

**From Inazuma to Japan:
The Role of Experience Economy in Video Game-Induced Tourism**

May 2026

Student: Ton Hoang Minh Le

Advisor: Tsz-Wai Lui

Abstract

The gaming industry continues to grow rapidly, with global revenue reaching \$197 billion in 2025. As game technologies advance and players become increasingly diverse, video game-induced tourism has emerged as a growing phenomenon, in which players seek information about or travel to real-world destinations represented in games. Authenticity plays an important role in connecting virtual experiences with the real world. Therefore, this study examines how authenticity and in-game experience shape destination image and travel intention.

Based on experience economy theory, this study examines authenticity, four experience dimensions (education, entertainment, esthetics, and escapism), destination image, and travel intention. An online survey was conducted using convenience sampling. Participants were non-Japanese Genshin Impact players recruited from Facebook and Discord communities who had played in the Inazuma region within the past three months. All items were adapted from validated scales, and data were analyzed using PLS-SEM in SmartPLS 4.0.

The results show that authenticity significantly influences all four experience dimensions and destination image. Esthetics affects both destination image and travel intention, while education and escapism affect only travel intention. Entertainment has no significant effect on either outcome.

The findings highlight the importance of authenticity and esthetic experience in shaping destination image and encouraging travel intention. Educational and escapist experiences also contribute to travel intention without significantly shaping destination image. From a managerial perspective, destination marketers and game developers should prioritize authentic and esthetic design, as well as storytelling and immersive gameplay.

Keywords: Video game-induced tourism, Authenticity, Experience economy, Destination image, Travel intention