



Book of **Abstracts**

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Omotenashi through Inbound Eyes: Evaluating Japanese Hospitality from the Tourist Perspective

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Abstract

Japanese *omotenashi* – a style of hospitality – has long served as a national brand that promotes Japan as a leading tourist destination worldwide. This concept plays a crucial role in the country’s tourism industry, acting as a key factor that attracts both inbound and outbound tourists. While many nations across the world are also recognized for their friendliness and hospitality, few can rival Japan’s outstanding ability to provide service that combines precision, respect, and mindfulness.

To clarify the definition of hospitality, Lashley (2000) divides hospitality activities into two domains: local and commercial. This study explores how inbound tourists in Japan perceive and evaluate two contrasting forms of local hospitality—**omotenashi** and commercialized – **standardized hospitality**—to determine which form aligns more closely with their cultural expectations and preferences. This research employed a **qualitative interpretivist approach**; also, semi-structured interviews were conducted with international visitors from diverse cultural backgrounds, including Europe, North America, Asia, and Oceania. Moreover, the results section includes the narrative analysis gathered from inbound tourists, where participants shared their sincere and most mesmerizing experiences. The study employs **Hofstede’s six cultural dimensions** as an analytical framework to interpret the influence of participants’ cultural values on their perceptions of Japanese hospitality. The research contributes to cross-cultural hospitality studies by highlighting how cultural background shapes service expectations as well as evaluations. The current study provides some practical and theoretical applications, which may contribute to further improvements in hospitality in Japan.

Keywords:

Omotenashi, Cultural background, Standardized hospitality, Local hospitality

Exploring Value Co-creation and Sustained Participation Mechanisms in Digital Heritage Experiences

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Abstract

This study focuses on the latest achievements at the intersection of heritage tourism and emerging technologies to clarify mainstream trends, research gaps, and future research directions. Existing studies mainly highlight that tourists have become active co-creators who enrich cultural narratives through their knowledge and emotional engagement. Local residents contribute place-based knowledge through festivals and interpretation, enhancing the authenticity of experiences. Experts and curators foster emotional resonance by designing narratives and immersive contexts, while technology providers employ AR/VR and AI technologies to lower participation barriers and promote sustainable content innovation and management. However, most existing research still concentrates on technological features, immersion, or authenticity, lacking a systematic analysis of the psychological mechanisms that drive tourists' sustained participation. Moreover, although the Uses and Gratifications (U&G) theory has been widely applied in social media research, it has not yet been systematically utilized in the context of digital heritage experiences. Therefore, this study explores how tourists develop sustained participation intentions through co-creation mechanisms in digital heritage experiences.

Keywords:

Heritage tourism, Emerging technology, Value Co-Creation

Designing an Educational Tourism Field Course in Rovaniemi, Finland: Cultivating Responsible Travelers

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Abstract

Tourism education has traditionally focused on developing professional competencies for the tourism industry. However, its role has expanded to include fostering more responsible and reflective travelers by engaging students in dialogue and interaction with diverse tourism stakeholders (Edelheim et al., 2022; Yamaguchi et al., 2021). Building on this shift, the present study examines how field-based educational tourism can cultivate ethical awareness and caring attitudes among Japanese tourism students through the integration of relational and values-based pedagogical perspectives (Yamagishi, 2024; Shibamoto, 2025a). To achieve this, the study emphasizes participatory and practice-based approaches for collecting and analyzing empirical materials. Rather than treating these materials as fixed and static “data,” we conceptualize them as active and vital agents, resonating with non-representational methodologies (Vannini, 2026). This year, we conducted preliminary fieldwork in Finnish Lapland, primarily in Rovaniemi. We had several meetings and informal interviews with local stakeholders in the tourism sector and researchers at the University of Lapland to co-develop a field course in Rovaniemi for tourism students at Wakayama University. Learning tourism in Rovaniemi—one of the largest tourist destinations in Northern Europe—can highlight the complex relationships between tourists and more-than-human local communities (Mochizuki, 2025). The course aims to deepen students’ understanding of how tourism can foster human-environment relations, while offering embodied learning experiences that encourage them to reconsider their intertwined roles as future tourism professionals and reflective travelers (Shibamoto, 2025b).

Based on a literature review and the results of our preliminary fieldwork, the research team is currently planning and developing a field course (Finland GIP for Wakayama University tourism students) to be implemented in the 2026 academic year. In this presentation, we will share a draft of the field course, synthesizing theoretical foundations with insights gained from the fieldwork.

Keywords:

Tourism education, Values-based learning, Relational pedagogy, Embodied learning

Reference:

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Exploring the use of immersive digital technologies for tourism education

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Abstract

As immersive technologies continue to evolve, higher education must adapt to meet the changing learning preferences of younger generations. In tourism education, immersive experiences have shown potential to enhance student engagement and deepen understanding. Despite this, current research has largely focused on Virtual Reality (VR) and Augmented Reality (AR), with limited studies exploring into the use of digital dome theatres. Digital dome theatres present an underutilized yet powerful tool for creating multi-sensory learning environments. Therefore, this research aims to explore how immersive experiences using a digital dome theatre can be integrated into tourism education. The presentation will share the current progress of the research project.

