

学位論文の要旨 (論文の内容の要旨)  
Summary of the Dissertation (Summary of Dissertation Contents)

論 文 題 目  
Dissertation title

Development of Disadvantaged Areas via Rural Tourism: Perspectives of Small Tourism Enterprises and Rural Tourists

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**(1) Research background**

Rural tourism (RT) has become a much-researched area in the past few decades. It is believed that RT can contribute to the economy, culture, and harmonious urban-rural development in local areas (Sharpley & Roberts, 2004; Scheyvens, 2007). The successful development of RT is positively linked with the development of the local destination. However, as RT is run by different stakeholders who together may draw on local physical, economic, social, and cultural resources through networking (Weaver, 2005; Cawley & Gillmor, 2008), it is quite difficult to assess the development of the most essential factors of RT development. Previous studies raised the theories of RT development based on the evolutionary approach of destination (La Lopa & Marecki, 1999; Streimikiene & Bilan, 2015) or the economic aspect of tourism, which integrates supply and demand sides of RT development (Lewis, 1998). Nevertheless, with the increase of diversification in RT studies, the destination evolution and market economy are no longer the main driving forces of RT development. Research interests in RT have gradually shifted to the individual characteristics and psychological factors of stakeholders (George et al., 2009). A more flexible concept that connects the supply and demand sides in a broader view of RT development, not merely on economic aspect, should be introduced. Hence, the concept of rurality connecting supply and demand sides is introduced in this study. The usefulness of using rurality in RT development is that the significant variability in rurality discourses can meet the needs of different stakeholders' imaginations of 'rural' (Pratt, 1996; Zografos, 2007). As the prominent stakeholders in RT, the supply side takes the responsibility of performing rurality (Edensor, 2006) and the demand side seeks to consume rurality. By examining the interactions between the supply and demand sides, this study aims to explore how a consensus of rurality discourse may be reached.

Literature review suggests that much research attention has been paid to either the tourist or supply side. To understand inefficiency and problems in RT development, it is necessary to examine both demand and supply sides of tourism services (Dai et al., 2017). Local small-sized tourism enterprises (hereafter small tourism enterprise: STEs) are chosen as the representatives of RT supply side and rural tourists are the demand side. Several major research gaps in the studies of STEs and rural tourists are identified.

**(2) Research questions & aims**

The aim of this research is to fill the research gaps and thoroughly investigate rural tourism from both supply and demand sides via the concept of rurality, in the context of disadvantaged areas. The author raises the research questions that aim to measure the current behaviors and to predict the preferences of STEs and tourists by controlling relevant influential factors.

**Research questions related to STEs:**

*Q-1: What are the current operation behaviors and performance of STEs among different survey areas?*

*How do individual conditions affect STEs' motivation and performance?*

*Q-2: How are STEs likely to continue their business under different external changes, especially under policy influence?*

**Research questions related to tourists:**

*Q-3: How do tourists perceive rurality? How does rural tourism experience affect tourists' behavior intentions?*

*Q-4: How are tourists likely to choose rural products, activities, and destinations under the influences of different rurality settings?*

**Research questions related to the interactions between STEs and tourists**

*Q-5: How do tourists/visitors perceive the services provided by STEs?*

*Q-6: How do STEs make connections to the main stakeholders, and how do social networks influence the sustainability of business operations and destination development?*

More specifically, focusing on STEs, this study explores the current situation, which includes the operation behaviors of STEs, the impacts of human and social capitals, and foresees the STEs' business intentions under external changes, especially under policy changes. Concerning tourists, this study explores the current situation, which includes tourism behavior and experience in different areas, and the impacts of hierarchy of tourism experience on tourism behavior intention. It also foresees the rural tourism market by measuring tourist preferences for rural products, activities and destinations. Through the current and future stages of exploration on STEs, tourists and the interactions, the gaps between the supply and demand sides of RT can be found, and strategies and implications can be addressed for the development of RT in the disadvantaged areas. How STEs and tourists may co-create various values that contribute to the development of disadvantaged areas will also be discussed.

