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LET'S VACATION IN JAPAN! A STUDY OF INDONESIAN IMAGES OF JAPAN THROUGH TOURISM

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Abstract

The number of outbound Indonesian travelers is rapidly increasing, especially in travel to long-haul destinations. For these travelers, Japan is considered a favorite and trendy destination. This is due not only to Indonesia's own push factors like its stable economy, but also structural changes in Japan. In 2011, the total number of foreign travelers to Japan dropped sharply after the horrible news of an earthquake and tsunami in the Tohoku area and the serious atomic power plant accident that followed in Fukushima. After these catastrophic disasters, the Japanese government intensely promoted inbound tourism to recover its damaged economy; this included waving visa requirements for short-term stays for visitors from countries like Indonesia, the Philippines, and Vietnam. The Japan Tourism Agency and the Japan National Tourism Organization, as well as travel agents and aviation companies, are important actors in promoting inbound tourism to Japan. As a result, compared with 2011, the number of Indonesian travelers in 2017 increased by approximately 5.7 times. Along with travelers' personal decisions, the roles of government bodies and private companies are very important for understanding the recent tourism dynamics. Travelers do not always need a correct and holistic understanding of the culture, but something "authentic," "unique," or "exotic" for them to share with friends and family. This paper also shows how Indonesian travelers to Japan

reflectively reconstruct and disseminate stereotypical images of the country through various channels including video sharing services like YouTube, or social network services like Instagram and Facebook. Although biased and limited, the accumulation and dissemination of Indonesians' personal experiences are now changing their images of Japan from monotonous to empirical and concrete.

Keywords

Outbound/Inbound Tourism, Promotion Activities, Social Network Services

1. Introduction

In recent years, the number of outbound Indonesian travelers has increased rapidly, with a greater tendency for them to travel to long-haul destinations (see figure 1). Thanks to Indonesia's stable economic development, long-haul tours have become affordable for ordinary Indonesians, too. Cheaper flights due to the success of low-cost carriers such as Air Asia and Cathay Pacific are other important push factors.

Japan is currently among the favorite and trendiest destinations for Indonesian travelers. Many ordinary Indonesians, even children, have recently visited Japan and personally experienced the country's look and feel. For them, Mt. Fuji is no longer an imaginary symbol of Japan, but an actual place they have visited. Indonesian travelers will try "authentic" sushi, sashimi, or see something "exotic," such as a ninja show or a robot restaurant. Along the way, what was once mentioned only in a narrative on Japan becomes the subject of personal experiences.

In addition to Indonesia's push factors for outbound tourism, this travel trend is due to structural changes to Japan's tourism environments. Since 2003, the Japan Tourism Agency (JTA) and the Japan National Tourism Organization (JNTO) have worked globally as important actors in promoting inbound tourism to Japan¹. However, in 2011, the total number of foreign travelers to Japan dropped sharply to 6,218,752 (-27.8% year on year) due to the catastrophic news of the earthquake and tsunami in the Tohoku area, and the serious nuclear power plant accident that followed in Fukushima. The Japanese government began to intensely promote inbound tourism to recover its damaged economy. For travelers from Southeast Asian countries

¹ In 2003, the Japanese government launched the "Visit Japan" project to stimulate inbound tourism to Japan.

such as Indonesia, the Philippines, and Vietnam, visa requirements have been simplified for short-term stays.

Thanks to the intensive tourism promotion activities and simplified visa procedures, the number of Indonesian travelers to Japan has increased by 5.7 times since 2011: 61,911 (in 2011) to 352,330 (in 2017), and was still increasing in 2018 (see Figure 2). Around one million people have traveled in Japan for leisure since 2011, and the main purpose of Indonesian travelers is leisure (82.7%, 2017).

In this paper, after viewing the general trends in outbound Indonesian tourism, the author focused on trends in outbound Indonesian tourism to Japan by considering the professional efforts of Japanese actors, such as governmental bodies and tourism companies.

