

Section 2

REVISITING OVERTOURISM: THE CURRENT SITUATION AND COUNTERMEASURES IN KYOTO CITY

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Assuming that the number of foreign visitors to Japan will continue to increase after the post-Expo period, it comes down to the supply constraints of lodging facilities. Therefore, in Section 1, we examine the supply constraints of lodging facilities and the response of foreign brand hotels to them.

The rapid recovery of foreign visitors to Japan has rekindled the problem of overtourism, which was once considered a non-issue due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In Section 2, overtourism is reconsidered. Kyoto City is a representative case of overtourism in Japan and the world. Kyoto City is one of the world's and Japan's leading tourist destinations, with a high concentration of international visitors, and is the best case to address the policy of overtourism.¹⁾

In Subsection 2.1, we first use basic statistics to clarify the characteristics of tourism in Kyoto City. In Subsection 2.2, we review the literature on overtourism and discuss its characteristics in Kyoto City. Subsection 2.3 reviews the literature on overtourism and discusses its characteristics in Kyoto City. Finally, Subsection 2.4 discusses the concept of sustainable tourism in Kyoto, with a view to the post-Expo period.

1. Characteristics of Tourism Dynamics in Kyoto City: Focusing on Inbound Tourism

Figure 3-2-1 shows the change in the number of Japanese and foreign guests staying at the surveyed hotels in Kyoto from April 2014 to May 2022. The number of Japanese guests remained generally flat until the COVID-19 pandemic (December 2019), while the number of foreign guests showed a clear upward trend. The number of foreign guests continued to exceed the number of Japanese guests after 2019, but almost disappeared from 2020 to the first half of 2022 due to the strengthening of waterfront measures against the COVID-19 pandemic.

1) In 2023, the number of international overnight visitors to Kyoto Prefecture reached 3.9 million, with 3.8 million of these individuals staying in Kyoto City, representing 97.5% of the total.

With the relaxation of waterfront measures in October 2022, the number of foreign overnight guests showed a recovery trend and exceeded the number of Japanese overnight guests again in April 2023, reaching 590,000 overnight stays in May 2024.

Figure 3-2-2 illustrates the shift in the number of international visitors staying overnight by country and region from 2015 to 2023. In 2019, prior to

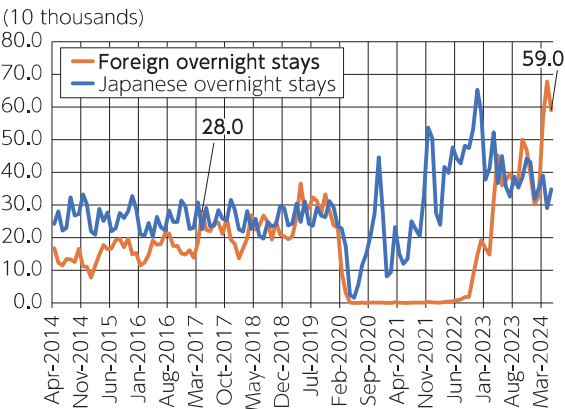


Figure 3-2-1

Changes in the number of overnight stays in Kyoto City: April 2014 to May 2024

Source: Prepared by the author based on "Kyoto City Tourism Association Monthly Date Report" by Kyoto City Tourism Association

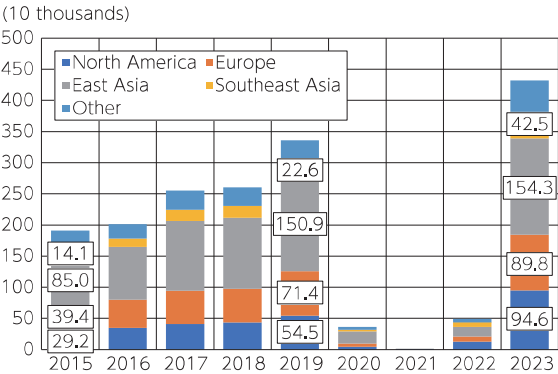


Figure 3-2-2

Changes in the number of foreign overnight stays in Kyoto City: 2014 to 2023

Source: Prepared by the author based on "Kyoto City Tourism Association Monthly Date Report" by Kyoto City Tourism Association

the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic, East Asia reached its zenith with 1.509 million guests, Europe 714,000, North America 545,000, and Southeast Asia 226,000. During this period, East Asia exhibited the most substantial growth (+659,000 compared to 2015).

In examining the data for the year 2023, it becomes evident that East Asia has experienced a near-equivalent level of overnight stays to that observed prior to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic²⁾. This is evidenced by the figure of 1,543,000 overnight stays. In comparison, North America has 946,000 overnight stays, Europe has 898,000 overnight stays, and Southeast Asia has 425,000 overnight stays. This represents a significant increase from the pre-COVID-19 pandemic levels.

