

Chapter 74

Reducing Costs of Knowledge Transfer in Tourism Development Using Historical Materials

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ABSTRACT

Recently, discovering local resources and utilizing them have been underway for the purpose to revitalize regional economies. The authors have conducted some activities for regional activation using historical materials such as old documents and maps. For these activities historians play an important role to discover and utilize local resources from historical materials. The cost of transferring historians' knowledge about such resources to tour developers is high. In this study, a tour developer who is also a volunteer tour guide designed two tour courses featuring local historical material with the aid of a proposed information system. They clarify the role of the information system and the factors of reducing the costs of knowledge transfer in tourism development using historical materials from the view points of the sticky information.

INTRODUCTION

Mass tourism which began in the 1950s had a big economic effect, whereas it produced negative impacts such as destruction of nature in sight-seeing areas. Reflecting on these experiences, a

community started to develop environmentally-friendly tours to sustain its local area (Prentice, 1993; Tosun & Jenkins, 1996). In Japan, tourism development by a community using local resources such as nature and local history has been done in various regions. In such tourism development,

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advice and knowledge transfer from experts in a domain to tour course developers are important to utilize local resources. However, there are many issues because of stickiness of such information (von Hippel, 1994).

Some studies about knowledge transfer in organizations were done (Argote *et al.*, 2000). Organizations which are able to transfer knowledge effectively from one unit to another are more productive than organizations which are less adept at knowledge transfer (Argote *et al.*, 1990). Organizations can learn not only directly from their own experiences, but also indirectly from the experiences of other organizations (Levitt & March, 1998). In the field of tourism, studies about knowledge transfer in an individual company such as in lodging industry were reported (Shaw & Williams, 2009; Baggio & Cooperb, 2010). However, there are not enough studies about knowledge transfer among organizations. It is important to investigate the role of information systems for knowledge transfer from experts in a domain to tour course developers in tourism development. It is also important to discuss the costs of knowledge transfer using information systems.

In this study, we focus on the utilization of local historical materials for tourism. The role of an information system and the factors of reducing the costs of knowledge transfer of an historian to a tour course developer are discussed, citing the developed two tour courses by a volunteer tour guide using an information system.

In Research Background, a voluntary guide organization in Kanazawa city, Japan is briefly explained. A tour course developer in this study belongs to the organization. Research Background also discusses some issues about the utilization of historical materials for tourism. Outline of *KuKuRI* explains an outline of an information system called *KuKuRI* which was used to develop the tour courses. Development of Tour Course by Using *KuKuRI* describes a case of the development of the tour courses by using *KuKuRI* and its evaluation. The role of *KuKuRI* and the factors

of reducing the costs of knowledge transfer are clarified from the case. Finally, the conclusion and future subjects are suggested.

RESEARCH BACKGROUND

This section describes an outline of the voluntary tour guide organization in Kanazawa, Japan called *Maidosan*, and the historical material, entitled, *Umeda Diary*. Both are used in this study. Also described are the issues that *Maidosan* had with the utilization of historical materials.

Maidosan: Voluntary Tour Guide Organization

Maidosan was established in 1994. Its members studied twenty tourism subjects (30 hours) in a school for volunteers in Kanazawa before joining it. There are two hundred eighty members in *Maidosan*. It provides sightseeing voluntary guide services to advanced tourists' requests and has publicized regular tours.

There is no manual in the *Maidosan* organization, and each guide must decide on the contents of their explanations. Beginners therefore accompany senior guides to learn their know-how of guidance. The organization's aims are to introduce Kanazawa's interesting points of which is not listed in guide books, using Kanazawa's dialect and increase the fans of Kanazawa and also tourists who make repeated visits to Kanazawa. Guides of *Maidosan* are expected to discover local resources and show their attractive points to tourists in addition to serving as guides in major sightseeing spots. Discovering local resources is important to maintain the organization's activity. Visiting lecturers give lectures in regular meetings of *Maidosan*, and *Maidosan's* members who designed new tour courses conduct training tours four or five times a year. After the training tours, these tour courses are used as regular tours which discover some new spots.

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