Anime pilgrimage in Japan: Focusing Social Influences as determinants

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ABSTRACT

Japanese animation, *anime*, has long been regarded as a niche culture reserved for *anime otaku* in Japan. The word *anime otaku* refers to individuals who spend most of their time alone at home, watching *anime*. However, in recent years, prototypical *anime otaku* have changed their behavioral patterns, resulting in a new movement called *anime* pilgrimage. *Anime* pilgrimage involves traveling to locations that resemble particular scenes in *anime* pieces, even though the locations themselves may be ordinary places. The authors constructed two models to describe the determinants of visit intention and destination loyalty based on research into ordinary and film tourism. The results suggested that, during the pre-tour period, *otaku* are motivated by the desire for interaction with other *otaku* and the wish to visit a new location. Moreover, they are also seeking to interact with the local people, and such experiences result in higher destination loyalty during the post-tour period.

1. Introduction

Japanese animation, *anime*, has long been regarded as a niche culture reserved for *otaku* in Japan. The word *otaku* literally means "your home" in Japanese and refers to individuals who spend most of their time alone at home, watching *anime*, reading comics (*manga*) and/or playing video games (cf. Kinsella, 1998). However, in recent years, prototypical *anime otaku* have changed their behavioral patterns, resulting in a new movement.

For example, if you travel to the town of Chichibu in October, you may see *anime otaku* who are wearing *anime* costumes and have traveled there to join local people participating in a traditional harvest festival called the *Ryusei* Festival. The reason that *anime otaku* travel to this commonplace town is that Chichibu contains some spots that resemble particular scenes in an *anime* piece entitled "The Flower We Saw That Day (*Anohi Mita Hana no Namae wo Bokutachi wa Mada Shiranai*)". Indeed, many places in Chichibu resemble scenes in several other *anime* pieces and, for this reason, *anime otaku* travel around to these various spots in Chichibu. *Anime otaku* regard such spots as *anime seichi*—"sacred places" for *anime* viewers—and touring the *anime seichi* in a town is referred to as undertaking an *anime* pilgrimage (Okamoto, 2009).

Anime seichi are often located in commonplace towns and are typically commonplace structures or scenic locations that attract ordinary tourists (non-*otaku*); there are no signs at such locations to suggest that such spots are the models for particular scenes in *anime* pieces. In fact,

tourist bureaus and even *anime* product studios generally provide no information regarding the locations that have been models for *anime* pieces. *Otaku* compete with one another to discover these locations and label their own sightseeing spots as sacred places (cf. Yamamura, 2012). This has given rise to the practice of *anime* pilgrimage, in which *anime otaku*, who used to spend most of their time alone at home (Kinsella, 1998), go out and travel all over Japan to discover locations that resemble particular scenes in an *anime* piece and, once they have discovered such a location, they may visit it frequently and engage in interactions with local, ordinary (non-*otaku*) people (cf. Yamamura, 2009).

Anime pilgrimage may be regarded as a kind of tourism and, in particular, as a variant of film tourism, i.e., the act of traveling to locations where a movie or a TV drama was filmed (cf. Riley, Baker, & Van Doren, 1998). Researchers who study (ordinary) tourism have claimed that destination image, as determined by various attributes (e.g., nature, climate, relaxation, accessibility, and safety), affects a tourist's visit intention during the pre-tour period (e.g., Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Hunt, 1975) as well as satisfaction and loyalty during the post-tour period (e.g., Chen & Tsai, 2007; Zhang, Fu, Cai, & Lu, 2014). However, researchers of film tourism have placed additional emphasis on the role of film involvement (Lee, Scott, & Kim, 2008) and on-site film experiences (Kim, 2012) in driving movie/drama viewers to visit and revisit specific destinations. It should be noted that neither (ordinary) tourism nor film tourism studies have examined social

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influences.

Social influences are additional key determinants in explaining *anime* pilgrimage. As discussed below, some *anime otaku*, called location seekers, are especially willing to discover key locations and spread information pertaining to them within the *otaku* community, whereas those referred to as followers orient more to gathering this information and visiting the destinations identified by location seekers to confirm whether these locations do in fact resemble particular scenes in an *anime* piece (Okamoto, 2011). To fully understand why *anime* pilgrims visit a destination and what fosters their loyalty to it, it is necessary to consider social influences. The purpose of this study was to model social influences in addition to the two categories of determinants that have been the focus of previous research on (ordinary) tourism and film tourism, and to explain Japanese *anime* pilgrims' visit intentions and destination loyalty.

2. Literature review

2.1. Tourism research

According to previous tourism research, destination image is an attitudinal concept consisting of the sum of beliefs, knowledge, and impressions pertaining to a destination, and is determined by perceptions about various destination attributes, such as natural beauty/features, climate, relaxation potential, accessibility, and safety (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Beerli & Martin, 2004; Chi & Qu, 2008; Gallarza, Saura, and Garcia, 2002). In turn, destination image affects potential tourists' visit intentions (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Hunt, 1975) as well as consequences of tourism, such as on-site experience (Ashworth & Goodall, 1988; Bigné, Sánchez, & Sánchez, 2001), satisfaction (Gallarza & Gil Saura, 2006; Lee, Lee, & Lee, 2005), and willingness to recommend or revisit the destination (Chi & Qu, 2008; Oppermann, 2000). In addition, it has been found that destination image changes over time as tourists enjoy their trip (Smith, Li, Pan, Witte, and Doherty, 2015).

2.2. Film tourism research

Tourism researchers have devoted considerable attention to tourism due to movies and TV programs and have investigated particular cases of film-induced tourism (e.g., "Notting Hill" (Busby & Klug, 2001), "Before Sunrise" and "Groundhog Day" (Kim & Richardson, 2003), "Captain Corelli's Mandolin" (Hudson & Brent Ritchie, 2006), "Lord of the Rings" (Carl, Kindon, & Smith, 2007), the Korean TV program "Winter Sonata" (Kim, Agrusa, Lee, and Chon, 2007), and "The X-Files" (Hills, 2002).

Researchers have claimed that, in addition to destination image, film involvement plays an important role in shaping tourism demand (Lee et al., 2008; Riley, Baker, Carlton, & Van Doren, 1998). Lee et al. (2008), for example, focused on celebrity involvement as a kind of film involvement and found it to be positively related to film viewers' visit intention. Riley et al. (1998) noted that storyline involvement may also be important in motivating tourists to visit a destination, though they did not empirically test the relationship between storyline involvement and visit intention.

