numbers of movie audiences in Japan, China and South Korea



Source: KOCCA (2017), Korea Box Office Information System (Kobis), Motion Picture Producers Association of Japan

2. Previous studies and research methods

Contents tourism is a superordinate concept of cinema tourism. Contents tourism is understood as the utilization of cultural contents as a tool for promoting tourism (Okamoto, 2013; Yasuda, 2015; Kusumi and Komeda, 2018). Though it is recently gaining attention, contents tourism is not a recent phenomenon. Contents industries all over the world have been employing the “one-source multi-use” strategy since the 2000s with the start of the online era. Starting from original sources such as industries related to movies, game software, music

and characters, it is expanding to new sources and industries.

Among these, the movie industry always had a close connection with tourism since people would visit locations of scenes in movies and dramas in expectation of equivalent experiences. The long history of the relationship between movies and tourism is represented by the popularity of amusement facilities providing experiences and contents based on movies such as Disneyland and Universal Studios (in the States, Japan and other countries) or Kyoto Uzumasa Movie Land in Kyoto, and various film festivals themselves are becoming tourist destinations.¹⁾

Uchida (2009) explains that there is a process of people going sight-seeing, influenced by contents they saw in a movie or drama and that there is a trend of activating tourism by utilizing media. However, he further points out that Japan only focuses on “external interests” of audiences who have watched the movies. The Japanese government does not offer tourism based on independent policies and there is still much room for developing attractions.

Considering the case of South Korea, Go (2004) cites some instances of cinema tourism in the States and Japan and indicates that South Korea needs to establish a hybrid cluster enabling cooperation with regional economies starting from the early stages of the planning process.

These prior studies show that cooperation of various fields is inevitable in order to make cinema tourism a success and that there is a need for policies and organizations for this purpose. While the relationship between movies and tourism was rather independent so far (though there was some kind of mutual influence), it is necessary that suitable organizations make comprehensive policies in order to effectively facilitate cinema tourism.

Considering the trend of globalization and recent growth of international tourism to attract inbound tourists, such policies and organizations should consider not only domestic but also overseas targets. The present study defines such overseas-related cinema tourism as “international cinema tourism” and pays attention to organizations in charge of policies.

In order to understand the choice of Japan and South Korea for comparison, it is necessary to identify some commonalities and differences between both countries. Regarding points of commonality, both develop tourism policies in consideration of demands of inbound tourists from China and other countries. They also share a similar historic background in that developments after the war are based on democracy and liberalistic economy through their alliance with the United States. Therefore, similarities are observed in their social security systems, educational systems and economic growth models (Onishi and Tatebayashi (1998), Shimada (2013)). In the last decade, defense issues owing to threats of North Korean missiles, economic problems caused by e. g. subprime mortgages, and social issues such as low birthrate and longevity are also common to both countries.

On the other hand, there are differences in policy-making processes since Japan employs the parliamentary cabinet system in contrast to the presidential system in South Korea. Furthermore, while local governments have long been active in Japan, South Korea has a long history of centralized national administration, and the first local governing bodies emerged only in the 1990s.

Keeping in mind such clear differences and similarities in social systems (See Table 1) will make it easier to understand and compare both countries’ policies. Therefore, cinema tourism policies of both countries will be compared based on these backgrounds.

1) Yasuda defines film induced tourism as “tourism whose objects are overall picture works including movies, TV dramas, TV commercials or promotion videos” and cinema tourism as “tourism to so-called locations of movies released at movie theaters” (sic) (Yasuda, 2015: 67). The present study employs these definitions and discusses tourism related to locations of movies.

Table 1. Common and different points of systems in Japan and South Korea

	Japan	South Korea
Common Points	Systems based on democracy and liberalistic economy Social security systems, educational systems and economic growth models Defense and social issues such as low birthrate and longevity Governmental tourist policies targeting on inbound tourists	
Points of difference	Parliamentary cabinet system Long history of local governing	Presidential system Short history of local governing

Source: created by author based on Onishi and Tatebayashi (1998) and Shimada (2013)

3. Cinema tourism policies and organizations in Japan

The Japanese government has first started paying attention to contents as a policy on a national level in 2004. They aimed to develop fundamental and active policies while considering contents business as a pillar of national strategies for the “soft power” era (Strategic Council on Intellectual Property Contents Investigation Committee (2004)). A major driving factor for the creation of such policies was the impression that Japan was falling behind countries like South Korea and China who were creating new business opportunities by implementing contents policies on a national level. This caused Japan to introduce the concept of “Cool Japan” as a national policy and to discuss how to utilize contents to create business opportunities.

