Festival and Tourism for Regional Revitalization: A Case of Jeonju Hanok Village Festival

Hyun A Oh

[ABSTRACT]

This study discusses the role of the festival in the process of Jeonju Hanok Village which is a tourist attraction. As the expectation about regional economy vitalization is getting higher, the role of contemporary local festival (which is) creating economic effect linked with tourism industry has been emphasized.

The Jeonju Hanok Village which recorded no more than 100,000 annual visitors in 1999, turned into a touristic attraction with more than 5 million annual visitors in 2014. The Jeonju Hanok Village experienced a hollowing effect after falling behind as a preservation area before the 1990s, but started changing drastically along with the Hanok Village development plan for the 2002 World Cup.

In order to vitalize Jeonju Hanok Village, Jeonju city started to actively host small and big scale festival at the Hanok Village. By changing the location of Pungnam Festival, which is one of the biggest existing festivals in Jeonju city to the Hanok Village, around 300,000 tourists visit the Hanok Village during the Pungnam festival week only.

Jeonju city also strived to vitalize private festivals with traditionality at the Hanok Village by supporting private festivals even though they didn’t lead the festival directly. Jeonju city supported the Sanjo Festival, a festival organized by a civilian since 1998, and in 2004 Jeonju city supported the Kimjang Festival pivoting around the “Hanok Village Preservation Society” comprised of Hanok Village residents.

Moreover Jeonju city invites performances of culture and art organizations that are active around the Hanok Village and by supporting diverse institution and cultural facilities, Jeonju city
endeavors to provide more attractions to visitors of the Hanok Village.

Through such efforts, the festivals based on diverse traditional cultures has played a huge role in making the Jeonju Hanok Village into the most representative traditional cultural touristic attraction of Korea. Especially, the "festival" is considered as one of the most important success factors of the Jeonju Hanok Village (Gyeonbuk Daily, 2014.10.16.). It has contributed in enhancing the image during the invigoration process of Jeonju Hanok Village and has played the role of a touristic content.

Keywords: Festival, Tourism, Regional Revitalization, Hanok Village

I. Introduction

1. Research background and purpose

This study was intended to investigate the role of festivals and departments who are taking the lead in urban restoration process. This study investigated how festivals are created, the effect on regions, and the kinds of mechanism that operate during the process around Jeonju Hanok Village which rapidly emerged as a tourist attraction.

As a sightseeing product of Jeonju Hanok Village, value can be represented by 'tradition' and 'taste.' First, traditional image is a very representative element for some festivals. For a representative case, 'Jeonju Sori (Sound of Voice & Music) Festival' is a festival focused on pansori that they are operating programs that accord with image of Hanok and image of 'tradition.'

Then, 'taste' can be considered as the most symbolic image of 'Jeonju' from the past. 'Jeonju' which was selected as the 'UNESCO City of Gastronomy' is holding an image of "the region of gourmets" for a long time. As the image is coupled with Hanok Village, visitors of Jeonju Hanok Village are visiting the place for food tourism to experience the 'taste' of Jeonju. In fact, the highest value-added business in Hanok village today is the food business. Also, for representative festivals of Jeonju Hanok Village, food related festivals are being progressed with considerable awareness level. There are gimjang (kimchi-making for the winter) festival and bibimbap festival and the most representative festival today is 'JeonjuBibimbap Festival.' The festival is created with 'bibimbap' that symbolizes Jeonju and is becoming a representative festival combined with the city image.

In terms of how food tourism is receiving attention recently, the 'bibimbap'-themed 'Jeonju Bibimbap Festival' which used a representative regional image can be considered to have continuous development possibility.

Lee Soo-Jin (2010) defined the food tourism as a tourism that various food related elements affect as a main factor that stimulates motives to travel. Also, food was a secondary motive in term of purpose of travel in the fast, but food itself became the primary and direct motive in tourism activity. Also, major activities in food tourism consist of visiting major areas of production and festivals related to the food.

A lot of efforts were done by the local government in success of Jeonju Hanok Village festivals. Local government made a lot of effort in developing and supporting festivals. In the meantime, there were efforts in introducing festivals which were progressed in different regions to the Jeonju Hanok Village as well. As a result, the Hanok Village became a place with ceaseless year-round festivals. As Jeonju Hanok Village is being evaluated as a successful case in urban regeneration process,