### **(3) Methodology**

In this study, both revealed preference (RP) and stated preference (SP) data are collected to capture the current behaviors and future intentions of STEs and tourists. To achieve the above research objectives, five questionnaire surveys were implemented in the rural areas of Laos, China, and Japan: four face-to-face surveys in Laos and China to STEs and tourists (178 STEs and 469 tourists in Luang Prabang and Pakse of Laos; 226 STEs (+526 SP responses) and 426 tourists (+1,404 SP responses) in Chongqing, China, and one web survey to rural visitors in the whole Japan (RP: 1,002 respondents; SP: 3,006 SP responses). The Lao surveys focus on the international tourism along the Mekong River region; the China surveys on domestic tourism at rural areas surrounding a large city; and the Japan survey on the disadvantaged areas designated by the Japanese government. Thus, this study covers a relatively broad set of rural tourism issues and geographical contexts. Considering the features of data collected and analysis of contents, different advanced modeling approaches are applied, such as Generalized Structural Equation Model (GSEM), Partial Least Squares - Structural Equation Model (PLS-SEM), Mixed Logit Models (MXL) with repeated choices, and Multilevel Models.

### **(4) Main findings**

The estimated results of STEs and rural tourists are summarized and discussed. The findings of STEs show a lot of similarities in their characteristics and operations in Laos and China. The common features of STE owners in the disadvantaged areas are that they have low education levels (on average), are lacking management skills, run family-owned business in their own houses, and mostly do low-standard work related to catering, retailing and accommodation. STEs have low operation costs and profits and face the challenges of tourism seasonality. However, many STEs have strong business motivation to grow and high perception of social sustainability in RT development. It is also found that the social networks of STEs have positive effects on STEs' perception of sustainability and behavior intentions. From the analysis of the data, government support is found to be helpful for STEs to expand their business but is not the crucial factor for keeping their business. The personal characteristics of STE owners has a large influence on their decision making while facing policy regulation and implementation.

As for the rural tourists, in the findings of tourist behavior, there are huge differences on rural tourists' personal characteristics, motivations and behavior patterns in the three countries. Based on these differences, the characteristics of RT markets are found to have a wide spectrum from tourism to leisure, which fit the feature

of tourism-leisure continuum theory. In the findings of tourism experience, tourism experience and place attachment are found to have positive influences on tourists' willingness to recommend the destination. In the analysis of group comparison, tourists from Asia and Pacific areas and those from Europe and Americas perceive the important dimensions of tourism experience and place attachment quite differently, which fits the features of long-haul and short-haul tourist markets. This suggests that segmentation is essential in international rural tourist market based on the different characteristics of tourist groups. It is also found that rurality is the best local branding to attract more tourists. Tourists prefer locally produced products, activities exhibiting local culture, and destinations with rural characteristics.

#### **(5) Significant contributions**

This study made several first attempts in tourism and leisure literature in terms of the following points, respectively:

- ①. collecting enterprise-level STEs tourism data from a social sustainability perspective in the context of Laos;
- ②. incorporating policy attributes into SP experiment to measure the preferences of STEs;
- ③. applying SP experiment to measure tourist preferences for not only local products and activities but also rural destinations;
- ④. applying the GSEM in the literature of general tourism research;
- ⑤. applying the MXL model in the RT research on STEs;
- ⑥. applying the MXL and multilevel logit model to address unobserved heterogeneities of respondents;
- ⑦. applying the reflective-formative hierarchical latent variable model and implementing multi-group analyses based on PLS-SEM;
- ⑧. confirming the sustainability value of social network for STEs and local communities;
- ⑨. exploring the rurality in the context of roadside rest areas via visitors' RP and SP.

At a theoretical level, this study built a research framework of RT from both supply and demand sides based on the concept of rurality, where individual behaviors, intentions, attitudes, experiences, and preferences of STEs and tourists are incorporated in a relatively systematic way. The performance of STEs is measured under the influences of human, social and political capitals. In particular, it makes a supplementary for the studies of STEs from a social sustainability perspective in the context of developing countries. This research confirms the pluralities in the concept of rurality and the development of RT market. It expands the form and patterns of RT tourism market with the theory of leisure-tourism continuum.

At a practical level, this research conducts empirical studies on STEs and tourists/visitors in the disadvantaged areas of three countries from different angles. The findings can help generate the traits of STEs and rural tourists. This research has derived various unknown but significant insights for policymaking for the development of disadvantaged areas in terms of STE guidance and tourist market management, which are helpful to sustainable RT development in the disadvantaged areas.

備考 論文の要旨はA4判用紙を使用し、4,000字以内とする。ただし、英文の場合は1,500語以内とする。

Remark: The summary of the dissertation should be written on A4-size pages and should not exceed 4,000 Japanese characters. When written in English, it should not exceed 1,500 words.