Unlike (ordinary) tourism researchers, film tourism researchers have not yet focused on what determines destination loyalty. However, destination image and on-site experience, which have been treated as determinants of destination loyalty in the context of (ordinary) tourism, have also been addressed in the context of film tourism. Kim (2012) proposed that on-site film-related experience can be divided into three different categories: "prestige and privilege", "beyond screen, sensory experience and re-enactment", and "intimacy and memory". Kim's study also suggested that these three types of on-site film-related experience have an impact on destination loyalty.

2.3. Anime Otaku—Individuals who devote themselves to Japanese animation

As *Anime* pilgrimage may be regarded as a sub-type of film tourism enjoyed by *anime otaku*, it may be important to examine the other characteristics of this group. The word "*otaku*" was first used to refer to individuals who devote themselves to Japanese animations and other Japanese objects? The first appearance of this word was in an article, "*'Otaku'-no-kenkyu* (Research on '*otaku*')", which was written by a columnist, Akio Nakamori submitted to a *manga* magazine, *Manga Burikko*, in 1983. However, the word "*otaku*" originated from a polite second-person pronoun meaning "your home" in Japanese (Galbraith & Schodt, 2009), and it has been used as a type of honorific expression, as people regard it as impolite to use the direct word "*anata* (you)". Another honorific title, "*tono/dono*", which originates from the word "your palace", had been used by vassals to refer to their master. Other than using "*tono/dono*" as a title in e-mails and official documents, "*otaku*" is still used by housewives as an honorific expression to refer to one another as the representative of their home. "*Otaku*" is used primarily by housewives and rarely by young people; however, it has been adopted by those who are devoted to *anime*. As Kinsella (1998) pointed out, there may be two reasons that *otaku* call each other "*otaku*": (1) *Anime otaku* spend most of their time alone at home watching *anime* or doing something associated with other objects of devotion; and (2) As they are not generally involved in close friendships, they communicate with peers using this distant and overly formal form of address.

Kinsella (1998) discussed the characteristics of Japanese youngsters known as "*otaku*", translating *otaku* into "*anime* nerds", which she defined as individuals who spend most of their time alone at home watching *anime*, reading comics (*manga*), and/or playing video games. Although they are devotees of *anime* or other specialized interests that may not be generally popular among most young people and they are not interested in romance or fashion, which are generally major areas of interest to members of their cohort. As noted by Kinsella (1998), the emergence of *otaku* came to be recognized by ordinary people with the advent of *otaku* TV personalities, such as Hachiro Taku, as well as *otaku* murderers, such as Tsutomu Miyazaki. After publication of Kinsella's work, there was another shocking murder incident committed by an *otaku* named Tomihiro Kato. These shocking incidents were interpreted as the outcome of the solitary and peculiar behavior, seen especially among *otaku*. However, as suggested by Otsuka (2015), Japanese animation has recently come to be regarded as an important component of the Japanese sub-culture and is now among the top topics of the Cool Japan campaign led by the Japanese government. This social transition has encouraged ordinary Japanese people to watch *anime*. Indeed, ordinary people who become interested in *anime* regard themselves as cool and proudly call themselves "*choi ota* (just a bit *otaku*)". As a result, a wide range of ordinary Japanese people are now attracted to *anime*, and some become *anime* pilgrims.

2.4. Classification of otaku/anime pilgrims

Anime pilgrims can be divided into sub-categories based on several criteria. First, Stebbins (1982) classified people who enjoy hobbies into two categories—those who engage in serious leisure and those who engage in casual leisure. According to Stebbins, serious leisure is the systematic pursuit of an amateur, hobbyist, or volunteer core activity that is highly substantive, interesting, and fulfilling; in typical cases, participants develop a career acquiring and expressing a combination of the special skills, knowledge, and experience related to this activity. *Anime* pilgrims, especially those to whom Stebbins (1992) refers to as "hobbyists", can be categorized as people engaged in serious leisure.

In some cases, *otaku* may develop a career involving the acquisition and expression of their set of *anime*-related specialized skills, knowledge, and experience. "Serious" in this context refers to the earnestness, sincerity, and care with which *otaku* participate in *anime*-related

activities and signals the importance of this type of activity as a source of fulfillment in everyday life (1992).

Stebbins (1992) also argued that the distinction between casual and serious depends on the degree to which the person is involved with the activity in question. Individuals who are less involved in a certain kind of leisure activity are regarded as engaging in casual leisure; as the degree of involvement increases, the leisure activity becomes increasingly serious. This implies that *anime* pilgrims can be divided into two groups: high-involvement pilgrims, who regard pilgrimage as a serious endeavor, and low-involvement pilgrims, who regard pilgrimage as a more casual pursuit.

Researchers studying *otaku* have also identified several consumer segments with different degrees of involvement in these activities. Okada (2000) argued that *otaku* are extremely involved in such activities, compared with ordinary *anime* viewers. Indeed, those with the highest level of involvement in *anime* are willing to spend money on *anime* that would ordinarily be used for living expenses. Okada (2000) referred to these individuals as "*otaking* (king of *otaku*)" and described them as respected within the *otaku* community.

On the other hand, unlike Okada (2000), Ono (2010) claimed that *otaku* devote themselves to immature hobbies, such as *anime,* rather than to the more popular activities involving food or fashion. According to this view, this difference creates a gap between them and the public, which results in disdain for *otaku*. However, as a result of the recent Cool Japan Campaign conducted by the Japanese government, *anime* has become increasingly popular and acceptable among ordinary, non-*otaku* citizens. Although less involved and informed than *otaku*, they enjoy watching *anime*; some even refer to themselves "*choiota* (little bit *otaku*)" and offer tips about the enjoyment of *anime* to the rest of the public. In sum, similar to Okada's identification of leaders and followers within traditional *otaku*, Ono (2010) identified leaders and followers within the new type of *anime* viewers.

2.5. Anime pilgrimage

As mentioned above, *anime* pilgrimage is a sub-type of film tourism enjoyed by *otaku* who are especially devoted to *anime*. This raises questions about the differences between *anime* pilgrimage and regular film tourism. Okamoto (2009)'s investigation of the *anime* production "Raki☆Suta" yielded several important findings in this regard. According to Okamoto (2009), *anime* pilgrimage is driven entirely by personal interest, whereas film tourism is often led by the media.

Some *anime* viewers actively travel around to find spots that resemble particular scenes in an *anime* piece (Okamoto, 2009), calling themselves "location seekers" (Okamoto, 2011). If a location seeker succeeds in finding a spot that resembles a particular scene in an *anime* piece, they spread information about it within the *otaku* community, with the result that they are regarded as leaders in that community (cf. Tanimura, 2011). In fact, location seekers are intently focused when it comes to their seeking behavior and compete with each other to claim the title of location seeking master (Okamoto, 2009).

