

Destination Marketing through Film-Induced Tourism -A Case Study of Otaru, Japan-

メタデータ	言語: English 出版者: Emerald Publishing Limited 公開日: 2022-09-27 キーワード (Ja): キーワード (En): Destination marketing, Film-induced tourism, Otaru, Overtourism, Site sacralization, Tourism development 作成者: 中山, 千尋 メールアドレス: 所属:
URL	http://hdl.handle.net/10291/22696



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Journal:	<i>Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Insights</i>
Manuscript ID	JHTI-02-2022-0047.R2
Manuscript Type:	Research Paper
Keywords:	film-induced tourism, tourism development, site sacralization, destination marketing, Otaru, overtourism

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Abstract

Purpose: This study aims to test the utility of Pearce *et al.*'s (2003) framework on film tourism in Otaru, Japan. This framework involves marketing the attraction according to five stages: resource identification, marketing emphasis, interpretation, sales and merchandising, and broader community use. The existing studies have failed to adapt this framework to films. Subsequently, this study uncovers the necessity of an additional stage involving sustainability aspects.

Design: A case study method was adopted, and Otaru, Japan—a popular film location—was chosen. Semi-structured interviews with the major stakeholders of film tourism, such as film commissions, representatives of the film and the tourism industries, tourists, and the community, were conducted, and the participants were observed. Data were collected using the snowball sampling technique.

Findings: The study reveals that Pearce *et al.*'s (2003) model is applicable to film tourism by adding a sixth stage to address sustainability, such as the issue of overtourism.

Practical implications: The transferability of the framework to different film tourism cases is plausible. It is also critical for governments and tourism practitioners to consider the community's perspective for sustainability and maximize the use of films as promotional tools for destinations.

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5 **Originality:** This study is the first to apply Pearce *et al.*'s (2003) model to film tourism—
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7 adding value to the literature by extending the framework to include an additional sixth
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9 stage to address sustainability.
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15 **Keywords:** destination marketing; film-induced tourism; Otaru; overtourism; site
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17 sacralization; tourism development
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20 **Article classification:** Research paper
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1. Introduction

There is a growing interest in films and TV dramas as drivers of tourism. Film-induced tourism is defined as a “tourist visit to a destination or attraction due to the destination being featured on television, video, DVD, or the cinema screen” (Hudson and Ritchie, 2006, p. 256). While existing studies have demonstrated the impact of film tourism (Connell, 2012), studies examining the use of films and TV dramas to promote specific destinations remain scarce. How can films and TV dramas be utilized and maximized as promotional tools for such destinations? One of the best models to examine this question is Pearce *et al.*'s (2003) approach. Pearce *et al.* (2003) adapted a site sacralization model, a five-stage theoretical framework developed by MacCannell (1976) to develop tourism destinations, and added a marketing perspective. Pearce *et al.* (2003) then applied the model to famous individuals, such as the president of the country, musicians, and film stars, while Henke (2005) applied the framework to music-induced tourism. However, existing studies have ignored the application of Pearce *et al.*'s (2003) framework to films. This study aims to test the utility of the framework focusing on Otaru, Hokkaido, Japan, where many popular films have been shot. Despite the increasing research on film tourism, corresponding studies in Asia have received little attention (Nakayama, 2021).

Product placements have an effect that appeals to destinations, which can utilize films as promotional tools (Croy and Walker, 2003; Hudson and Ritchie, 2006). For example, in 2003, the Japanese government launched tourism promotional strategies to support film-induced tourism, calling them “content tourism” to revitalize regional economies. This activity was promoted as part of a package of policies to address the aging population and declining birth rate through the integration of a national tourism policy and pop

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5 culture content, such as films, TV dramas, games, and anime (Tourism Agency, Japan
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7 National Tourism Organization, Ministry of Economy Trade and Industry and Japan
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9 External Trade Organization, 2013). While Anglophonic film tourism focuses on the
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11 media, content tourism concentrates on the content, such as the narratives and locations
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14 (Seaton and Yamamura, 2015).
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18 Additionally, certain motion pictures have increased the awareness of the places they
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20 portrayed and successfully encouraged tourists to visit them (Riley and Van Doren, 1992;
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22 Riley *et al.*, 1998; Tooke and Baker, 1996). For instance, the hit Chinese film, *If You Are*
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24 *the One*, released in 2008, was shot in Hokkaido and facilitated the entry of Chinese
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26 visitors to the area in 2008, along with the relaxation of visa requirements (Seaton and
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28 Yamamura, 2015). This marked a 195% increase in Chinese visitors. Thus, a film can
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30 increase the popularity of certain aspects of the country, such as its nature, culture, and
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32 people, to create a positive image. Such images may influence people's decision to visit
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34 the country (Iwashita, 2006). Thus, marketers are increasingly working with film
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36 producers to promote their destinations as possible film locations (Kim and Richardson,
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38 2003).
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45 Hudson and Ritchie (2006) argued that the success of film tourism relies on the
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47 destination's efforts to invite producers to shoot there, and Croy (2010) claimed that
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49 image strategies are necessary to gain sustainability from films. Strielkowski (2017)
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51 revealed the causality between the popularity of films and the number of tourists
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53 influenced by films shot in Japan. Croy *et al.* (2018) provided measures for destination
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55 marketing organizations to effectively use certain film images, thereby benefitting the
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57 region and the local community. Moreover, Lee and Bai (2016) revealed the positive
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5 impact of pop culture on destinations. While studies have recognized the significant
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7 influence of films on the number of visitors, the sustainability of using films and TV
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9 dramas in promoting destinations is not fully understood.
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13 This study is structured as follows. First, it reviews the literature and outlines the five-
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15 stage framework by Pearce *et al.* (2003), adopting the “site sacralization” theory and
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17 determining the framework’s significance for using films as avenues for tourism
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19 promotion. Then, it utilizes the events of film-induced tourism in Otaru, Japan, to discuss
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21 the model’s utility. Finally, the study summarizes the main findings and provides their
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23 implications for destination marketers and the film industry. This study reveals that the
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25 five-stage framework by Pearce *et al.* (2003) is applicable and complements the
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27 framework by adding a sixth stage to address sustainability.
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35 **2. Literature Review: A Five-stage Model**

