

Introduction: Wakayama Tourism Review Vol. 6

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This introductory article launches the sixth volume of Wakayama Tourism Review (WTR), a compilation of current studies by Wakayama University's Center for Tourism Research (CTR) affiliated researchers. The eight articles selected for this volume are all empirical research, including ongoing research. Under the overarching umbrella of tourism, each study explores distinct topics, reflecting the wide range of phenomena and issues that researchers and practitioners in the field find worth addressing. Below, an overview of each study is provided, highlighting what it addresses, how it approaches the topic, and its contributions, to help readers identify articles that align with their interests.

First of all, Sano and Yashima's article clarifies how service innovation functions as a form of Omotenashi (Japanese hospitality) at tourism destinations, with a focus on Shirahama, Wakayama Prefecture. Using a case study approach with data gathered from biometric recognition systems and service robots, the study highlights their integration into local tourism practices. It contributes to understanding how service innovation enhances Omotenashi, providing practical insights into balancing technological advancements with personalized experiences to promote sustainable tourism development.

Next, Tachibana's article explores the potential of place branding in promoting sake tourism by analyzing Burgundy's hierarchical geographical indication (GI) system as a model. Through a comparative framework, it reveals how Burgundy's strategies improve wine tourism and considers their application to sake, addressing challenges like stakeholder collaboration and quality certification. The research highlights the importance of effective place branding in boosting regional economies, revitalizing sake culture, and fostering sustainable tourism development in Japan.

Elbarbary's article explores the symbolic functions of Linguistic Landscape (LL) in multi-ethnic tourist destinations, focusing on Shin-Ōkubo, Tokyo, and Neukölln, Berlin. Using a linguistic-ethnographic approach, the study draws on data from direct observation, photographic documentation, and semi-structured interviews. The research contributes to understanding how LL reflects cultural identities and social dynamics, shedding light on its role in shaping multi-ethnic urban spaces and enhancing the appeal of global tourist destinations.

Sawada, Takanashi, Kusakabe, Tamazawa, Hiramatsu, Kawagoe, and Okyudo's article explores the competitive advantages of astrotourism (AT) within Japan's nightlife tourism (NT) offerings, employing paired comparison evaluation to analyze preferences among the general public. Situated within the context of Japan's expanding nighttime economy, it compares AT with NT activities such as illuminations, firefly watching, and live concerts. The research delivers meaning perspectives for tourism stakeholders by highlighting AT's potential to diversify NT experiences and promote sustainable tourism in rural communities.

Araki, Saito, Miyake, and Saito's article investigates the impact of menstruation on young women's travel experiences in rural Japan, addressing an under-researched topic in tourism studies. Using a quantitative survey of female students, it examines

menstrual-related barriers to travel and strategies for managing symptoms, while emphasizing the importance of inclusivity in the tourism sector. The research highlights the need for practical solutions and cultural change, delivering a deeper understanding of how to improve the travel experience for menstruating individuals and encouraging education that challenges taboos, advancing inclusivity within the industry and society.

Hanai's article reconsiders the concept of trust through the author's own experiences of solo female travel, employing postdisciplinarity and post-qualitative inquiry as an onto-epistemological way of being and knowing. By challenging conventional paradigms centered on fear and empowerment, it seeks to illuminate the fragile uncertainty inherent in solo travel experiences and academic inquiry. This research contributes to tourism and feminist scholarship by creating spaces for coexistence and dialogue, encouraging readers to embrace vulnerability and uncertainty in both personal and academic contexts.

Shibamoto's article explores the role of values-based education in tourism through reflections on the "Teaching Tourism – Values-Based Transformative Learning Experiences" course at Hokkaido University. Using a reflective topical autobiography framework, it examines the author's experiences as both a participant and an educator. The research underscores the transformative potential of values-based learning in fostering self-awareness, encouraging diverse perspectives, and preparing educators and students to address the ethical complexities of tourism responsibly.

Finally, Abidin and Tuomi's article introduces their ongoing research project, which aims to explore community-driven strategies for mitigating climate change impacts through sustainable tourism revitalization. Employing a mixed-methods research design that includes qualitative surveys, co-creation workshops, and AI-generated virtual galleries, the project examines Finnish and Japanese residents' visions for sustainable tourism to address climate change. Preliminary findings highlight the importance of incorporating local residents' perspectives to guide tailored, community-led tourism development and influence policy and business practices toward preferable tourism futures.

In conclusion, this volume offers important, timely, and forward-looking insights. From the editorial team, we would like to express our gratitude to the authors for choosing WTR as the outlet for their research outcomes and to the reviewers for their time and effort. We hope the new knowledge presented in this volume will be valuable to a wide range of stakeholders, including students, teachers, practitioners, policymakers, and researchers involved in tourism.



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