The following section will examine the amount of tourism spending in Kyoto City based on the findings of the “Survey of Tourist Trends” (Figure 3-2-3).

Tourism consumption has exhibited a gradual upward trajectory since 2013, reaching the milestone of exceeding JPY 1 trillion in 2016. This achievement has surpassed the projected timeline set forth in Kyoto City’s tourism policy. Subsequently, tourism consumption exhibited a gradual upward trajectory, exceeding JPY 1 trillion until 2019. However, the advent of the COVID-19

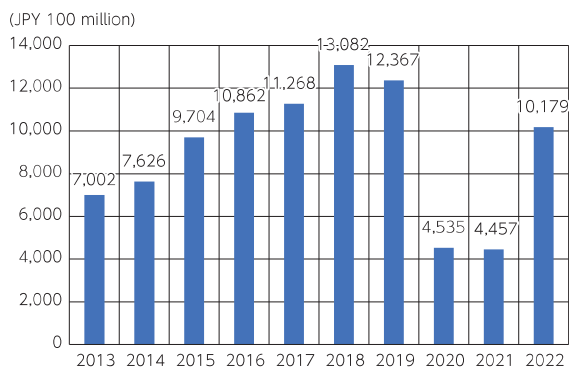


Figure 3-2-3

Changes in tourism spending in Kyoto City: April 2013 to May 2022

Notes: This survey was not conducted in 2020 and 2021 due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, and since it is an estimate by Kyoto City, a simple comparison with other years cannot be made.

Source: Prepared by the author based on “Kyoto Sightseeing Overall Research (2013- 2019)” and “Research Which Affects the Trends of the Tourist (2020- 2022)” by Kyoto City Industry and Tourism Bureau Tourism and MICE Promotion Office

2) The protracted recuperation of Chinese visitors has been identified as a contributing factor. For further details, please refer to Chapter 5, Section 1 of this document.

pandemic precipitated a notable decline in tourism consumption. In 2022, the amount exceeded JPY 1 trillion once again, due to an increase in the number of foreign visitors to Japan, in addition to measures implemented to stimulate domestic travel demand.

In order to confirm the dynamics of tourism consumption by foreign visitors to Japan, it is necessary to examine the sales of duty-free goods in Kyoto City. Figure 3-2-4 illustrates the total sales of the four department stores in Kyoto, as well as the proportion of duty-free sales relative to the total sales volume. Prior to the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic, the total sales of department stores reached a zenith of JPY 259.8 billion in December 2019. This surge was partly attributable to the influx of international visitors to Japan. Following a period of recuperation, the sales figures rebounded in the early autumn of 2020, reaching JPY 26.29 billion in December and JPY 22.46 billion in May 2024. This marked a significant recovery, exceeding the pre-COVID-19 peak.

Duty-free sales rate reached their highest point in April 2019 (13.5%) and has since remained at a level below 10%. In May 2012, the percentage was 26.3%, a level higher than that observed prior to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Based on APIR's estimates, the rate of duty-free sales constituted 22.9% of the total sales of department stores in the Kansai region in May 2024.

The exponential growth in the number of international tourists visiting Japan has resulted in a corresponding surge in tourism expenditure, which has

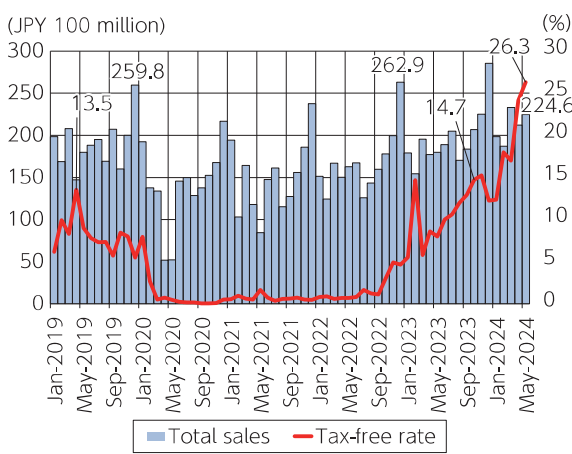


Figure 3-2-4 Changes in total sales and tax-free sales ratios for 4 department stores in Kyoto City: January 2019 to May 2024

Source: Prepared by the author based on "Kyoto City Tourism Association Monthly Date Report" by Kyoto City Tourism Association

played a pivotal role in the economic recovery of Kyoto³⁾. Conversely, instances of overtourism have emerged, resulting in adverse impacts on the daily lives of citizens.

2. Changes in Kyoto City's Tourism Policies: An Evaluation from the Perspective of Overtourism

Subsection 2.2 presents a summary of Kyoto City's tourism policies, delineating three distinct phases: (1) the emergence of overtourism, (2) the disappearance of travel demand due to the COVID-19 pandemic and new responses in the with-COVID-19 period, and (3) the rapid recovery of tourist numbers and the goal of sustainable tourism in Kyoto. We will then analyze how these measures are evaluated by the citizens of Kyoto.

