


Comparative Insights on Workcation Providers: Applying Japanese Models to Korean Islands

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Abstract

The relational population concept, which includes individuals engaging with regions without residing there, is key to combating regional extinction and population decline in island areas. This study explores strategies for introducing workcations in island regions by analyzing promotional materials from South Korea and Japan. Through a comprehensive analysis of promotional data using Latent Dirichlet Allocation and cluster analysis, the study identifies significant themes in workcation attraction strategies, highlighting differences and similarities between the two countries. The findings emphasize the importance of leveraging unique regional characteristics, providing excellent facilities, and promoting long-term stay programs. South Korea focuses on maintaining work efficiency in diverse settings, while Japan adopts a more holistic approach integrating work into a nature-oriented lifestyle. Recommendations include turning infrastructure challenges into advantages and diversifying workcation programs. This research contributes to the development of effective workcation policies and serves as a resource for enhancing the sustainability of island regions. By examining successful practices in South Korea and Japan, the study offers valuable insights for policymakers and regional planners seeking innovative approaches to address depopulation issues and revitalize island communities in the context of evolving work patterns and digital connectivity.

Keywords

Relational population

workcation

island regions

regional revitalization

remote work

digital nomads

1. Introduction

In an era of rapid urbanization and demographic shifts, many regions, particularly rural and island areas, face the looming threat of regional extinction and population decline. These challenges necessitate innovative solutions that go beyond traditional approaches to community sustainability. One such promising measure is the concept of the "relational population" (関係人口, kankeijinkō), which has gained traction in recent years as a potential remedy for marginalized areas struggling with depopulation.

The relational population, as defined by the Japanese government, encompasses individuals who, while not permanent residents of a given area, maintain meaningful connections through various activities, such as leisure, work, and social contributions (Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, 2018). This concept presents a nuanced approach to population dynamics, transcending the limitations inherent in both tourist and settled populations. While tourists often have fleeting interactions with a place, and potential settlers face high entry barriers, the relational population offers a middle ground that can provide sustained engagement without the need for permanent relocation (Dilley et al., 2024).

The significance of the relational population concept is particularly pronounced in island regions, where the processes of population decline and regional extinction often occur faster than in inland urban areas. This urgency underscores the need for innovative strategies such as long-term stay experiences and specialized tourism programs. Initiatives like workcations and month-long living experiences have emerged as potential tools to foster stronger connections between individuals and these vulnerable regions (Ji, 2024).

Recognizing the potential of this approach, governments are beginning to incorporate the concept of relational population into their policy frameworks. A notable example is the Japanese government's 2023 amendment to the "Remote Islands Development Act" (離島振興法), which now includes provisions specifically aimed at securing a relational population for island regions (Zollet & Qu, 2024). This legislative change reflects a growing awareness of the need to enhance island sustainability through targeted support for workcations and long-term stay tourism projects.

The concept of workcation, a portmanteau of "work" and "vacation," represents a paradigm shift in how the relationship between work and leisure is perceived. Defined as a hybrid form of tourism that combines business and leisure purposes (Pecsek, 2018; Chatterjee & Singh, 2021), workcations have gained popularity globally. This trend is fueled by a societal shift toward recognizing the efficiency of remote work, coupled with an increasing emphasis on work-life balance and employee well-being. Research indicates that workcations can positively impact not only work efficiency but also employee welfare, quality of life, and job satisfaction on a global scale (Bassyiouny & Wilkesmann, 2023).

However, the challenges facing island societies extend beyond population dynamics. These communities grapple with a complex web of issues including rapid aging, climate crises, and structural changes in traditional industries that threaten their economic viability (Yan et al., 2023). Among these multifaceted challenges, the population issue stands out as a critical factor that could determine the very survival of these societies (Dilley et al., 2022).

In response to these pressing concerns, there is a growing consensus that expanding both the relational and living populations in island regions could be a key solution to the problem of island extinction. Pilot workcation programs are being introduced in these areas as part of this strategy (Matsushita, 2023). However, their implementation faces significant hurdles. Despite government initiatives, island regions are often overlooked as workcation destinations in the private market due to geographical and infrastructural limitations.

In the context of Japan, workcations have taken on unique characteristics that distinguish them from their Western counterparts. Matsushita (2023) provides valuable insights into the Japanese approach to workcations, highlighting how it embraces digital nomadic work styles while maintaining a distinctly Japanese flavor. According to Matsushita's research, Japanese-style workcations are not merely about individual workers seeking a change of scenery. Instead, they are positioned as a form of social design that aims to address broader societal issues such as urban population concentration, aging rural communities, and declining local economies.

