

# Approaches for sustaining cultural resources by adapting diversified context of customers in tourism: Comparison between Japanese and Slovenian cases

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**Abstract.** Amid changing economic situation rapidly, how to sustain local/cultural resources and distribute their value to many customers is crucial in a number of business communities. In tourism industry, although there are a lot of activities for such struggles, a small number of the global comparison studies are a problem for exploring and adopting the more effective ways worldwide. In this paper, we examine two Japanese cases and one Slovenian case doing well of sustaining and balancing cultural resources in terms of adapting the differences of customers' context in tourism. In the first case from Japanese tourism spa community "Awazu-onsen", the key point is a loose relationship between the traditional local hotels and the modern hotel chain. The second case from Kanazawa Creative Tourism in Japan is a NPO supported by the local art universities for connecting the local artists and the local tourism. The third case from the Ana Desetnica International Street Theatre Festival in Slovenia offers not only each street artistic performances simply, but also the unique city Ljubljana as a big theater for attracting many tourists who have a wide variety of touristic preferences. There are three approaches for attracting current customers with sustaining their local values, those are installing a new resources, making a new matching system and reinterpretation of the existing resources. In the future research, it is important to collect related cases by analyzing those countries' situations, issues, purposes, and the ways and results by more extensive surveys for understanding and making significant theories.

**Keywords:** Resource, sustainability, expansion, community, tourism

## 1 Introduction

### 1.1 Background

Matured industry is leading us to service economy as well as globalization while developing Information and Communication Technology (ICT) all over

the world. “Equally, as the digital divide narrows, service have enabled less-developed countries to participate on a leveller playing field in business and trade” [1]. In services sector, there are high potential of a lot of participants who have differential cultural background in the future.

In tourism industry, there are also influences of matured industry. Generally, high standardized businesses’ entering, such as hotel chain, hypermarket and so on, into provincial cities can deteriorate the local, cultural unique values. In Japan, there are many related controversies in each province city.

Therefore, especially in local tourism community, some strategies for juggling sustain the unique core values and distributing them into many tourists competing with standardized big businesses are crucial in this current economic situation. For addressing such strategies, we have to consider what our core values are and what parts we are able to change flexibly without deteriorating the core values.

But, to generalize the best practice for sustaining local core values and distributing them widely is difficult. Because there are vast amounts of factors that affect the decision-making, such as differences of target customers, changing customers’ needs, new technologies trend like social media and so on.

Meanwhile, there are a wide variety cases of tourism activities, some can achieve success, and the others cannot. First of all, to discuss what kind of tourism approaches can do well in terms of sustaining and distributing their values and the others cannot do well. And then, considering how to generalize these activities is important for adapting this matured global, service economy.

## 1.2 Research Question and Purpose

In this paper, we analyze promising tourism approaches that are juggling between sustaining local/cultural values and attracting many tourists. In tourism, characteristics of the activities as a community would have a key role in handling the issue. What kinds of the strategies in terms of a community are there? And are there meaning differences between countries based on the strategies?

The research purpose is to increase the possibility of utilizing insights based on abundant tourism cases all over the world. And also we can explore new theoretical approaches based on the generalized theory validated with data.

## 1.3 Approach

In this paper, we analyze tourism cases in terms of a community activity world-wide. The specific study targets are Japanese and Slovenian cases. For both countries, tourism industry plays a key role to their countries’ economic activities. Thus, they have a wide variety of tourism cases. In addition, there are several tourism cases of a similar size in terms of community. We selected specific tourism cases from them that are the Japanese spa tourism community “Owazu-onsen”, the Japanese tourism activity with artists “Kanazawa Creative Tourism” and the Slovenian Street Theatre Festival organized by “Ana Monró Theatre.”

