

I. Film Exhibition at Theaters

Comparison with Foreign Countries [2019]

* The data of foreign countries are from:

The United States of America (and Canada) : Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA)

"Theatrical Home Entertainment Market Environment (THEME) Report"

France : Centre National du Cinema et de l'Image Animée (CNC) "Bilan du CNC"

The United Kingdom : British Film Institute (BFI) "Statistical Yearbook"

Germany : Filmförderungsanstalt (FFA) "FFA Info"

Australia : Screen Australia "Fact Finders"

Korea : Korean Film Council 영화진흥위원회 (KOFIC) "Korean Film Industry"

Japan : "Film Almanac 2019" "Statistics: Various Statistics of the Major Countries of the World" (Kinema Jumbo-sha)

As of the end of January 2021, the statistics of foreign countries have not been released online. Below is the comparison of the statistics in Japan and other countries (the USA/Canada, France, the UK [United Kingdom], Germany, Korea, and Australia). There was not much change between 2018 and 2019, and the below description is often the same as the prior year's.

Attendance

Before we compare the film exhibition environments, we have to take the fact into consideration that Japan's population has been decreasing unlike these other seven countries during the last 10 years. During these years, the USA/Canada, France, Korea, and the UK have each increased their population by about 5%, and Australia has by 16%. In contrast, Japan has decreased its population annually and during the last 10 years between 2011 and 2020, by about 1.5%.

In 2019, attendance in the USA and Canada together was the largest, followed by the attendance of Korea, France, the UK, Japan, Germany, and Australia in this order. During the last 10 years, Korea, which attendance in 2019 was increased largely from that in 2018, has increased its attendance by more than 50%. In 2019, Japan showed the largest attendance since 2000, and during the last 10 years, its increase was by 12%. The increase/decrease in other 5 countries were all by less than 10%. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, the increase of online streaming had not influenced the number of the people who went to see films at theaters.

The number of films a person went to see annually (the attendance divided by the population) in Korea was the highest at 4.4 films. 3.4 films of the USA/Canada followed this, then, 3.3 films of France and Australia each, 2.6 films of the UK, 1.5 films of Japan, and 1.4 films of Germany. Japan's number of people who went to see films at theaters was lower than others, and there is room for more audiences. In Japan, there are many communities with no movie houses, and there are a considerable number of people who watch films at public halls, etc., rather than at regular movie houses. If we take this into consideration, we realize that we do not know the exact numbers.

fig.16 Comparison with Foreign Countries [Attendance from 2010 to 2019]

	the USA/Canada*	Korea	France	the UK	Germany	Australia	Japan
Population (2019)	366.04 million	51.71 million.	64.82 million	66.8 million	83.07 million	25.52 million	126.17 million
2010	1,340,000	149,180	207,100	169,200	126,600	92,000	174,358
2011	1,280,000	159,720	217,200	171,600	129,600	85,000	144,726
2012	1,360,000	194,890	203,600	172,500	135,100	85,900	155,159
2013	1,340,000	213,350	193,700	165,500	129,700	82,000	155,888
2014	1,270,000	215,060	209,100	157,500	121,700	78,600	161,116
2015	1,320,000	217,290	205,400	171,900	139,200	90,300	166,630
2016	1,320,000	217,020	213,200	168,300	121,100	91,300	180,189
2017	1,240,000	219,870	209,400	170,600	122,300	85,000	174,483
2018	1,300,000	216,390	201,200	177,000	105,400	89,800	169,210
2019	1,240,000	226,680	213,000	176,100	118,600	84,700	194,910
2010→2019	93%	152%	103%	104%	94%	92%	112%

multiply by 1,000

fig.17 Comparison with Foreign Countries [Number of Films A Person Went to See Annually from 2010 to 2019]

	the USA/Canada*	Korea	France	the UK	Germany	Australia	Japan
2010	3.9	3.0	3.3	2.7	1.5	4.1	1.4
2011	3.7	3.2	3.4	2.7	1.6	3.8	1.1
2012	3.9	3.9	3.2	2.7	1.7	3.8	1.2
2013	3.8	4.2	3.0	2.6	1.6	3.5	1.2
2014	3.6	4.2	3.3	2.4	1.5	3.4	1.3
2015	3.7	4.3	3.2	2.6	1.7	3.8	1.3
2016	3.7	4.2	3.3	2.6	1.5	3.7	1.4
2017	3.4	4.3	3.2	2.6	1.5	3.4	1.4
2018	3.6	4.2	3.1	2.7	1.3	3.6	1.3
2019	3.4	4.4	3.3	2.6	1.4	3.3	1.5

Numbers of Theaters and Screens

In all seven countries, the number of screens during the last 10 years increased. Korea's number, in particular, increased by more than 50% and 1,000 screens, the UK's increase was 22%, and both France and Australia increased by more than 10%. It is presumed that the increase in multi-screen theaters is behind these increases, similar to the situation in Japan.