Keywords:

Tourism education, Immersive learning, Educational technology, Digital dome theatre

Tourism Destination Governance: New Roles and Innovative Approaches to Management, Stakeholder Networks and Sustainability — Project Update and Future Research Directions

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Abstract

This presentation first introduces the overview and objectives of the CTR-funded research project titled ‘Tourism Destination Governance: New Roles and Innovative Approaches to Management, Stakeholder Networks, and Sustainability’. The project primarily investigates the governance of tourism destinations in Japan, with a particular focus on destination management organisations (DMOs) in the Kansai region. While Japan remains the central focus, the project also incorporates comparative perspectives from overseas.

As an illustrative example, this presentation highlights one of the studies within the project that examines the historical development and contemporary roles of DMOs, with particular attention to Kazakhstan and the broader Central Asian region. The study explores the applicability of the Japanese DMO framework in enhancing collaboration and competitiveness along the Silk Road corridor.

Following a brief review of international DMO models and current discussions on their evolving roles—from marketing-oriented bodies to destination management entities—the study analyses structural and functional contrasts between the Kazakhstani system and Japan’s multi-tiered DMO framework, which encompasses local, regional, and wide-area levels. The Japanese

model—noted for its hierarchical structure and its ongoing efforts towards more data-driven coordination and multi-stakeholder collaboration—is also examined in light of global trends and destination governance theory to evaluate its applicability to other countries.

The presentation concludes by outlining the study's theoretical contributions and practical implications for future policy and research, emphasising the potential of cross-national learning between Japan and Central Asia in fostering more adaptive and sustainable forms of destination governance.

Keywords:

Destination governance, Sustainability, DMO, The Silk Road corridor

Addressing Overtourism Issues in Global Cities: Street Art as An Alternative Tourism Product

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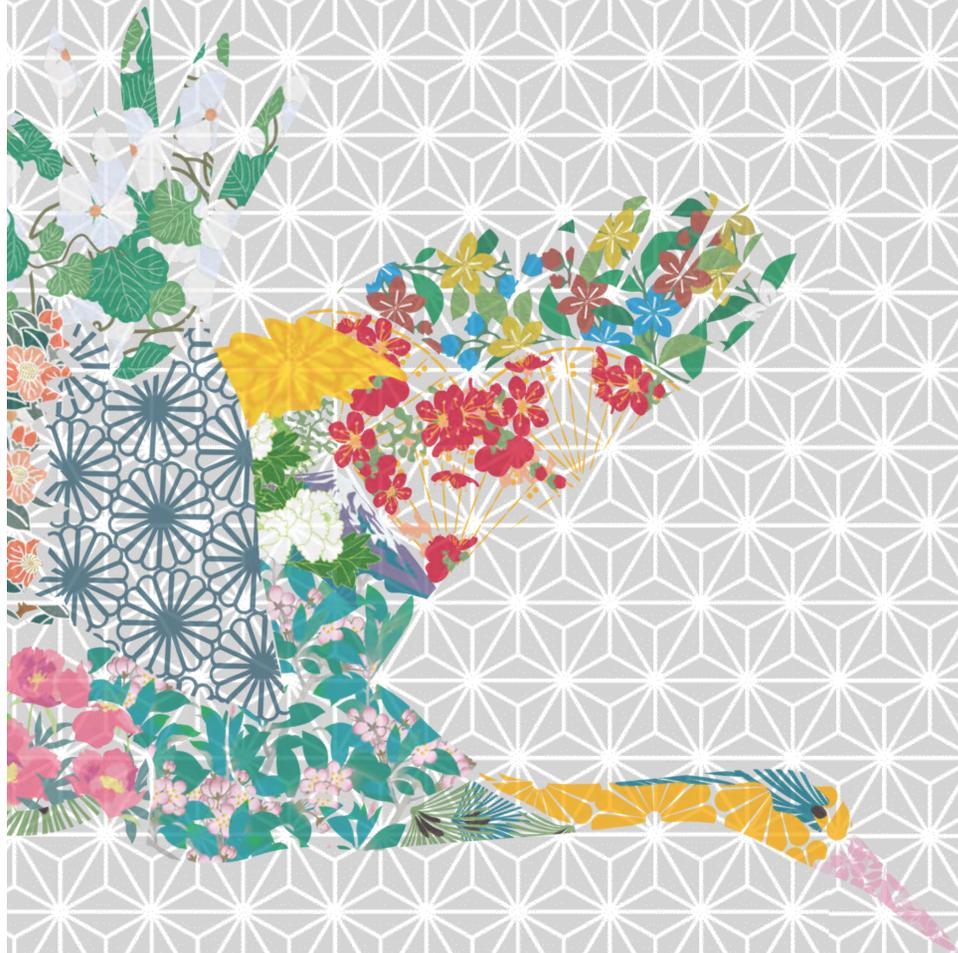
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Abstract

Investigating the Blind Walls Gallery in Breda, the Netherlands, and the YODOKABE Mural Project in Osaka, Japan, this research examines street art as an alternative tourist product that addresses issues of overtourism. The research employs a mixed-methods approach, utilizing questionnaires and semi-structured interviews to investigate the perceptions, experiences, and intentions of street artists, local residents, and visitors regarding the promotion of street art as an alternative tourist product in suburban public spaces. The preliminary findings revealed that street art plays a significant role in the place-making of 'Street Art Destinations' with meaningful murals that entail alternative forms of tourism. The Blind Walls Gallery project contributed to strengthening the locals' sense of belonging and broadened the range of tourist products in Breda city's suburban spaces, promoting slow tourism schemes off the crowded city center. The research's empirical findings suggest considering the potential of street art, which often provokes public controversy, especially among locals and policymakers.

Keywords:

Street art, mural, Place-making, Overtourism, Alternative tourism, Japan



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