36 *2.1 MacCannell’s (1976) site sacralization model*

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41 MacCannell’s (1976) site sacralization model has been used in tourism studies to analyze
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43 the development of tourist attractions and argues that sites are transformed into sacred,
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45 development-worthy attractions through site sacralization. It is a five-stage model for
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47 tourist destinations, offering unique insights into site development. The order of the five
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49 stages is as follows: resource identification, marketing emphasis, interpretation, sales and
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51 merchandising, and broader community use. Jacobsen (1997) and Löytynoja (2008) noted
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53 that the stages may not always be in that order.
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5 Some tourism studies have adopted the model to deconstruct the development of
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7 tourist attractions. For instance, Varnajot (2020) demonstrated the economic and
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9 sustainable significance of hosting the Tour de France. Forristal *et al.* (2011) revealed
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11 that Historic Prophetstown, US, has never surpassed the first stage, which resulted in
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13 fewer visits and limited economic benefits. Löytynoja (2008) tested the model's
14
15 applicability in the context of North Cape, Finland, to research peculiar destinations and
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17 their development into tourist attractions. Cooper *et al.* (2020) tested whether the
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19 framework is effective and aimed to identify the distinctiveness of the Sourtoe Cocktail,
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21 a custom in Canada. They applied the framework not to the attraction but to the human
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23 toe, the important ingredient in the Sourtoe Cocktail, and deconstructed some of the
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25 processes and relationships. Nevertheless, this framework is restrictive because it only
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27 elucidates the development of tourist attractions (Pearce *et al.*, 2003). Its sociological
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29 perspective overlooks an effective structure that evaluates the destination development
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31 from the marketing perspective (Forristal *et al.*, 2011).
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39 *2.2 Pearce et al.'s (2003) five-stage model*

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42 Pearce *et al.* (2003) relabeled the five phases of MacCannell's site sacralization theory
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44 and added a marketing perspective to meet the demands of marketing managers. The
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46 model reframed MacCannell's approach using icons and heroes. Pearce *et al.*'s (2003)
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48 model reveals the marketing aspects and provides practical implications for film tourism
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50 stakeholders. As a precondition, a very close reciprocal association between films and
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52 their location is essential for successful tourism. This relationship has two components
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54 (Pearce *et al.*, 2003). The first is that the place should be associated with the icon and vice
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56 versa (Pearce *et al.*, 2003). The second is the semiotic arrangement in which the film or
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5 the sign presents the signified place with exactness (Dann, 1996). The film cannot
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7 function as an icon if its name is only vaguely linked to a specific place.
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10 The first stage of the model is called resource identification or naming, and it focuses
11 on “marking the sight as worthy of preservation” (MacCannell, 1976, p. 44) or
12 differentiating the sight from other attractions (Löytynoja, 2008). For example, North
13 Cape was made into a worthy site by the added meanings of “northernness” and
14 “remoteness” and because it is a “mystic place” where the midnight sun is visible
15 (Löytynoja, 2008, p. 17). Cooper *et al.* (2020) claim that the Sourtoe Cocktail, a mixture
16 of different legends, originated from the Gold Rush myth. At this stage, “an icon is
17 defined, and the valuable on-site agents are delineated” (Henke, 2005, p. 5). This stage
18 motivates people to visit the site using books, guides, and the Internet, without any
19 proactive promotion from marketing organizations (Pearce *et al.*, 2003). Varnajot (2020)
20 claimed that the Tour de France was created by its relationship with the media. There
21 must be an icon development of the destination to promote tourism. This process can be
22 conducted either “reactively” by events that can make the place recognized or
23 “proactively” by the tourism businesses and destination marketing organizations (Pearce
24 *et al.*, 2003, p. 75).
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47 The second stage is the marketing emphasis or framing and elevating stage, where the
48 target market is determined to promote the icon. Framing refers to placing a boundary
49 around the object, while elevation pertains to showing and opening an object for visitation
50 (Cooper *et al.*, 2020; Jacobsen, 1997; MacCannell, 1976). Destination marketers can use
51 social media to expand the event’s reach (Varnajot, 2020). Moreover, the icon’s
52 characteristics are evaluated by comparing them with other icons or tourist destinations
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5 (Henke, 2005). Examples of this stage are film location maps that open the destination
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7 for visitation. For successful tourism, the size and types of markets must be defined and
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9 be accessible, identifiable, and stable over time (Pearce *et al.*, 2003).
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13 The third stage is the interpretation or enshrinement stage, where the importance of
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15 the place is promoted, and amusements are provided to increase engagement (Henke,
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17 2005). The attraction, such as the hotel that serves the Sourtoe Cocktail and the city with
18
19 a gold rush ambiance, also captivates visitors (Cooper *et al.*, 2020). To succeed in this
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21 phase, stakeholders should involve visitors in activities with “a sense of personal
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23 connection.” For example, they can set up “film screenings, festivals, walking tours,
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25 parties, museums or interpretive centers” to attract more visitors (Henke, 2005, p. 5).
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31 The fourth stage is the sales and merchandising or mechanical reproduction stage.
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33 This is characterized by souvenir or artifact manufacturing related to the site,
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35 photographs, or pictures (Löytynoja, 2008) and the “transaction of icon-related artifacts
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37 among serious collectors” (Henke, 2005, p. 6). MacCannell (1976) claims that this stage
38
39 is primarily involved in motivating tourists. Löytynoja (2008) argues that the adjective
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41 “easternmost” has been utilized in marketing to a particular municipality, village, or
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43 company (p. 24). Here, the works of famous painters, authors, and artists have been
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45 identified, and people have become increasingly aware of sites that reproduce the title or
46
47 caption of such works (Forristal *et al.*, 2011).
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53 The fifth stage is the broader community use or social reproduction stage
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55 characterized by the “acceptance by the community” (Pearce *et al.*, 2003, p. 79). Here
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57 residents identify with the attraction (MacCannell, 1976), and this occurs when groups,
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5 regions, towns, schools, or even people start labeling themselves after prominent sites.