As the results from the cases, there are three approaches for attracting current customers with sustaining their local values. Those approaches are installing a new resources, making a new matching system and reinterpretation of the existing resources. In terms of countries differences, Japanese communities have a number of own tourism resources to make new values by only reclassification for now. But on the other hand, Slovenia is relatively a small country. They need to reinterpret a part of their own tourism resources for attracting new tourists. We believe different techniques are required depended on that kind of ways of how to utilize tourism resources.

There are some patterns in tourism communities for adapting changes of economic trend and their situations. It is important in tourism to collect information like those countries' situations, the ways to develop and distribute their values and the effects by this type of survey. Generalizing that kind of cases, we can share valuable trial and error in tourism activities.

In the following sections, we will give the detailed. Section 2 shows related works in terms of context and fidelity vs. convenience. Section 3 describes the results. And Section 4 is for discussion, then we will conclude in section 5.

## 2 Related Works

In this section, we show a concept of context and adapting diversified context in this paper. The former comes from Anthropology by Hall[2] and Context Aware Computing by Dey[3], the latter does from a fidelity and convenience concept by Maney[4].

From Anthropology, Hall explained context as a function of communication in terms of High Context communications(HC) and Low Context ones(LC) with figure 1. He says “a universal feature of information systems is that meaning is made up of: the communication, the background and preprogrammed responses of the recipient, and the situation”, “Therefore, what the receiver actually perceives is important in understanding the nature of context” and “Most of the information must be in the transmitted message in order to make up for what is missing in the context.”

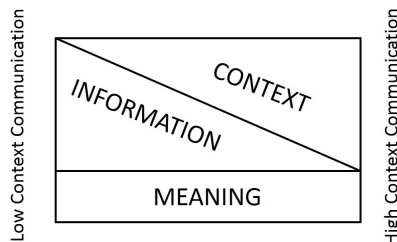
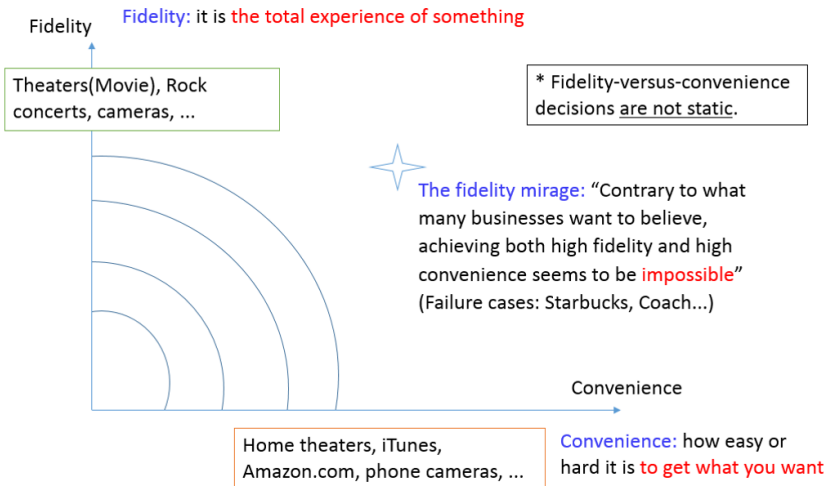


Fig. 1. Context as a function of communication by Hall

On the other hand, from an ICT perspective in Context Aware Computing, Dey says “Context is any information that can be used to characterize the situation of an entity. An entity is a person, place, or object that is considered relevant to the interaction between a user and an application, including the user and applications themselves.”

In terms of diversified context in businesses, Maney proposed one perspective consisted of two dimensions: fidelity and convenience (Figure.2). Fidelity is the total experience of something like theaters experiences, rock concerts and so on. On the other hand, convenience is how easy or hard it is to get what you want. The examples of easy convenience are home theaters, iTunes, Amazon.com and so on. He explains that “Contrary to what many businesses want to believe, achieving both high fidelity and high convenience seems to be impossible.” It means there is trade-off consumers were making between fidelity and convenience.