Matsushita (2023) identifies several key features that characterize Japanese workcations. Firstly, there is a strong emphasis on local community engagement, with participants encouraged to actively participate in community activities. This approach fosters a deeper connection between workcationers and the local area. Secondly, Japanese workcations are distinguished by significant government and corporate involvement, reflecting a more structured and institutionalized approach to implementation. This level of formal support contributes to the sustainability and scalability of workcation initiatives. Thirdly, workcations in Japan are being utilized as a means to promote and normalize hybrid work arrangements, potentially leading to long-term changes in work culture. Lastly, there is a clear focus on revitalizing the tourism industry, particularly in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, with workcations seen as a potential solution to the decline in traditional tourism. These characteristics collectively shape the unique nature of Japanese workcations, differentiating them from similar initiatives in other countries and positioning them as a tool for addressing broader societal challenges.

These characteristics of Japanese workcations provide a unique lens through which to examine the implementation of workcation initiatives in both Japan and South Korea. By understanding these nuances, we can better analyze the similarities and differences in approaches between the two countries, and potentially identify best practices that could be adapted across different cultural contexts.

This study aims to bridge this knowledge gap by analyzing the factors that influence the decisions of workcation providers, with a specific focus on island regions. Additionally, it seeks to draw valuable insights from Japan's successful implementation of workcation programs in island regions. Through these case studies, the research aims to identify key considerations and best practices that could be adapted to the South Korean context, particularly in island regions.

The primary research questions guiding this study are:

1. What are the key factors attracting workcation providers to specific destinations, particularly in island regions?
2. How do the strategies for implementing workcations differ between South Korea and Japan, and what lessons can be learned from these approaches?
3. How can the concept of relational population be effectively integrated with workcation initiatives to address population decline and promote sustainable development in island regions?

By exploring the intersection of work, leisure, and regional development through the lens of workcations and relational populations, this research seeks to contribute to the development of more resilient and sustainable island communities. As we navigate the complexities of a rapidly changing world, such innovative approaches may hold the key to preserving and revitalizing vulnerable regions for future generations.

2. Research Methods

The research methodology employed in this study involved several key steps designed to comprehensively analyze the supplier perspective of workcation promotions in South Korea and Japan. The approach was structured to ensure thorough data collection and analysis, capturing the nuances of workcation offerings from various sources.

2.1 Data collection

To analyze workcation promotions in South Korea, text data were manually collected from both official municipal websites and private promotional websites (see Table 1) from September 22 to September 25, 2023. The researchers

visited each site and performed data scraping, focusing on extracting relevant information related to workcation offerings, resulting in a total of 53 valid text data entries. The collected data encompassed various regions and authorities, providing a diverse view of workcation promotions across the country.

Similarly, for analyzing workcation promotions in Japan, data were collected from September 7 to September 27, 2023. A Google search of the term "ワーケーション (workcation)" was performed to identify relevant municipal and private websites promoting workcation locations, and each identified site was visited individually to gather the necessary text data. This process yielded 64 valid data entries, covering a wide range of regions and authorities in Japan. The collection aimed to capture the essence of workcation promotions, highlighting the key elements and unique selling points emphasized by different regions.

2.2 Data analysis

To ensure a robust and meaningful analysis of workcation promotions in South Korea and Japan, we employed several advanced text analysis techniques. Initially, we considered frequency analysis, but this was deemed insufficient due to the repetitive and often meaningless nature of the words generated. Instead, we utilized latent Dirichlet allocation (LDA), a powerful method for discovering hidden topics within a document set (Hagg et al., 2022). LDA helped identify the main themes and patterns in the promotional texts, providing deeper insights into the focus areas of workcation promotions.

Our methodology involved several analytical steps. First, LDA was used to identify the main topics within the texts. This initial step allowed for the extraction of key themes and patterns present in the promotional materials. Second, we analyzed the location classification and leadership of each topic, categorizing the texts based on their geographical region and the type of authority (local government or private) promoting the workcation. This classification helped elucidate the distribution and characteristics of workcation promotions across different regions.

Following this, we conducted cluster analysis to group the texts based on their similarities. The term frequency-inverse document frequency (TF-IDF) method was used to extract feature vectors from each text, capturing the importance of each term within the documents. Subsequently, the K-means clustering algorithm was employed to classify the texts into distinct clusters. This analysis allowed for the identification of common themes and characteristics within each cluster, providing a clearer picture of the workcation landscape. The findings of our analysis are presented through a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods. The main topics extracted from the text data are presented in tables, showcasing the different priorities for South Korea and Japan. These tables illustrate the distribution and significance of each topic across different regions and promoting entities.