Okamoto (2009) also suggested that other *anime* viewers are not on the front lines in seeking these locations. They simply enjoy conducting pilgrimages based on the information provided by location seekers. However, these less involved *otaku*, or followers, play an important role in the confirmation of *anime* *seichi* by receiving information from location seekers and judging whether the spots do in fact resemble particular scenes in an *anime* piece.

Following Okamoto (2009, 2011), Yagi and Pearce (2016) investigated *anime* pilgrimage. Whereas Okamoto (2009, 2011) examined pilgrimage to the destination associated with a particular *anime*, the authors investigated electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) regarding satisfaction with and/or recommendations to visit various destinations predicted to serve as *anime* *seichi* for each of four *anime* pieces. Regarding two of the four *anime* pieces (*i.e.*, "Nausicaa of the Valley of the Wind" and "Laputa the Castle of the Sky"), they found several eWOM

messages posted on the Japanese version of TripAdvisor indicating the existence of more than one expected *seichi*. Unlike Okamoto (2009, 2011), the authors did not observe the social interactions between the location seekers and their followers that contributed to the establishment of a unique *seichi*. This may have been because their analysis relied on eWOM messages regarding science-fiction (SF) *anime*, a genre that creates extraordinary worlds that do not resemble the real one.

The *seichi* of the other *anime* pieces (*i.e.*, "Anne of Green Gables" and "A Dog of Flanders") are identified in the original novels. Without utilizing data from TripAdvisor, Yagi and Pearce (2016) claimed that Japanese travelers' intentions to visit *anime* sites can be understood in terms of their appreciation of nature, including *wabi sabi* (quiet aesthetic appreciation), *natsukashii* (nostalgia), and *akogare* (admiration for the destination). These findings imply that, like film tourism, *anime* pilgrimage may be partially motivated by travelers' evaluations of images of the destination.

It should be noted that there are *otaku* devoted to objects other than *anime;* although, as noted earlier, the stereotype of an *otaku* is someone who spends most of his/her time alone at home dedicated to a particular object, *otaku* actually do leaves their homes. For example, "idol" *otaku*, who devote themselves to a pop star, often attend concerts and fan meetings. Also, train *otaku*, who devote themselves to trains, often rides and/or photograph trains. However, *anime otaku* differ from other kinds of *otaku* in that they cannot initially identify the destinations to go to because they are unaware of the locations on which an *anime* piece has been modeled. Therefore, unlike other kinds of *otaku*, as well as film tourists, *anime* pilgrims search for 'sacred' places by themselves. *Manga* (comic) *otaku* also leave home and search for "sacred" places. However, because *manga* consist of still images and include fewer cues than *anime*, *manga otaku* are less likely to go on pilgrimages. Thus, *anime* pilgrimage is very characteristic of *anime otaku,* and it differs not only from film tourism but also other kinds of *otaku* tourism. In spite of the need, scant research has been conducted on this phenomenon.

3. Study 1

3.1. Destination attributes as determinants of visit intention

As discussed in the previous sections, there are three plausible categories of determinants of visit intention, which is formed during the pre-pilgrimage period. Visit intention can be defined as the degree to which a tourist wants to visit a particular destination. The first category is destination image. Previous research on (ordinary) tourism and film tourism has emphasized destination image as a determinant of visit intention. According to these previous studies, destination image consists of various destination attributes (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Beerli & Martin, 2004; Chi & Qu, 2008; Gallarza, Gil Saura, & Garcia, 2002; Gallarza & Gil Saura, 2006). Gallarza et al. (2002) conducted a systematic study of destination attributes and identified twenty: landscape, relaxation, sports facilities, shopping, gastronomy, value, climate, social interaction, residents' receptiveness, accommodation, cultural attractions, availability of information, service quality, nightlife, originality, transportation, accessibility, variety of activities, nature, and safety. In our empirical investigation, we will assess these attributes as determinants of visit intention among *anime* pilgrims, although we expect their explanatory power to be relatively low. Thus, we hypothesize the following:

H1. Destination attributes positively affect visit intention.

3.2. Anime involvement factors as determinants of visit intention

The second category of determinants of visit intention is *anime* involvement. Film tourism researchers have found that tourists' involvement with celebrities positively affects visit intention with regard to locations represented in a movie or TV drama (Kim et al., 2007).

Whereas movie or TV dramas involve celebrity actors, *anime* pieces contain *anime* characters. Thus, in modeling *anime* pilgrimage, celebrity involvement is replaced with character involvement.

Film tourism researchers refer to character, as well as storyline involvement. However, the relationship between storyline involvement and visit intention has not yet been empirically tested (Riley et al., 1998) despite the importance of the former. As with film tourism, both character involvement and storyline involvement may affect visit intention in the context of *anime* pilgrimage.

Note that the character may not be separable from the storyline (Otsuka & Steinberg, 2010). However, when conducting our empirical test using statistical analysis, we treat them as separate factors due to the limitation of the analysis. Thus, we hypothesize the following:

H2a. : Character involvement positively affects visit intention.

H2b. Storyline involvement positively affects visit intention.

3.3. Social influences as determinants of visit intention

Social influences represent the third and final category of determinants of visit intention among *anime* pilgrims. As discussed in the previous sections, unlike with film tourism, tourist bureaus and even *anime* production studios provide no information regarding the locations that *anime* pieces are modeled after. Some *anime* viewers become "location seekers" and try to discover these locations by themselves. Once they find a spot that resembles a particular scene in an *anime* piece, this information is spread online within the *anime otaku* community, and some of these spots become recognized as *anime seichi*—sacred places for *anime otaku*. Therefore, social influences are the most important determinants of visit intention among *anime* pilgrims.

Some *anime* viewers are particularly keen on discovering these locations. If the willingness to discover these locations is great, visit intention may also be high. It should be noted that the relationship between willingness to discover *anime* locations and visit intention is facilitated by opinion leadership (cf. Rogers, 1995), which is at a high level only if the pertinent individual is a highly-involved *anime* viewer or *anime* maniac (Ono, 2010)—in other words, a location seeker (Okamoto, 2011). Thus, we hypothesize the following:

H3a. Opinion leadership positively affects the positive influence of willingness to discover locations on visit intention.

On the other hand, followers, or ordinary *anime* fans, may not be highly motivated to discover locations that resemble a particular scene in an *anime* piece; they may derive greater enjoyment from judging whether the locations discovered by location seekers really resemble particular scenes in an *anime* piece. Thus, if the willingness to confirm locations is great, visit intention may be high, and the relationship between willingness to confirm locations and visit intention may be moderated by opinion leadership, resulting in the following hypothesis:

H3b. Opinion leadership negatively affects the positive influence of willingness to confirm locations on visit intention.

