

COMPLETION REPORT

Identifying the Role of Tourism in the Process of Natural Disaster Recovery: Comparison between Earthquake Recovery in Kumamoto Prefecture and Hokkaido Prefecture

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Research Objectives

This project aims at comparing Kumamoto Prefecture and Hokkaido Prefecture that were affected by earthquakes in 2016 and 2018 separately. The precise objectives are:

1. To identify influences of culture, attitude and behavior in earthquake recovery in the two Prefectures;
2. To investigate the role of tourism in earthquake recovery; and
3. To advance natural disaster management framework with functions of tourism incorporated

Methodology and Field Work

The research team conducted interviews with local tourism stakeholders in Kumamoto and Hokkaido regions. The interview questions elucidated stakeholders' experience and views on their contributions and interconnections to disaster management process. The questions were based on the six phases of disaster management process by Faulkner (2001) and Ritchie (2004). The interviews were conducted in: (1) July 2018 in Kumamoto (10 participants), and (2) August 2019 in Hokkaido (15 participants). Thematic content analysis was used to comparing, contrasting and categorizing the responses obtained from the interviews according to the frameworks.

Key Findings

- 1) Multi-functionality of tourism resources, spaces and industries are prominent for disaster preparation and emergency phases in both Prefectures.
- 2) Whereas Kumamoto recovery tends to focus on knowledge and information building, Hokkaido's case stresses the importance of accurate and timely communication.
- 3) Three post-disaster (intermediate, recovery and resolution) phases demonstrate more possibilities of restoring the affected destination to a state of long-term (re)development in product creation, image improvement, local knowledge enrichment, and people-to-people and people-to-place connections.
- 4) Returning to a "pre-disaster" state in terms of tourist arrival only is undesirable but transforming the corresponding tourism strategies to suit the resources, cultures and characteristics of the specific destinations (e.g. culture-based versus nature-based) in a regional context is more sustainable.
- 5) Collaboration is the key determinant to an improved region and greater disaster resilience, which could integrate stakeholders through shared local values, experiences and memories in disaster risk communication and strategies for preparedness.
- 6) The use of mascot like Kumamon is strongly supported to rebuild the destination image and local spirit as compared with relatively weaker case in Hokkaido.

Implications and Advice

- 1) Tourism forms a platform that must involve stakeholders' organizations in the disaster recovery. People-to-people and people-to-destination integration must be considered in the disaster management process, especially during long term recovery and resolution periods.

- 2) In territories with diversified cultures of local communities, indigenous groups and governance, more studies and experience sharing should be undertaken to further understand how stakeholders' network and power structure work in disasters.
- 3) The Japan Government should better integrate tourism into disaster management frameworks, rather than locating the industry in a separate domain of recovery. The results demonstrate the significant contribution of tourism to all phases of the disaster process.

Future Research

Future research may continue: (1) to compare how the roles of tourism differ between types of tourism actors and disasters; (2) to refine the framework in different disaster-prone destinations such as Japan and the region; (3) to investigate the socio-cultural characteristics of different cities or regions within Japan; and (4) to explore the potential contribution of special-interest tourism in destination revitalization.

Publication of the Results of Research Project:

Verbal Presentation (Date, Venue, Name of Conference, Title of Presentation, Presenter, etc.)

- (1) 6 June 2019; The 2nd Lincoln International Business School (LIBS) Annual Research Showcase, in University of Lincoln, United Kingdom (One Keynote presentation); Title of presentation: Tourism and natural disaster recovery: Perception of tourism stakeholders in the 2016 Kumamoto earthquake in Japan; Presenter: Chan, C. S.
- (2) 20-22 April 2019; The 2nd conference from the Global Congress of Special Interest Tourism & Hospitality (2nd GLOSITH), in Taipei, Taiwan; Title of presentation: Tourism and natural disaster recovery: Perception of tourism stakeholders in Kumamoto earthquake in Japan; Presenter: Chan, C. S.
- (3) (Postponed) 15-21 April 2021; The 16th World Leisure Congress, in Pinggu-Beijing, China; Title of presentation: The role of tourism in the process of natural disaster recovery: Lessons learnt from earthquake recovery in Kumamoto Prefecture and Hokkaido Prefecture, Japan; Presenter: Chan, C. S.
- (4) 24 September 2020; Departmental Seminar of Department of Geography and Resource Management, The Chinese University of Hong Kong; Title of presentation: Tourism and natural disaster recovery: Perception of tourism stakeholders in Kumamoto earthquake 2016 in Japan; Presenter: Chan, C. S.

Thesis (Name of Journal and its Date, Title and Author of Thesis, etc.)

- (1) Chan, C. S., Nozu, K., & Cheung, L. T. O. (2019). Tourism and natural disaster management process: Perception of tourism stakeholders in the case of Kumamoto earthquake in Japan. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 23(15), 1864-1885. [SSCI: 3.395]
- (2) Chan, C. S., Nozu, K., & Zhou, Q. (2020). Tourism stakeholder perspective for disaster management process and resilience: The case of 2018 Hokkaido earthquake in Japan. *Sustainability*, under review.
- (3) Chan, C. S., Nozu, K., & Zhou, Q. (2020). Advancing tourism disaster management process and building destination resilience: The experience of 2018 Hokkaido earthquake in Japan and beyond. *Tourism Recreation Research*, under review.

Book (Publisher and Date of the Book, Title and Author of the Book, etc.)

N/A