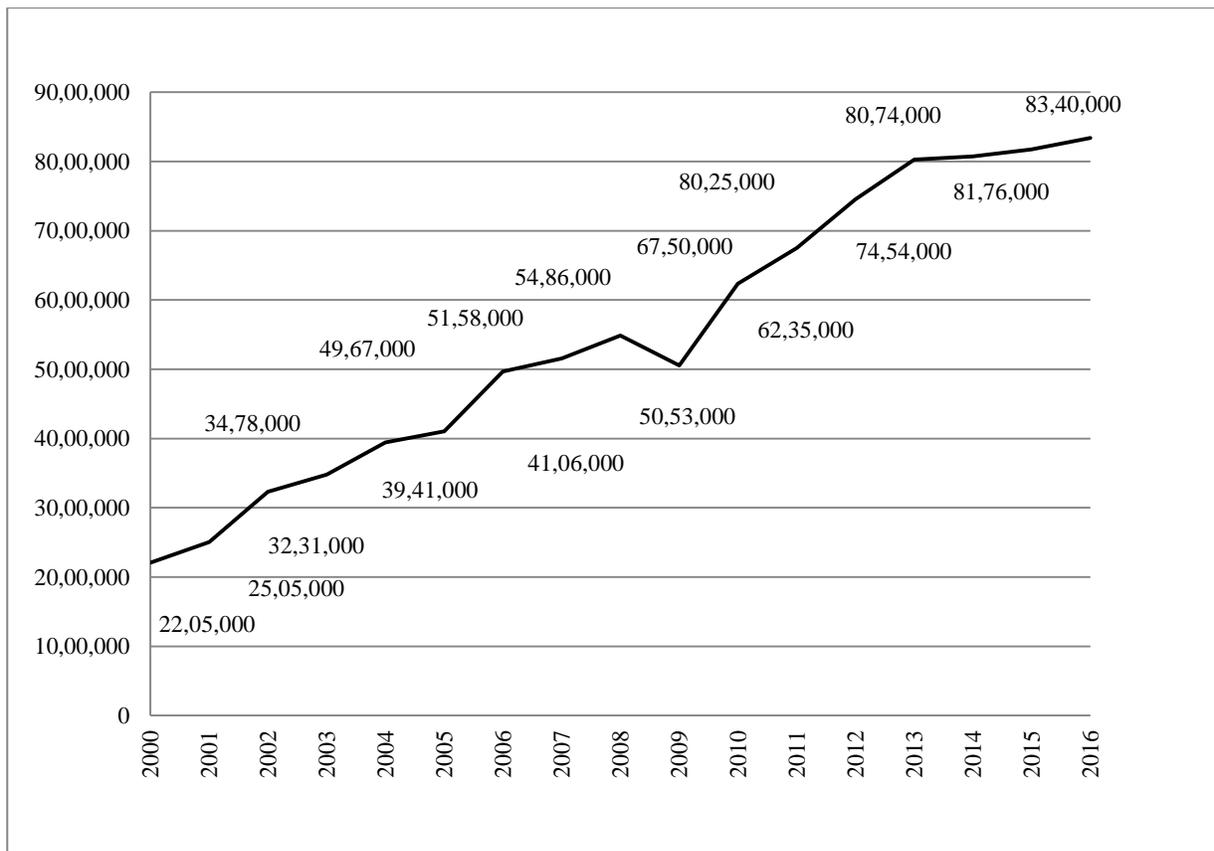


Figure 1: Number of Indonesian Outbound Tourists
Source: Country Data of World Bank 2019

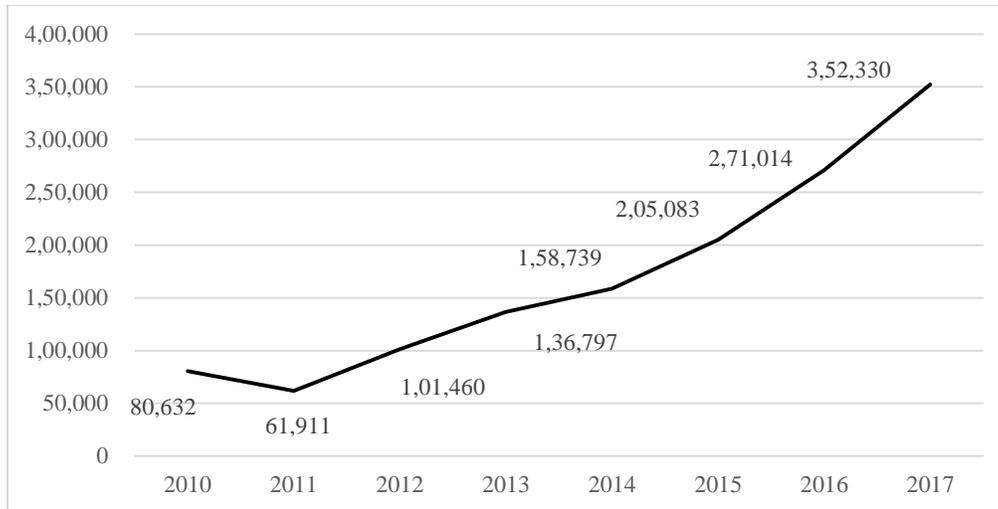


Figure 2: Number of Indonesian Tourists to Japan

Source: Statistics of Foreign Visitors by Japan National Tourism Organization

2. General Background on Outbound Indonesian Tourism to Japan

2.1 Indonesian Outbound Travelers in General

For Indonesians, the main reason for traveling abroad is for work. Indonesia is the second largest country in sending manual laborers to foreign countries. Pilgrimages to Mecca are also important reasons for traveling abroad, as Indonesia has the largest Muslim population in the world. While the total number of travelers for the major pilgrimage (*haji*) during the pilgrimage month is strictly controlled by Saudi Arabia, the host country, minor pilgrimages (*umroh*) during other periods are easier to obtain, and various special packages bundled with other leisure destinations are offered by travel agents for these pilgrimages.

Along with these pilgrimages, the number of Indonesian leisure travelers is also rapidly increasing. The major destinations for leisure trips are still Singapore and Malaysia, where one can even visit on a day trip by ferry, without a short-stay visa. Hong Kong is also a popular destination for city tours, theme parks, and shopping. Conversely, Taiwan is not their favorite destination for leisure. Although the number of travelers to Taiwan increased by 46.6% in 2017², the total number of travelers is still small, and their main purpose for visiting is business.

² This is partly the result of the New Southbound policy introduced by President Tsai Ing-wen in 2016.

Table 1: Number of Outbound Indonesian Tourists

Country	2016	2017	increase/decrease (year on year)
Singapore	2,893,627	2,954,400	2.1%
Malaysia	3,049,964	2,796,570	-8.3%
Japan	218,373	291,532	33.5%
South Korea	139,486	146,190	4.8%
Hong Kong	464,406	482,022	3.8%
Taiwan	32,868	48,186	46.6%

Note: Based on tourism statistics published by each national tourism organization

Statistics on Foreign Visitors by Hong Kong Tourism Organization.

