

# Multi-language promotion under the increasing trend of inbound tourism development by initiating the collaboration between industry and academia

## —A case study of Wakkanai Noshappu Aquarium—

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### ●要約

日本においては観光立国を謳い、経済成長をけん引するとの考えから観光関連産業の成長を促す様々な施策がとられており、インバウンドへの対応も進められている。

稚内北星学園大学（以下、「本学」という）では、COCの採択を受け、地域を教育・研究のフィールドとすると同時に、教育・研究を通じて課題解決を図るべく、地域との連携が続けられている。

本研究のベースは、本学が持つ外国語教育及び研究のノウハウと外国人観光客の来館がみられる施設において外国語表記の整備が進んでいないという地域課題を結び付け、教育活動に活かすとともにその成果を地域に還元し、もって地域課題の解決を図る一連の活動を実践するための初歩的な検証を、稚内ノシャップ寒流水族館をフィールドとして試みようとする研究である。

本研究は、上記研究の一環として行われた「ワークショップ」「モニター・ツアー」「外国人来館者アンケート」から得た知見をまとめるとともに、成果物としての「多言語表記ガイドブック」制作の検討状況を報告する。

主な成果は次のとおりである。

- ① ワークショップ、モニター・ツアーによって水族館の魅力向上のための斬新な意見が抽出された。
- ② 外国人来館者アンケートにおいて、回答者全員から「外国語での説明が必要であると思う」との回答があり、多言語化の必要性が示唆された。
- ③ 学生による展示説明の翻訳、教員による翻訳精査ほか一連のプロセスを通じて、ガイドブックの制作は最終段階にあり、施設の改善の一助となることが見込まれている。

### ●キーワード

Inbound tourism development

Multiple language promotion

Academia and public collaboration

## **1 . Introduction**

### **1.1 Background of Japan's goal to become a tourism nation**

The cultural and natural landscape of Japan makes it a desirable destination for traveling. The number of inbound tourists reached over 10 million in 2014, which is over twice as much as it in 2003 (Japan Tourism Agency, 2015). The boom of tourism industry development benefits not only regional economy such as creating employment opportunity, it also helps to increase bilateral international understanding. Therefore, it is a key component of Japan in the 21st century and has grown in importance as one of the pillars of Japanese policy—Tourism Nation Promotion Basic Law. Besides, offices have been newly launched in order to encourage public and private sections to work together for pursuing tourism nation building.

Under such context, the satisfaction of the traveling experience is a critical indicator and as one way to ensure that, the program of improving and reinforcing multi-language support system was announced. It emphasized the importance of providing information in Chinese and Korean in tourist destinations such as museum, gallery, natural park as well as public transportation (Japan Tourism Agency, 2014).

### **1.2 Current tourism status of Hokkaido and Wakkanai City**

Hokkaido Prefecture, the northernmost mainland of Japan, has become a tourist attraction due to its abundant natural resources, fresh food material and appealing seasonal sceneries. In 2014, it attracted 53.1 million visitors. There into, foreign tourists take up nearly 3% and it keeps increasing rapidly. A large number of tourists coming from abroad such as Australia and other countries adds up to over 100,000 annually while Asian countries remain the main source of the increase of inbound tourism. Taiwan take the largest percentage which number doubled within 4 years, then followed by China, South Korea, Hong Kong and etc., (Bureau of Tourism, Department of Economic Affairs, 2014). It is well known that Hokkaido is desirable for nature appreciation and apart from that, dining, skiing and zoos/aquariums are also popular among tourists (Japan Travel Bureau, 2013).

Wakkanai, the northernmost city of Japan possesses very unique climate features and natural sceneries. Due to its special geographic location, it has a relatively easy access to Sakhalin of Russia. All these factors give Wakkanai an exclusive difference from the traditional Japanese culture. Although the annual number of tourists of Wakkanai fluctuates around 500,000, there is a instinct increase of inbound tourist, especially those from Asian countries which occupied over 70 percent of overall inbound tourists. Under such circumstance, promoting multiple language support system becomes one of the city's goal for ensnring tourists to have a easy access and understanding of the traveling information (Wakkanai City, 2015).