The number of screens was highest in the USA, which was 41,172, more than 10 times of 3,627 in Japan.

When the population per screen (the population divided by the number of screen) is lower, it means that there are more screens near you. The population per screen in Japan was 34,785, and this means that there were much fewer screens compared with those in other countries. The USA's number of screens was the highest, and the population per screen was 7,972. In France, the population per screen was 10,602. In all 6 countries other than Japan, the population per screen was roughly between 10,000 and 20,000. In Japan, the number of movie houses was one fourth of that in the USA, one third of that in France, and one half of that in Korea. The low average number of films a person went to see annually in Japan was related to the low number of screens.

fig.18 Comparison with Foreign Countries [Number of Screens (2010-2019)]

	the USA	France	Germany	the UK	Korea	Australia	Japan
2010	39,547	5,478	4,699	3,671	2,003	1,994	3,412
2011	39,580	5,467	4,640	3,767	1,974	1,991	3,339
2012	39,662	5,508	4,617	3,817	2,081	1,997	3,290
2013	40,024	5,588	4,610	3,867	2,184	2,057	3,318
2014	39,956	5,647	4,637	3,909	2,281	2,041	3,364
2015	40,006	5,741	4,692	4,046	2,424	2,080	3,437
2016	40,174	5,842	4,739	4,150	2,575	2,121	3,476
2017	40,393	5,913	4,803	4,264	2,766	2,210	3,530
2018	40,575	5,983	4,849	4,340	2,937	2,278	3,591
2019	41,172	6,114	4,961	4,480	3,079	2,310	3,627
2010→2019	104%	112%	106%	122%	154%	116%	106%

fig.19 Comparison with Foreign Countries [Number of Theaters (2010-2019)]

	the USA	France	Germany	the UK	Korea	Australia	Japan
2015	—	2,033	1,648	751	388	493	580
2016	—	2,044	1,654	766	417	498	584
2017	—	2,046	1,672	774	452	513	587
2018	—	2,040	1,672	775	483	520	584
2019	—	2,045	1,734	808	513	524	593
2015→2019	—	101%	105%	108%	132%	106%	102%

fig.20 Comparison with Foreign Countries [Population per Screen (2019)]

	the USA	France	Germany	the UK	Korea	Australia	Japan
Population (thousand)	328,240	64,821	83,073	66,797	51,709	25,522	126,167
Screens	41,172	6,114	4,961	4,480	3,079	2,310	3,627
Population per screen	7,972	10,602	16,745	14,910	16,794	11,049	34,785

fig.21 Comparison with Foreign Countries [Attendance per Screen (2010-2019)]

	the USA	France	Germany	the UK	Korea	Australia	Japan
2010	—	37,806	26,942	46,091	74,478	46,138	51,101
2011	—	39,729	27,931	45,553	80,912	42,692	43,344
2012	—	36,964	29,261	45,193	93,652	43,015	47,161
2013	—	34,664	28,134	42,798	97,688	39,864	46,983
2014	—	37,029	26,245	40,292	94,283	38,511	47,894
2015	—	35,778	29,668	42,486	89,641	43,413	48,481
2016	—	36,494	25,554	40,554	84,280	43,046	51,838
2017	—	35,413	25,463	40,009	79,490	38,462	49,429
2018	—	33,629	21,736	40,783	73,677	39,421	47,121
2019	—	34,838	23,906	39,308	73,621	36,667	53,739

Box Office Income [2018]

In 2018, the box office income in Japan was the third largest, coming after the USA/Canada and China. The theater ticket price in Japan was in average 1,315 yen (that in 2020 was 1,350 yen), relatively higher than that of other countries, and this is the reason why box office income in Japan was high. On the other hand, the high admission is also considered to be the reason why the number of films a person went to see at theaters has not increased. However, the average ticket price in Australia and the UK was each equal to more than 1,000 yen, while their average number of films a person went to see at theaters were: 3.3 films for Australia; and 2.6 films for the UK, much higher than that of Japan.

Attendance and Box Office Income Per Screen

The number of the annual attendance per screen (the annual attendance divided by the number of screen) was highest in Korea, which was 73,621, followed by Japan, which number was 53,739. Japan's yearly box office income per screen was about 63,030,000 yen, which was the highest among all of the 7 countries. Compared with other countries, Japan's number of screen was low while its theater admission was high, making the numbers of annual attendance per screen and the box office income high.