Statistics on Foreign Visitors by Japan National Tourism Organization.

Statistics on Foreign Visitors by Korean Tourism Organization.

Statistics on Foreign Visitors by Singapore Tourism Board.

Statistics on Foreign Visitors by the Government of Taiwan.

Singapore welcomes nearly 3 million Indonesian travelers in recent years. As per the market report by the Singapore Tourism Board (STB), in 2012, almost 30% of Indonesian travelers were leisure travelers who want to enjoy Singapore's clean and modern urban areas, shopping, and theme parks (Singapore Tourism Board 2014). Based on STB's statistics on foreign travel arrivals, the total number of Indonesian travelers to Singapore was more than 2.95 million in 2017.

For travelers in general, limited budgets and holiday periods are the main restrictions in selecting one's destination. One's hobby or curiosity about something unique and authentic like historical architectures and breathtaking landscapes are also strong factors that influence destination selection. But outside of these factors, what is the important factor for Indonesian travelers when deciding on destinations and where to go abroad?

As per the STB report, "Indonesians rely heavily on recommendations from their friends and family, and the social media is a method to amplify the reach of the community" (Singapore

Tourism Bureau 2014: 8). For researchers of Indonesian society and readers who are familiar with Indonesian daily life, the report's findings may be easy to understand because this practice is also true in various decision-making processes for Indonesians, as well as for leisure travelers to Japan.

2.2 Indonesian Leisure Travelers to Japan

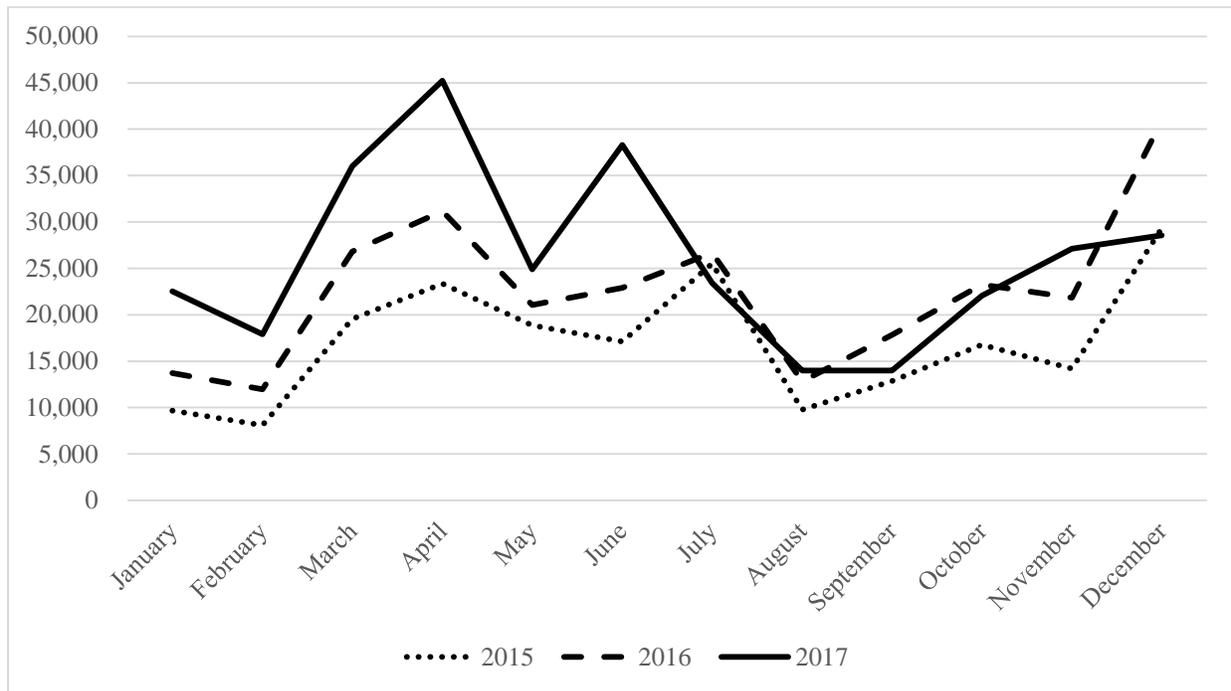


Figure 3: *Monthly Trends in Indonesian Travelers to Japan over the Past Three Years*
Source: Statistics of Foreign Visitors by Japan National Tourism Organization

Thanks to its stable economic development, long-haul tours have become affordable even for ordinary Indonesians, and currently, Japan is a very popular destination.

The JNTO report cited that 352,330 Indonesian travelers visited Japan in 2017, 82.7% (291,532 travelers) of whom were leisure travelers. The JTA's survey indicated that these Indonesian leisure travelers tend to travel with partners and family members (59.1%), or with friends and colleagues (31.8%)³. The majority of Indonesian respondents (64.3%) were in their 20s and 30s. There is also a shift from typical travel agents to online travel agents. While 54.7% of the respondents arranged their trips via travel agents and 40.6% of the respondents made

³ This is one of the reasons why the number of tourists is rapidly increasing to popular destinations like Japan. Traveling with families, kin members, and friends is also an Indonesian habit with domestic travel.

arrangements through online agencies, 72.5% of the respondents arranged their leisure trips individually⁴ (JTA 2017a).

The JNTO's statistics on foreign travelers by month shows that there are three peak seasons in which Indonesian leisure travelers visit Japan (see Figure 3). It is clear that Indonesians favor the season of *sakura* (cherry blossoms) from late March to early April, and the snow experience in December. Recently, the month of *Ramadan* has also become an important season for Indonesian leisure travel. Therefore, as we note in the 2017 data, the number of travelers in June is salient⁵. Usually, summer is not favorable for Indonesian leisure travelers.