Table 1 provides a detailed breakdown of the characteristics of workcation locations in South Korea and Japan. It categorizes the data by country, location, region name, category, and main authority, offering a comprehensive overview of the workcation landscape. Additionally, we present a comparative analysis of workcation implementation in Korea and Japan, highlighting the distinct approaches and strategies employed in each country. This analysis is presented in table format, allowing for easy comparison between the two countries' strategies. These presentations complement the quantitative results with qualitative interpretations, offering a comprehensive understanding of the data and its implications for workcation promotion strategies in both countries. Regarding the roles of co-authors, the second author was primarily responsible for data collection and oversaw the general analytical process. The first author focused on data interpretation and synthesized the overall findings, ensuring a cohesive and meaningful analysis of the results.

It is important to acknowledge the limitations of our chosen method. While LDA and clustering techniques enable us to identify key themes and patterns in workcation promotions across a large dataset, they are primarily descriptive and do not allow for causal inferences (Mishra et al., 2021). Additionally, our analysis is limited to textual data and does not capture visual elements of workcation promotions or real-time changes in marketing strategies. As Özen (2021) notes in a similar study on heritage site reviews, textual analysis may not fully capture the nuanced experiences of visitors or the complex dynamics of tourism development. Despite these limitations, our method provides valuable insights into the current landscape of workcation promotions and offers a foundation for further research in this emerging field. By combining LDA, cluster analysis, and qualitative interpretation, we have been able to uncover significant patterns and themes in workcation promotions across different regions and types of promoting entities.

Table 1. Analysis of characteristics by workcation location

Country	Location	Region Name	Category	Main Authority
Korea	Seoul	Dongdaemun-gu	City	Private
		Sinchon		
		Jongno-gu		
	Gyeongsang	Geoje-si	Island	Private
		Gyeongju-si	Inland	Private
		Namhae-gun	Coast	Local Gov. & Private
		Tongyeong-si, Dumido	Island	Local Gov.
	Jeolla	Wando	Island	Local Gov.
	Chungcheong	Gongju-si	Inland	Private
		Boryeong-si, Sapsido	Island	Local Gov.
	Gangwon	Gangneung-si	Coast	Local Gov. & Private
		Goseong-gun		
		Donghae-si		
		Sokcho-si		
		Yangyang-gun		
		Yeongwol-gun		
Jeongseon-gun				
Chuncheon-si				
Japan	Kagawa	Takamatsu-si, Megijima	Island	Local Gov.
		Takamatsu-si, Ogijima	Island	Local Gov.
		Mitoyo-si	City	Private
	Kagoshima	Yoron Island	Island	Local Gov.
	Kanagawa	Kamakura-si	City	Private
		Miura-si	Inland	Local Gov.
	Kyoto	Kyoto-si	City	Private
	Kumamoto	Yatsushiro-si	Inland	Local Gov.
	Gifu	Takayama-si	City	Private
	Nagano	Fujimi Town	Inland	Private
	Nagasaki	Matsuura-si	City	Private
		Sasebo-si	City	Private
		Saikai-si	City	Private
		Iki-si, Iki Island	Island	Local Gov.
		Hirado-si	City	Private

3. Results

This study analyzed workcation promotion data from South Korea and Japan, yielding significant insights into the strategies and themes employed in both countries. Our analysis revealed distinct patterns and priorities in workcation promotions, which can be categorized into several key areas. The following sections detail these findings, beginning with an examination of the primary themes identified through our textual analysis.

3.1 Analysis of Key Workcation Themes

Latent Dirichlet Allocation (LDA) analysis revealed distinct themes emphasized in workcation promotions in South Korea and Japan, highlighting the different approaches and priorities of each country in attracting workcation participants. In South Korea, the analysis identified five main themes. The most prominent theme was work environment and facilities, accounting for 35.3% of mentions. This category included terms related to office spaces, Wi-Fi connectivity, hotel accommodations, and other work-related facilities. The second most prevalent theme was shared spaces and facilities, comprising 25.1% of mentions. This theme encompassed references to co-working spaces, shared areas, and communal facilities, reflecting a focus on collaborative work environments. Diverse programs and activities emerged as the third significant theme, representing 21.3% of mentions. This category included various recreational and educational offerings for workcation participants. Work efficiency was the fourth theme, accounting for 16.9% of mentions, with a focus on productivity, work routines, and concentration. Lastly, Jeju Island-specific workcation emerged as a distinct theme, albeit with a lower frequency of 7.3%, indicating a specific focus on this popular tourist destination.