3.4. Data collection

The data were collected by conducting street surveys in the Akihabara and Mita areas of Tokyo. In Akihabara, we targeted all those who exited a famous *anime* shop during a certain period of time, whereas, in Mita, we visited an *otaku* community and asked all of its members to complete the questionnaires. Of the 88 questionnaires collected in Akihabara and the 90 collected in Mita, 152 were valid (85%). Although our sample was, like previous ones, a convenience sample, ours was much larger than those used in previous research (cf. Kinsella, 1998). Also, assuming that the total population of the two areas in Tokyo is 98,549 (Tokyo Chiyoda City Website; Tokyo Minato City Website), our sample falls into the allowable error range at the 10% level. The sample was split between 71.9% males and 28.1% females. Respondents' ages varied from 14 to 54 years. Over 45% of the respondents were males between 21 and 29 years of age. Respondents were asked to answer questions regarding (1) destination image, (2) *anime* involvement, (3) willingness to discover/confirm locations, (4) opinion leadership, and (5) visit intention.

3.5. Measures

Visit intention was measured using items developed by Lam and Hsu (2006). Twenty destination attributes that were components of destination image were measured using items developed by Gallarza and García (2002). Two components of *anime* involvement, *i.e.*, character involvement and storyline involvement, were measured using items developed by Lee et al. (2008) and Riley et al. (1998), respectively. Willingness to discover and confirm locations was measured using various original items developed on the basis of a qualitative study conducted by Okamoto (2009). Opinion leadership was measured using multiple items from Childers's scales of opinion leadership (1986) and Hoffman, Kopalle, and Novak's scales of lead users (2010). For a list of all items, see Appendix 1. Responses to all these items were made on the basis of a five-point Likert-type scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree).

Cronbach's α values and composite reliability (CR) values for all multi-item scales were above 0.70 (ranging from 0.86 to 0.94 for Cronbach's α and 0.87 to 0.94 for CR), indicating that the constructs had high level of reliability (cf. Hair, Hult, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2012; Nunnally, 1978). To estimate the model, values of all multi-item scales for each construct were summed.

3.6. Model

A hierarchical multiple regression analysis was utilized. We utilized linear modeling because squared terms were not significant with regard to all the independent variables. Prior to coefficient estimation, we used a mean-centering procedure to minimize multicollinearity. The variance inflation factor (VIF) for each of the regression coefficients was well below the recommended threshold of 10 (lowest = 1.58, highest = 5.02), suggesting that multicollinearity was not an issue (Chatterjee & Hadi, 2012).

In Model 1, only destination attributes and dummy variables for survey areas were incorporated. In Model 2, *anime* involvement terms were added. In Model 3, social influence terms, *i.e.*, willingness to discover locations, willingness to confirm locations, willingness to discover locations × opinion leadership, and willingness to confirm locations × opinion leadership were added. In addition, opinion leadership was added as a control variable.

Model 3 can be described as follows:

$$Int = \sum_{l=1}^{20} \beta_{1l} Image_l + \sum_{j=1}^{3} \beta_{2j} Area_j + \sum_{k=1}^{2} \beta_{3k} Inv_k + \beta_{41} Lead + \beta_{42} Dis$$
$$+ \beta_{43} Con + \beta_{44} DisLead + \beta_{45} ConLead + \varepsilon,$$

where *Int* is visit intention, $Image_{1\text{-}20}$ are destination attributes, $Area_{1\text{-}3}$ are dummy variables for survey areas, *Lead* is opinion leadership, $Inv_{1\text{-}2}$ are two dimensions pertaining to *anime* involvement (1 = character involvement; 2 = storyline involvement), *Dis* is willingness to discover locations, and *Con* is willingness to confirm locations. *Dis* × *Lead* and *Con* × *Lead* represent the interaction of each type of social influence with opinion leadership. *β*s are regression coefficients, and *ε* is the error term for the equation.

3.7. Results

The results of the hierarchical multiple regression analysis are shown in Table 1. The adjusted R^2 of Model 2 was significantly higher

Table 1
Estimation results of study 1.

	Standardized Coefficients					
	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3	
	β	t-value	β	t-value	β	t-value
β_{11}: Image 1 (Landscape)	0.379***	3.47	0.327***	3.05	0.284***	3.25
β_{12}: Image 2 (Relaxation)	−0.149***	−1.32	−0.155***	−1.43	−0.151***	−1.73
β_{13}: Image 3 (Sport Facilities)	−0.212***	−2.54	−0.164***	−2.01	−0.114***	−0.72
β_{14}: Image 4 (Shopping)	0.305***	2.98	0.288***	2.92	0.106***	1.28
β_{15}: Image 5 (Gastronomy)	−0.050***	−0.47	−0.039***	−0.39	−0.031***	−0.39
β_{16}: Image 6 (Value)	−0.048***	−0.51	−0.086***	−0.94	−0.064***	−0.88
β_{17}: Image 7 (Climate)	−0.062***	−0.75	−0.064***	−0.80	−0.054***	−0.81
β_{18}: Image 8 (Social Interaction)	0.011***	0.12	−0.002***	−0.02	0.065***	0.92
β_{19}: Image 9 (Residents' Receptiveness)	0.043***	0.43	−0.013***	−0.14	−0.062***	−0.78
β_{110}: Image 10 (Accommodation)	0.067***	0.70	0.089***	0.98	0.030***	0.41
β_{111}: Image 11 (Cultural Attractions)	0.021***	0.23	0.002***	0.03	−0.027***	−0.38
β_{112}: Image 12 (Availability of Information)	0.284***	3.21	0.289***	3.43	0.143***	2.01
β_{113}: Image 13 (Service Quality)	−0.026***	−0.23	−0.000***	−0.00	0.090***	0.99
β_{114}: Image 14 (Nightlife & Entertainment)	0.003***	0.03	0.007***	0.07	−0.046***	−0.54
β_{115}: Image 15 (Originality)	−0.204***	−2.27	−0.204***	−2.38	−0.041***	−0.57
β_{116}: Image 16 (Transportation)	0.279***	1.96	0.205***	1.50	0.049***	0.42
β_{117}: Image 17 (Accessibility)	0.041***	0.27	0.075***	0.52	0.261***	2.20
β_{118}: Image 18 (Variety of Activities)	−0.184***	−1.84	−0.159***	−1.67	−0.211***	−2.70
β_{119}: Image 19 (Nature)	0.071***	0.68	0.065***	0.65	0.070***	0.87
β_{120}: Image 20 (Safety)	0.077***	0.78	0.065***	0.69	−0.060***	−0.75
β_{21}: Area Dummy (Akihabara)	0.094***	1.18	0.128***	1.68	−0.075***	−1.10
β_{31}: *Anime* Involvement 1 (Character)	–	–	0.200***	2.27	0.186***	2.54
β_{32}: *Anime* Involvement 2 (Storyline)	–	–	0.111***	1.29	−0−0.0087**	−0.11
β_{41}: Opinion Leadership	–	–	–	–	0.117***	1.39
β_{42}: Willingness of Discovery	–	–	–	–	0.216***	2.29
β_{43}: Willingness of Confirmation	–	–	–	–	0.127***	2.66
β_{44}: Willingness of Discovery × Lead	–	–	–	–	0.129***	1.66
β_{45}: Willingness of Confirmation × Lead	–	–	–	–	−0.272***	−3.50
F value	3.76***		4.47***		8.44***	
R^2	0.378***		0.445***		0.658***	
Adjusted R^2	0.278***		0.346***		0.580***	
Δ Adjusted R^2	——		0.067***		0.213***	