Figure 4: Visual Image of Japan in an Indonesian Travel Magazine
Source: Destin Asian Indonesia, October-December 2018

⁴ However, this may not mean that they developed the customized trip from scratch, but may select some free tours which include round trip flight tickets and accommodations, plus optional excursions to theme parks or discount train passes like JR Pass, if they want. It may be reasonably priced and suitable for personal reasons.

⁵ As the *Hijrah* calendar is 354 days, if we view the *Ramadan* month in western solar calendar with 365 days, the holiday would come 11 days earlier than the previous year.

2.3 Destinations of Indonesian Leisure Travelers in Japan

As per the JTA’s annual survey in 2017, among 321 respondents of Indonesian leisure travelers, 60.5% (207 respondents) stayed in Japan for 7 to 13 days (average 7.9 days), and 32.7% (112 respondents) stayed in Japan for 4 to 6 days (average 4.2%). This short-stay trend is consistent with other countries, including those in Southeast Asia.

For first-time travelers, the so-called “Golden Route” is the main course for both tour participants and fully independent travelers (FITs). Typically, a “Golden Route” tour extends from Tokyo to Osaka or vice versa, and may include city tours in Tokyo, Osaka, and Kyoto; various theme parks such as Tokyo Disneyland, Tokyo DisneySea, and Universal Studios Japan; and outlet shopping malls or famous shopping areas (for examples of typical 7-day tours to Japan, see Tables 2 and 3).

Table 2: Example of “Golden Route” Itinerary (1)

Tour Name	7D/5N Favorite Japan Golden Route + 2 Theme Park	
Price	Start from IDR 24,678,000 (around USD 1,650)/person	
Day	City	Tourist Spots and Attractions
Day 1	JAKARTA – OSAKA	Depart from <i>Soekarno Hatta</i> International Airport, Jakarta, Indonesia, to Kansai International Airport, <i>Osaka</i> , Japan. Direct flight.
Day 2	OSAKA	<i>Osaka</i> tour: Universal Studios Japan, <i>Shinsaibashi</i> shopping area
Day 3	OSAKA – KYOTO – TOYOHASHI	Kyoto tour: <i>Kiyomizu</i> Temple, <i>Fushimi-inari</i> Shrine
Day 4	TOYOHASHI – HAMAMATSU – Mt. FUJI AREA	Mt. Fuji
Day 5	Mt. FUJI AREA – GOTEMBA – TOKYO	Shopping at <i>Gotemba</i> Premium Outlets Tokyo city tour: <i>Senso-ji</i> Temple, <i>Nakamise</i> Street (shopping district in the <i>Asakusa</i> area), and Tokyo Skytree
Day 6	TOKYO – DISNEYLAND/DISNEYSEA – TOKYO	Theme park: Disneyland / DisneySea
Day 7	TOKYO – JAKARTA	Depart from Tokyo International Airport, Tokyo, Japan, to Soekarno Hatta International Airport. Direct flight.

Source: <https://his-travel.co.id/group-tour-packages/7d5n-favorite-japan-golden-route-plus-2-theme-park>

Note: The itinerary is translated from Indonesian to English and summarized by the author.

Typical itineraries also include “authentic” experiences such as *onsen* (hot spring bathing), Japanese foods such as sushi and sashimi, and various seasonal attractions and events

like *sakura* viewing (viewing of cherry blossom flowers) in spring, or *yukimatsuri* (snow festivals) in winter. Old temples and *shinto* shrines like the Golden Temple (*Rokuon-ji* Temple), *Kiyomizudera* Temple, and *Yasaka* Shrine are among these authentic spots for tourists. Some of these “Golden Route” tours extend to other cities like Kobe, Hiroshima, Nara, Nagoya, Tochigi, Gifu, and Nagano if the itinerary is longer than 7 days or if there are less activities in nearby cities. The JTA statistics also confirm the total number of foreign travelers to each prefecture in Japan (JTA2017b). As Figure 5 shows, most Indonesian travelers stay in Tokyo and Osaka, prefectures in central Japan, and Hokkaido.

Today, to differentiate from typical tours, travel agents include some extra experiences in their itineraries like strawberry pickings, wearing of *kimono* or *yukata* (both traditional Japanese wear), and ninja shows. These travelers’ personal experiences during their short visit to the “Golden Route” form the basis of their empirical images of Japan.

Table 3: Example of “Golden Route” Itinerary (2)