The numbers of the annual attendance per screen and the box office income per screen in each country were both lower than those of ten years ago, except in Japan. While the number of screens has increased, the size of the audience has not. During the last 10 years, in the UK, the number of screens increased by more than 20%, and the attendance per screen decreased by more than 6,000; and the number of screens in Australia increased by 16%, and the attendance per screening decreased by close to 10,000. In 2019, the box office income was high in Japan and the attendance per screen increased by more than 20,000. The box office income per screen in the USA and Canada together was 28,550,000 yen; in France, it was 28,590,000 yen; in Germany, it was 26,610,000 yen; and these were less than half of that of Japan. The highest in all of Europe and North America was the UK's 43,180,000 yen.

fig.22 Comparison with Foreign Countries [Theater Admission and Box Office Income (2018)]

	Average Admission (yen)	Box Office Income (x1 million yen)	Attendance (x1 million)	# of Screens	Box Office Income Per Screen (x10,000 yen)
the USA & Canada	999	1,241,912	1,243	43,500	2,855
China	594	1,020,261	1,717	60,079	1,698
the UK	1,073	189,957	177	4,399	4,318
France	867	170,973	197	5,981	2,859
India	112	163,989	1,463	9,610	1,706
Korea	677	146,555	216	2,937	4,990
Germany	1,114	117,388	105	4,411	2,661
Australia	1,143	102,633	90	2,278	4,505
Mexico	295	98,105	332	7,106	1,381
Brazil	453	73,886	163	3,347	2,208
Sweden	1,516	24,861	16	844	2,946
Japan	1,315	222,511	169	3,530	6,303

The Ratio of Multi-Screen Theaters

The ratio of multi-screen theaters has consistently increased since 2011 in each country. The ratio of multi-screen theaters was highest in Korea with 93.7%, 2,885 screens out of Korea's nationwide total of 3,079 screens. The total number of screens of other types theaters was constantly decreasing in Korea but began to increase in 2014 and by more than 60 screens between 2015 and 2019. The number of these theaters increased from 99 in 2018 to 106 in 2019. In Japan, other types of theaters increased by 14 screens and 5 theaters from 2018 to 2019.

Multi-screen theaters have occupied a major place in each country. However, the number of these theaters in France and the UK are not so high compared with the numbers in the three other countries (the USA, Korea and Japan). Particularly in France, the ratio of multi-screen theater was as low as 43.6%, and the number of multi-screen theaters was 232, while that of other types theaters was 1,814, much more than the former. (In France, the definition of a multi-screen theater is the one with 8 screens and more, while that of other countries is the one with 5 screens and more. This difference affects France's statistics.) In France, there were 2,045 theaters, close to four times as many as the 593 theaters in Japan, making people feel that they are close to diverse types of theaters even in middle- and small-sized cities, towns, and villages.

fig.23 Comparison with Foreign Countries [Ratio of Multi-screen Theaters and Their Number of Screens (2011~2019)]

		2011	2013	2015	2017	2019
the USA	# of Screens	39,580	40,024	40,006	40,393	—
	# of multi-screen	33,010	33,537	35,299	35,950	—
	Ratio	83.4%	83.8%	88.2%	89.0%	—
France	# of Screens	5,467	5,589	5,741	5,913	6,114
	# of multi-screen	2,026	2,171	2,330	2,505	2,666
	Ratio	38.8%	38.8%	40.6%	42.4%	43.6%
the UK	# of Screens	3,767	3,867	4,046	4,264	4,480
	# of multi-screen	2,833	2,915	3,096	3,334	3,666
	Ratio	75.2%	75.4%	76.5%	78.2%	81.8%
Korea	# of Screens	1,974	2,184	2,424	2,763	3,079
	# of multi-screen	1,857	2,072	2,292	2,602	2,885
	Ratio	94.1%	94.9%	94.6%	94.2%	93.7%
Japan	# of Screens	3,339	3,270	3,467	3,531	3,627
	# of multi-screen	2,774	2,764	3,035	3,109	3,197
	Ratio	83.1%	84.5%	87.5%	88.0%	88.1%

fig.24 Comparison with Foreign Countries [Ratio of Multi-Screen Theaters and Their Number of Theaters (2018-2019)]

	2018		2019		
	Multi-screen Theaters	Others	Total	Multi-screen Theaters	Others
France	226	1,814	2,040	232	1,813
the UK	353	422	775	389	419
Korea	384	99	483	407	106
Japan	352	232	584	356	237

Number of Films Released

In Japan and Korea, the numbers of films released in 2019 was each more than 1,000; particularly in Korea, where as many as 1,740 films were released.