Note: ***$p < 0.01$, **$p < 0.05$, *$p < 0.10$.

than the adjusted R^2 of Model 1 ($\Delta R^2 = 0.07$, $p < 0.01$). Moreover, the adjusted R^2 of Model 3 was significantly higher than that of Model 2 ($\Delta R^2 = 0.21$, $p < 0.01$). The R^2 value of 0.66 may not be very impressive, but it is higher than that in previous research, which included only variables related to the image of the destination ($R^2 = 0.38$). Those results indicated that social influence terms are, in general, important determinants of visit intention.

With regard to the third category of determinants related to H3a and H3b, the coefficient of willingness to discover locations and the coefficient of the interaction of this variable with opinion leadership were both significant and positive in Model 3, as we predicted ($\beta_{42} = 0.216$, $t = 2.29$, $p < 0.05$; $\beta_{44} = 0.129$, $t = 1.66$, $p < 0.10$, respectively). On the other hand, the coefficient of willingness to confirm locations was significant and positive ($\beta_{43} = 0.127$, $t = 2.66$, $p < 0.05$), whereas the coefficient of the interaction of this variable with opinion leadership was significant and negative ($\beta_{45} = -0.272$, $t = -3.50$, $p < 0.01$), also as predicted. Hence, H3a and H3b were both supported.

With regard to the second category of determinants related to H2a and H2b, which were based on previous film tourism research, the results showed that character involvement, which had been empirically tested in the context of film tourism, had a significant impact on visit intention, whereas storyline involvement, which had not yet been tested in previous research, had no significant relation to visit intention. Thus, H2a was supported, whereas H2b was not.

With regard to the first category of determinants related to H1, whose importance has been emphasized by (ordinary) tourism research, the results showed that six of the twenty destination attributes had a

significant impact on *anime* viewers' visit intention, including landscape ($\beta_{11} = 0.284$, $t = 3.25$, $p < 0.01$), relaxation ($\beta_{12} = -0.151$, $t = -1.73$, $p < 0.10$), sports facilities (), availability of information ($\beta_{112} = 0.143$, $t = 2.01$, $p < 0.05$), accessibility (($\beta_{117} = 0.261$, $t = 2.20$, $p < 0.05$), and variety of activities ($\beta_{118} = -0.211$, $t = -2.70$, $p < 0.01$).

3.8. Discussion

The findings regarding social influences suggest that location seekers, or *anime* maniacs, are more likely to visit a destination if they are willing to discover locations that resemble particular scenes in an *anime* piece. The results also suggest that followers, or ordinary *anime* fans, are more likely to visit a destination if they are willing to confirm whether locations discovered by location seekers resemble particular scenes in an *anime* piece.

With regard to *anime* involvement, we found that character involvement affects *anime* pilgrims' visit intention, whereas storyline involvement does not. We assumed that both characters and storyline are important because some *anime* pieces treat them as jointly integral to their "world" (Otsuka & Steinberg, 2010). However, as discussed by Azuma (2009), recent *anime otaku* are more likely to respond to small cues left by *anime* characters and to focus on segments of the "world" of the *anime* pieces. As a result, the storyline may not be as important as the characters.

Most attributes of destination image did not affect visit intention. This may be due to the fact that *anime* pilgrims are not attracted by destination attributes that have no relation to *anime*. However, some

attributes did affect visit intention. Relaxation, sports facilities and variety of activities had a negative impact on visit intention, perhaps because *anime* pilgrims are willing to concentrate their efforts on the discovery/confirmation of locations that resemble particular scenes in an *anime* piece. In contrast with the above attributes, landscape, social interaction, availability of information, and accessibility had a positive impact. Landscape may be important for *anime* pilgrims because the concept of landscape is closely related to whether the location resembles a particular scene in an *anime* piece. Social interaction may be important because it is fun for *anime otaku* to meet each other offline during travel. The availability of information may be an important consideration if the content of such information is related to *anime* pilgrimage or *anime* itself. Accessibility may also be important, allowing *anime* viewers to make casual visits to pilgrimage sites.

4. Study 2

4.1. Destination attributes as determinants of destination loyalty

As discussed in the previous sections, we propose the existence of three categories of determinants of destination loyalty, which is formed during the post-tour period. Destination loyalty can be defined as the degree to which a tourist wants to visit a particular destination. As with visit intention, the first category of determinants of destination loyalty is destination image. Previous research related to (ordinary) tourism has emphasized destination image as a determinant of destination loyalty. According to (ordinary) tourism research, destination image affects destination loyalty as well as visit intention (Gallarza & García, 2002; Chen & Tsai, 2007; Gallarza et al., 2002; Zhang et al., 2014). Thus, in our empirical investigation of destination loyalty among *anime* pilgrims, the twenty attributes identified by Gallarza et al. (2002) will be examined as determinants, though we expect their explanatory power to be relatively low. Thus, we hypothesize the following:

H4. Destination image positively affects destination loyalty.

4.2. On-site anime experiences as determinants of destination loyalty

The second category of determinants of destination loyalty is that of on-site *anime* experiences. It has been found that tourists' positive experiences at tourism destinations positively affect their destination satisfaction and loyalty in the context of (ordinary) tourism (Bramwell, 1998; Oppermann, 2000). Although film tourism researchers have not yet studied on-site film experiences as determinants of film tourists' destination loyalty, Kim (2012) has focused on on-site film experiences and claimed that film tourists' experiences are related to three factors: "prestige and privilege", "intimacy and memory", and "beyond screen, sensory experience and re-enactment".