Tour Name	Japan Highlight	
Price	Start from IDR 18,890,000 (around USD 1,265)/person	
Day	City	Tourist Spots and Attractions
Day 1	JAKARTA - HONGKONG - NARITA	Depart from <i>Soekarno Hatta</i> International Airport, Jakarta, Indonesia, to <i>Narita</i> International Airport, Tokyo, Japan. Connecting flight through Hong Kong (night flight)
Day 2	NARITA - TOKYO	Tokyo city tour: <i>Senso-ji</i> Temple and <i>Nakamise</i> Street (shopping district in <i>Asakusa</i> area), Tokyo Skytree, drive nearby Imperial Palace, <i>Ginza</i> shopping area, <i>Shinjuku</i> area
Day 3	TOKYO - HAKONE - KAWAGUCHI	Tokyo city tour: <i>Shibuya</i> area, take photo with <i>Hachiko</i> statue. Travel to <i>Hakone</i> and enjoy <i>Ashinoko</i> Lake cruise
Day 4	KAWAGUCHI - MT. FUJI - TOYOHASHI	Go to level 5 on Mt. Fuji Shopping at <i>Gotemba</i> Premium Outlets
Day 5	TOYOHASHI - KYOTO - OSAKA	<i>Kyoto</i> tour: <i>Kiyomizu</i> Temple and <i>Yasaka</i> Shrine. <i>Shinkansen</i> (Japan’s famous bullet train) experience from Kyoto to Osaka Shopping in <i>Shinsaibashi</i> shopping district, <i>Osaka</i>
Day 6	OSAKA - KOBE - KANSAI - HONGKONG	<i>Kobe</i> tour: Kobe Chinatown, Kobe Earthquake Museum, Sake Museum, and Kobe Harborland Return to Indonesia from <i>Kansai</i> International Airport to <i>Soekarno Hatta</i> International Airport. Connecting flight through Hong Kong (night flight)
Day 7	HONGKONG - JAKARTA	Arrive at <i>Soekarno Hatta</i> International Airport in the morning

Source: <https://www.panorama-jtb.com/tour/detail/group/29976>

Note: The itinerary is translated from Indonesian to English and summarized by the author.

Table 4: Length of Stay in Japan by Nationality (2017)

Length of stay (day)	World Total		Indonesia		Malaysia		Philippines		Singapore		Thailand		Vietnam	
	respondent	%	respondent	%	respondent	%	respondent	%	respondent	%	respondent	%	respondent	%
less than 4	4,639	15.90%	4	1.20%	5	0.70%	8	2.00%	4	1.70%	15	2.50%	1	1.50%
4 to 6	15,305	52.60%	112	32.70%	231	34.30%	208	50.70%	61	25.20%	335	55.90%	36	53.70%
7 to 13	7,062	24.30%	207	60.50%	407	60.50%	169	41.20%	153	63.20%	227	37.90%	26	38.80%
14 to 20	1,547	5.30%	19	5.60%	22	3.30%	16	3.90%	19	7.90%	20	3.30%	1	1.50%
21 to 27	308	1.10%	0	0.00%	7	1.00%	0	0.00%	3	1.20%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
28 to 90	221	0.80%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	8	2.00%	2	0.80%	2	0.30%	3	4.50%
more than 90	10	0.00%	0	0.00%	1	0.10%	1	0.20%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
total	29,092	100%	342	100%	673	100%	410	100%	242	100%	599	100%	67	100%

Source: Appendix Table 5 in “Survey of Foreign Tourists Expenditure in Japan” (JTA 2017a)

For Indonesian leisure travelers, Hokkaido is another popular Japanese destination, especially in winter as Indonesians are eager to enjoy snow, which does not exist in their country’s tropical climate. The strong tourism promotion activities by the Hokkaido local government and the Sapporo municipal government are another push factor for Indonesians. For example, the Hokkaido local government often invites the Indonesian mass media, bloggers, and travel agents on familiarization trips. Sapporo municipal government has collaborated with *Bluebird* taxi and *Kompas* newspaper for tourism campaigns.

Other areas are less popular with Indonesian leisure travelers. However, for return visits, Chubu and Hokuriku are destinations for traditional cultural experiences, and Kyushu is another choice for short visits.

Indonesians love shopping and theme parks, but the *onsen* hot spring experience is optional for travelers, as displaying one’s naked body in a public bath is against their cultural values. There are also Indonesians who won’t attempt to eat raw foods such as sashimi and sushi, even though sushi restaurants are burgeoning in major Indonesian cities. For Muslim travelers, some Japanese foods are problematic for religious reasons. While pork and alcoholic seasonings are typical in Japanese cuisine, these are forbidden foods (*haram*) for Muslims.

Indonesian travelers love social networking services (SNS) such as Facebook, WhatsApp, and Instagram; thus, one of the reasons for traveling to Japan is to visit different and extraordinary destinations and post about them. SNS posts by Indonesian celebrities about their leisure trips also help to promote Japan as a holiday destination for Indonesians.

So, if we combine these results, it is primarily families who visited Japan for leisure, staying in Japan for 7 to 8 days, mainly along the “Golden Route” (see figure 6 for general understanding of this route). Other kin members or close friends may have recommended they visit Japan for leisure. The majority of these families do not travel through existing group tours, but arrange their trips individually.