Table 3-2-1 shows the evolution of Kyoto City's tourism plan from 2014 to foot 24.

The Kyoto Tourism Promotion Plan 2020, formulated in October 2014, is based on four fundamental pillars: (1) human resource development and city planning, (2) attraction enhancement and attraction methods, (3) communication of attractions, and (4) MICE strategy. The overarching objective is to disseminate the message that Kyoto is an international cultural tourism city, both within Japan and abroad.

Some of the indicators⁴⁾ targeted in this plan were achieved ahead of schedule in 2016. However, the issue of overtourism emerged as a significant challenge.

In order to address this issue, the Kyoto Tourism Promotion Plan 2020+1 (May 2018) was formulated. In May 2018, Kyoto City constituted a project team with the objective of implementing the plan, and released an interim report in November of the same year.

However, despite the initial resolution of the issue of overtourism with the

3) One of the factors contributing to the observed increase in tourism consumption through 2018 is likely to be inbound consumption by foreign visitors to Japan. Inada and Shimoda (2020) posit that inbound consumption in the Kansai region in 2019 will contribute to an increase of 2.54 percentage points to Kyoto Prefecture's GRP, a larger contribution than in other prefectures.

4) The objectives to be achieved by 2020 are as follows: (1) 1 trillion JPY in tourism spending, (2) 3 million foreign guests, (3) (4) Achieving 100% repeat visit intention (Japanese and foreign nationals), (5) (6) Achieving 100% introduction intention (Japanese) and (7) (8) Attaining 100% hospitality (Japanese and foreigners), (9) (10) Retaining the 35th position globally in the number of conventions held and maintaining the 1st position in the ratio of foreign participants in conventions in major Japanese cities.

Table 3-2-1

Changes in Kyoto City's tourism plan

year	Changes in the plan and the surrounding environment	Details of Initiatives
2014	Kyoto Tourism Promotion Plan 2020 Planning Period : Oct 2014~ Mar 2021	① Human resource development and community development ② Attractiveness enhancement and attraction methods ③ Communication and dissemination of attractiveness ④ MICE strategy
2015	3 million foreign overnight stays and 1 trillion yen in tourism spending is achieved → Occurrence of overtourism problem	Countermeasures against overtourism (1): (Table 3-2-2) ① Dispersed tourism ② Dealing with congestion, etiquette issues, etc. ③ Public transportation Organized into the above three categories
2016		
2017		
2018		
2019	Kyoto Tourism Promotion Plan 2020+1 Basic Policy and Specific Measures to realize a "Sustainable Tourism City that Places the Highest Priority on Harmony with Citizens' Daily Lives" (Interim guidelines)	(1) Harmonization and enrichment of citizen life and tourism (2) Refinement of Kyoto's "light" and improvement of the quality of tourism (3) Active role for the bearers of the tourism industry (4) Promotion of safe, secure and sustainable tourism that can cope with crises (5) Promotion of MICEM Countermeasures against overtourism (2): (Table 3-2-3) Countermeasures against overtourism (3): (Table 3-2-4)
2020	Spread of COVID-19	
2021	Kyoto Tourism Promotion Plan 2025 Planning Period : Apr 2021~Mar 2026	
2022	Mitigation of waterfront measures →Rapid recovery in the number of foreign visitors to Japan The government decided on a "package of measures to prevent and curb overtourism" (Oct 2023)	
2023		
2024		
	Kyoto City selected as a model region (Mar 2024)	

Source: Prepared by the author based on Kyoto City published materials

advent of the COVID-19 pandemic, a novel challenge to tourism has emerged. The Kyoto Tourism Promotion Plan 2025, formulated in March 2021, has the objective of enhancing the four pillars of the Kyoto Tourism Promotion Plan 2020, while also introducing a new pillar, namely the promotion of safe, secure, and sustainable tourism that can respond to crises. The specifics of the overtourism measures are outlined in Tables 3-2-2 to 3-2-4.

(1) Overtourism Manifestations (2018-19)

[Kyoto City's overtourism measures (1)]

Table 3-2-2 provides a summary of the overtourism initiatives that have been proposed in accordance with the "Kyoto Tourism Promotion Plan 2020+1" and the "Interim Report." In addition to the ongoing projects, it also includes new and strengthened projects.

(1) Distributed sightseeing: The issue of congestion was addressed through the promotion of excursions to neighboring areas, as exemplified by the "Totteoki-no-Kyoto" initiative. Additionally, the concept of time dispersion, or the practice of dividing sightseeing into morning and evening sessions, was introduced as a means of alleviating congestion.

