

Present State of Geoparks on the Twitter. -Prospective study based on Social Network Analysis-

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As of January 2017, there were 43 geoparks in Japan, of which 8 are designated as UNESCO global geoparks. Various activities are conducted in these geoparks, such as those for ecotourism and product development. However, in many geoparks, these activities did not contribute to sustained regional development.

Itoh *et al.* (2015) used an Internet questionnaire to investigate the level of awareness of geoparks, finding that people's awareness of geoparks is generally low and they also do not have a definitive image of Geoparks.

Recently, an information marketing business that analyzes big data on social networking sites (SNS) such as Twitter and LINE was developed. It is used in various fields to investigate such as corporate image and risk management of the corporate.

In this study, we investigated the word of "Geopark" is how tweeted and shared on SNS using the big data analysis provided by Valway121 net Ltd.

Over the three-week measurement period from December 7 to 21, 2016, 20,000 cases per day were analyzed. In addition to "GeoPark," "ecopark" and "world heritage site" were included in the search conditions, and the results were compared.

During the measurement period, the number of hits for geopark was 1,049, while those for ecopark and world heritage site were 63 and 2,753 respectively, indicating a significantly higher number of hits for the latter. Furthermore, the number of hits for geopark rose to 172 on December 9, 2016, which was attributed to the announcement by the Japan Geopark Committee (JBC) of the recertification examination results on the same day.

Most geopark influencers are geopark stakeholders such as "izugeo." In contrast, many individual world heritage enthusiasts, travel lovers, and bot systems rank highly for world heritage. Furthermore, the number of followers of these Twitter accounts is more than 10 times that of the geopark stakeholders, and a tendency to transmit the same information repeatedly was recognized.

On the other hand, in terms of the characteristics of comments on geoparks, geopark stakeholders mostly describe events and geosites, and the number of retweets was not that high. In addition, the number of comments by people other than the stakeholders was extremely small. In other words, on SNS, geoparks are considered to form a closed system comprising their stakeholders and a few geopark enthusiasts.

Keywords: Geopark, twitter, SNS analysis, ecopark, World Heritage