The analysis of Japanese workcation promotions revealed a different set of priorities. The most dominant theme was natural environment and location, accounting for a substantial 43.8% of mentions. This category included references to nature, landscapes, seas, forests, and specific locations, underscoring Japan's emphasis on its natural beauty as a key attraction for workcation participants. Regional characteristics and activities emerged as the second most important theme, representing 24.9% of mentions. This theme encompassed terms related to regional uniqueness, cultural activities, and local experiences, highlighting Japan's focus on promoting its diverse cultural offerings. The work environment theme, similar to that in South Korea, accounted for 19.8% of mentions, indicating the importance of suitable work facilities. Support and benefits emerged as the fourth theme, comprising 15.1% of mentions, reflecting Japan's emphasis on providing comprehensive support services to workcation participants. Lastly, recreation and leisure accounted for 8.5% of mentions, indicating a focus on relaxation and recreational opportunities.

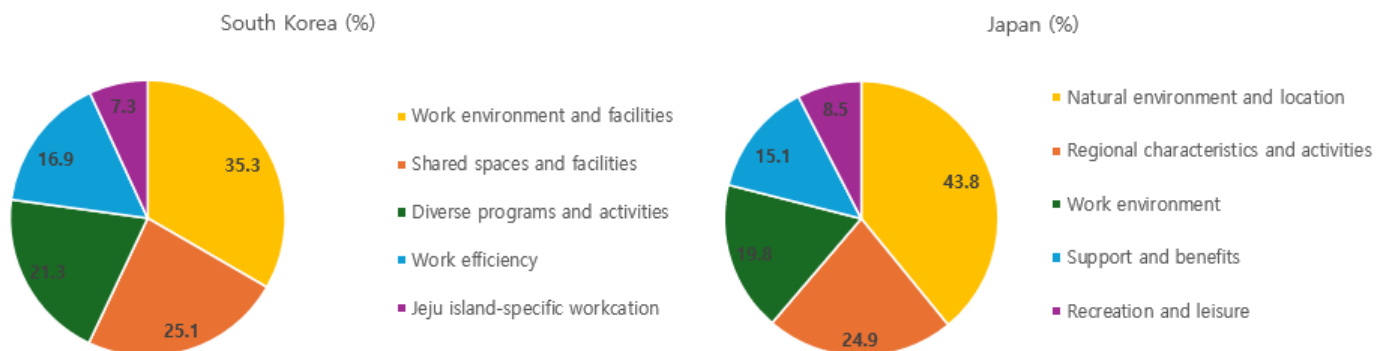


Fig 1. Comparison of key workcation themes in South Korea and Japan

These findings highlight the contrasting emphases in workcation promotions between South Korea and Japan (see Fig. 1). South Korea, being in the early stages of introducing workcations, focuses strongly on explaining the concept and emphasizing the possibility of working from various locations. This is reflected in their emphasis on work-related facilities, efficiency, and diverse programs. In contrast, Japan, where the workcation concept is more established, prioritizes the value of working in natural environments, regional characteristics, and unique local activities. Japan also emphasizes comprehensive support systems in its workcation offerings. This difference in approach reflects the varying stages of workcation adoption in each country and their unique strategies to leverage respective strengths in the growing workcation market. While South Korea aims to familiarize potential participants with the workcation concept, Japan seeks to differentiate its offerings by highlighting the intrinsic value of working in diverse, nature-rich locations.

3.2 Location-based Workcation Characteristics

The analysis of workcation site characteristics based on location revealed distinct approaches and emphases in South Korea and Japan, reflecting each country's unique geographical assets and strategic focus in attracting workcation participants (see Table 2). In South Korea, a diverse range of locations was promoted for workcations, with tourist areas emerging as the most prominent, accounting for 26.92% of mentions. These destinations were marketed for their ability to blend scenic attractions with work environments, appealing to those seeking a balance between productivity and leisure. Coastal areas and islands were equally emphasized, each representing 23.08% of mentions. Coastal locations highlighted the availability of offices with ocean views and various accommodations that allow participants to work while enjoying nature. Similarly, island destinations focused on specialized workcation programs and tailored office environments set against tranquil island backdrops. Urban locations in South Korea accounted for 17.31% of mentions, promoting unique workcation spaces that capitalize on the convenience and dynamism of city life. While less prominent, inland areas (7.69% of mentions) offered diverse facilities such as libraries, yoga studios, and resorts, aiming to create environments conducive to both work and relaxation. Countryside locations, though mentioned less frequently (1.92%), were presented as options for those seeking peaceful and secluded work environments.

