

How Anime IP Activates Travel Intention: A Case Study of Crayon Shinnchan and Kasukabe

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Abstract. Some places in the country have started to develop rural tourism for economic reasons. Many rural areas are now similar to one another and have started to offer the same goods and services. Intellectual Property (IP) tourism has started to be used as a way to solve the problem. Kasukabe City has studied how the Japanese anime Crayon Shinnchan can stimulate the desire to travel among its fans. According to the SOR (Stimulus-Organism-Response) theory, the six core factors are character attachment, media exposure, travel motivation, emotional value, psychological distance and destination image. A small number of people were interviewed and the data were analysed by fsQCA. It has been determined that the cause of the high travel intention is unknown at present. All kinds of reasons cause the fans to come to Kasukabe. Based on the application of SOR theory and fsQCA, this paper will enrich the research on IP tourism in the field by taking an anime IP released in a real Japanese city as its subject. The above results can also provide some ideas for the development of IP-based tourism in rural areas. By learning how all sorts of factors affect the behaviour of tourists traveling alone, local governments and tourism promotion departments can plan new-era activities better, boost social participation among the public, and create lasting enthusiasm for travel. Ultimately, this paper believes that the intellectual property of anime can be used to boost the economy of rural areas and develop long-term tourism in suburban areas.

Keywords: anime tourism, IP tourism, travel intention

1. Introduction

In recent years, there has been a change in people's desire for travel around the world. More and more tourists are leaving the traditional city and coastal areas for rural areas and small towns these days. As rural tourism has grown in recent years, more and more contemporary tourists wish to enjoy a connection with nature, experience local culture, and get away from busy city life [1]. Rural tourism is one of the current plans by many governments in the world to stimulate the economy, create jobs and address issues such as poverty. Despite the development of rural tourism, it is now somewhat standardised. Many rural areas offer the same products and services; there are many farms, similar local food and activities. It is not special and thus cannot attract the attention of many tourists. As a result, visitors may come once but do not often return; there is no special reason to remember one village over another. As a result, many more places are now promoting Intellectual

Property tourism. An IP can be a popular movie, cartoon, game or character. Through collaboration with famous Internet personalities, some places have added charm and stories to their sites to help the site attract more tourists [2]. It can also be hoped that this way will spark the tourists' interest in the place. One typical case is Kasukabe City in Japan, which has made full use of the popularity of the anime Crayon Shinchan to attract tourists. Crayon Shinchan is a very popular Japanese cartoon that started airing on television many years ago and is still popular now.

The main character is a cute but mischievous 5-year-old boy named Shinnosuke, who is also known as Shinchan. His family and friends also appear in the show occasionally. Kasukabe is a real city near Tokyo in Saitama Prefecture where the story takes place. Due to the long-running nature of the anime broadcast on television, many people in Japan and around the world have come to know Kasukabe through it. When the name of the city is mentioned, many people immediately think of Shinchan. Kasukabe has gradually gained popularity as a result of the anime. The city has begun to use Shinchan for tourism marketing. There are Shinchan statues, Shinchan-themed buses and other Shinchan souvenirs for visitors in the city. Every year, many fans go to Kasukabe to see the real places that resemble the anime. This case is a good example of how an anime IP can promote tourism in a small city [3, 4]. Some scholars have studied IP tourism. Li and his colleagues have studied how the game IP King of Glory affects the travel intention of players [2]. They found that the reasons for the characters' attachment and emotions are various. Liu studied how IPs can promote the development of tourism in rural areas of China [1]. Based on the above, one would hope that the village could receive some attention and increase income. Recently, some studies have applied the SOR framework to the phenomenon of anime-related events and tourism, but they have not specifically examined the effect of a famous work of anime intellectual property, such as Crayon Shinchan, on fans' desire to visit a real city [5, 6]. Most of the previous research has been on games or Chinese villages. There is a lack of research on Japanese anime IP such as Crayon Shinchan. Specifically, the research do not know how this anime motivates the fans to come to Kasukabe.

Therefore, this paper hopes to address the above problem in the literature. It is known that Shinchan fans go to Kasukabe, but the reasons for this behaviour have not been studied in an organised way. What is the motivation of these fans for the trip? Is it that they like the character? Is it contact with social media? Or is it the good feelings related to the anime? The aim of this paper is to find out why fans go to Kasukabe. The main problem this paper will solve is: What factors promote the desire to travel among Shinchan fans?