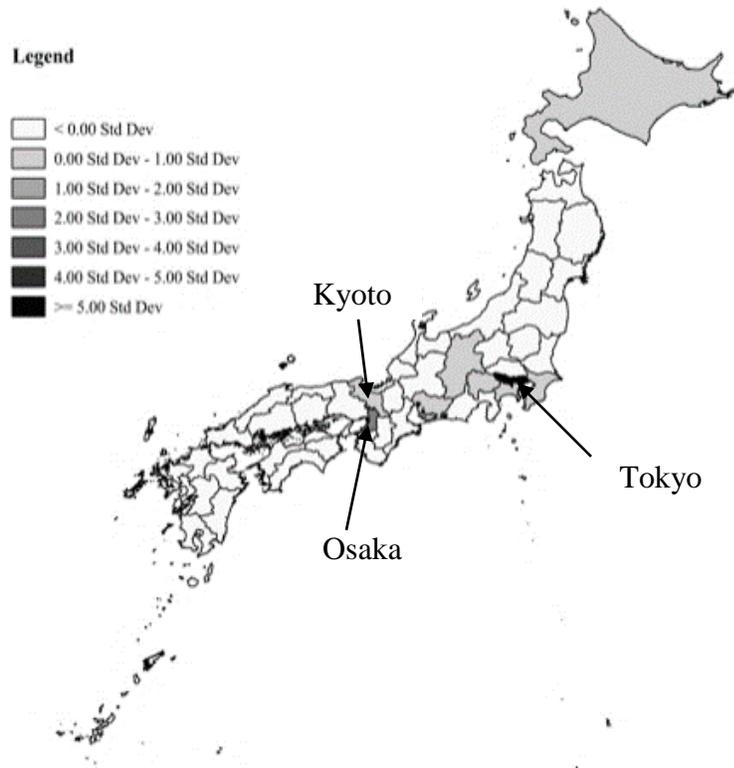


Figure 5: *Number of Indonesian Travelers by Stay in Each Prefecture in Japan (2017)*
Source: Statistic of Foreign Travelers Stay in Japan (JTA 2017b)

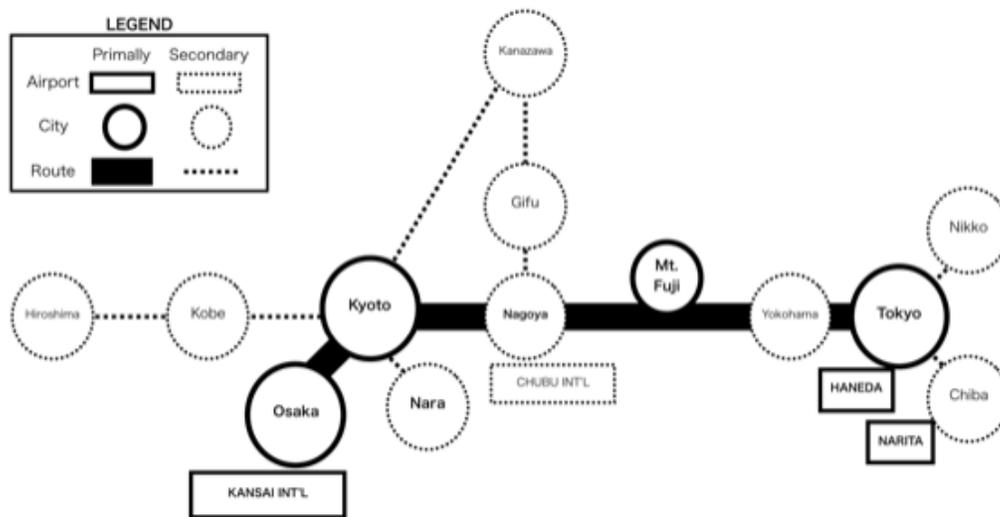


Figure 6: Route Diagram of the “Golden Route”

3. Promotion of Inbound Tourism to Japan and the Role of Agents

3.1 Professional Experts on Tourism

As the theoretical explanation of “tourist gaze,” Urry and Larsen explained that it “is of a different order in that it is not a gaze confined to professionals ‘supported and justified by an institution’. And yet even in the production of ‘unnecessary’ pleasure, many professional experts help to construct and develop one’s gaze as a tourist” (Urry and Larsen 2011: 1).

Various professionals, such as the staff at aviation companies, transport companies, accommodations, restaurants, souvenir shops, as well as interpreter guides and tour attendants, are actors supported by and aligned with an institution. They are in direct contact with foreign tourists, and therefore, provide them with positive or negative experiences that will construct and develop the images, or the “tourist gaze,” of Japan.

With the motto of “*omotenashi*,” the Japanese form of hospitality, these actors also try to improve the foreign tourists’ experiences in Japan. For example, to accommodate Muslims’

dietary needs, some restaurants now offer *halal* foods, or so-called “Muslim friendly foods⁶.” Aviation companies such as JAL and ANA now also offer *halal* meals and snacks for Muslims.

As most Japanese people cannot speak Indonesian and are not good at English, travel guides and tour attendants are important actors when it comes to helping travelers better understand Japanese society and cultures. However, there are still few skilled guides in Japan, and most of them speak English⁷. In addition, since 2018, anyone can now work as a tour guide without sufficient knowledge of the Japanese culture, which raises the concern that they will create misunderstandings with foreign tourists. However, as most Indonesians also cannot speak Japanese and are not good at English, and services in the Indonesian language are rare, communication difficulties are still a big problem for Indonesian travelers⁸.

Professional actors are very important to the tourism practice, and I would like to discuss this issue later. In following sections, I will focus on institutional actors for inbound tourism to Japan.

3.2 The Role of the Japan Tourism Agency and the Japan National Tourism Organization

The Japan Tourism Agency (JTA), a division of the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism, Japan, defines marketing strategies and conducts various researches on both domestic and international tourism, while the Japan National Tourism Organization (JNTO), as the direct undertaker of JTA’s inbound projects, is one of the major actors in promotional activities for foreign markets.

⁶ “Muslim friendly foods” are not *halal*, but they do not use pork or alcoholic seasonings.

⁷ The Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism has exclusively licensed guides who passed their examinations to be Tour Guide-Interpreters for nationwide tourism. In January 2018, this system was changed. While the title Tour Guide-Interpreter indicates the guides’ knowledge and language skills are above a specific level, it is no longer an exclusive license. Anyone can now work as tourist guide in Japan. Along with Tour Guide-Interpreters, there are also Region-Specific Tour Guide-Interpreters for specific regions.