In contrast, Japan's workcation promotion strategy showed a different distribution of location emphasis. City locations dominated, accounting for 38.46% of mentions. These urban destinations were promoted for their comprehensive infrastructure, including coworking spaces, efficient transportation, and modern facilities, particularly in prominent areas like Shinjuku. This focus underscores Japan's emphasis on providing work-friendly environments within its urban centers. Countryside locations in Japan featured prominently, representing 30.77% of mentions. These areas were marketed not only for their serene work environments but also for the support they offer, including relocation assistance and childcare support. The promotion of unique regional activities in these locations highlights Japan's strategy of combining work opportunities with cultural immersion and local experiences. Island destinations in Japan accounted for 26.15% of mentions, with a focus on natural beauty, particularly in places like Okinawa. These locations were promoted as ideal for balancing work with leisure in picturesque, relaxed settings, emphasizing beautiful beaches and island-specific activities.

Table 2. Location-based analysis of workcation characteristics

Location	Korea	Japan
Tourist areas	Blend of scenic attractions and work environments	Not specifically highlighted
Coastal areas	Offices with ocean views; work-nature balance	Not specifically highlighted
Islands	Specialized programs; tailored office environments	Focus on natural beauty (e.g., Okinawa); work-leisure balance
City	Unique urban workcation spaces	Most emphasized; coworking spaces, modern facilities, transportation options
Inland areas	Diverse facilities (libraries, yoga studios, resorts)	Not specifically highlighted
Countryside	Limited mentions; peaceful and secluded environments	Strongly emphasized; relocation support, childcare assistance, unique regional activities

The distribution of location-based characteristics in both countries reflects their respective strengths and strategic approaches to workcation promotion, with some notable similarities and differences. Both South Korea and Japan emphasize urban areas as key workcation destinations, leveraging their existing infrastructure and amenities. However, distinct patterns emerge in their secondary focus areas. South Korea places a strong emphasis on promoting workcations in popular tourist areas, while Japan concentrates more on countryside locations. Recently, there have been initiatives in South Korea to introduce workcations in coastal areas and islands, reflecting a growing interest in diversifying workcation offerings beyond urban centers. In contrast, Japan's approach in non-urban areas tends to prioritize the natural environment over work-specific amenities, with a greater focus on attracting a 'relational population' and encouraging longer-term engagement with local communities. This difference in focus highlights how each country is adapting the workcation concept to its unique geographical and cultural context, as well as to different stages of implementation. While South Korea's strategy aims to blend work with various leisure experiences in established tourist destinations, Japan's approach seeks to leverage its rural appeal to create distinctive workcation experiences that potentially foster deeper connections between participants and local areas.

3.3 Entity-based Workcation Strategies

The analysis of workcation promotion strategies revealed significant differences between private entities and local governments in South Korea and Japan, reflecting diverse approaches to attracting workcation participants (see Table 3). In South Korea, private entities accounted for 30.77% of workcation promotions. These entities focused on offering special workcation programs, coworking spaces, and various discounts to attract participants. A notable feature of their promotions was the emphasis on work environments with ocean views and the promotion of workcation facilities on Jeju Island. Private companies also highlighted both shared and individual workspaces, emphasizing convenience and high-quality services in their accommodations. South Korean local governments played a more prominent role, representing 40.38% of mentions. Their approach centered on promoting work environments integrated with leisure facilities such as libraries, yoga studios, and resorts. Local governments also placed a strong emphasis on regional characteristics, particularly in areas like Ganghwa and Goseong, offering diverse programs and unique regional workcation opportunities.

In Japan, private entities were slightly more prominent, accounting for 39.73% of mentions. Their focus differed from their South Korean counterparts, with a greater emphasis on support services including subsidies, relocation assistance, and childcare support. Japanese private entities also highlighted regional characteristics and unique cultural experiences for workcation participants, including island-specific activities and natural landscapes. Japanese local governments were the most active promoters, representing 43.84% of mentions. Their strategy focused on promoting

workspaces in urban settings while also offering regional workcation opportunities in rural and island areas. These promotions often included information about local culture, unique experiences, and activities such as beach trips, aiming to attract remote workers seeking a balance between work and local exploration.