2. The shinchan IP becoming a travel intention activator

2.1. Theoretical framework: SOR theory

The theoretical basis for this paper is SOR Theory, and the problem to be solved is as follows. SOR is an abbreviation for Stimulus, Organism and Response. It is one of the most widely used frameworks in the study of environmental psychology and consumer behaviour [7]. It is usually used to study how external circumstances affect people's emotions and thus their behaviour.

SOR Theory is employed in this paper to address the problem of research. SOR is short for Stimulus, Organism and Response. It is generally used to study how the outside world affects people's feelings and behaviour. In the background of this study, a stimulus is an external trigger that can draw the attention of fans; for example, watching the anime, seeing a funny video of Shinchan on TikTok, or viewing an image of a Shinchan statue on Instagram are all such stimuli. For example, a fan is watching an episode of Shinchan and his family visiting a park near their home in Kasukabe; at that moment, this picture may spark their interest. Another time, they will see the popular short

video of Shinnchan's "Oh, my hips" dance spread across social media and be motivated to spread it as well. The three stimulus factors are character attraction, media exposure and motivation for travel, etc.; that is to say, they are the external factors that motivate people to travel psychologically. The organism is the internal psychological changes that happen to the fan in his mind and heart. When the audience watches Shinnchan, they feel happy, laugh, or have nostalgic feelings; these are all forms of emotions. They may think Kasukabe is a place they know well, even though they have never been there, due to repeated appearances in the anime; this is a form of psychological proximity. They may also have a positive mental image of Kasukabe as a place that is fun, friendly and a bit quirky, as shown in the anime, which is a destination image. For example, a fan who is interested in the daily life of Shinnchan at Futaba Kindergarten may think that Kasukabe is a warm and funny place full of daily life.

The three factors of the organism are emotional value, psychological distance and destination image; these are the internal states that link external stimuli to behavioural responses. Finally, the response is the behaviour that follows these internal changes; in this study, it is the intention to visit Kasukabe, which is shown by whether the fan plans to travel to Kasukabe in the near future. For example, a fan who is happy about and close to Shinnchan may want to go to Kasukabe to see the real-life Shinnchan statues, visit the city hall that is featured in the anime, or buy Shinnchan-themed goods at local shops. The basic idea of this framework is that watching Shinnchan gives people good feelings and a sense of proximity to Kasukabe, so they wish to visit Kasukabe more. In other words, the external stimulus itself is not the cause of the desire to travel; rather, it is transmitted via the internal psychological mechanism mentioned above. This is in line with the SOR theory, that is, external factors need to be processed internally before affecting behaviour. For example, after watching many Shinnchan videos online, a fan may not be motivated to travel immediately, even if those videos introduce the sense of happiness and familiarity of Kasukabe, as their emotional needs are not yet met; only then will they genuinely wish to visit.

The basic idea of this framework is as follows: Watching Shinnchan (S) gives one good feelings and a sense of closeness to Kasukabe (O), and this psychological state increases one's desire to go to Kasukabe (R). In other words, external factors are not the reasons for a person's travel intention. Instead, they are carried out by the internal psychological processes mentioned above. This is in line with the SOR theory, that is to say, the effect of the environment on behaviour must first be assimilated by an individual. For example, a fan who has watched many Shinnchan videos online may not be in the mood to travel right away unless those videos give them a sense of happiness and familiarity with Kasukabe. Only then will the fan have the genuine wish to come and visit.

2.2. Important drivers of travel intention

Based on the SOR framework and a review of the literature, six main factors have been identified. Character attachment refers to how much a fan feels emotionally connected to or is fond of Shinnchan, his parents, his sister, and his friends at the kindergarten. Media exposure is the frequency with which a fan watches Shinnchan on television, YouTube, Instagram, TikTok, etc. Travel motivation refers to people's desire to visit the places in the anime in their daily lives, such as the streets and houses shown in the show. Emotional value is the feelings of happiness, peace, or longing that fans have upon thinking of Shinnchan. Psychological distance is the sense of familiarity or closeness Kasukabe feels towards the fan, even if the fan has never been to the city. Destination image is the mental picture that fans have of Kasukabe, and they consider it a cute, funny, friendly and welcoming city.