⁸ There are also traffic signs, restaurant menus, ticket bending machines, and ATMs that use English and some East Asian languages, but the Indonesian language has not yet been applied in the same manner, except in ATM services, and some maps and brochures by the JNTO.



Figure 7: *The Top Page of JNTO Jakarta Office Official Website*
Source: Retrieved from <https://www.jnto.or.id>

Before 2016, the JTA submitted its promotional projects for various areas, and the JNTO worked as the operational body for each project. In 2016, the system changed. The JNTO is now responsible for managing tourism promotion projects, including each projects' proposal. Recently, the JNTO's foreign offices became responsible for projects in specific areas. The JTNO headquarters directs these foreign offices and boosts projects covering multiple markets.

The JNTO operates nationwide tourist information centers in Japan, where they post specialists and provide brochures, maps, and tourist-oriented websites in various languages to improve inbound tourism environments. They also have their foreign branch in Jakarta (see Figure 7).

The JTA and JNTO promotional activities in foreign countries are not simply a matter of a government body disseminating information to consumers, but involve multiple levels of actors, both professionals and consumers.

The JTA and JNTO are also working hard to promote destinations other than the “Golden Route,” so the destinations for fam trips as well as other promotional activities often focus on areas less familiar in the foreign market, including areas damaged by natural disasters, such as Tohoku and Kyushu.

The JNTO also exhibit information in booths/stands at travel expos in collaboration with promotion companies. Japanese wholesalers, retailers, various inbound-oriented companies, and local tourism organizations in Japan will take part in the booth/stand to directly promote their products and destinations to consumers. Promotional cultural events and attractions are offered at the booths/stands and on the expos’ main stage, ranging from *daikagura* (traditional street performances) to *origami* (Japanese traditional art of paper folding) experiences. There are plenty of Japanese cultural events and attractions to capture visitors’ interests.

For travel agents, the JNTO introduces new information and updates their knowledge on destinations in Japan. They also invite them to travel seminars, roadshows, and business meetings to stimulate professional activities in tourism. The JNTO also collaborates with local travel agents to advertise inbound tourism to Japan.

3.3 The Role of Local Governments and Travel Organizations

For most Indonesian leisure travelers, Tokyo, Kyoto, and Osaka are the most preferred cities along the “Golden Route.” Local governments, local tourism organizations (*kanko-kyokai*) and tourism industries in other prefectures and cities outside the “Golden Route” are working very hard to attract more foreign travelers to their areas.

Many local governments and local travel organizations not only promote their destinations independently, but also join the JNTO’s promotional activities like exhibition booths/stands for international travel expos, travel seminars, and business meetings in foreign markets. Sometimes, a local travel organization will simply place their English flyers at the JNTO’s booth/stand without sending any personnel, while others send specialists to various promotional events to directly promote their prefectures or cities as interesting leisure destinations to foreign markets. Sometimes local governments and travel organizations have their own promotional activities in foreign markets. Tokyo even places their own tourism representatives in twelve targeted cities including Los Angeles, New York, London, Paris, Beijing, and Seoul. Local governments and travel organizations also provide original maps and brochures written in English and some other East Asian and European languages.

For example, in the Indonesian market, as I cited above, the Hokkaido local government and the Sapporo municipal government actively promote their destinations in Indonesia through various campaigns and advertisements. The Tokyo Convention and Visitors Bureau (TCVB) is also actively promoting Tokyo as indispensable destination for Indonesians. They have made promotion videos for Indonesian consumers and have multiple promotional events in Jakarta to which they invite travel agents and mass media.

3.4 The Role of Promotion Companies

The JTA and JNTO have projects for promoting inbound tourism to Japan consists of sub projects like familiarization trips, travel expos, business meetings and tourism seminars, and consumer campaigns. Each project is undertaken by private companies like travel agencies and event promotion companies. The JNTO and these companies work together to run each promotional project, and these companies also serve as a kind of hub of actors, like aviation companies, retail companies, wholesalers, mass media, local tourism organizations, and consumers/travelers involved in campaigns.

For example, if the JNTO opened a bid for a familiarization trip/tour (often abbreviated as fam trip or fam tour), while a project usually contains multiple activities, these companies will submit proposals, from which one company will be selected. The company will work together with local media and local travel agents or bloggers to realize each specification of the proposal. Aviation companies may collaborate with the JNTO and these companies will offer round trip tickets for fam trip participants, and useful information on their flight routes for media. Local travel agents may dispatch their high-level personnel like managers or directors who have the right to decide the contents of tour products for one's company. Japanese wholesalers may offer new itineraries for travel agents participating in the fam trip. Collaboration with local travel organizations is also indispensable. Media reporters may write some travel articles about the destinations visited and activities experienced during the fam trip, and these articles will be posted in printed media or web media for consumers before the destination's main travel season. A promotion is not as simple as a transaction from businesses to customers, but a connection with each other. It is the promotion company who plays an important role to arrange such connections.

3.5 The Role of the Wholesaler and the Retailer

As with most retail tours and options offered by specific wholesalers, each tour's variety and options are limited to what wholesalers offer. Wholesalers also offer various tours along with "Golden Route," as well as optional excursions, but the main destination is still the "Golden Route." As an example, some leading retailers may organize original tours to some strategic destinations with chartered flights to Hokkaido or Kyushu, but it is still rare when it comes to Indonesian tours to Japan. Major retailers and wholesalers also exhibit their own booths/stands at tourism expos to sell tours to consumers at reasonable campaign prices.