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7 Thus, the local residents engage with the icon as a tourist site (Henke, 2005). However,
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9 this last stage has not taken place in the case of the Easternmost Point, Finland (Löytynoja,
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11 2008).
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15 In tourism studies, Henke (2005) concluded that, with minor adjustments, Pearce *et*
16
17 *al.*'s (2003) framework could provide useful guidance as it applies music as a promotional
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19 tool for destinations. Tang *et al.* (2009) used the study to create a framework to examine
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21 how human icons are used to develop tourist attractions, and they proposed factors to
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23 measure the effectiveness of human icons. Nevertheless, the model has not been applied
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25 to films. This study uses films as icons and tests the framework's utility for film tourism.
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27 If films are elevated successfully to the level of icons, they can attract tourists to the
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29 location where they were shot.
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38 **3. Data and Methods**

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40 Adopting a case study method, this study used the events from films shot in Otaru for an
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42 empirical investigation to evaluate the utility of Pearce *et al.*'s (2003) framework. The
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44 data were collected from interviews with major film tourism stakeholders and participant
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46 observation using a qualitative lens. A snowball sampling strategy was used to collect the
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48 data.
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52 *3.1 Data collection*

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55 The study conducted two investigations; the preliminary round involved visits to film
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57 sites in Otaru, tourist observations, and a collection of photographs and brochures of film
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5 sites. The second round focused on interviews with key stakeholders, participant
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7 observation, and examining historical materials surveyed by the author, including a video
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9 narrating Otaru's history. The latter was provided by the former head of the Otaru
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11 Tourism Association.
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15 The data were collected via face-to-face and telephonic interviews and through
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17 participant observation. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with forty-one major
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19 film tourism stakeholders from the film commission, tourism agencies, the film industry,
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21 the local community, and tourists using the snowball sampling technique. First, the author
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23 contacted the Otaru Film Commission via email to conduct a face-to-face interview.
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25 Those who had the longest connection with the researcher were asked if they knew the
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27 stakeholders involved. Three informants from the tourism agency, film industry, and
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29 extras were introduced from the Otaru Film Commission, and the interviews were
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31 gradually expanded to other stakeholders.
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38 All the interviews were conducted face-to-face, except those with the advertising
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40 agency, which were conducted via telephone, as the person in charge had been transferred
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42 to Kyushu. With the permission of the interviewees, the interviews were recorded. After
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44 the interview, the major points were confirmed with the interviewees, which helped
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46 improve the validity of the data. The interviews lasted for approximately 90 minutes, with
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48 data collection spanning between November 2018 and December 2021, and the
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50 interviewees were asked to explain how films and TV dramas were involved in tourism
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52 at the destination. All interviews were conducted in Japanese. English was used to
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54 interview the international tourists. The interviews were anonymous and manually
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5 transcribed and analyzed. The interview data were translated from Japanese to English by
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7 the author.
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10 In this study, the “tourist icon” refers to films, while Pearce *et al.*’s (2003) icon
11 development refers to individuals. A data analysis was conducted by applying film-
12 related organizations, events, and artifacts as tools of attraction development for each of
13 Pearce *et al.*’s (2003) stages. This was done to explore the possibility of destination
14 development. Following Henke (2005), the study adopts the reciprocity rule to assess the
15 strength of the film’s association with the place. Then, Pearce *et al.*’s (2003) framework
16 was applied and analyzed.
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27 *3.2 Background of Otaru and the films shot at the location*