However, the names of these factors do not appear to adequately reflect the scale items. Therefore, in this study, we refer to them as "immersive experience", "vicarious experience", and "nostalgic experience", respectively. Immersive experience is the factor measured by items such as "I was excited to get close to and to touch buildings that appeared in *anime* scenes" and "I was excited to be able to be at the location in person"; vicarious experience is the factor measured by items such as "It was a great experience to perform the same actions as the characters" and "I was excited to personally re-enact some *anime* scenes as if I were the main character"; and nostalgic experience is the factor measured by items such as "I immediately recognized all the things as they had appeared in the *anime* piece" and "The story from the *anime* piece went through my mind as I was here". These three on-site *anime* experiences may affect *anime* pilgrims' loyalty to the destination. Thus, we hypothesize the following:

H5a. : Immersive experience positively affects destination loyalty.

H5b. : Vicarious experience positively affects destination loyalty.

H5c. : Nostalgic experience positively affects destination loyalty.

4.3. Social influences as determinants of destination loyalty

The third and final category of determinants of destination loyalty is that of social influence. Social influences represent the most important determinants not only of visit intention but also of destination loyalty for *anime* pilgrims.

Some *anime* viewers become "location seekers" and try to discover locations because, unlike the situation with movies and TV dramas, the *anime* production studios provide no information regarding the locations that an *anime* piece modeled is after. If the perceived level of success in discovering these locations is high, destination loyalty may be high. It should be noted that the relationship between perceived success and destination loyalty is probably facilitated by opinion leadership (cf. Rogers, 1995), which is high only if the pertinent individual is a highly-involved *anime* viewer or *anime* maniac (Ono, 2010)—in other words, a location seeker (Okamoto, 2011). Thus, we predict the following:

H4a. Opinion leadership positively affects the positive influence of discovering locations on destination loyalty.

On the other hand, followers, or ordinary *anime* fans, may not be highly motivated to discover locations that resemble those in *anime* pieces. They may, instead, be more focused on judging whether the locations discovered by location seekers resemble particular scenes in an *anime* piece. Thus, if perceived success in confirming the location is high, destination loyalty may be high, and the relationship between perceived success and destination loyalty may be moderated by opinion leadership. Thus, we hypothesize the following:

H4b. Opinion leadership negatively affects the positive influence of confirming the location on destination loyalty.

4.4. Data collection

The data were collected from *anime* pilgrims by means of street surveys conducted at two locations: Chichibu (79.6%), which contains *anime seichi* corresponding to the *anime* pieces entitled "The Flower We Saw That Day (*Anohi Mita Hana no Namae wo Bokutachi wa Mada Shiranai*)" and "The Anthem of the Heart (*Kokoro ga Sakebitagatterunda*)," and Hanno (20.4%), which contains *anime seichi* corresponding to an *anime* piece entitled "Encouragement of Climb (*Yama no Susume*)." Of the 159 questionnaires collected in Chichibu and the 40 collected in Hanno, 195 were valid (98%). Although our sample was, like the previous, a convenience sample, ours was much larger than those used in previous research (cf. Kinsella, 1998). Also, assuming that the total population of Chichibu and Hanno is 138,768 (Statistics Bureau, Japan Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communication Website), our sample falls into the allowable error range at the 10% level. The sample was split between 81.1% males and 18.9% females. Ages varied from 15 to 61 years. More than 51% of the respondents were males between 21 and 29 years of age.

Respondents were asked to answer questions regarding: (1) destination image, (2) on-site *anime* experiences, (3) success in discovery/confirmation, (4) opinion leadership, and (5) destination loyalty.

4.5. Measures

Destination loyalty was measured using multiple items developed by Chi and Qu (2008). Twenty destination attributes that were components of destination image were measured using items developed by Gallarza et al. (2002). Three components of on-site *anime* experiences, *i.e.*, immersive experience, vicarious experience, and nostalgic experience, were measured using items developed by Kim (2012), along with

an additional item for nostalgic experience that we created. Success related to the discovery and confirmation of locations was measured using various original items developed on the basis of a qualitative study conducted by Okamoto (2009). Opinion leadership was measured using multiple items from Childers's scales pertaining to opinion leadership (1986) and Hoffman et al.'s scales for identifying lead users (2010). For a list of all items, see Appendix 2. Responses to all these items were made on a five-point Likert-type scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree).

Cronbach's α values and composite reliability (CR) values for all multi-item scales were above 0.70 (ranging from 0.78 to 0.93 for Cronbach's α and 0.79 to 0.93 for CR), indicating that the constructs had high reliability (cf. Hair et al., 2012; Nunnally, 1978). To provide model estimates, we summed the values on all multi-item scales for each construct.

4.6. Model

A hierarchical multiple regression analysis was performed, as in the previous study. We utilized linear modeling because squared terms were not significant with respect to all independent variables. Prior to coefficient estimation, we used a mean-centering procedure to minimize multicollinearity. The variance inflation factor (VIF) for each of the regression coefficients was well below the recommended threshold of 10 (lowest = 1.29, highest = 4.29), suggesting that multicollinearity was not an issue (Chatterjee & Hadi, 2012).

In Model 1, only destination attributes and the dummy variable for survey areas were incorporated. In Model 2, immersive experience, vicarious experience, and nostalgic experience were added. In Model 3, social influence terms, *i.e.*, perceived success related to discovering locations, perceived success in confirming locations, perceived success related to discovering locations × opinion leadership, and perceived success in confirming locations × opinion leadership, were added. In addition, opinion leadership was added as a control variable.

Model 3 can be described as follows:

Where *Loy* is destination loyalty, $Image_{1\text{-}20}$ are destination attributes, *Area* is a dummy variable for survey areas, *Lead* is opinion leadership, $Exp_{1\text{-}3}$ are three items representing on-site *anime* experiences (1 = devoted experience; 2 = vicarious experience; 3 = nostalgic experience), *Dis* is perceived success in discovering locations, and *Con* is perceived success in confirming locations. $Dis \times Lead$ and $Con \times Lead$ represent interactions of these variables with opinion leadership. βs are regression coefficients, and ε is the error term for the equation.

4.7. Results

The results of the hierarchical multiple regression analysis are shown in Table 2. The adjusted R^2 of Model 2 was significantly higher than the adjusted R^2 of Model 1 ($\Delta R^2 = 0.21$, $p < 0.01$). In turn, the adjusted R^2 of Model 3 was significantly higher than that of Model 2 ($\Delta R^2 = 0.10$, $p < 0.01$). The R^2 value of 0.67 may not be very impressive, but it is higher than those of previous research (Sönmez & Sirakaya, 2002), which included only factors related the image of the destination ($R^2 = 0.38$). Those results indicate that social influence terms are, in general, important determinants of destination loyalty.