Only in France and Japan, the domestic film share was more than 50%. In Japan, from the late 1980s to the early 2000s, many more foreign films were released than Japanese films. However, since 2008, more Japanese films have been released than foreign films. During the last several years, the number of foreign films released has been also increasing. In 2019, the ratio between Japanese and foreign films released matched the ratio of their box office incomes at 54% vs. 46%. This proportion was well balanced compared with that of other countries. (In 2020, due to the spread of COVID-19, the releases of many Hollywood films have been postponed, and its balance was drastically broken, making the ratio of the box office income of Japanese and foreign films 76.3% vs. 23.7%.)

fig.25 Comparison with Foreign Countries [Number of Films Released (2011-2018)]

		2011	2013	2015	2017	2019	Domestic Films	Foreign Films
France	# of Films	588	654	652	693	677	391	286
							58%	42%
	Attendance (x1,000)	217,200	193,700	205,400	209,400	213,000		
	Attendance per Film	369,388	296,177	315,031	302,165	314,623		
Germany	# of Films	532	563	596	587	606	252	354
							42%	58%
	Attendance (x1,000)	129,600	129,700	139,200	122,300	118,600		
	Attendance per Film	243,609	230,373	233,557	208,348	195,710		
the UK	# of Films	558	698	759	760	764	191	573
							25%	75%
	Attendance (x1,000)	171,600	165,500	171,900	170,600	176,100		
	Attendance per Film	307,527	237,106	226,482	224,474	230,497		
Korea	# of Films	439	905	1,176	1,621	1,740	502	1,238
							29%	71%
	Attendance (x1,000)	159,720	213,350	217,290	219,870	226,680		
	Attendance per Film	363,827	235,746	184,770	135,638	130,276		
Australia	# of Films	342	421	539	694	754	59	695
							8%	92%
	Attendance (x1,000)	85,000	82,000	90,300	85,000	84,700		
	Attendance per Film	248,538	194,774	167,532	122,478	112,334		
Japan	# of Films	799	1,117	1,136	1,187	1,278	689	589
							54%	46%
	Attendance (x1,000)	144,726	155,888	166,630	174,483	194,910		
	Attendance per Film	181,134	139,560	146,681	146,995	152,512		

Long-Term Public Support of Movie Houses

When we compare the situation of the movie houses in Japan with that in foreign countries, various questions come up. Why is the number of movie houses in Japan much smaller than that in foreign countries? How do the movie houses in other countries survive while their attendance per screen is much smaller than that in Japan?

In Europe, a movie house is not necessarily a commercial theater (like the ones in Japan running films 5-6 times daily). Among the theaters in Germany included in the “Film Exhibition Activities Almanac 2016,” there are theaters that close one day per week, and at some other theaters, when they are open, they run films only 2-3 times a day. Many run films only from Friday to Sunday operated by volunteer staff. In France, the UK, the USA, and Korea, movie houses have diverse forms.

In every country outside of Japan, there are organizations administering the film industry and film culture (CNC in France, BFI in the UK, FFA in Germany, KOFIC in Korea, etc.), and they get involved with every sphere in film including production, distribution, theater operation (exhibition), education and preservation. As for the film exhibition activities, their support systems cover a variety of levels and types of assistance including screenings at big-scale commercial movie houses, multi-screen theaters, mini-theaters, cinemathèques and independent screening, together offering a highly diverse mix of films. In Europe, there is the support system by Europa Cinema, a cultural organization under the EU.

Public support and promotional policies should cover more than mere financial support. The movie houses receiving public supports are expected to present diverse activities including programming emphasizing their relationship with the community and other cultural organizations, development of the young audiences, and film educational projects. Programmers responsible for these projects are also nourished. It inspires theaters and film exhibitors to increase their cultural profiles and sustainability in their communities.

In 2020, during the emergency situation caused by the worldwide COVID-19 pandemic, the film administration organizations like CNC, BFI, and KOFIC initiated policies protecting movie houses and exhibitors. First, they handled an urgent situation by paying their grant money earlier than was scheduled. Next, they planned, enacted, and executed the support programs needed by movie houses and exhibitors in association with agencies and ministries corresponding to the Japanese Agency of Cultural Affairs and Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare.

The COVID-19 pandemic exposed the situation in Japan that there are no organizations or systems to support the movie houses and public exhibitions like community cinemas. This caused a strong sense of anxiety and crisis among people working in film and film fans. Projects such as “SAVE the CINEMA” and Mini-Theater Aid Fund started as movements to protect mini-theaters. Recently, these projects have been shifting direction to protect and promote film culture and establish organizations and systems beyond that of just the mini-theaters. This has become one of the good legacies from the COVID-19 pandemic and we hope that their goals will be realized before long.