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30 Located 30 km northwest of Sapporo, Hokkaido, Otaru used to be a fishing village that
31 became a large international trading port city. With a thriving shipping port for coal, the
32 fishing village found affluence through fishing herring. In 1880, the Temiya Railway Line
33 formed part of the Poronai Railway, which became the third railway in Japan and mainly
34 transported coal. In 1890, Otaru became an international trading port. It was named “the
35 Wall Street of the North” and considered the economic center of Hokkaido. Nevertheless,
36 the city experienced an economic downturn because of declining exports following the
37 establishment of the Tomakomai Port. Despite its economic decline, media reports of the
38 Otaru Canal Preservation Movement supported the transformation of the city into a
39 popular tourist destination (Horikawa, 2018), and the city transformed into a tourist
40 destination in the mid-1980s. In 1973, the residents begun the Otaru Canal Preservation
41 Movement to stop the government to reclaim the canal to construct the six-lane roads.
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5 Known as the “City of Hills,” Otaru was chosen as the case study because it is the film
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7 location of countless popular films. The film tourism stakeholders chose the following
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9 five films for the evaluation. They were asked to explain the popular film tourism which
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11 they were involved. First, *Love Letter*, the Japanese fantasy love story released in 1995,
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13 which begins with an unintentionally delivered love letter, was shot in Otaru. It attracted
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15 approximately 1,400,000 visitors from South Korea during the First Cultural Opening of
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17 Japan in 1998. Second, *Kita Kita*, a Filipino romantic comedy that made approximately
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19 USD 6.5 million at the box office, was released in 2017. In the movie, a Filipino travel
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21 guide in Sapporo loses her eyesight after witnessing her fiancé’s infidelity. Third, *One*
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23 *Day*, a romantic comedy released in 2016, won the 26th Subanahongsa Thai Film Awards
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25 in 2016, Thailand’s equivalent of the Oscars. In the film, an IT office worker became a
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27 one-day couple with Nui, who developed a memory disorder after a ski accident. Fourth,
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29 *Honeymoon*, a short film released in 2015 in China and Taiwan, depicts the honeymoon
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31 of a couple who like the movie *Love Letter*. Fifth, *The Detective Is in the Bar 3* is a
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33 Japanese suspense comedy released in 2017. Here, detectives are involved with an
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35 entrepreneur who influences the underground community.
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44 As a precondition, the reciprocity rule evaluates the association of the films with the
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46 place. The film *Love Letter* has a strong association with the community, and the
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48 community is very aware of the film. Although non-Japanese films, such as *Kita Kita*
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50 and *One Day*, are incompatible with applying the reciprocity rule to stakeholders and
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52 the community, they apply to tourists as they were successfully released in their own
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54 countries.
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58 **4. Findings: Adopting Pearce *et al.*’s Five-stage Model**

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5 This study employed the five-stage model for developing tourist destinations used in films
6 and TV dramas and applied it to Otaru from a marketing perspective.
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9 10 *4.1 Resource identification* 11

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13 The first stage, resource identification, is the establishment of the Otaru Film
14 Commission. The fourth film commission was established in Hokkaido in March 2003 to
15 attract and support domestic and foreign film production. Operating under the direct
16 control of the local government, the Otaru Film Commission aims to revitalize local
17 economies and promote tourism through films and TV dramas. The commission's
18 practice of preparing free meals for film crews deprives location services and catering
19 companies of business opportunities. Consequently, they held numerous meetings with
20 the three main local private location service companies to avoid interference with their
21 businesses and ensure cooperation. In addition, filmmakers can gain support from the
22 local government through the film commission. In 2003, right after its establishment, the
23 Otaru Film Commission received 124 inquiries resulting in 95 productions. In 2017, they
24 received approximately 90 inquiries, with 70 film shootings being permitted. The film
25 commission claims that the most recent shootings were for food shows instead of films
26 and dramas.
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47 Unlike individual icons, sites can become popular without the participation of agents,
48 such as private-sector businesses, conventions, and tourist information centers (Pearce *et*
49 *al.*, 2003). For instance, in an interview for this study, a South Korean tourist said, "We
50 saw the picture of the film site in the guidebook, and we wanted to visit," and a Chinese
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5 tourist commented, “We saw the posting of the film site of *Honeymoon* on Instagram and
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7 decided to visit.”
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10 4.2 Marketing Emphasis 11 12