### **1.3 Wakkanai Noshappu Aquarium**

Noshappu Aquarium, located at western coast area of Wakkanai City next to the Noshappu Cape, which is the second most visiting place of Wakkanai after Soya Cape (Wakkanai City, 2015). The aquarium is the northern most and also the 100th aquarium in Japan which was built in 1968 in memory of 100th anniversary foundation of Hokkaido and the 20th anniversary foundation of Wakkanai City.

There are currently 120 species and 1,300 kinds of creatures being displayed in the aquarium and attracts over 30,000 tourist annually. Among them, foreign tourists are mainly from Russia and Taiwan while visitors from Russia are usually independent travelers and those from Taiwan are usually coming as group tour. In the year of 2015 alone, the number of group tour from Taiwan has reached 816 (Wakkanai Noshappu Aquarium, n.d). Although the Noshappu Aquarium is relatively small comparing to other famous aquarium, fish that only inhabit in the cold northern waters such as Bering wolffish, Sakhalin taimen shown in Figure 1, can be seen here in a panorama tank and the aquarium also providing very unique and interesting exhibitions for visitors to experience (Wakkanai Sight-seeing Association, 2015; Shima, Abe, Numajiri ((ed.) 2013). For instance, a touch pool show in Figure 2, was made all by staff that enables tourists to have a close look at sea creatures such as starfish, sea urchin, sea cucumber and etc. Meanwhile, many other cute fish, such as clownfish, which is also known as sea angel and balloon lumpfish can also be seen here. Besides, sea seal show performs regularly during summer and wintertime until early November and tourists are able to interacting with seals during the show.



Figure 1 : Bering wolffish (left) and Sakhalin taimen (right)

Source: Wakkanai Noshappu Aquarium, n.d.



Figure 2 : tourists trying the touch pool

Source: Wakkanai Noshappu Aquarium, n.d.

However, despite the effort mentioned above, there still lack of information and guide signs for visitors to enjoy, especially for foreign visitors. In terms of the use of aquarium facilities, sign of washroom is hard to find. While for interactive facilities, time schedule of seal show performance is not available, neither seal feeding service nor instruction for touch pool are available in even Japanese. The current condition makes it hard for visitors to fully enjoy.

#### **1.4 Study objective**

In order to provide a more hospital environment for foreign visitors and meanwhile enriching and raising visitors' experience and satisfaction towards aquarium tour, by making the best use of appointed linguistic professors in both English and Russian and international student coming from Russia, Nepal and China of the university, this study aims to:

1. re-recognize the appealing points of the aquarium from multiple point of views;
2. provide opportunities for student to enhance the ability of foreign language translation, material design and communication skill;
3. build up connections between aquarium and the university for the sake of facility improvement and furthermore, contributing to inbound tourism development of Wakkanai City

By making a full use of the teaching resource of the university, this study is expected to help strengthen the service function of tourism facility targets at foreign visitors. The study is considered as one step to prospering local tourism development.

## **2. Methodology**

### **2.1 Monitor tour**

A total of 3 monitor tours were formally arranged for discovering and appreciating the attraction of Noshappu Aquarium, both student and project members are welcome to join. During the first tour on May 16th 2015, a map that illustrated the structure of aquarium (seen in Appendix A) was given and participants are encouraged to take memo which will be sharing afterwards. The second tour was on June 13th and a workshop was hold after that. In addition, a monitor tour mainly targets at international student was also arranged on July 20th and six international students, including four Nepalese, one Chinese and Russian took part in. Unlike the previous monitor tours, this tour focused at viewing the Aquarium from the foreigners' perspective and different viewpoint are expected.

### **2.2 Workshop**

The workshop in titled of "See Aquarium from a new perspective—the ' uniqueness' , ' issue' and ' multi-lingual' " was hold. There were 19 participants including student, teacher and the aquarium staff. A mini lecture was delivered by Lecturer Fujisaki before the workshop in order to have a better understanding of the current condition of inbound tourism. The workshop was conducted by firstly, participants taking a self-guided

tour while taking notes and then explain their thoughts about whatever they noticed during the tour. A large size paperboard of the aquarium map was used so that points that participants had taken down can be clearly illustrated. In the end, the aquarium staff gave a brief summary about the workshop and future expectation and effort towards the aquarium improvement was pictured.