Table 3-2-2

Measures to deal with overtourism caused by a sudden increase in the number of tourists: 2018-2019

Initiatives: Start Period		Overview and Purpose	
Dispersed tourism			
• Visualization of congestion status: Nov 2018	Utilizing big data to visualize congestion status (tourism comfort level) and publish it on the web	New	
• "Totteoki- no- Kyoto": 2018~	Promote excursion to the surrounding areas of Kyoto City (Fushimi, Yamashina, etc.) and revitalize the region	New	
• Promotion of morning and night tourism: 2019~	Creation of content that incorporates night culture and collaboration with shrines and temples	New	
Congestion, etiquette issues, etc.			
• Efforts to prevent tourist buses and other vehicles from staying on the road: Dec 2018, Feb 2019	Implementation of awareness-raising activities to avoid road congestion	New	
• Conducting etiquette education for foreign visitors to Japan	Published in an in-flight magazine of a major Chinese LCC	Expansion	
• Conducting etiquette education while traveling	Create educational stickers and multilingual awareness videos	Expansion	
Public transportation			
• Kyoto City bus "front-loading/rear-unloading system": Mar 2018~	Introduced to the sightseeing types to alleviate congestion during loading and unloading of the bus	New	
• Raising awareness of hands-free tourism	Reducing congestion due to luggage on buses and on the road	Keep	

Source: Prepared by the author based on "Kyoto Tourism Promotion Plan 2020+1(May 2018)" and "Basic Guidelines and Specific Measures for Achieving a "Sustainable Tourism City that Places the Highest Priority on Harmony with Citizens' Daily Lives" (Interim Report)(November 2019)" by Kyoto City

- (2) Congestion, manners, etc.: As the number of tourists increased, congestion caused by tourist buses and other vehicles remaining on the streets became a significant issue. In response to this issue, efforts were made to enhance awareness and encourage the utilization of parking facilities in the vicinity of tourist attractions. Furthermore, an initiative was undertaken to enhance the program aimed at fostering awareness among foreign visitors to Japan regarding appropriate conduct. This was implemented across a range of travel modes, including airplanes and limousine buses.
- (3) Public Transportation: A novel " front-loading/rear-unloading" system was implemented with the objective of alleviating congestion on the city bus sightseeing system. Furthermore, efforts were made to enhance awareness of the concept of "empty-handed" sightseeing.

[A survey of Kyoto citizens' perceptions of the city's tourism policies]

What do the citizens of Kyoto say about the city's tourism policies? Even without a direct review of tourism policies, the “Kyoto City Survey of Citizens' Perceptions of Life in Kyoto” offers a valuable reference point.

Let's examine the citizenry's evaluation of Kyoto by organizing the frequency of responses to the inquiry, “Kyoto is a high-quality tourist city for tourists,” in chronological order (Figure 3-2-5).

As a general trend, responses indicating agreement or partial agreement constituted 70% of the total. With regard to the individual items, the highest proportion of respondents who indicated their agreement was in 2016 (42.1%), after which there was a decline to 33.2% in 2019. The number of respondents who selected the option “somewhat disagree” has exhibited a slight yet consistent increase since 2013.

As has been previously observed, the year 2016 saw Kyoto City achieve its 2020 goals of 3 million foreign overnight visitors and JPY 1 trillion in tourism consumption ahead of schedule. Additionally, the issue of overtourism attracted considerable attention during this period. In addition, the preceding year saw a challenge to Kyoto's reputation as a “high-quality tourist city.”

We will now examine the results of the question “Kyoto is a tourist city

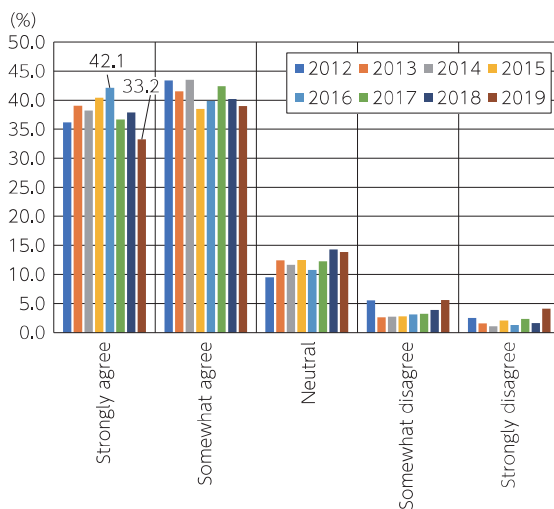


Figure 3-2-5

Rate of respondents for each item in response to the question “Kyoto is a high-quality tourist city for tourists”: 2012-2019

Source: Prepared by the author based on “Kyoto City Citizens' Livelihood Survey” by Kyoto City