13 In the second stage, the marketing emphasis determines the major aspects of promoting
14 films shot in the destination as a tourist icon. This is to motivate visitors to visit the site.
15 One way to identify the potential fans of films is to expose non-natives to films and
16 motivate visits through film location maps. Those with positive responses may determine
17 the key aspects of promotion, and the film location identifies suitable demographics,
18 including age and gender, and people’s behavior.
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28 The Otaru Film Commission focuses on Japanese films and created film location maps
29 for *Love Letter* and *The Detective Is in the Bar 3* with the actors pictured at the sites. They
30 were distributed to local tourist information centers, film locations, and tourists on bus
31 tours. The film commission received permission to use the pictures before the film’s
32 release as it is difficult to obtain permission after the release.
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41 Meanwhile, the Sapporo Film Commission focused on foreign films and produced
42 film location maps for *Kita Kita* and *One Day*. First, the *Kita Kita* film location map was
43 introduced in Otaru and Sapporo, and many Filipino travel agents inquired about tourism
44 visits. In the interview with the researcher, the Sapporo Film Commission claimed that
45 “People could enjoy not one but ten places with the film location maps. First and
46 foremost, everybody long to visit because the actors were there.” Film location restaurants
47 sold special menus associated with the film, and the film commission tracked the
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5 participants' behavior as they logged in with their smartphones using QR codes on the
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7 map.
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10 Second, the film location map for *One Day* introduced Otaru, Sapporo, Hakodate, and
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12 Noboribetsu in the winter. Written in Thai, it offers precise information, such as the music
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14 box building and the Otaru Canal, with QR codes. In the interview with the researcher,
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16 the Sapporo Film Commission reiterated, "Asian tourists want to see the snow, and
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18 Sapporo is the gateway to Hokkaido." Otaru's winter snow created a desire for snow, as
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20 Sapporo is the gateway to Hokkaido." Otaru's winter snow created a desire for snow, as
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22 seen in the films, and the extras appearing in movies shot in Otaru commented that filming
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24 in the winter takes place more than in any other season, rendering the shoot difficult.
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27 Another marketing strategy would be the use of film images, which motivate visitors
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29 to come to the film site. The following quotes echo the view of the film image and visitors'
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31 motivation by the Sapporo Film Commission: "The film enhances the brand image of
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33 Sapporo, having a remarkable effect. The power of brand image attracts the producers to
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35 shoot here. We invite filmmakers and lead to city promotion." For instance, the Filipino
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37 producers of *Kita Kita* decided on the location shoot immediately after they visited
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39 Sapporo. In addition, the Sapporo Film Commission supports filmmakers with a
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41 maximum subsidy of 10-million-yen for filming in Sapporo. Both *Kita Kita* and *One Day*
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43 made use of this.
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50 Films have a significant impact on the potential marketing segments of a destination.
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52 *Kita Kita* became the driving force for direct flights from Manila to Sapporo, which began
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54 in December 2018. In the interview for this study, the Sapporo Film Commission claimed
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56 that "Without *Kita Kita*, there would not be direct flights from Manila. Before *Kita Kita*,
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5 few Filipinos were familiar with Sapporo and Hokkaido.” Furthermore, potential
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7 filmmakers who saw the film inquired about shooting in Sapporo at the Contents Market
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9 in Singapore. The hit movie led to the next Philippine film being shot in the area, thus
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11 creating ripple effects.
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15 To appreciate and identify the size and types of markets, this study proposes the
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17 inclusion in the first stage of resource sharing and collaboration among the stakeholders
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19 of film tourism to identify and expand the size of markets to address sustainability and
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21 reach various types of markets for fruitful promotion. For instance, despite partnerships
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23 with other Asian travel agencies, Japanese travel agencies have insufficient information
24
25 about foreign movies being shot in Hokkaido. Their challenge is to propose film tourism
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27 for inbound markets in the future. Similarly, the Otaru Tourism Development Advisor
28
29 does not focus on foreign movies. Despite the arguable importance of inbound tourism in
30
31 Japan, Japanese tourists are the target of market segments, with foreign tourists receiving
32
33 little attention in Otaru. The framework needs to include resource sharing of foreign films,
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35 such as showing them to the film tourism stakeholders and the community at the film sites
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37 during the resource identification stage. This is because the success of film tourism lies
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39 in being able to predict the type and size of the market that is attractive to the destination
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41 and plan accordingly, which in turn, addresses sustainability.
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49 *4.3 Interpretation*

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52 Stage three, “interpretation,” explains the importance of the place so that tourists can
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54 enjoy their visit more. To achieve the interpretation aims, Otaru has bus tours of film
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56 locations. The travel agent that the researcher interviewed conducted *The Detective Is in*
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5 *the Bar 3* bus tours around the film sites in Otaru and Sapporo on weekends in December
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7 2017 and January 2018 in collaboration with the tourism agency, film industry, film
8 commission, and local film sites. The tour began by watching the film in Sapporo,
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10 followed by visiting the locations by bus. The travel agency scheduled a total of four one-
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12 day tours and organized three tours, which were booked except for one tour. There were
13
14 160 participants—124 females and 36 males—25 participants of which were from outside
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16 of Hokkaido. The bus tour attracted enthusiastic fans as well as mildly interested ones. It
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18 was successful despite being conducted during the low season of the first Friday of
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20 December in winter in Hokkaido. The travel agency claimed that the film tour motivated
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22 tourists regardless of the season.
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30 Special-interest groups are closely connected to the film and have the potential to
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32 revisit the sites in the future. The importance of core fans who participate, even though
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34 they live far away, is recognized by travel agents and the Otaru Film Commission.
35
36 Moreover, many fans participated in the tour a day after the main actor's fan meet-and-
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38 greet in Sapporo, the day before the movie was released. The fans enjoyed the behind-
39
40 the-scenes look at the production as told by the film commission. The stakeholders,
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42 including the film commission, film industry, and travel agency, used social networking
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44 sites (SNS) to reach the fans. Destination marketers are encouraged to question the
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46 existing fans and supporter groups, such as "fan clubs or societies" (Pearce *et al.*, 2003,
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48 p. 76). This is important as the fans are most likely to revisit.
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55 For a successful interpretation, stakeholders must offer visitors diverse displays,
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57 experiences, and personal connections. The stakeholders must ensure that visitors
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59 participate in activities that orientate and organize the visitors to different events and have
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5 clearer content that the fans like to see, allowing participants with different degrees of
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7 devotion to join them (Pearce and Black, 1995; Tilden, 1977; Wolf *et al.*, 1979; Woods
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9 and Moscardo, 1996). There is a necessity for greater depth and distinction to meet the
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11 needs of both devoted and mildly interested enthusiasts (Pearce *et al.*, 2003).
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15 Despite the city announcing that the tourism policy would use the individual narrative
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17 of the destination for visitors to experience tourism activities (Otaru City, Industrial Port,
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19 and Harbor Department and Tourism Promotion Section, 2016), visitors do not have
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21 many options to experience activities, such as film talk events and personal connections
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23 to fully experience the real locations of the films they enjoyed. Besides an Otaru Anime
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25 Party, an animation festival held every year since 2014 with 20,000 domestic and foreign
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27 participants engaging in cosplay, there are fewer options to experience activities,
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29 especially for mildly interested enthusiasts. This means that they lack sufficient narrative
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31 for foreign visitors. South Korean tourists requested that Otaru should explore the
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33 historical narrative of the Otaru Canal, an international port that experienced an economic
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35 downturn but was revived as a tourism destination (Otaru City, Industrial Port, and Harbor
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37 Department and Tourism Promotion Section, 2017). Destination stakeholders must
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39 demonstrate historical narratives for foreign tourists and amalgamate two opposing
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41 factors in their branding strategy: one based on the identity and history (past) and another
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43 based more on marketing and aesthetics (future) (S  raphin *et al.*, 2016).
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51 *4.4 Sales and merchandising*