Table 3. Entity-based analysis of workcation characteristics

Entity	Korea	Japan
Private	Special workcation programs; coworking spaces; discounts; ocean view work environments; Jeju Island facilities; shared and individual workspaces; convenience and services in accommodations	Support services (subsidies, relocation, childcare); regional characteristics; cultural experiences; island activities; natural landscapes
Local Gov.	Integrated work-leisure environments (libraries, yoga studios, resorts); regional characteristics (e.g., Ganghwa, Goseong); diverse regional programs; promotion of local workcation opportunities	Urban workspaces; rural and island workcation offerings; local culture and experiences; beach activities; balance of work and local exploration

This entity-based analysis reveals more similarities than differences between private entities and local governments in both South Korea and Japan, suggesting a cohesive approach to workcation promotion within each country. However, notable distinctions emerge in the strategies employed by the two nations. In South Korea, where the concept of workcation is still relatively new to many, both private and public sectors focus on attracting visitors through diverse programs and substantial discounts. This approach reflects an effort to introduce and popularize the workcation concept among potential participants. In contrast, Japan's promotions, regardless of the entity type, place greater emphasis on cultural experiences unique to each region and the distinct lifestyle offered by non-urban areas. This strategy in Japan leverages the established familiarity with workcations to highlight the qualitative aspects of the experience, particularly the immersion in local culture and alternative lifestyles. These differing approaches underscore how each country is tailoring its workcation offerings to its current market needs and cultural context, with South Korea focusing on building awareness and initial engagement, while Japan aims to deepen the workcation experience through cultural immersion and lifestyle differentiation.

3.4 Comparative Analysis of Workcation Implementation

The implementation of workcation programs in Korea and Japan reveals distinct approaches tailored to each country's unique cultural, economic, and social contexts (see Table 4). Korea's workcation initiatives primarily focus on major cities and popular tourist destinations, with Jeju Island being a prominent example. This approach capitalizes on existing infrastructure and the appeal of well-known locations, making it easier for participants to transition into a workcation lifestyle. The emphasis on urban and established tourist areas suggests a strategy that aims to blend work with traditional vacation experiences. In contrast, Japan leverages the charm of smaller cities and rural areas, offering workcation experiences that highlight the tranquility and cultural richness of less urbanized regions. This approach aligns with a growing trend of "slow tourism" and appeals to those seeking a more immersive, local experience while working remotely. For instance, areas like Fukuoka and Osaka have been promoted as workcation destinations, emphasizing their unique local cultures and slower pace of life.

Korea places significant emphasis on developing coworking spaces, offices, and other work-related infrastructure to support the relatively new concept of workcation. This focus ensures that participants have the necessary resources for productive work, addressing potential concerns about maintaining professional efficiency while away from traditional office environments. The investment in such infrastructure demonstrates Korea's commitment to establishing itself as a viable workcation destination. Japan, with its already well-established work environments, shifts its focus more towards enhancing the overall workcation experience, particularly through the integration of local cultural activities. This

approach suggests a more mature workcation market, where the basics of remote work are already well-catered for, allowing for a greater emphasis on the 'vacation' aspect of workcation.

In terms of service diversity, Korea promotes workcations through various activity programs and experiences, offering a range of options to engage participants. This strategy caters to different interests and work-leisure balance preferences, potentially attracting a wider range of workcation participants. Japan takes a more holistic approach, combining workcations with unique elements such as art, food, and beverage experiences. This strategy caters to those seeking a blend of work and personal enrichment, potentially appealing to a more discerning workcation market that values cultural immersion alongside professional productivity.

Government and local support for workcation initiatives differ between the two countries, reflecting varying levels of institutional recognition and support for this emerging trend. While Korea has introduced workcation and relational population concepts with support from both private entities and local governments, the level of support is less developed compared to Japan. This suggests that Korea is in an earlier stage of workcation adoption, with potential for growth as the concept gains more traction. Japan provides extensive support and benefits to promote workcation activities, including subsidies, relocation assistance, and childcare support. This comprehensive approach significantly enhances the attractiveness and success of their workcation initiatives, potentially serving as a model for other countries looking to fully embrace the workcation concept.

Table 4. Comparative analysis of workcation implementation in Korea and Japan

Category	Korea	Japan
Regional focus	Major cities and popular tourist destinations	Smaller cities and rural areas
Infrastructure emphasis	Developing coworking spaces and work-related facilities	Enhancing overall experience with existing infrastructure
Service diversity	Various activity programs and experiences	Holistic approach integrating local culture, art, food
Government support	Emerging support from both private and public sectors	Extensive support including subsidies and relocation assistance

4. Discussion and Implications

This study's findings offer significant insights into the implementation and promotion of workcations in South Korea and Japan, with particular emphasis on island regions. The results highlight distinct approaches and strategies employed by both countries, reflecting their unique cultural, economic, and social contexts. This section discusses the theoretical and practical implications of these findings, integrates the concept of relational population, and proposes directions for future research.