In Indonesia, especially outside major cities, many travel agencies are SOHO level ones for domestic tours, and they cannot offer foreign tours as they lack the network and knowledge. Therefore, except for cities and areas like Yogyakarta, Surakarta and Bali Island, which have been accepting many international tourists, retailers for foreign destinations are mainly located in large cities like Jakarta, Bandung, Surabaya, and Medan.

Retailers not only sell tours but also work as the information hub for individual travelers who are not familiar with foreign destinations like Japan. However, the role of retailers appears to be shrinking, mainly because customers prefer to use online travel agencies (OTAs) and direct purchases through aviation companies and accommodations to reduce travel costs. As previously noted, Indonesian travelers now tend to arrange their tours online.

4. Changing Indonesian Images of Japan

As Urry and Larsen indicated that tourists' gazes are "not a simple pre-existing reality simply waiting 'out of there,' but "it was an epistemic field, constructed linguistically as much as visually." In other words, "People gaze upon the world through a particular filter of ideas, skills, desires, and expectations, framed by social class gender, nationality, age and education" (Urry and Larsen 2011: 1-2).

Indonesian images of Japan are varied mixture of the following: (1) flat, stereotypical images of Japan; (2) limited images and experiences (re)constructed and offered by the Japanese tourism industry; and (3) images gained with personal experiences⁹.

⁹ The third type is also true for wartime experiences, job experiences, or friendships with Japanese, but this paper solely focuses on tourists' experiences.

In 1980s and 1990s, the number of Indonesians traveling to Japan was still limited. Therefore, the Indonesian images of Japan have been created and reproduced with indirect sources and information, like the stories of cruel Japanese army written in national history textbooks, television dramas like “*Oshin*,” and impressions of high-tech industrial products such as cars, motor bikes, and electrical appliances. For younger generations of Indonesians, the viewing of Japanese-made animation series such as “*Doraemon*” and “*Crayon Shin-chan*” were more common and daily experiences in their childhood than the viewing of traditional *wayang kulit* (shadow puppet) plays.

Although there have been gradual changes in the images of Japan from past to present, the construction was still based on indirect images. Something “*Jepang* (Japan)” is always around them, both tangible and intangible, and these are sources of stereotypical images of “*Negeri Sakura* (the country of cherry blossom).”

As I described in chapter II, Japan and Indonesia’s tourism industries collaborate to develop interesting tours to various areas in Japan, but those short tours offer limited images and experiences, especially those of the “Golden Route.” This is because what travelers want from their short trips are facets of stereotypical but familiar images of Japan, such as *anime*, *ninja*, *onsen*, *sakura*, *sashimi*, and *sushi*, as well as places like Tokyo, Osaka, Kyoto, and *Mt. Fuji*. Thus, these facets remain core elements when developing their tours.

Such images match with tourists’ reasons to visit to Japan, and for their personal experiences, makes these images an indispensable part of their “tourist gaze.” Selfies with extraordinary backdrops of nature, architecture, and joyous moments in Japan are shared with kin members, friends, and colleagues through SNS such as Instagram and Facebook.

The images of Japan have been reflectively reconstructed but the mode is changing. Although limited and biased, the accumulation and circulation of personalized travel experiences in Japan is now ongoing in Indonesia, and this is a phase of changing the images of Japan from monotonous stereotype to more empirical, personalized variants, especially among ordinary Indonesians.

5. Conclusion

Tourism studies in cultural anthropology and sociology began in the 1970s, and mainly discussed the socio-cultural impact of tourism with the theories of “host and guest,”

“authenticity,” and “tourist's gaze.” There are three categories of research subjects: (1) tourist (2) local inhabitants of host society, and (3) producers (Endo 2018: 45). These studies are matched with cultural anthropological methodology because cultural anthropology analyzes data obtained from personal interviews and grass-root research. This was applied to analyze the tourism dynamics based on their discourse and narratives, as well as based on the dualism of host and guest.

In this academic trend, Indonesian people have been analyzed as members of a host country of international tourists, and such research has mainly focused on the dynamism of traditional culture and society¹⁰, while the outbound tourism of Indonesia has been academically overlooked, maybe because it is a relatively new phenomenon. Because of this academic bias, previous studies on Indonesian outbound tourists are limited in both number and perspective¹¹.

This paper focused on the industrial actors of tourism as an important factor for observing the ongoing changes in Indonesian images of Japan, as a study of the cultural cognition of Indonesian people. The original contribution of this paper, therefore, is to show the increase of Indonesian outbound tourists based on various statistical data using a holistic approach, and also to show how the increase of experiences in Japan is currently leading to a new phase of the reconstruction of Japan's images in Indonesia, with the ad hoc sharing of personal experiences. However, the discussion of this paper is still lacking an analysis of 'narratives' of Indonesian tourists to Japan shared through SNS and word of mouth with one's relatives, as well as the analysis of guidebooks and travel magazines published in Indonesia¹². I would like to perform such analysis to see “how a reality is constructed by the practices of discourse and representation” (Endo 2018: 58) with the view of social constructionism. Furthermore, I would also like to conduct a similar analysis of other Southeast Asian countries such as the Philippines in comparison with Indonesia.

¹⁰ For example, see Yamashita 1996 and 1999, and Picard 1996.

¹¹ For example, Dina Hariani, Myrza Rahmanita, and Rahmat Ingkadijaya discusses about the influence of Muslim friendly facilities in Japan for Indonesian Muslim tourists (Dina Hariani et al. 2017)

¹² Partly because it's hard to find Indonesian guidebooks fit to see the needs of Indonesian tourists.

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