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54 In the sales and merchandising stage, the two main promotional tools associated with
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56 films shot in Otaru include glass artifacts and music boxes. The making of glass artifacts
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5 is the primary occupation of the protagonist in *Love Letter*. The Otaru Canal Artifacts
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7 House, now renamed “Il Ponte,” was often portrayed as the Otaru Glass Factory. Many
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9 South Korean, Taiwanese, and Chinese fans have visited the glass factories two decades
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11 after the film was released.
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15 The glass artifacts that appear in films and TV dramas are a strong motivation to visit
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17 the film sites. The Kitaichi Glass Factory produced oil lamps and glass fishing balls
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19 against the backdrop of the thriving herring fishing industry. Tie-ins with local traditional
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21 glass manufacturing plants, such as the Kitaichi Glass Factory, created the brand of Otaru
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23 and the glass artifacts. When interviewed for this study, the former sales manager of
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25 Kitaichi Glass commented, “Many tourists came to buy the glass artifacts after being
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27 featured in the drama.”
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33 After the decline of herring fishing, the media saved the local community three times.
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35 First, by telecasting the TV drama “*Garasu no Chienowa*” in 1982, which translates as
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37 “A Glass-made Disentanglement Puzzle,” the sponsor Kitaichi Glass was acknowledged,
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39 and fans came to buy their products. Second, through the Otaru Exposition in 1984, the
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41 road along the port was created, and the company moved to the renovated warehouse.
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43 The warehouse was used as a café which was lighted romantically with oil lamps, as
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45 suggested by Kuramoto, the producer of the TV drama “*Garasu no Chienowa*” (1982).
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47 This became popular along with the glass wind chimes. Third, the media repeatedly
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49 reported on the Otaru Canal Preservation Movements.
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55 The second type of sales and merchandising are music boxes. Otaru needed something
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57 besides the glass artifacts to attract people from Sapporo. Luckily, the music box matched
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Otaru's image. In an interview conducted during the study, a resident who brought music boxes to Otaru as a new business said that "the combination of glass artifacts and music boxes was so successful in Otaru that the twin set spread as fancy souvenirs to many places around Japan, like Karuizawa, Kurokabe, and Kiyosato." Suspense dramas, such as *Otaru Satsujin Jiken (Otaru Murder Case)*, broadcast in 1986 and 1996, used the sound of the music box to generate a withering atmosphere. Its image had a significant promotional effect along with the image of glass artifacts. Unlike Japanese dramas, Asian films use music boxes in romantic settings. In *One Day*, the Otaru Music Box Museum and the shop, the popular sightseeing spot that has a collection of more than 25,000 music boxes, is a romantic venue that embraces the nostalgic city in the snow. When the researcher visited in January 2019, she witnessed great interest in purchasing the music box. Digitization, such as smartphones and social media applications, has also increased sales and merchandising (Varnajot, 2020).

As described above, tourists purchase glass artifacts and music boxes to reexperience the films. This demonstrates MacCannell's (1976) belief that souvenirs or artifacts motivate tourists. Despite the former Head of the Otaru Tourism Association arguing that "souvenir tourism," in which tourists stay just half-day in Otaru to buy the souvenirs, then go back to Sapporo to spend the night, glass artifacts and music boxes represent Otaru. Furthermore, although Boorstin (1963) and Horne (1984) criticized the souvenir trade, the sale of these artifacts does not trivialize the opportunity to participate and enjoy the recollection and appraisal of the films and dramas as they allowed visitors to reexperience the films. Moreover, for film fans, the collection of memorable merchandise enhances their understanding of the film.

4.5 Broader community use

The fifth stage is broader community use, which includes building a fan community for the films or TV dramas and creating a specialized brand community for Internet-based fans (Muniz and O'Guinn, 2001).

The community widely recognizes Otaru's "film culture," which served as a social activity before TV became prevalent. Hence, the community supports filmmaking for regional promotion. Before the cinema complex emerged in Otaru in March 1999, there used to be 23 movie theaters running at their peak and showing movies just two years after the first movie screenings in France, with even older people enjoying watching movies. The Miyako Shopping Street has supported film shooting by lending places for meetings, storing equipment, and negotiating with the police and shop owners in arranging road blockades. It is evident that nothing but the passion for the films motivates the local residents to assist the film production. One of the actors interviewed for this study has even lent her house for shooting with no charge.