**Fig. 2.** Fidelity vs. convenience by Maney

In matured tourism, the characteristics of tourism activities become higher context ones than ever. In other words, there would be a wide variety of fidelity patterns depended on characteristics of tourists. And also we have to consider them as a community because tourism is an industry that has a lot of players. However, in tourism industry, although there can be a lot of activities considering the balance between low-context and high-context, or convenience and fidelity, a small number of the global comparison studies in terms of this direction is a problem for exploring and adopting the more effective ways worldwide in this global economy.

### 3 Case Results

We analyze tourism cases as a community activity in terms of low-high context or convenience-fidelity perspective. In Slovenia and Japan, tourism industry plays a key role to their countries' economic activities. And there are several tourism cases of a similar size of community in both countries. We, therefore, selected Japanese and Slovenian cases doing well of sustaining and distributing their cultural resources. The cases we selected are: Japanese spa tourism community "Awazu-onsen", a NPO "Kanazawa Creative Tourism" in Japan and Ana Desetnica International Street Theatre Festival by "Ana Monró Theatre" in Slovenia.

#### 3.1 Japanese spa tourism community "Awazu-onsen"

Japan has a lot of spa tourism communities. The histories many have are old, and the Awazu-onsen community has their history for 1300 years. This is one of the longest traditional tourism communities in Japan. Meanwhile typically, the communities have hard time for their operations. Because young generation in Japan is familiar with the customs of modern hotel services. There is a gap between providing the value by the traditional hotels and the needs that young people have. In this Awazu-onsen case, despite the tradition powerful brand, it was same situation. However, a hotel chain happened to enter into this community since 2004 by acquiring a local facility that was bankrupted. There is no strong relationship between the tradition hotels and the hotel chain. But the chain could attract tourists using the local Awazu-onsen brand and serve their convenient service with low price.

The brand has been developed by the traditional hotels for long periods. The services are a classic type of Japanese luxury hotel. Generally the quality of hospitality, spa and cuisine is high and they require relatively high price. But installing modern facilities and business systems are very slow. We can say it seems to require to customers something like fidelity. On the other hand, the hotel chain happen to enter into this area. It has generated a loose cooperation generate. The hotel chain had modernized hotel systems and low-price strategy. It could attract casual tourists like family, business persons in the business trip and so on.

The figure 3 represents the structure of Awazu-onsen community in terms of the convenience-fidelity concept. There is no explicit cooperative relationship between the traditional tourism community and the new hotel chain. But the hotel chain is using the high brand value in Awazu-onsen for attracting their casual users. And then a part of casual users become heavy users of this Awazu-onsen community. However, by reason that the business the traditional community operates is still hard, supports by the local governments are very important for the traditional tourism community. The relationship with these three groups are working effectively in this area.