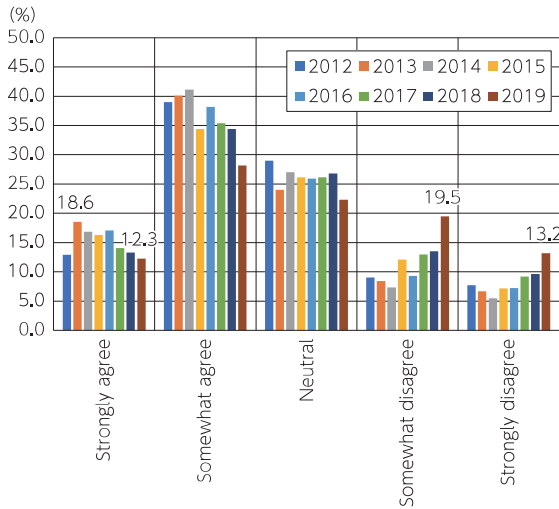


Figure 3-2-6

Rate of respondents for each item in response to the question "Kyoto is a tourist city that is easy for citizens to live in": 2012-2019

Source: Prepared by the author based on "Kyoto City Citizens' Livelihood Survey" by Kyoto City

that is easy for citizens to live in," which directly demonstrates the relationship between tourism policy and citizens' awareness (Figure 3-2-6).

As a general tendency, the proportion of respondents who indicated agreement, which was considerable in the initial inquiry, has diminished by over 20 percentage points. The highest level of agreement was observed in 2013, with a peak of 18.6%, and a subsequent decline to 12.3% in 2019. Conversely, the proportion of respondents who indicated "somewhat disagree" and "strongly disagree" increased gradually, reaching 19.5% and 13.2%, respectively, in 2019. This suggests that the influx of tourists in Kyoto has a detrimental impact on the quality of life of citizens. Consequently, it can be inferred that the measures taken to address overtourism have not resulted in enhanced satisfaction among Kyoto citizens.

(2) The Extinction of Travel Demand Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic and New Responses in the "With-COVID-19" Period (2020-22)

[Kyoto City's overtourism measures (2)]

Table 3-2-3 presents a synthesis of novel policies and initiatives within the with-COVID-19 period, along with an overview of strategies pertaining to overtourism. This is contextualized within the framework of the "Kyoto Tourism Promotion Plan 2025."

Table 3-2-3

New responses in a with-COVID-19 period and measures against overtourism: 2020- 2022

Initiatives: Start Period		Overview and Purpose	
Dispersed tourism			
• Visualization of congestion status	Installing live cameras at major tourist spots and distributing congestion status		Expansion
• "Totteoki- no- Kyoto"	Promoting decentralized tourism to avoid the three Cs (Closed spaces, Crowded places and Close-contact settings)		Keep
• Promotion of morning and night tourism			Keep
Congestion, etiquette issues, etc			
• "Kyoto Machiketto": Sep 2020	Guidelines for tourism behavior in response to the new lifestyle		New
• "Code of Conduct for Sustainable Tourism in Kyoto (Kyoto Guidelines for sustainable tourism)": Nov 2020	Promotion of tourism aimed at harmony with civic life and local culture		New
Public transportation			
• Kyoto City bus "front-loading/rear-unloading system"	Due to the deterioration of management due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the introduction to all types has been postponed		Keep
• Raising awareness of hands-free tourism			Keep

Source: Prepared by the author based on "Kyoto Tourism Promotion Plan 2025 (March 2021)" by Kyoto City

- (1) Distributed sightseeing: The project is ongoing and is currently being implemented by the with-COVID-19 period. In the project to visualize congestion, live cameras were installed at major tourist attractions and live congestion data was distributed (enhancement).
- (2) Congestion, manners, etc.: A new initiative, entitled "Kyoto Machiketto (Town + Etiquette)"⁵⁾ was created and disseminated in the travelers' area. Furthermore, a dedicated website for the "Kyoto Tourism Morals" initiative, recently established with the objective of promoting regional tourism, was launched, and awareness-raising efforts were undertaken.
- (3) Public Transportation: The implementation of the "front-loading/rear-unloading" system on all lines was postponed due to the adverse impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on business.

[A survey of Kyoto citizens' perceptions of the city's tourism policies]
 In order to ascertain the citizens' evaluation of the promotion of tourism in a post-COVID-19 period, it is necessary to consider the results of the statement, "Kyoto has achieved safe and secure tourism that can respond to various crises such as disasters and infectious diseases" (Figure 3-2-7).

In general, the proportion of respondents who "neutral" is the highest,

5) A compendium of etiquette for "Enjoying Kyoto, a new way of life."