Cinema tourism policies were first considered following an extension of the above discussions. The Japan Tourism Agency (JTA), subordinate to the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport, defines “location tourism” as “visiting locations of movies and dramas, enjoying sceneries and food, getting in touch with the hospitality of people, and becoming a fan of the regions”, and aimed for regional vitalization through tourist attractions.²⁾ The government (1) held location tourism liaison conferences with respective local governments, film commissions, scholars and related businesses; (2) held location tourism seminars, and (3) made examples of advanced efforts as concrete measures during the period between 2013 and 2016, and further created a “location tourism manual” summarizing information about these actions.³⁾

However, these actions did not last long. Actions of the JTA related to location tourism ended in 2016 and cinema tourism policies were thereafter taken over by local governments. Unfortunately, actions of local governments are limited to mediating location candidates for movies through respective film commissions. Although there is a nationwide organization, the Japan Film Commission mainly gears towards a liaison committee consisting of local film commissions and is thus somewhat distant from cinema tourism which requires comprehensive policies.

The prevailing circumstances were mainly caused by influences of long lasting local governments. Tourism policies in Japan have been subject to the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transportation since after the war. The same ministry left tourist attracting policies to local governments while it, as a central government, focused on infrastructure investments related to tourism. The Tourism Basic Law established in

2) Location tourism is subordinate to the concept of film induced tourism since its object is not limited to movies but to overall picture works including dramas but superordinate to cinema tourism focusing on movies only. However, despite the small differences, the present study treats them as equivalent concepts.

3) Website of the Japan Tourism Agency, Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transportation, “location tourism” www.mlit.go.jp/kankoch/shisaku/kankochi/locatourism.html browsed on January 28, 2019

1963 backed up active investments in tourism-related facilities such as accommodations or information facilities and in tourism infrastructure establishments such as airports or trains. However, the investments mainly covered domestic demands for tourism and did not lead to active inbound policies, and contents of inbound policies were left to the discretion of respective local governments (Japan Travel Bureau (2004)).

These circumstances were improved with the advocacy of the necessity and importance of inbound tourism in, for instance, the “Welcome Plan 21” (Ministry of Transport (1996)) or “Tourism Promotion Measures in the early 21st Century” (Tourism Policy Council (2000)), and the Tourism Basic Law was fully revised to the Basic Act for Promoting a Tourism-Oriented Country in 2006. Particularly the establishment of the JTA led to integration to an organization in charge of both, planning and implementing policies for attracting inbound tourists.

The problem of an organization in charge of tourism was thus eliminated. However, there is a larger issue concerning cinema tourism, that is, separate organizations in charge of tourism and movies. Tourism policies are subject to the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transportation, the superordinate organization of the JTA while culture-related organizations such as the movie industry come under the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, the superordinate organization of the Agency of Cultural Affairs.

It is the aim of the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transportation “to utilize, develop and preserve land in a comprehensive and systematic manner, and in order to solve the aim, to consistently improve social overhead capital, to promote transport policies, to promote policies for realizing a tourism-oriented nation, to achieve a sound development of meteorological service, and to secure safety, peace and order of the sea (Article 3 of the Act of Establishment of the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transportation). In contrast thereto, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology aims “to comprehensively promote cultivation of creative human resources with rich sense of humanity with the focus on promotion of education and lifelong learning, promotion of learning and culture as well as science and technology, and policies related to sports and to appropriately execute administrative affairs related to religion (Article 3 of the Act of Establishment of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology). In other words, features comprising cinema tourism, namely “tourism” and “culture”, are under jurisdictions of two separate organization which poses a large hindrance in promoting cinema tourism.

Another problem is the absence of an organization specializing on film-related issues. While movies have to be filmed prior to discussing cinema tourism, there are no organizations that can comprehensively coordinate those film-related issues. Neither are there any integrated points of contacts at central governments so that respective film commissions need to take care individually. However, film commissions usually operate at small sizes as external bureaus of local governments so that there are multitudes of issues such as difficult licensing procedures due to language problems or insufficient monetary aids.

In this manner, the split in organizations and the absence of an organization specializing in movie-related policies are some of the crucial factors that badly affect cinema tourism in Japan.