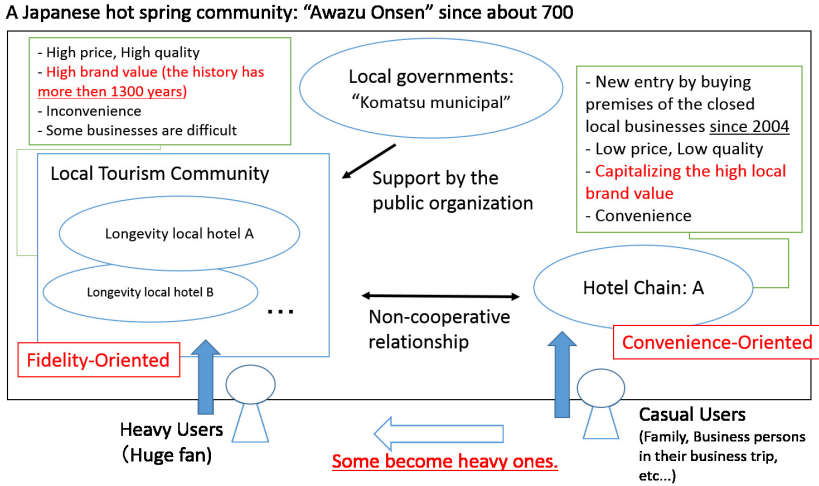


Fig. 3. A structure of Awazu-onsen community

### 3.2 NPO "Kanazawa Creative Tourism" for art tourism in Japan

Recently there are many tourism cases that they try to utilize artistic resources into tourism all over the world. In Japan, Kanazawa city has an old history and a wide variety of cultural aspects such as cuisine, craftwork/artwork and so on. A NPO called Kanazawa Creative Tourism is organizing a platform between local artists and the local tourism. The body is operated mainly by a member of local art school and so on. Although local arts and crafts graduates have a wide variety of niche, generally the niche business is difficult to grow as a stable work. Therefore, the body is playing a key role to sustain the arts/crafts communities.

The figure 4 represents the structure of the platform made by Kanazawa Creative tourism. The NPO arranges various kinds of local tourism products easily available like tour of inspection to craft studio, seminar, talk event, and so on. The target customers of the NPO are relatively casual users who have interests in creative activities. On the other hand, the artists have varied niche values. Typically to explore customers is difficult if the value is niche. It means the NPO is setting the opportunities to connect between artist and casual users. Kanazawa city aims to be a cultural city in Japan. Therefore this relationship of Kanazawa Creative Tourism, Artists/craftspeople community and several public organizations has potential to sustain and distribute the cultural value through tourism.

### Kanazawa Creative Tourism (KCT) since 2010

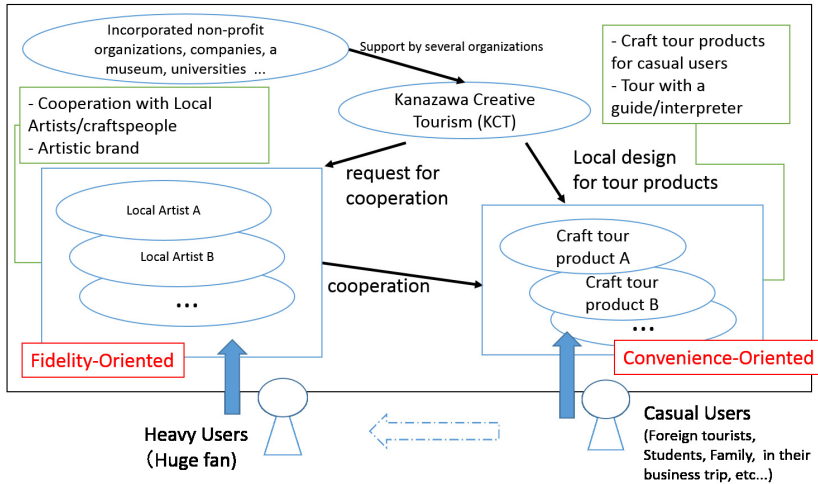
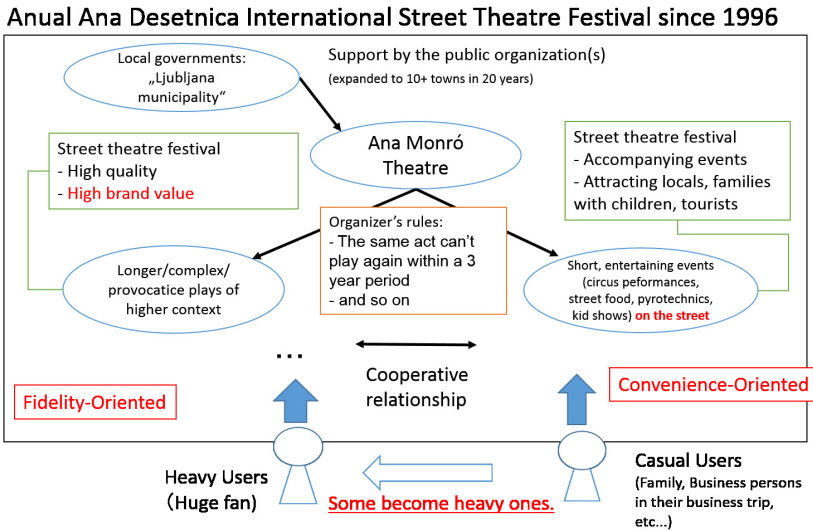