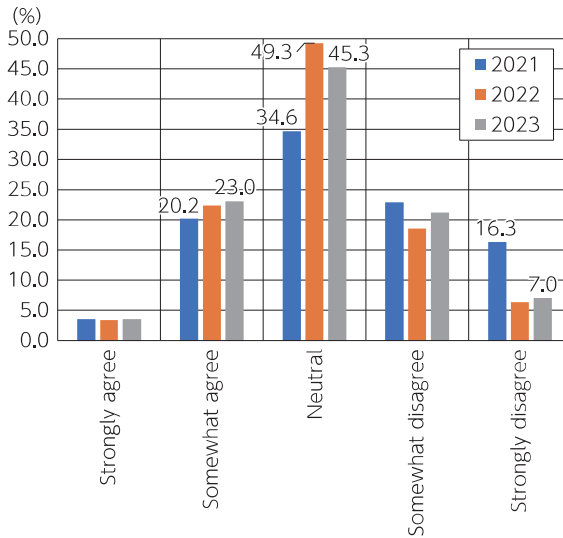


Figure 3-2-7

Rate of respondents for each item in response to the question "In Kyoto, safe and secure tourism that can respond to various crises such as disasters and infectious diseases has been achieved.": 2021-2023

Source: Prepared by the author based on "Kyoto City Citizens' Livelihood Survey" by Kyoto City

while the proportion who agree is the lowest.

A comparison of the data from 2021 and 2023 reveals an increase in the proportion of respondents who indicated "strongly agree" (from 20.2% to 23.0%) and "neutral" (from 34.6% to 45.3%). Conversely, the proportion of respondents who indicated disagreement decreased from 16.3% to 7.0%. These findings suggest that citizens have a clear understanding of the purpose and objectives of the Kyoto Tourism Promotion Plan 2025, as reflected in their assessment of its measures. However, the relatively low number of respondents who indicated agreement with the plan may demonstrate a need for further clarification or refinement of its objectives.

(3) Toward a Rapid Tourist Recovery and Sustainable Tourism in Kyoto (2023-24)

[Kyoto City's overtourism measures (3)]

Table 3-2-4 summarizes the efforts to realize sustainable tourism in Kyoto and overtourism measures, based on materials published by the Kyoto City Tourism Association.

- (1) Distributed tourism: In the congestion visualization project, efforts were made to enhance forecasting accuracy in anticipation of a recovery in

Table 3-2-4

Realizing sustainable tourism in Kyoto and countermeasures against overtourism: 2023- 2024

Initiatives: Start Period		Overview and Purpose	
Dispersed tourism			
• Visualization of congestion status	Utilizing big data from foreigners to improve prediction accuracy. Introduction of portable live cameras and distribution of congestion status at specific events		Expansion
• "Totteoki- no- Kyoto"			Keep
• Promotion of morning and night tourism			Keep
Congestion, etiquette issues, etc			
• Dissemination and enlightenment of "Kyoto Guidelines for sustainable tourism"			Keep
• Raising awareness through media for foreign tourists: Mar 2023	In preparation for the spring holiday season, we conducted awareness-raising activities at before traveling		Expansion
• Fact-finding survey of foreign language guide notation	Improving the quality of foreign language support in tourist stores and facilities		New
Public transportation			
• Introduction of "Sightseeing Express Bus": Jun 2024	Stopping only in major tourist spot areas. Verify contribution to congestion reduction in the future		New
• Raising awareness of hands-free tourism	Strengthen the dissemination of existing websites and enhance baggage storage services		Keep

Source: Prepared by the author based on Kyoto City published materials

tourism.

- (2) Congestion, manners, etc.: The awareness-raising campaign on manners for international visitors has been reinitiated with a view to its strengthening. A new initiative will be undertaken in 2024, namely a survey on foreign-language signage in stores, with the objective of improving the quality of services for foreign visitors.
- (3) Public Transportation: In order to mitigate the issue of overcrowding on city buses, a "sightseeing express bus" was introduced in June 2024, operating on a new fare system that allows it to stop only at the nearest bus stop to a sightseeing destination⁶⁾. The efficacy of this service as a measure against overtourism will be evaluated in the future.

[A survey of Kyoto citizens' perceptions of the city's tourism policies]
The Kyoto Tourism Promotion Plan 2025 states the objective of "Harmonization

6) The objective is to alleviate congestion by implementing a dual-pricing strategy.

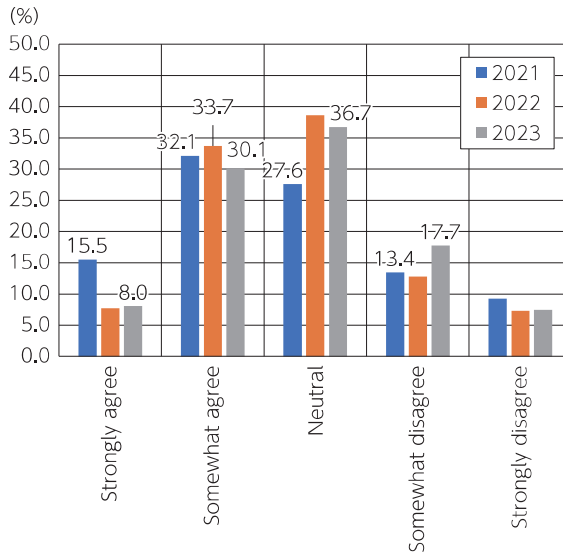


Figure 3-2-8

The rate of respondents for each item in response to the question "Tourism brings benefits to the local area, such as industrial promotion, job creation, the maintenance and improvement of culture and scenery, and the enhancement of public transport.": 2021-2023

