

Japan as a Tourism Nation: Emerging Immigrant Entrepreneurship in the Tourism Sector of Kyoto

Authors : Szabó Renáta Andrea

Abstract : In 2012 Japan created a new plan in order to become a tourism nation. The number of foreign tourists rises rapidly year by year, and with the upcoming Olympics in 2020, tourism turned into a prioritized national strategy. This paper offers a new perspective of tourism research: instead of focusing on the host nation or the inbound tourists, it represents an emerging in-between group: foreign entrepreneur residents. Despite the fact that Japan continuously scores as one of the lowest in East and South Asia related to entrepreneurial activity, in recent years, the activity of foreign entrepreneur residents is on the rise. This study is focused on Kyoto - the former capital of Japan and a popular tourist destination - and applies the mixed embeddedness model, which was used to understand this new phenomena and explore this emerging mediator group between locals and foreign tourists. Immigrant entrepreneurship is often related to a disadvantageous situation, and the businesses are introduced as the sole purpose of making a profit. The study seeks to argue with this point of view and augment the standard approaches to immigrant entrepreneurship. The findings introduce the key factors of this lifestyle choice besides profit and present how entrepreneurship is becoming an escape route to avoid standard working environment while living in Japan. It also shows the gap in the visa system and raises awareness about the emerging trend.

Keywords : immigrant entrepreneurship, Japan, lifestyle entrepreneurship, mixed embeddedness model, tourism

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