With regard to the third category of determinants related to H6a and H6b, although the coefficient of perceived success in discovering locations was not significant in Model 3 ($\beta_{82} = -0.009$, t = -0.13, p > 0.10), the coefficient of the interaction of this variable with opinion leadership was significant and positive ($\beta_{84} = 0.100$, t = 1.92, p < 0.10), as expected. In contrast, the coefficient of perceived success in confirming locations was significant and positive ($\beta_{83} = 0.223$, t = 3.57, p < 0.01), and the coefficient of the interaction of this variable with opinion leadership was significant and negative ($\beta_{85} = -0.258$, t = -4.97, p < 0.01), as we predicted. Thus, H6a and H6b were both supported.

With regard to the second category of determinants related to H5a, H5b, and H5c, which we derived from previous film tourism research, the results showed that both immersive experience and nostalgic experience had a significant impact on destination loyalty ($\beta_{71} = 0.157$, t = 1.95, p < 0.10; $\beta_{73} = 0.149$, t = 1.73, p < 0.10, respectively), whereas vicarious experience had no significant relation to destination loyalty ($\beta_{72} = 0.037$, t = 0.43, p > 0.10). Thus, H5a and H5c were supported, whereas H5b was not.

With respect to the first category of determinants related to H4, which has been the focus of (ordinary) tourism research, the results showed that only the following three of twenty destination attributes had a significant impact on *anime* viewers' destination loyalty: relaxation ($\beta_{52} = 0.200$, t = 3.05, p < 0.01), residents' receptiveness ($\beta_{59} = 0.132$, t = 1.80, p < 0.10), and information availability ($\beta_{512} = 0.129$, t = 2.12, p < 0.05).

4.8. Discussion

The findings regarding social influences suggest that location seekers, or *anime* maniacs, are more likely to become loyal to destinations that they have discovered that resemble particular *anime* scenes in an *anime* piece. The results also suggest that the followers, or ordinary *anime* fans, are more likely to become loyal to destinations discovered by location seekers if they have confirmed that these locations resemble particular scenes in an *anime* piece. These social influences are unique to *anime* pilgrimage because, unlike with movies and TV dramas, tourist bureaus and *anime* production studios provide no information regarding the locations that serve as the models for *anime* settings.

With regard to on-site *anime* experiences, we found that immersive experience and nostalgic experience positively affected destination loyalty, whereas vicarious experience did not. This may be because *anime* pilgrims can enjoy vicarious experiences at many locations, whereas immersive experiences and nostalgic experiences are more specific to locations that resemble those in *anime* pieces. Hence, in the absence of a treasured experience, *anime* pilgrims do not become loyal to a destination, whereas they do become loyal to a destination if they have had a valuable experience there.

Most attributes of destination image did not affect destination loyalty. This may be due to the fact that *anime* pilgrims do not value destination attributes that have no relation to *anime*. However, some attributes did affect destination loyalty. In particular, the attributes of relaxation, residents' receptiveness, and the availability of information each had a positive impact on destination loyalty. If *anime* pilgrims feel relaxed at the destination as a result of undertaking the pilgrimage and interacting with local people, they may become loyal to the destination. *Anime* pilgrims often feel that they are only accepted at home (Kinsella, 1998). Once they feel the warmth of the local people, they may feel accepted and become loyal to the destination. Furthermore, easy access to information about the destination that is relevant to their pilgrimage may enhance feelings of convenience, thereby fostering loyalty to the destination.

5. Implications

5.1. Theoretical implications

This is, to our knowledge, the first study to construct causal models to explain the determinants of Japanese *anime* pilgrims' visit intentions and destination loyalty, and to conduct empirical studies with traveler datasets. Although *anime* pilgrimage has become a popular and well-known social phenomenon in Japan, few studies have examined it and, as far as we know, no quantitative research on this topic has been conducted; all previous studies have been conceptual or single case studies that have generated preliminary findings. Hence, our study helps to position *anime* pilgrimage research at the same level as work related to (ordinary) tourism and film tourism.

Table 2
Estimation results of study 2.

	Standardized Coefficients					
	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3	
	β	t-value	β	t-value	β	t-value
β_{51}: Image 1 (Landscape)	0.199***	2.24	0.078***	1.03	0.062***	0.90
β_{52}: Image 2 (Relaxation)	0.210***	2.42	0.150***	2.06	0.200***	3.05
β_{53}: Image 3 (Sport Facilities)	0.066***	0.92	0.054***	0.92	0.028***	0.51
β_{54}: Image 4 (Shopping)	0.031***	0.37	0.014***	0.20	−0.066***	−1.01
β_{55}: Image 5 (Gastronomy)	−0.039***	−0.40	−0.024***	−0.29	0.016***	0.22
β_{56}: Image 6 (Value)	0.079***	0.81	0.017***	0.21	0.050***	0.68
β_{57}: Image 7 (Climate)	−0.028***	−0.37	−0.096***	−1.51	−0.094***	−1.64
β_{58}: Image 8 (Social Interaction)	−0.021***	−0.23	−0.006***	−0.07	−0.034***	−0.45
β_{59}: Image 9 (Residents' Receptiveness)	0.124***	1.32	0.076***	0.96	0.132***	1.80
β_{510}: Image 10 (Accommodation)	0.169***	1.91	0.054***	0.72	0.018***	0.27
β_{511}: Image 11 (Cultural Attractions)	−0.085***	−1.03	−0.052***	−0.77	−0.097***	−1.58
β_{512}: Image 12 (Availability of Information)	0.156***	1.92	0.103***	1.53	0.129***	2.12
β_{513}: Image 13 (Service Quality)	0.022***	0.24	−0.026***	−0.33	−0.083***	−1.18
β_{514}: Image 14 (Nightlife & Entertainment)	−0.179***	−2.28	−0.128***	−1.95	−0.024***	−0.39
β_{515}: Image 15 (Originality)	−0.059***	−0.67	−0.072***	−0.99	−0.085***	−1.28
β_{516}: Image 16 (Transportation)	0.197***	1.57	0.108***	1.04	0.097***	1.05
β_{517}: Image 17 (Accessibility)	−0.146***	−1.19	−0.114***	−1.12	−0.105***	−1.13
β_{518}: Image 18 (Variety of Activities)	0.101***	1.38	0.101***	1.66	0.087***	1.60
β_{519}: Image 19 (Nature)	−0.071***	−0.80	−0.067***	−0.91	−0.042***	−0.64
β_{520}: Image 20 (Safety)	−0.020***	−0.25	−0.002***	−0.02	0.006***	0.10
β_{61}: Area Dummy (Chichibu)	− −0.034***	−0.52	−0.011***	0.20	−0.001***	−0.01
β_{71}: On-site *Anime* Experience 1 : (Immersive experience)	–	–	0.315***	3.74	0.157***	1.95
β_{72}: On-site *Anime* Experience 2 :(Vicarious Experience)	–	–	0.021***	0.22	0.037***	0.43
β_{73}: On-site *Anime* Experience 3 : (Nostalgic Experience)	–	–	0.304***	3.42	0.149***	1.73
β_{81}: Opinion Leadership	–	–	–	–	0.201***	3.16
β_{82}: Performance in Discovery	–	–	–	–	−0.009***	−0.13
β_{83}: Performance in Confirmation	–	–	–	–	0.236***	3.57
β_{84}: Performance in Discovery × Lead	–	–	–	–	0.100***	1.92
β_{85}: Performance in Confirmation × Lead	–	–	–	–	−0.258***	−4.97
F value	4.53***0		9.21***0		11.42***0	
R^2	0.355***		0.565***		0.667***	
Adjusted R^2	0.276***		0.504***		0.609***	
Δ Adjusted R^2	——		0.210***		0.102***	

