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**WHAT DETERMINES ANIME PILGRIMS’ VISIT INTENTION AND
DESTINATION LOYALTY?**

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ABSTRACT

Japanese animation, called *anime*, has long been regarded as a niche culture reserved for ‘nerds’ (*otaku*) in Japan. The word *otaku* refers to individuals who spend most of their time alone at home watching *anime*, reading comics (*manga*) and/or playing video games. However, in recent years, *otaku*, or *anime* viewers, have changed their behavioral patterns, resulting in a new transcultural movement. That peculiar phenomenon is known as *anime* pilgrimage, which involves traveling to locations that resemble particular scenes in *anime* pieces, even though the locations themselves may be ordinary places. Research on ordinary tourism has focused mainly on destination attributes as determinants of visit intention/destination loyalty. Research on film tourism places additional emphasis on the role of film involvement. We focus here on social influences. The results of structured regression analyses show that our new models were superior to previous models that omitted investigation of social influences. Furthermore, the results show that though, during the pre-trip period “within home”, *anime* nerds may expect that they will interact primarily with other nerds, they enjoy interactions with the local people while traveling. Such transcultural experiences result in higher destination loyalty during the post-trip period “beyond home”.

Keywords: Japan, anime, visit intention, destination loyalty, transcultural experience

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