The former Yujiro Ishihara Memorial Hall, the museum devoted to the Japanese star, which opened four years after his death in 1991 and closed in 2017, attracted approximately 1,800,000 fans by 2016. Located at the Otaru Port Marina, the museum showed the cars used in his movies, records, costumes, and yacht as Yujiro spent three to nine years in Otaru. The former head of the Otaru Tourism Association commented, "Yujiro contributed so much to the tourism and image branding of Otaru." The owner of the music box shop mentioned, "We sold innumerable music boxes in the museum because many of the exuberant fans were wealthy gold-card holders, and they bought

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5 many of them as souvenirs.” Its closure was due to the older fans’ difficulty in making
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7 visits and increasing building maintenance and upgrade costs (Seaton and Yamamura,
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9 2015). Canonizing the star after his death was not enough to maintain the tourism, and
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11 broader community use was discontinued. The destination marketers need further insight
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13 to widen the process of tourism planning and tourism area life cycles (Seaton and
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15 Yamamura, 2015). The museum’s closure has dissatisfied deeply committed followers as
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17 no events to commemorate Yujiro have been held since then, despite his wide recognition
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19 in the community.
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26 Despite the success of the five stages, the phenomenon of overtourism necessitates
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28 the sixth stage. This study proposes a sixth stage to address sustainability and discuss
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30 overtourism at the Asari station, located between Sapporo and Otaru. Some film locations
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32 face overtourism due to films that are not widely accepted by the community. For
33
34 example, Japan Railways (JR) staff noted that foreign tourists, especially from China,
35
36 surged exponentially at the Asari station, which has no staff. From 2016 to 2019, about
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38 600 visitors a day were registered, which is approximately five times the average number
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40 of daily visitors. A few JR staff members are aware that most residents are not familiar
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42 with the reason for this sudden overtourism. The Chinese omnibus film *Cities in Love:
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44 Honeymoon* was shot in the quiet snowy Asari station. Nevertheless, the stakeholders
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46 have not promoted this film, as most are oblivious to its existence.
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52 Overtourism is becoming a potential problem for a particular part of Otaru. The United
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54 Nations World Tourism Organization (2018) considers this as the impact tourism has on
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56 a destination that results in significant negative effects on the quality of life of its residents
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58 and the tourists’ experiences. From April 2016 to March 2017, Otaru marked a 121.2%
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5 year-on-year increase with 44,208 Chinese visitors spending the night in Otaru; this
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7 number was limited to 4,300 in 2012 (Otaru City, Industrial Port, and Harbor Department
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9 and Tourism Promotion Section, 2017). The increase could be attributed to increasing
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11 direct flights, low-cost carriers beginning international service to Sapporo, and easing
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13 visa restrictions.
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16 17 18 **5. Discussion**

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20 The tourists' inappropriate behavior at the Asari station and the residential areas
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22 around it negatively impacted the community. It has become an issue as it was once a
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24 quiet residential area but is now affected by the sudden increase in tourists, noise, and
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26 disturbances. The film *Honeymoon* portrays the Asari Station as significant in the
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28 couples' honeymoon in the snow. Moreover, *Love Letter* was shot at Asari Junior High
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30 School. As such, Asari has become popular among Chinese and South Korean tourists.
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32 JR staff members state that tourism congestion occurs only in winter because the films
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34 were shot in the snow. A pilgrimage to sacred film sites and the unpleasant behavior of
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36 tourists at the Asari station was featured in *Hokkaido Shimbun* on January 13, 2017, which
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38 caused a stop or delay in trains six times in two months (Hokkaido Shimbun, 2017). Train
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40 drivers have also had to use emergency breaks to stop the train because tourists stepped
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42 onto the railroad to take pictures. In 2019, JR dispatched three staff members from JR-
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44 related companies.
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51 Overtourism has negative effects, such as the loss of privacy, security issues, and
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53 congestion. Although the JR posts warning signs in Chinese, Korean, and English at the
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55 station, tourists still cross the railroad to take pictures. On one occasion, the residents
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57 complained about tourists stepping into their backyards and big tour buses driving down
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5 the narrow road. Chinese tourists claim that they came to see the ocean as there is no
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7 ocean around where they live. “Tourists are often excited to see the ocean and become
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9 noisy, and residents complain,” claimed one of the vendors near the station. A person
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11 who started the music box business in Otaru mentioned, “Otaru does not want to be like
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13 Furano with the overflowing of tourists.” The residents’ well-being has been neglected in
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15 the relentless practices of urban alteration (Smith *et al.*, 2019).
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21 Tourism should be managed and sustained for local communities and tourists as it can
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23 maximize the use of films as tools for promotion to help communities prosper. Tourism
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25 practitioners must “develop high-season tourism based on the local community
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27 perspective” and with various images (Rantala *et al.*, 2019, p. 63). Thus, the relationship
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29 between the tourism sector and the communities should be reinforced (United Nations
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31 World Tourism Organization, 2018). In the study on film tourism’s impact, Connell
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33 (2005) demonstrates the significance of involving the community and other stakeholders
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35 in tourism planning to avoid the situation of a community being unprepared for the rapid
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37 influx of tourists. Koens *et al.* (2018) argued that to address overtourism, policy actions,
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39 regulations, and leadership are necessary, which contradicts the mainstream self-
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41 governance approach (Koens *et al.*, 2018).
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48 Subsequently, the sixth stage to address sustainability aspects such as overtourism is
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50 necessary. Due to global communication tools, such as SNS, information is transmitted
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52 directly to tourists, leading to sudden overtourism. For example, to deal with
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54 overcrowding and loss of privacy, a demarketing strategy, which involves various
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56 strategies including behavioral education, entry regulation, pricing control, and a decline
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58 in the destination market, could be implemented (Beeton, 2002; O’Connor *et al.*, 2010).
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5 Nevertheless, there were no tourists when the researcher visited Asari station in
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7 November 2021. This aligns with Löytynoja (2008), who argued that this stage may not
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9 end with the social reproduction but continues through constant redefinition or
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11 mechanical reproduction and becomes involved in “a process of de-sacralization” (p. 27).
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14 Tourist attractions are also affected by different social and political processes (Löytynoja,
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16 2008, p. 27), like the COVID-19 pandemic.
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21 Jacobsen (1997) argued that most phases, such as resource identification, continue
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23 where reports illustrate the appraisal of the site (p. 353). Clark (2002) excluded the final
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25 stage of social reproduction without describing why adopting only the naming and not
26
27 the complete stages. The stages may occur erratically, or only some or one of the stages
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29 might occur. The results from this study demonstrate that the sixth stage may appear
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31 without the fifth stage or may occur simultaneously. In summary, the framework should
32
33 consider the after-effects of tourism and include a new stage to alleviate these effects. For
34
35 successful management strategies, united efforts with stakeholders outside of tourism,
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37 such as the residents, are necessary (Šegota *et al.*, 2017). A market-oriented approach has
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39 its limitations in effectively addressing overtourism (Russo and Scarnato, 2018). Thus,
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41 this study proposes the adoption of the sixth stage to manage sustainability.
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47 *5.1 Theoretical implications*