4.1 Theoretical Implications

The analysis of workcation themes and characteristics in South Korea and Japan aligns with and extends existing theoretical frameworks in tourism and regional development studies. The concept of 'relational population', as outlined by Dilley et al. (2024), provides a useful lens through which to interpret our findings. This concept, which emphasizes sustained engagement without permanent relocation, is particularly relevant to the workcation strategies observed in both countries, especially in their efforts to revitalize island regions.

The differences in implementation strategies between South Korea and Japan can be understood through the lens of institutional theory and the work-leisure nexus (Kozak et al., 2024). South Korea's approach to workcations emphasizes maintaining a work-life balance, focusing on creating work environments in rural areas that are comparable to those in urban centers. This strategy reflects a "work while traveling" mindset, where the primary aim is to ensure productivity in diverse settings (Kozak et al., 2024). The focus on work environments, facilities, and efficiency (35.3% of mentions) in South Korean promotions aligns with the 'work-leisure balance' theory proposed by Pecsek (2018). This theory suggests that successful workcation destinations must offer a harmonious blend of productive work environments and leisure activities.

In contrast, Japan's approach aligns more closely with the concept of "slow tourism," emphasizing the enjoyment of life in natural environments (Matsushita, 2023). The strong emphasis on natural environments and location (43.8% of mentions) and regional characteristics and activities (24.9% of mentions) in Japanese promotions resonates with this concept. Japanese local governments are actively promoting regional migration by highlighting the unique natural surroundings and location-specific activities that can only be experienced in their areas. This approach, which prioritizes immersive local experiences and cultural engagement, appears to be a key strategy in Japan's efforts to revitalize rural and island regions through workcations. It also aligns with the findings of Hannonen (2023), who emphasizes the importance of place in shaping digital nomadic mobilities.

These contrasting approaches reflect the different stages of workcation adoption and the unique cultural contexts of each country. The Japanese model seems to position workcations as a lifestyle choice, integrating work seamlessly into a more nature-oriented, slower-paced life, while the South Korean model appears to prioritize the replication of urban work efficiencies in diverse settings. This variation in approach emphasizes the importance of considering local contexts, cultural values, and institutional structures when developing workcation initiatives.

The emphasis on shared spaces and facilities (25.1% of mentions) in Korean promotions indicates a strategy to create collaborative work environments that cater to the needs of remote workers. This approach resonates with the concept of 'hybrid tourism' discussed by Bassyouny and Wilkesmann (2023), where the boundaries between work and leisure are increasingly blurred.

Overall, these findings contribute to the growing body of literature on workcations and digital nomadism, providing insights into how different cultural and institutional contexts shape the implementation of these concepts. The study also highlights the potential of workcations as a tool for regional revitalization, particularly in island and rural areas facing depopulation challenges (Ji, 2024; Zollet & Qu, 2024).

4.2 Practical Implications

Our findings offer several practical implications for policymakers and stakeholders in South Korea, particularly in island regions seeking to develop effective workcation initiatives. By examining Japan's approach, we can identify key areas for improvement and adaptation in the Korean context. Firstly, while South Korea has focused on replicating urban work environments in rural settings, there is an opportunity to leverage unique regional characteristics more effectively. As demonstrated by Japan's emphasis on natural environments (43.8% of mentions) and regional activities (24.9%), Korean policymakers should consider highlighting the distinctive natural and cultural assets of their island regions. This could involve developing integrated marketing campaigns that showcase scenic coastlines alongside state-of-the-art coworking spaces, appealing to workers seeking a balance between productivity and island life (Matsushita, 2023). Secondly, South Korea could benefit from developing more comprehensive support systems for workcation participants,

similar to Japan's approach. This could include creating specialized visa programs for island regions, offering tax incentives, and implementing local integration programs to foster deeper connections between workcation participants and local communities. Such initiatives could help address the challenges of depopulation and aging in rural areas, as discussed by Takahashi et al. (2024).