### 2.3 Framework of questionnaire

The questionnaire was designed mainly to get a brief understanding of the visitors' perspective towards the aquarium. It was distributed to foreign tourists and is available in Chinese (both simplified and traditional style), English and Russian. Figure 3 shows the outline of the questionnaire. Questions that requiring their satisfaction level about the tour and their altitude towards the promotion of multi-language regards to the exhibition information were asked which considered helpful for figuring out the actual needs. Students are responsible for questionnaire translation, data collection and analyze.

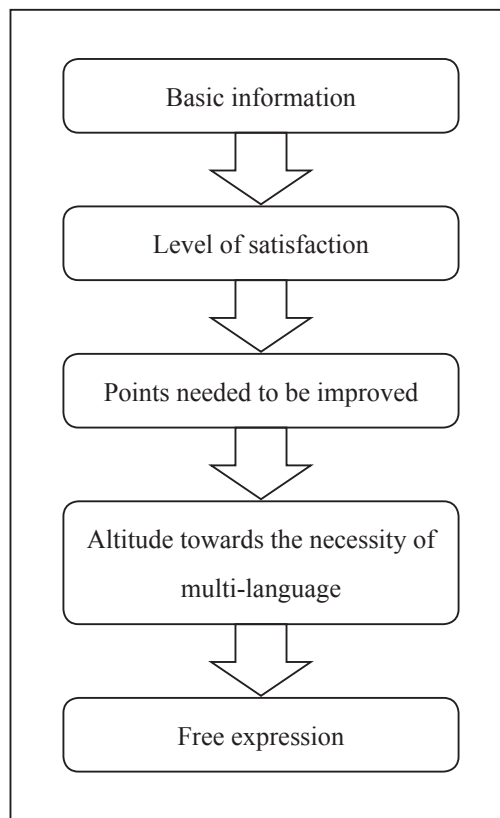


Figure 3 : The design of questionnaire outline

## 2.4 Guidebook design

Based on the opinions be given in the workshop, language was considered as one of the main barrier that hampering foreign tourists to enjoy the aquarium. Suggestions about providing guidebook in foreign language, especially in English and Russian was brought to table and after being discussed thoughtfully, the proposal was approved.

## 3. Results

### 3.1 The outcome of monitor tour and workshop

Through monitor tours, opinions about the uniqueness of the aquarium and points, which need to be improved are collected. It was found that information in general, is insufficient, especially for interactive activities, which makes it hard for tourist to enjoy. There are many other points been noticed during the workshop while only the most mentioned points will be discussed here:

#### ◆ Field Exhibition :

1. Penguin exhibition and seal show: the necessity of providing time schedule for both penguin and seal show is mentioned, and how the information should be provided is also been noted;
2. Feeding corner: information about how to feed the seal is need. In addition, it will be more enjoyable if there are any other animals visitors are allow to feed.

#### ◆ 1<sup>st</sup> floor

1. Light was too dark to read, especially at the panorama tank;
2. More detail about the balloon lumpfish is expected, such as pictures taken at different stages of its growth.
3. Effort in improving exhibits presentation through making the best usage of the current species. For instance, in order to increasing the interaction between visitors and exhibits, small species can be presented in a way by asking visitors to looking for. And for the exhibit of octopus, its spawning process is worth to be introduced.

#### ◆ 2<sup>nd</sup> floor

1. The design of the display was unified and light in general, was too dark to read;
2. Information about the exhibitions is insufficient. For instance, only species distribution was available for some exhibits. Providing more interactive activity will be more attractive. Such as proving quiz that enable children to participate;
3. Doctor fish: poor explanation (even in Japanese) makes it hard to fully participate. Signs and descriptions about how to enjoy is needed;
4. Staff is wanted which help to strengthen the hospitability of the aquarium.

#### ◆ Others

1. By collaborating with canteens just outside of the aquarium as one approach to establish a theme aquarium such as “Tasty Aquarium” ;
2. Staff, is wanted for providing visitor-friendly environment.

Apart from points mentioned above, suggestions such as utilization of original handwritten design, flexible use of concept like tasty aquarium (introducing recipe, different ways of eating) and etc. are also been mentioned. The full version is available in Appendix A.