Note: ***$p < 0.01$, **$p < 0.05$, *$p < 0.10$.

Unlike previous models of (ordinary) tourism and film tourism, our models included an examination of social influences among location seekers and their followers in the tourist community. The results of our empirical tests showed that, in the context of *anime* pilgrims, these new models were superior to previous models that omitted investigation of social influences. Furthermore, our results suggest that even though, during the pre-tour period, *anime otaku* may expect to meet and interact primarily with other *otaku,* they also enjoy interactions with the local people while traveling. Such experiences result in higher destination loyalty during the post-tour period.

5.2. Managerial implications

Anime otaku enjoy being the first to discover and confirm locations that resemble particular scenes in *anime* pieces. In other words, locations that are deemed 'sacred places' for *anime otaku* are decided by *anime otaku* and not by the local tourist bureau. Destination marketers should not, therefore, promote the locations that *anime* pieces are modeled after.

Although *anime otaku* may not be accustomed to close friendships in their daily material lives (Kinsella, 1998), the desire to participate in *anime* pilgrimages spurs them to go out and visit locations that resemble particular scenes in *anime* pieces, and they achieve this goal through communication with other *anime otaku* on the Internet. At these

locations, they not only have on-site *anime* experiences but also come into contact with the local culture. Such contact with the local people allows *anime otaku* to feel their warmth, an experience that fosters loyalty to the destination. Therefore, by warmly welcoming *anime otaku* to their towns, destination marketers may succeed in attracting greater numbers of *anime* pilgrims.

6. Limitations and future research

6.1. Limitations of this study

This study has some limitations. First, the survey was conducted in a limited number of areas. In particular, in Study 2, we collected data in only a few towns, and targeted *anime seichi* relating to a very small number of *anime* pieces. Like previous research, the sample size was also limited in this study due to the difficulty of establishing contact with *otaku* as well as constraints on time and financial resources. Due to these limitations, this research did not examine difference among *anime* pieces or differences based on sex or nationality.

6.2. Future research

The amount of social influence activated by location seekers and followers in the *otaku* community may vary among *anime* pieces. For

example, Okamoto studied a modern *anime* piece with a fictional location that seemed real ("Raki☆Suta") and so did we in this study ("The Flower We Saw That Day", "The Anthem of the Heart", and "Encouragement of Climb"); therefore, location seekers were relatively more willing to search for the location and followers were more willing to specify unique *anime seichi* (sacred places). In contrast, Yagi and Pearce (2016) examined several science fiction *anime* pieces ("Nausicaa of the Valley of the Wind" and "Laputa the Castle of the Sky") that did not seem to be based on locations in the real world. Therefore, although several locations have been proposed as *anime seichi*, there is no conclusive evidence about any of them. The locations of the other pieces examined by Yagi and Pearce (2016) ("Anne of Green Gables" and "A Dog of Flanders") actually exist and were disclosed by the authors of the original novels. Thus, the social influence of *anime* pieces differs and should be modeled and tested in the future.

Similarly, there are sex differences in *anime* pilgrimage behavior. Typically, *anime* pieces for boys are more likely to attract male *otaku*, whereas those for girls are more likely to attract female *otaku*. However, due to our small sample size, we were not able to examine sex differences in the variables of interest.

Regarding nationality, our new models may be applied not only to *anime* pilgrimage in Japan but also to other kinds of film tourism, extending even to ordinary tourism in other countries and areas all over the world. Future research should be conducted to examine the external validity of our models. However, previous research has pointed out that *anime* pilgrimage may be associated with several other features of Japanese culture (Azuma, 2009; Yagi & Pearce, 2016). Therefore, there may be differences between cases in which Japanese *otaku* visit *anime seichi* and foreigners doing so, and between cases in which Japanese *otaku* visit *anime seichi* in and outside of Japan. Future research should develop more complex models to elucidate the differences according to *anime* piece, sex, and nationality.

Finally, while we examined *anime* pilgrimage from the pilgrims' point of view, there have been no investigations thus far of *anime* pilgrimage from the perspective of the local people. It would be interesting to construct a model explaining why local, ordinary (non-*otaku*) people welcome *anime otaku* to their towns, allowing them to participate in their traditional rites and festivals.

Author contribution

(1) A. Ono designed the conceptual framework. All other co-authors conducted surveys to collect datasets, which were analyzed by (2) S. Kawamura with (3) Y. Nishimori, (4) Y. Oguro, and (5) R. Shimizu. (6) S. Yamamoto worked on the manuscript. (1) A. Ono, (3) Y. Nishimori, (5) R. Shimizu, and (6) S. Yamamoto mainly constructed the empirical models with input from all authors.

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Appendix A. Supplementary data

Supplementary data to this article can be found online at https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2019.06.010.

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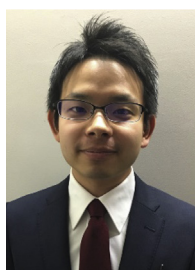Stebbins, R. A. (1992). *Amateurs, professionals and serious leisure.* Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press.

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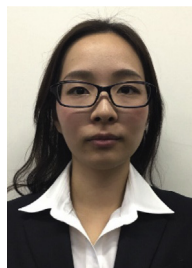
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