4. Cinema tourism policies and organizations in South Korea

In South Korea, tourism policies were separated from transportation policies and incorporated into the former Ministry of Culture and Sports to consolidate cultural and tourism policies in a single department at the time of reorganization of the central government ministries and agencies in 1994. Furthermore, as a result of the reorganization of central government ministries and agencies in 2008, digital content-related fields were included in the newly reorganized cultural policies which enabled more integrated policies to cover not only

movies but also a wider variety of images. The new Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism developed into a ministry that can more resolutely promote tourism.

While the above ministry is in charge of overall tourism policy making, the Korean Tourism Organization (KTO) has been established as a subordinate organization in charge of study, implementation of tourism policies and training personnel from tourism organizations. Founded in 1962, this quasi-governmental organization is mainly in charge of tourism policies for inbound tourists. KTO has expanded not only domestically but also overseas and cooperates with similar content-related organizations under the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism. In this manner, advertisements and implementation of measures related to contents tourism including movies are offered to potential inbound tourists.

On the other hand, the Korean Film Council (KOFIC) is in charge of policies related to movies themselves and also falls under the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism. KOFIC is an organization for performing research and training with the goal to promote Korean movies and develop the Korean movie industry. Additionally KOFIC aims to interact with foreign countries through movies. Among a variety of roles of the KOFIC, particular attention in view of cinema tourism is to be paid to their support of locations of overseas movies.

The Location Incentive Program of KOFIC grants up to 30% cash rebate for foreign audio-visual works' production expenditures made when filming on location in Korea. In order to receive this incentive, 80% of the production costs should be covered by foreign capital, the filming period should be over 10 days, and the amount of expenses in Korea should exceed two billion won (approximately 170 million dollars). If these conditions are met, the incentives are paid through film commissions of the concerned local government. These funds are allocated to KOFIC by the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism, and this program is being advertised overseas through KOFIC. This initiative is not only of great help for film makers who can cut their production expenditures, but also for the film commissions and local governments themselves who are very eager to attract overseas film productions but lacked the resources to do so in the past.

Consequently, numerous films, and particularly Hollywood films have been shot in Korea, some of which are blockbuster movies such as "Marvel's Avengers: Age of Ultron", "Black Panther", and "Pacific Rim Uprising". In particular in the case of "Marvel's Avengers: Age of Ultron", which received an incentive of approximately four billion won (approximately 340 million dollars), the production-induced economic benefit for South Korea was reported to amount to approximately 2.51 billion (approximately 2,300 million dollars). Therefore, such initiative can be seen as a win-win situation for both the movie production and the local governments

In conclusion, the strategic cooperation between the organization in charge of tourism and culture policies, supportive organizations specially focussing on inbound tourism, and organizations specialized in movies leads to and increased popularity of South Korea as a filming location.

5. Conclusion

The present study has compared organizations related to cinema tourism in Japan and South Korea to confirm the roles of some key organizations (See Table 2). It has been found that although both countries resemble each other in their systems, there are differences in organizations and their respective roles.

Two findings have been obtained through this analysis. First, movie policies and tourism policies should be integrated when considering cinema tourism. Second, there is a need for an organization capable of comprehensively and professionally dealing with the movie industry.

There are different standpoints among countries on whether to treat the cultural industry including movies and the tourism industry equally. However, it might be beneficial to the cinema tourism industry and other related industries to establish an organization that deals with both the individual cultural fields (in this case movies) and the tourism industry as a whole.

Table 2. Comparison of cinema tourism-related organizations in Japan and South Korea

South Korea	Policies related to tourism and culture: Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism Policies related to inbound tourism: Korean Tourism Organization (KTO) Specialized movie-related organization: Korean Film Council (KOFIC) Locations: Local governments (film commissions)
Japan	Policies related to tourism: Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport Policies related to culture: Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology Policies related to inbound tourism: Japan Tourism Agency Movie-related organization: Agency of Cultural Affairs Specialized movie-related organization: none Locations: Local governments (film commissions)

Source: created by author

Due to the fact that developments in mobile technologies have made it easier to shoot films and that the number of movie works is increasing with the popularity of movie-related websites (e. g. Netflix, Hulu or Amazon), it is expected that specialized movie-related organizations will grow in importance and scope in the future.

While the present study mainly discusses locations as a starting point for a broader discussion subsequently following the flow of cinema tourism, it is also possible to discuss the impact of movies themselves on tourists' travel choices.

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