2.3. Predicted high travel intention behaviour

There are four main reasons why game players have a strong intention to travel. The same direction will be taken for Shinchon fans as well. The first way is the stimulus-driven path. This happens when the fan is very passionate about the character, has been exposed to a lot of media, and has a strong desire to travel. All of the above are reasons that make people want to go to Kasukabe. The second way is the path of emotions. In this case, emotions are the main factor and do not depend on other factors such as media. Even if a fan does not watch much media content, they will still want to visit Kasukabe if the anime makes them feel very happy or nostalgic. The third path is the psychological closeness path. It is because the fan has been familiar with Kasukabe for some time. Although the fan has never been to the place in person, they believe that it is already familiar to them from watching the anime repeatedly. The fourth way is an end-image path. It occurs when a fan has a very positive and clear image of Kasukabe in their mind. The fan thinks that Kasukabe is a good place to go and is like a real-life version of the anime.

2.4. Economic and tourism effects

The Shinchon IP has already brought many benefits to Kasukabe in various ways. Here are some examples. Every year, a large number of Shinchon fans visit Kasukabe and go to places such as the real-life Kasukabe City Hall and local shops that are similar to the scenes in the anime. As shown in the Japanese news reports, this trend has been expanding steadily in recent years. Shinchon statues can be found all over the city, and there are also Shinchon-themed trains and parks that fans can take pictures in. Local shops sell Shinchon souvenirs such as keychains, snacks and T-shirts, and some restaurants have food that looks like Shinchon's face. Kasukabe also has annual Shinchon events and festivals, and during the anime's anniversary, there are other special events, such as a Shinchon parade. Due to the increase in the number of tourists, hotels, restaurants and other local service enterprises have been built, and thus jobs have been created and more income has been generated for the city.

3. Discussion

Both the game IP of King of Glory and the anime IP of Crayon Shinchon have created an emotional bond with their audiences; when a character is loved, this love can be transferred to a particular place in real life through a process called emotional transfer, and this paper advocates for this view. However, the first difference between the two kinds of IP is time; a player may play a game for only a few months, but a dedicated Shinchon fan has been watching the anime for ten or twenty years.

Therefore, the emotional connection of anime fans can be deeper and longer-lasting, and this is suitable for a city because the fans will continue to visit for many years to come. Liu has talked about how Chinese villages can use IPs to promote their tourism, and Kasukabe is a typical case; before being featured in Shinchon, it was just a normal suburban area near Tokyo with few tourists, but now, as a result of the anime, it has become a special destination and shows that an IP can turn an ordinary rural or suburban area into a tourist spot [1].

Recently, new digital technologies have begun to be used in Japan to increase the participation of anime fans and link them with regional tourism resources via blockchain, as shown in [8]. The role of the local government is also very significant; therefore, Kasukabe City did not merely have the anime represent it passively, but actively set up statues, operated themed buses, organised events in cooperation with the anime production company, and online fan communities have also helped keep

the interest high by sharing photos and stories and encouraging other fans to visit. In recent years, SEM and fsQCA have been combined to study the intention of anime pilgrimage among various people, and related industry reports have also pointed out that anime tourism has achieved global popularity [9, 10].

4. Conclusion

The Impact of the Crayon Shinchan Anime IP on Fans' Desire to Visit Kasukabe was investigated in this paper. In line with the SOR theory, this paper will study the following six factors: character affinity, media exposure, travel motivation, emotional significance, psychological distance and destination image. It is hoped that no single reason will be the only reason for visiting. Fans of different types have followed various paths based on the different reasons that made them do so. Some are due to frequent exposure through the media; others have reasons for this out of emotion. Nevertheless, closeness to Shinchan and positive emotions about the anime are essential in all cases. This study has provided some reference for the literature on IP tourism. First, it applies SOR theory and fsQCA to an anime IP, not a game IP. Second, it takes a real city in Japan as an example instead of a general theoretical analysis. The above is how anime tourism works in reality. For other anime-related towns, the following recommendations are put forward: organise fan activities to gather fans, use social media to spread information and pictures, work with local enterprises to sell anime goods, and actively collect the opinions of visitors. It is recommended that Kasukabe continue the current work and, at the same time, better target foreign fans. Add more English-language signs and cooperate with travel agencies around the world. There are some deficiencies in this paper. It is unknown whether similar results will be obtained for other cities and anime, as only one city (Kasukabe) and one anime (Crayon Shinchan) have been studied so far. Most of the survey respondents are likely to be Japanese fans, and international fans may have different reasons for their visit, but the sample size may be too small to reflect this. In the future, other Anime Intellectual Properties such as Doraemon in Kawasaki, One Piece and Detective Conan could also be compared. Therefore, the comparison will offer more knowledge about anime tourism. Recently, SEM and fsQCA methods have been applied to study people's willingness to participate in anime pilgrimages; at the same time, many foreign publications have been released on the rise of anime tourism around the world.

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