Regards to the result of international student monitor tour, points that been mentioned in the previous workshop such as poor light and availability of staff were found. In addition, combined the concept of fishery history of Wakkanai to the aquarium was suggested by one student, as Wakkanai City has a long history in fishery industry. In terms of the light issue, idea that by painting the wall using fluorescent dye could on one hand, be ingenious for visitors and meanwhile make a good use of the darkness. Besides, necessity of provide multiple language was brought up frequently.

### 3.2 Result of questionnaire

#### 3.2.1 Data collection

There are a total of 21 respondents of the questionnaire and Figure 4 shows the distributions of the respondents. Among them, 5 (24%) are from Russia, 1 (5%) from France, 3 (14%) from China (mainland) and the rest 12 (57%) from Taiwan. In addition, tour type was also asked, which can be seen in Figure 5. No significant differences in the number of tour type was found. A total of 10 (48%) respondents considered themselves as group tour and 11 (52%) are individual tour.

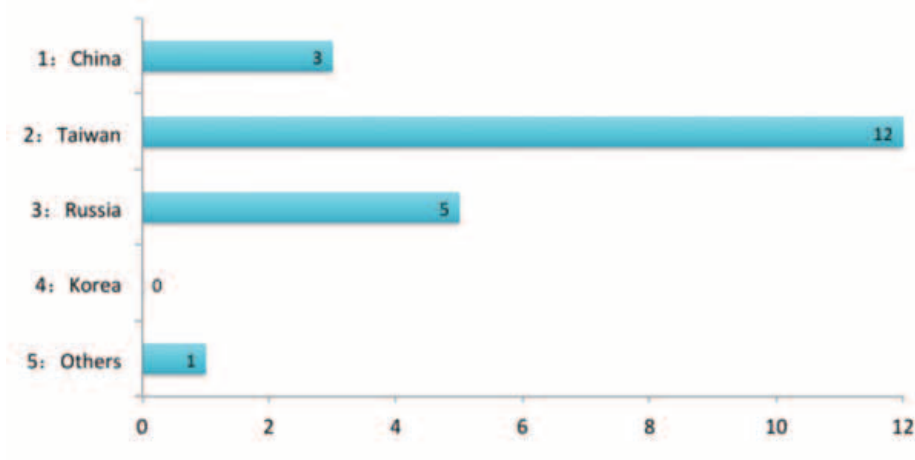


Figure 4 : Numbers of inbound tourists

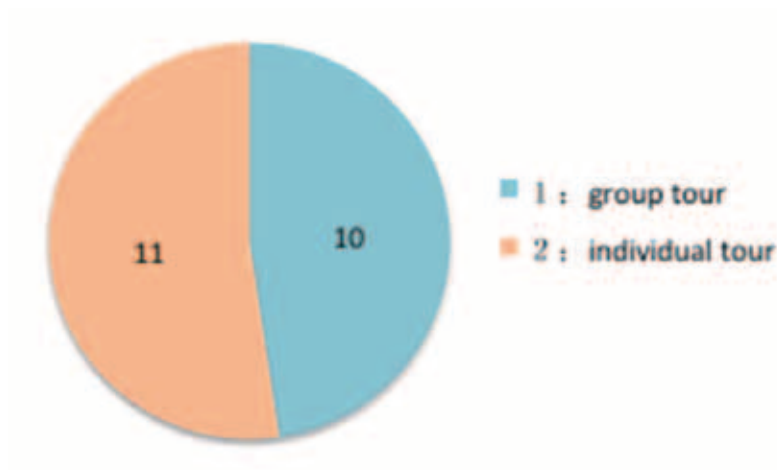


Figure 5 : Type of tour

### 3.2.2 Demographics

Basic demographic questions including gender and age were asked to the respondents. Additionally, level of their satisfaction towards the aquarium and the necessity of multi-language were also inquired. Out of 21 responses, 18 answers of gender were valid, among which, 10 (56%) were male and 8 were (44%) female (Figure 6). The age group of respondents shows in Figure 7, it can be seen that most of the respondents (70%) are from age 30's to 50's.