Source: Prepared by the author based on "Kyoto City Citizens' Livelihood Survey" by Kyoto City

of Tourism with Citizens' Lives." The objective here is to ascertain the citizens' evaluations based on the results of the statement, "Tourism brings benefits to the region such as industrial development, employment expansion, maintenance and improvement of culture and landscape, and enhancement of public transportation" (Figure 3-2-8).

As an overall trend, more than half of the responses were classified as "somewhat agree" and "neither agree nor disagree," and the positive and negative evaluations were relatively minor.

A comparison of the results for 2021 and 2023 reveals a decrease in the proportion of respondents who indicated agreement (from 15.5% to 8.0%). Conversely, the proportion of respondents who indicated that the situation was "not so much" the case increased from 13.4% to 17.7%.

In light of these findings, it can be concluded that the anticipated outcomes of Kyoto City's implemented measures have not been fully achieved, partly due to the accelerated recovery in tourist numbers. It is important to note that Figure 3-2-8 does not reflect the effects of efforts made after 2024, as illustrated in Figure 3-2-4.

In the 2023 survey of citizens' attitudes toward tourism in Kyoto⁷⁾ conducted by the city, the action most desired to be taken was cited as “measures to prevent congestion on public transportation.” In the future, Kyoto City's top priority will be to implement concrete measures that will benefit its citizens in addition to the Code of Conduct.

3. Factors Contributing to Overtourism

(1) What Is Overtourism?

The term “overtourism” gained significant traction in the global media and academic literature between 2016 and 2017. In Japan, the term was first employed around 2006 (Japan Tourism Agency, 2018) and was subsequently identified as a social issue (Miyamoto, 2022). As documented by the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO⁸⁾), the term “overtourism” was first used by Skift in 2004 and subsequently trademarked by the company. However, the term “overtourism” is not decisively defined and is often defined and used differently in various academic and non-academic literature. However, in the general public consciousness, the term “overtourism” is understood to refer to a situation in which the presence of an excess number of tourists results in a set of negative consequences (Miyamoto, 2022).

The following definitions of overtourism are illustrative: the UNWTO, based on Skift's definition⁹⁾, defines overtourism as “the excessive negative impact of tourism on the quality of life of a tourist destination and its inhabitants.” In terms of the quality of the experience of visitors, the UNWTO (2018) defined it as “the negative impact of tourism on the quality of life of the inhabitants of a tourist destination or its inhabitants, and on the quality of experience of visitors.” In 2019, Kosaka defined overtourism as “the overuse of tourism resources in excess of the environmental carrying capacity of a tourist destination and the resulting problematic events.” Tanimoto and Tanimoto (2020) defined overtourism in both a broad and narrow sense (see Table 3-2-5).

In light of these definitions, our attention will be focused on Kyoto City, which is experiencing the most significant challenges associated with overtourism.

7) The survey is utilized as a foundation for the formulation of prospective tourism policies and for the monitoring of progress, functioning as an indicator for the Kyoto Tourism Promotion Plan 2025.

8) The abbreviation has been changed to “UN Tourism” as of January 2024.

9) The company defines overtourism as follows “Overtourism represents a potential hazard to popular destinations worldwide, as the dynamic forces that power tourism often inflict unavoidable negative consequences if not managed well.” (Ali (2016))

Table 3-2-5 Various definitions of overtourism

Source	Season	Definition (excerpt)
Skift	2016	Overtourism represents a potential hazard to popular destinations worldwide, as the dynamic forces that power tourism often inflict unavoidable negative consequences if not managed well.
World Tourism Organization (UNWTO)	2018	The undue negative impact of tourism on the quality of life of tourist attractions, the residents of those who live in them, and/or the quality of experience of visitors
Japan Tourism Agency	2018	Environmental conditions in which a significant increase in the number of visitors to a particular tourist destination causes an unacceptable negative impact on the lives of citizens, the natural environment, landscapes, etc., or significantly reduces the satisfaction of travelers
Kosaka	2019	Overuse of tourism resources that exceed the environmental capacity of tourist destinations and resulting problems
Tanimoto / Tanimoto	2020	Overtourism in the broad sense of the word In the wake of the rapid increase or excessive increase in the number of tourists, all phenomena and problems related to the sustainability of tourism are being highlighted"
		Overtourism in the narrow sense Negative phenomena related to the maintenance of the living environment of residents, the quality of tourism, and the decline in tourist satisfaction, etc.