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50 The theoretical implications of this study are threefold: first, it adopts Pearce *et al.*'s
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52 (2003) framework for films as a promotional tool for destination marketing; second, it
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54 highlights the applicability of the framework to film tourism for the first time; and third,
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56 it is the first empirical study to add the novel sixth stage to the framework to address
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5 sustainability issues. Previous studies have focused on icons and music; however, by
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7 focusing on films, this study enriches destination marketing studies. Moreover, the
8
9 applicability of the framework develops the theoretical underpinnings of film tourism
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11 studies. The sixth stage is needed because film tourism can have a negative impact on
12
13 environmental sustainability and create pressure among residents (Beeton, 2005). Urban
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15 areas can receive tourists, but for small communities positioned in sensitive nature, it can
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17 be a challenge, and the effects must be investigated (Varnajot, 2020). The sixth stage was
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19 added to further consider the community's perspective on tourism development and
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21 promotion. Benjamin *et al.* (2012) claimed the importance of identifying profiles and
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23 types of film tourists, especially for the significance of the sustainability of film tourism.
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25 The success of film tourism lies in predicting the market size and types that will be
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27 attracted to the destination and plan accordingly. With the added sixth stage of addressing
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29 sustainability, films can be fully utilized as a promotional tool for the destination by
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31 considering the community's influence.
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39 *5.2 Practical implications*

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42 The practical implication of this study is the utilization of Pearce *et al.*'s (2003)
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44 framework to improve destination marketing using films. This enables governments and
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46 tourism industries to understand how films can be utilized as promotional tools in
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48 destination marketing. Specifically, based on existing work, the transferability of the
49
50 framework to a different case of film tourism is plausible. As proposed by this study, the
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52 additional stage of addressing sustainability provides insights to the policymakers to
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54 create promotional plans for sustaining the community environment. Considering that
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56 overtourism is not only an issue in Otaru but also in other cities, the findings from this
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5 study support sustainable development and demonstrate how to maximize the use of films
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7 in destination marketing.
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10 11 12 13 **6. Conclusion**

14 15 16 *6.1 Conclusion*

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19 This study examined the strategic use of films and TV dramas as a promotional tool for
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21 tourism destinations from a marketing perspective. Five stages—resource identification,
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23 marketing emphasis, interpretation, sales and merchandising, and broader community
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25 use—highlighted the use of films in marketing the destination. The results demonstrated
26
27 the usefulness of Pearce *et al.*'s framework with an important revision. The original
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29 contributions are twofold. First, this is the first empirical study that adopted Pearce *et al.*'s
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31 (2003) model for films and revealed its applicability to film tourism. Second, this study
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33 is the first to add a novel stage to the framework to consider sustainability standpoints in
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35 marketing the destination. An analysis through the framework revealed that sustainability
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37 issues, such as overtourism, must be addressed.
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44 Although the framework has only five stages, this study proposes a sixth stage to
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46 address the sustainability issues, such as overtourism at film locations, to ease the tensions
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48 between residents and tourists. Moreover, a community's vision of coping with the
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50 disadvantages of film tourism, such as overtourism, must be considered as the use of films
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52 in promoting the site can easily become negative. The addition of the new stage for
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54 addressing sustainability can maximize the positive impact of the use of films as
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56 promotional tools for a destination.
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6.2 Limitations and future research

Even though this research provides a useful approach to utilizing films as a promotional tool for tourist destinations, it has some limitations. First, since this study mainly examined Asian visitors, the marketing strategies were based on Asian cultures. Therefore, tourists from different cultural backgrounds should be considered as they may have different interests, and future studies should focus on cultural differences in marketing strategies. Second, the longevity of film tourism has not been considered in this study. Although the films may have been popular for several years, they may lose this popularity later, with some exceptions. Future studies should consider the duration of the films' popularity and the changes in the tourists' perceptions. Finally, future research can focus on the long-term effects to verify the additional stage, including the drawbacks of tourism.

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Funding

This work was supported by the Haraguchi Memorial Asia Research Fund Field Research Grant and Research for Creation New Areas Research Fund, Meiji University.

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