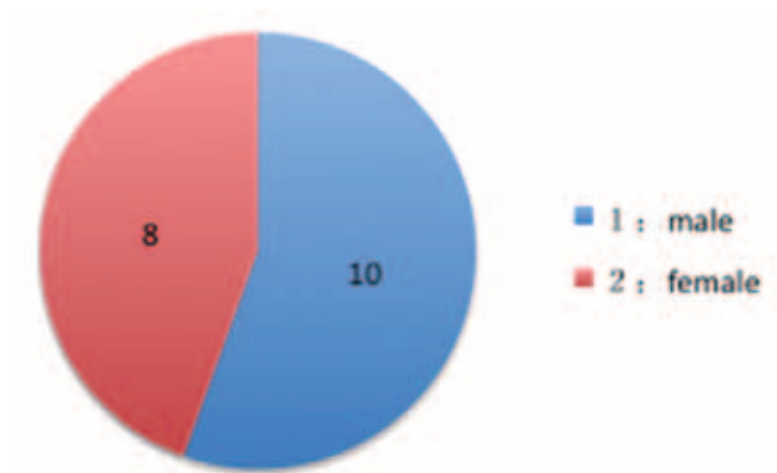


Figure 6 : Gender of respondents



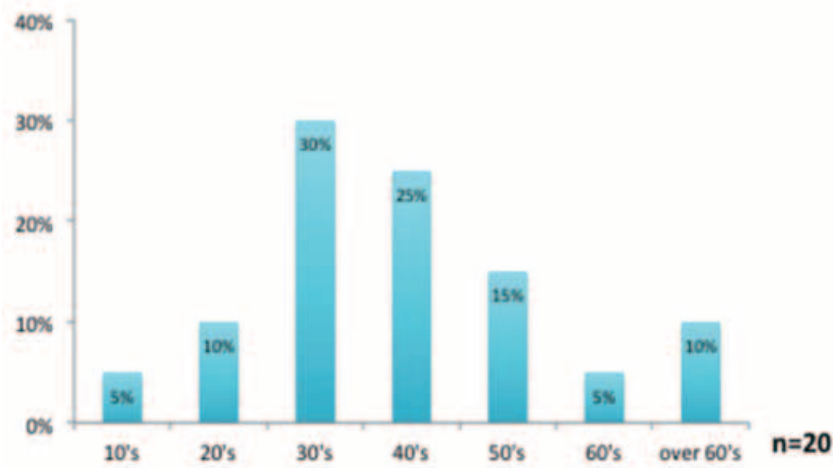


Figure 7 : Age group of the respondents

### 3.2.3 Level of satisfaction and the necessity of multi-language promotion

In terms of visitors' level of satisfaction, most of the visitors (67%) stated that they were satisfied with aquarium, especially visitors from Asian countries. As shown in Figure 8, 71% of the evaluation of "very satisfied" was given by visitors from Taiwan and China, In the category of "satisfied", 83% were from China and the rest were from Russia. Only one visitor from France gave the answer of "unsatisfied" due to limited space for marine mammals. The evaluation of "very unsatisfied" was not found during this investigation.

Figure 9 shows the necessity of multi-language promotion, 71% of the respondents considered it as "very necessary" and 29% considered it as "necessary". Among the visitors who considered "very necessary", 60% were from Taiwan, China takes up 20% and the rest were from Russian and France, which constitute 13% and 7% respectively. Respondents who considered it as "necessary" were all from Taiwan or China and it is evenly divided into fifty-fifty.

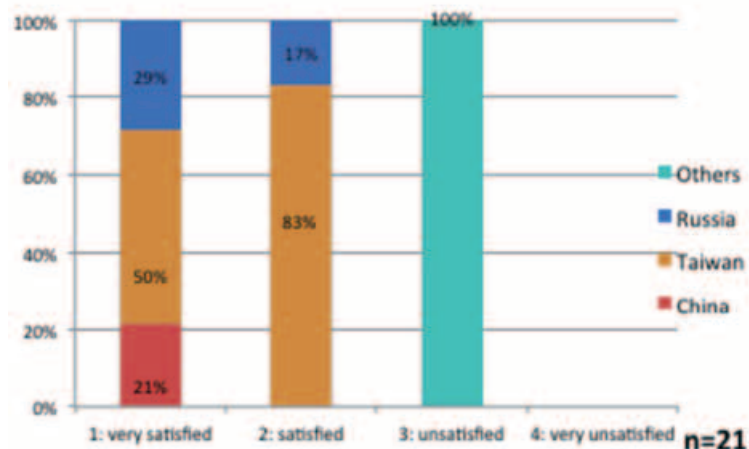


Figure 8 : Satisfaction level of aquarium tour from visitors of different nationality