Thirdly, the strong emphasis on work environments and facilities in South Korea (35.3% of mentions) highlights the need for robust digital infrastructure in potential workcation destinations. While this is important, Korean policymakers should also consider investing in experiences that offer physical and mental development, such as wellness activities or cultural immersion programs. This approach aligns with the findings of Shin et al. (2024), who identify multiple dimensions of workcation experiences, including relaxing, improvised, autonomous, and localized experiences. Lastly, South Korea could explore the development of a "Workcation Certification System" for businesses and accommodations, ensuring high-quality standards for remote work facilities and services. This could help build confidence among potential workcation participants and encourage local businesses to adapt to this new market segment (Voll et al., 2023). By incorporating these elements from Japan's approach, South Korea can enhance its workcation offerings, potentially leading to more sustainable development in island regions and a more diverse, resilient tourism industry.

4.3 Future Research Directions

This study opens up several avenues for future research while also highlighting the potential of workcations as a tool for building a relational population in island regions. The concept of relational population, as suggested by Zollet and Qu (2024), aligns well with the emphasis on regional characteristics and cultural experiences observed in our findings, particularly in Japan. This approach has the potential to address the challenges of depopulation and aging in rural and island areas, as discussed by Takahashi et al. (2024). However, our data also reveal challenges in fully implementing this concept. The limited mention of community integration in workcation promotions suggests a need for more explicit strategies to foster long-term engagement with local populations.

To address these gaps and further develop the field, we propose several directions for future research. Firstly, long-term impact assessments are needed to examine the effects of workcation initiatives on local economies, community dynamics, and population trends in island regions. These studies should also explore strategies for fostering deeper connections between workcation participants and local communities, potentially through mentorship programs or cultural exchange initiatives. Such research could build on the work of Yan et al. (2023), who explore the spatial restructuring effects of urban-to-rural migration, while also addressing the importance of community integration highlighted by Kurochkina (2022).

Secondly, in-depth research focusing on the experiences and perspectives of workcation participants could provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of different promotional strategies and program designs. This could extend the work of Lee et al. (2024), who investigate the managerial effects of workcations on digital nomad employees. Understanding participant experiences is crucial for refining and improving workcation offerings. Thirdly, future research could explore the development of personalized workcation recommendation services based on individual preferences and work styles. This could involve analyzing how different personality traits, work requirements, and leisure preferences influence the choice of workcation destinations. Such research could leverage emerging technologies and data analytics to create more tailored and effective workcation experiences. Lastly, studies examining the effectiveness of policy measures such as specialized visa programs, tax incentives, or infrastructure investments in promoting workcation

adoption and community development would be valuable. These studies could provide concrete evidence to guide policymakers in designing and implementing supportive measures for workcation initiatives in island regions.

5. Conclusion

This study set out to address a significant knowledge gap in understanding the factors that influence workcation providers' decisions, with a particular focus on island regions. By conducting a comparative analysis of promotional materials from South Korea and Japan, we aimed to identify key considerations and best practices that could be adapted to the South Korean context, especially in island areas. Our research employed advanced text analysis techniques, including LDA and cluster analysis, to uncover significant themes in workcation attraction strategies and highlight the differences and similarities between the two countries.

Our findings illuminate the distinct approaches to workcation implementation in South Korea and Japan, reflecting their unique cultural contexts and stages of adoption. While South Korea focuses on maintaining work efficiency in diverse settings, Japan embraces a more holistic approach that integrates work into a nature-oriented lifestyle. This contrast highlights the importance of aligning workcation strategies with local cultural values and institutional structures. For the successful implementation of workcations in Korean island regions, a balanced approach is crucial. This approach should harmonize the strengths of Korea's work culture with the immersive experiences offered by island environments. By thoughtfully blending high-quality work infrastructure with the unique natural and cultural assets of the islands, Korea can create a distinctive workcation model. This model should not merely replicate urban work environments but rather offer a transformative experience that enhances both productivity and quality of life. Furthermore, fostering collaboration between government entities, private sector stakeholders, and local communities will be essential in creating a sustainable and appealing workcation ecosystem. By adapting these elements while staying true to its cultural identity, South Korea can develop a workcation offering that not only attracts remote workers but also contributes to the revitalization and long-term sustainability of its island regions.

While this study provides valuable insights, it is important to acknowledge its limitations. Our analysis was based solely on promotional materials, which may not fully reflect the actual experiences of workcation participants or the complex dynamics of tourism development. Additionally, the focus on two countries may limit the generalizability of the findings to other cultural contexts. Future research should address these limitations by conducting long-term impact assessments of workcation initiatives on local economies and community dynamics. In-depth studies of workcation participants' experiences and perspectives would provide a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon.

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