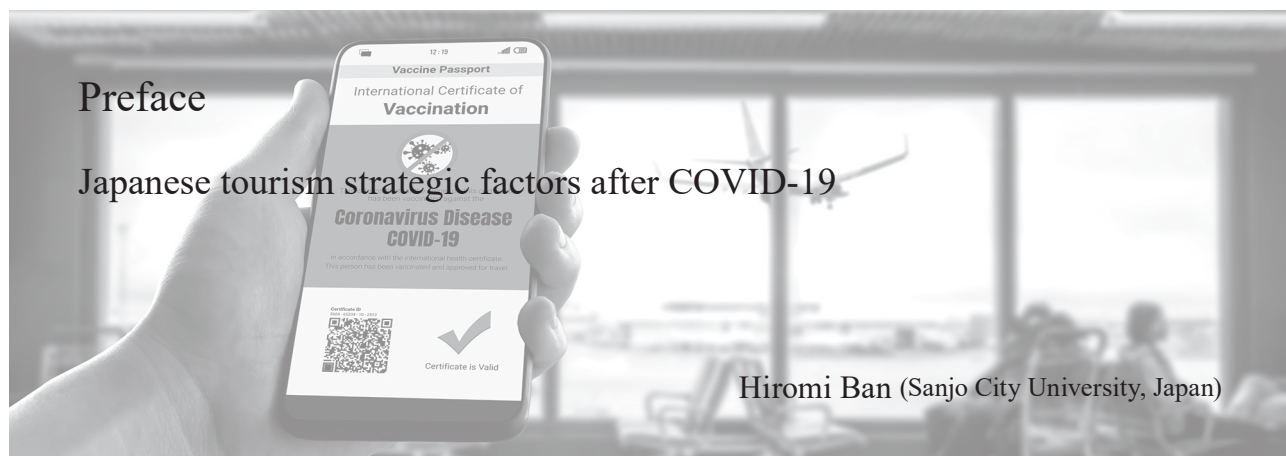


Preface

Japanese tourism strategic factors after COVID-19

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The manufacturing industry's share of Japan's GDP is on a declining trend and the tourism industry is newly on a rise. Due to the coronavirus pandemic in 2020, the world tourism industry was damaged and temporarily declined. Entering 2023, the industry is rapidly recovering. Infectious diseases not only cause great damage to the tourism industry, but also force us to change the form of tourism. About 100 years ago (from 1918 to 1921), the Spanish flu spread worldwide and about 500 million people were infected according to statistics. The population of Japan at that time was about 56 million and it can be understood how many people were infected. Many people were infected in this corona pandemic and not only international but also domestic tourists have decreased sharply. As a result, it caused great damage not only to transportation systems but also to the restaurant and accommodation industry. It is difficult to completely control the coronavirus, however the pandemic can be suppressed by raising public awareness, for example by avoiding the three Cs (closed, crowded, close-contact) as well as the development of vaccines. It is essential to introduce these measures on a daily basis in the tourism sector.

Vaccine efficacy and social immunity are progressing. Some new tourism strategies are being offered globally. All tourists and staff engaged in the tourism industry must keep in mind the enforcement of disinfection and keeping a distance from people. It is necessary to make every effort to involve local residents in order to create a new Japanese tourism industry that can compete with other countries. Furthermore, there is a strong need to build a tourism strategy that is one step ahead in the next 10 years. Attracting foreign visitors to Japan is a key point to the rise and fall of local tourism, considering the declining birthrate and aging population. Many foreign visitors to Japan visit metropolitan areas such as Tokyo, Osaka, and Kyoto. It is necessary to change the policy to attract tourists from metropolitan areas to rural areas. It is also necessary to change the consciousness of the residents to the age of locality.

According to a report by the Organization for Economic

Co-operation and Development (OECD), Japan ranks 23rd out of 38 member countries in the 2020 labor productivity ranking, just over 60 % behind the United States. The productivity in the tourism sector is lower than this. It is related to wages and immediately affects the securing of human resources for the industry as a whole. From this aspect, the introduction of digital transformation (DX) is essential in the tourism industry. In addition, it is necessary for the industry as a whole to promote the corporate management (GX: green transformation) that considers global warming in recent years and to be recognized with the activity by the world. In recent years, the term "Tourism DX" has been used a lot, and there is a strong demand for improving the productivity of the tourism industry and introducing a global strategy. Tourism DX will contribute to improving convenience for tourists and sophistication of tourist area management based on tourism data.

Recently, the use of generation AI such as Chat GPT has been seen in many fields. It has excellent writing ability, such as creating poems and even books, and is being used as a very convenient tool. It also provides appropriate answers according to the user's questions in various fields. It is clear that it will make a great contribution in the tourism field, and it will lead to a reduction in manpower and improve labor productivity. However, the derived answer by the generative AI is not always correct. Answers to simple or routine questions, such as the weather at tourist sites and how to use transportation, are mostly correct. However, it should be used with the understanding that there are mistakes. In other words, checking is certainly required. In addition, since sentences are created from a large amount of data in the Internet, copyright infringement may occur. When using sentences created by AI, a check is required as it may lead to litigation issues. However, it is clear that it will also be used in the tourism field in Japan, and we should construct a tourism DX environment that can support generation AI and implement various measures.


In order to spread the economic effects of the tourism

industry throughout Japan, it is essential to attract tourists (especially foreign tourists) to rural areas. It is necessary to discover and disseminate not only local nature but also history, culture and art as tourism resources. Awareness from the multifaceted perspectives of local residents is important. The first step is to build an organization such as DMO (Destination Management Organization), which aims to manage tourist areas. The DMO aims to improve the local economy and achieve sustainable development as an organization that connects tourists with the local community. It is also necessary to judge whether the utilization and evaluation of tourism resources in rural areas and the dissemination of information are appropriate. Naturally, it is necessary to understand the outline of word of mouth on SNS and make use of it for tourism management strategies without delay. The opportunity and motivation to go to sightseeing spots both domestically and internationally is necessary. In order for everyone to go sightseeing without anxiety, if the individual's sightseeing behavior is given as an index, they can go out with a sense of security. If the country can draw out the tourism behavior of the elderly and create an environment that is consistent with the declining birthrate and aging population, it is possible to create a tourism-oriented country that serves as a model for the world.

Let's hope for the recovery of Japan's tourism industry.

About the author

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