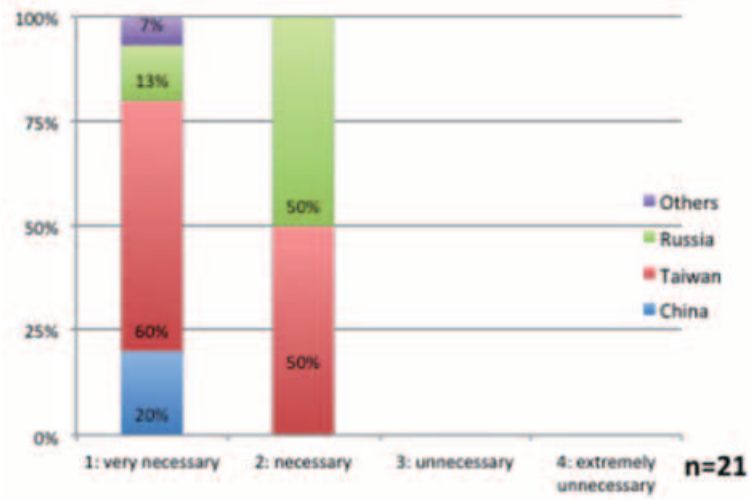


Figure 9 : Necessity of multi-language promotion from different nationality

### 3.2.4 Comment regards to aquarium

Comments are show in Table 1. It is categorized into three types, namely favorable point, unsatisfied point, suggestions and recommendations.

	Content	Nationality	Age
<b>favorable Points</b>	Sea seal show	Taiwan	50's
	Everything	Russian	50's
	The around shaped aquarium	French	40's
	The exhibitions are arranged in order	Taiwan	30's
	Interactive activities were great	Taiwan	30's
	The exhibitions are arranged in order	Taiwan	30's
	It is attractive that sea seal can be feed by tourist and it was very interesting	Taiwan	40's
	The exhibitions are very educative	Taiwan	60's
<b>unsatisfied Points</b>	It is dangerous to walk inside the aquarium due to the wet floor	Taiwan	50's
	There is not enough space for marine mammals	French	40's
	The aquarium is quite small and there was no penguin performance	Chinese	20's
<b>suggestions and Recommendations</b>	It will be better if the exhibitions introduction is available in foreign language	Chinese	30's
	It will be more interesting if more small animals are provided	Chinese	30's
	It is referred the fish name is available in Chinese, especially the type of traditional Chinese	Taiwan	40's
	More decoration can help to emphasize the origin of the exhibitions	Taiwan	20's
	It will be more enjoyable if Clione is introduced by video	Taiwan	60's
	It will be better of the lighting was brighter	Taiwan	50's

Table 1 : Comment regards to the aquarium

### 3.3 Guidebook Design and Translation

A 30 pages guidebook (two-sided) was completed. It was made by first deciding the content written in Japanese and then translated into English and Russian respectively. Students are responsible for the guidebook design and translation.

It took 6 students about 2 months to accomplish the translation work. The content included the information related to animals' ecological characters such as the size, color, distribution and etc. Due to time limitation, suggestion about giving the recipe about some eatable species was not introduced in the guidebook. On the other hand, guidebook managed to emphasize the interactive exhibitions such as field exhibition session, touch pool, doctor fish and electric eel. Touch pool for instance (Figure 10), a full view of the pool is taken so that it can be easily found. The description of the creatures is given in detail and besides, the location of hand washing sink is be clearly presented for visitors' convenience. Due to lack of instruction, previous doctor fish session was hard to enjoy, while the guidebook by using pictures instead of word, manage to illustrate in a clear and easy



Figure 10 : Description for touch pool in English (left) and Russian (right) respectively.

way.

In addition, in order to heighten the hospitality, handwriting style is applied in guidebook design. An original sketch of the aquarium was used as the cover sheet of the guidebook (Figure 11). What's more, original animal illustrates such as penguin, octopus and etc., are designed as page marker by students.