Fig. 4. A structure of a NPO Kanazawa Creative Tourism(KCT)

### 3.3 Ana Desetnica International Street Theatre Festival by “Ana Monró Theatre” in Slovenia

In Ljubljana, Slovenia, there is Annual Ana Desetnica International Street Theatre Festival. This festival has started since 1996. Ljubljana is a small size city. It means we can walk around the city easily. The size of the city is suitable for transforming the city into the street theatre during the festival. The director of this festival says this festival is not only for tourists but also for local citizens. In Europe, many people are working out of home country. This festival is also working as a social gathering opportunity for family in Ljubljana.

The figure 5 represents the structure of the Ana Desetnica International Street Theatre Festival. This festival has been started since 1996. The point of this festival is to connect between artistic performers and the city itself. It is difficult to attract a lot of casual users by Just only professional performances. The festival offers those performance conveniently through the city. It plays a role of theater during the festival. Then, tourists in the festival can get an easy access to those performances. This is an opportunity for connecting between artist and casual tourists. And Ana Monró Theatre has some rule for selecting the performers, for example, to restrict same performance within a 3 year period and so on, in order to giving new experiences to repeated tourists. Ljubljana is a small city. There are limited resources for utilizing the tourism. Thus, they changed the function of existing resources.



**Fig. 5.** A structure of Ana Desetnica International Street Theatre Festival

## 4 Discussion

These tourism cases have activities for how to sustain/extend their core values and also how to distribute them to casual and heavy tourists/customers. In terms of the fidelity-convenience concept, these cases have a part of developing values that is pursuing fidelity and a part of distributing values that is pursuing convenience as a structure/system of their communities. There are three approaches in this study for attracting casual users/customers with sustaining local core values. Those are installing a new resource, making a new matching system and reinterpretation of the existing resources. The common point of them is to separate between a part of developing values and distributing them widely. In other words, not only to have value developers, but also to have separated value distributors are needed for this kind of activities. Combination of each component can play a key role in sustaining and improving tourism communities.

In terms of comparison between Japanese and Slovenian cases, Japanese cases can adapt the current economic situation by installing a new function into the community or making a new matching system. This is because Japan is a relatively big country and there are a wide variety of available resources. On the other hand, the street festival case in Slovenia shows they had to seek new interpretations to existing resources. Slovenia is a relatively small country and surrounded by competitors in tourism industry in Europe. It may lead them to go into this direction. For sustaining/developing and distributing core values in



tourism, if there are differences about available resources, the adequate strategy can be also affected with the difference. We do think that there are some patterns or combinations related to the strategy and constrained conditions for achieving this direction.

## 5 Conclusion

Generally in businesses, juggling making advanced values and also attracting casual users/customers at once is very difficult. In this paper, we studied that the treatments for the difficulty in selected Japanese and Slovenian tourism cases were to divide the part of sustaining/developing values and distributing values to casual tourists/customers as combined activities in one tourism community. And there are three approaches: installing a new resources, making a new matching system and reinterpretation of the existing resources for attracting casual users/customers with sustaining core values.

There are vast kinds of tourism activities all over the world. Because our survey is only a few of them, it is difficult to generalize our results in the wider sense. But we do think the promising patterns for this direction are finite. We consider that making theories related to this concept is important for extracting the essences of a lot of actual trial-and-error cases in tourism for increasing the productivity.

In the future research, it is important to collect cases for sustaining/developing tourism values and distributing them to casual tourists/customers by analyzing those countries' situations, issues, purposes, and the ways and results by more extensive surveys for understanding and making significant theories.

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