

Revitalization of Nara's tourism industry

1. Motivation behind Research Paper

The tourism industry in Japan's modern society has been hit hard by the impact of COVID-19. So, what is needed now to return to the revitalized Japanese tourism industry before the spread of COVID-19? The reason why I am exploring the tourism industry is because I thought that the companies that were hit the hardest by the COVID-19 infection were the tourism industry. However, focusing on Japan's tourism industry would result in a larger theme, so I decided to focus on Nara, which is easier to explore and more accessible. Because I live in Nara, I thought that I could convey the charm of Nara, which is not well known, in order to increase the number of tourists. And now that COVID-19 is nearing its end, we chose this theme thinking about how we should revitalize the tourism industry.

2. Introduction

What are the challenges faced by the tourism industry in modern society? The current number of tourists in Nara Prefecture was on the rise until 2019, before COVID-19. The main reason for this is the increase in the number of foreign visitors to Japan where the number of Japanese tourists in 2018 was 14,374,000, which was on a rising trend. Since 2020, when the new coronavirus spread, the number of tourists has decreased to less than half of the previous year. In addition, due to the government's declaration of a state of emergency related to the spread of COVID-19, the closure of tourist facilities in Nara Prefecture and the cancellation of events

caused a significant drop. Even before COVID-19, Nara Prefecture had some major challenges for the tourism industry. The first is about the length of stay. According to the length of stay by prefecture, the length of stay in Nara Prefecture was 4.7 hours, the shortest compared to other prefectures in the Kinki region. On the other hand, neighboring Osaka and Kyoto have the longest stays in the Kinki region. The second is about the increase in the number of guests. It is necessary to increase the number of guests by creating tourism content that leads to Nara. Looking at the breakdown of tourists in Nara City in 2019, it turned out that it was a low result of less than 10% of overnight stays. From the first and second tasks, we found that tourists often go sightseeing in Nara during the day and stay in Osaka or Kyoto at night.

3. Results and Analysis

From these three issues, we thought it necessary to increase tourist spots and events that make tourists want to come to Nara. Nara's greatest feature is that you can experience the good old townscape of Japan. I thought that Naramachi was the place where I could experience it the most. Naramachi is an area centered on the former precincts of Gangoji Temple, a World Heritage Site in Nara Prefecture. It is a quaint town that makes visitors feel nostalgic. When I took a walk through Naramachi, it was a townscape that retains the atmosphere of traditional townhouses, an atmosphere that can only be felt in Nara. In Naramachi, there were many cafes and other establishments in renovated old houses. Therefore, I thought that we should increase the number of cafes in renovated old houses. Currently, the number of vacant houses in Japan continues to increase. One of the causes of these problems is the rapid aging of the population in Japan. In addition, vacant house owners themselves have problems regarding the management and utilization of

vacant houses. As the population of Nara City continues to decline and age, it is assumed that the number of vacant houses will increase further in the future. In order to solve the problem of vacant houses and attract more tourists to Nara Prefecture, we thought that a cafe in a renovated old private house would be the best. The renovated cafe that I envision has an exterior that makes use of the townscape that has been around for a long time. In Nara, the buildings are low and you can enjoy nature more, so the interior is made so that you can see nature from the large windows. Since it is an old private house, it can be used by all generations.

4. Conclusion and Future Problems

I thought that the problem of vacant houses, which is one of the problems in Japan today, could be solved by renovating old houses and turning them into cafes to attract more tourists. This time I thought about cafes, but Nara still has a lot of charm. In order to attract more tourists to Nara, I thought that it was necessary to think about things other than cafes. However, these proposals have not yet led to an increase in staying time. Therefore, Nara Prefecture has the problem that transportation is inconvenient. Neighboring cities such as Osaka and Kyoto are well connected with transportation, and have a wide range of sightseeing spots and lodging facilities. Also, like Nara, Kyoto cherishes Japan's ancient history and culture. Nara needs to spread the charm that is different from Kyoto. In addition, COVID-19 has not ended yet, so compared to before the epidemic, it is still being hit. As soon as COVID-19 is over, the number of foreign tourists will increase more than before the spread of the coronavirus. It turns out that there are still many challenges left.

5. Reflection

At first, I liked traveling, so I chose tourism as the theme, but I realized that the idea I came up with this time would also lead to the resolution of the SDGs. In the future, I would like to do a job related to architecture, so I decided to make use of the idea I came up with this time in my future.

6. Work Cited

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