Source: Prepared by the author based on Skift (2016) and others

(2) An Analysis of Overtourism in Kyoto City

In an effort to mitigate the adverse effects of overtourism¹⁰⁾, the government has resolved to prioritize the promotion of rural tourism in the upcoming year. Furthermore, 20 regions facing significant challenges due to overtourism have been designated as “pioneer model regions.” Furthermore, 20 regions with significant overtourism issues have been designated as “pioneer model regions,” and a forum has been established for local stakeholders to discuss and develop plans for targeted measures.

In regard to overtourism in Kyoto City, the issues most frequently addressed in academic literature and media discourse are “extreme crowding” and “bad manners” exhibited by tourists (Kosaka, 2019; Karavasilev, 2020; Miyamoto, 2022; Kosaka, 2024).

The phenomenon of extreme crowding by tourists is particularly evident in Kyoto City, manifesting in a multitude of locations, including bus terminals, public transportation, and roadways surrounding tourist attractions. This has had a deleterious effect on the general public, who are unable to utilize public

10) See “Package of Measures to Prevent and Curb Overtourism” published in October 2023 and Imaizumi (2024).

transportation and are unable to pass through on the roads. In contrast, the violation of manners manifests as the phenomenon of “maiko paparazzi,” whereby tourists obsessively follow “maiko” and “geiko,” or take pictures of their daily lives without consent.

Other significant issues include the escalating real estate prices in tourist regions due to the influx of tourists, and the challenges faced by local residents due to the proliferation of private accommodations.

This section will examine the problems of “extreme crowding” and “bad manners” by tourists from both the supply and demand sides of tourism, and elucidate the characteristics and countermeasures observed in Kyoto City.

The initial topic of discussion is the phenomenon of “extreme crowding” caused by tourists. From the perspective of demand, the congestion caused by the large number of tourists is compounded by the prevalence of group sightseeing and the tendency for tourists to carry large amounts of luggage (Karavasilev, 2020). From the perspective of supply, the concentration of accommodation, high reliance on public transportation, and the presence of characteristic streets all contribute to congestion. In comparison to radial streets, Kyoto’s unique grid pattern is more prone to congestion (Karavasilev, 2020).

The following section will examine the concept of “breach of manners.” The transition from the conventional practice of tourism targeting specific “sightseeing spots¹¹⁾” to a more holistic approach of transforming the entire city into a destination for visitors has given rise to concerns about its impact. Such issues as littering, photography in prohibited areas, and the presence of maiko paparazzi have been identified as problematic. These issues are shaped by the diverse cultural backgrounds of visitors to Japan and their varying interpretations of problematic behaviors (demand-side factors). It is incumbent upon tourism suppliers to assume responsibility and to proactively educate their customers on the importance of good manners. The absence of such measures can be considered a factor on the supply side.

The issue of overtourism is not a matter that can be readily resolved in a short period of time, as evidenced by the experience of Kyoto City. It is therefore essential to review current policies and their outcomes, and to implement solutions in a gradual and systematic manner¹²⁾.

11) See Choi (2023) for a discussion of “making the city a tourist destination.”

12) For comprehensive perspectives on overtourism in general, see Abe (2023), Abe (2024), and Tanaka (2024).

4. The Post-Expo Period and the Future of Tourism in Kyoto

In the FY2020 white paper (Chapter 5: Kansai and the Asia Pacific Economic Outlook and Inbound Strategy - Focusing on Post-COVID-19), it was indicated that four key areas require further attention for the development of effective inbound strategies: (1) the refinement of brand power, (2) innovation, (3) the enhancement of accessibility and reach, and (4) the prioritization of “safety, security and relief.” Additionally, he emphasized the significance of ensuring safety, security, and peace of mind.

In regard to the issue of overtourism, it is crucial to underscore the significance of innovation and the establishment of a comprehensive touring network across a vast region, as highlighted in the aforementioned perspectives. With regard to the former, the further application of AI and ICT technologies¹³⁾ is proposed as a means of eliminating congestion and facilitating wide-area tourism through the utilization of KANSAI MaaS. With regard to the latter, the crucial objective is to enhance the programs for sightseeing tours and wide-area sightseeing, which are integrated by the prefectural and city governments¹⁴⁾. These perspectives are of significant importance in the context of post-Expo 2025 and the future of tourism in Kyoto, and smooth wide-area tourism using KANSAI MaaS is considered. For the latter, the key point is to further refine the programs for sightseeing tours and wide-area sightseeing that are integrated by the prefectural and city governments. These are important perspectives on post-Expo 2025 and the future of tourism in Kyoto.

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13) The implementation of ICT will facilitate effective quantitative regulation.

14) The “Another Kyoto” project, which is being promoted by Kyoto Prefecture, serves as an illustrative case study. For further details, please refer to the research conducted by Inada, Koyama, and Nomura (2022).

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