Figure 11 : The cover sheet of guidebook

## **4. Discussion**

The result of the questionnaire demonstrated that most of the respondents think guidebook available in foreign language could contribute to an easy and pleasant experience. However, during an inspection of Noboribetsu Marine Park, except only few guidance signs are available in multi-language such as English, Chinese and Korean, most of the descriptions of exhibitions per se, are only available in Japanese. According to a simple inquiry survey of a staff regards to the multi-language promotion of the Marine Park, it was known that the English description was the first foreign language been applied, the popularization of Chinese and Korean was due to the rapid increasing amount of tourist from Asian countries during the recent 3 years and it was only available in some popular zones. Although the description was not easy for tourists who do not understand Japanese, the exhibitions per se, are very interesting to watch and some of the species are also eatable in the restaurant and souvenir shop. Thereby, by simply promoting multi-language is not enough, the effort of providing original information and attractive way to present exhibition are also necessary to heighten aquarium attraction for tourism development in a long-term. However, due to limited time, this study only managed to complete the guidebook in two foreign languages, regards to the effort in exhibition style, it requires further study in the future if possible.

## **5. Conclusion**

### **5.1 Project Outcome**

By arranging monitor tour and distributing questionnaire to foreign visitors, the study managed to re-recognize the attraction points of aquarium from a new perspective. During the workshop, scattered display design, poor light, insufficient information for animal show as well as the exhibits were pointed out. Based upon such context, guidebook was designed in Russian and English. Not only the exhibits are described in detail, information about interactive sessions is also well-informed which help to enhance the hospitality of aquarium overall. Moreover, the workshop hold between students, teachers and aquarium staff formed a communication bridge that connecting aquarium and university for the very first time. By means of discussion and exchange information and opinions, the workshop considered as one approach to promote regional development by bounding local public facility and educational institution.

### **5.2 Educational Significance**

In the meantime, the process of guidebook design, translation and the preparation and participation of workshop was a great opportunity for student to train communication skill and linguistic learning. As the contents of translation mainly concentrate at marine animals, especially the ecological characteristics of fish, which is not familiar in everyday life and for this reason, skills of information collecting and processing is required for students who are responsible for guidebook translation. Besides, during the workshop, students need to state their own opinion towards the aquarium in a simple and clear way. Therefore, it was also a unique chance to learn how to lead a well-balanced participatory activity.





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## ● Abstract

Due to the booming development of inbound tourism accompanied by Japan's goal of developing into a tourism nation, the growth of tourism industry has become a key component of Japan. Therefore, effort of improving tourists' satisfaction of their travel experience has become a priority task. This study, based on Noshappu Aquarium of Wakkanai City, aims to providing a foreign tourist-friendly environment by making the best use of the resource of the university. It is considered to contribute to local tourism development. The study managed to arrange 3 monitor tours targeted at both domestic and international students, and guidebook, available in two foreign languages was completed. Besides, questionnaire regards to visitors' satisfaction level and their attitude towards promoting multi-language guidance of the aquarium was distributed. As a result, in terms of the outcome of monitor tours and workshop, various ideas were brought up for the sake of heightening aquarium's attraction and as a consequence, the connection between university and local tourism industry was able to be built up. Regards to the result of questionnaire, there were 21 respondents and there into, over half of them (57%) are from Taiwan and the rest are from Russia (24%), China (14%) and France (5%). Only 18 responses of gender were valid, female accounts for 44% and male takes up 56%. The percentage of individual tour and group tour is almost evenly distributed, which are 52% and 48% respectively. Among the 20 effective responses of age group, most of them (70%) are from middle age between 30's and 50's. Out of 21 responses of satisfaction, 20 of them (95%) stated that they are "very satisfied" or "satisfied" with the aquarium while only 1 (5%) marked "unsatisfied" due to lack of space for baby sea seals. When comes to the necessity of multi-language promotion, all 21 respondents considered it is "very necessary" or "necessary" to provide description in foreign languages. In addition, some particular language style was mentioned as 1 respondent stated it is favorable if the fish name was available in traditional Chinese. The interactive activities



such as sea seal show and feeding service are the most favorable points about the aquarium while poor light and slippery floor concerns visitors and negatively affect level of satisfaction. Outcome, including workshop, guidebook and result of questionnaire will be given back to aquarium in the end for the sake of further facility improvement.

