

3.Comparison with Foreign Countries [2021]

As of the end of January 2023, the statistics of foreign countries have not been released online. Below is the comparison of the statistics in Japan and other countries (the USA [United States of America]/Canada, France, the UK [United Kingdom], Germany, Korea, and Australia) from 2021. These countries were under the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020-2021.

Theater Attendance

In 2020-2021, the Japanese film industry was gravely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, however, movie theater operations in other countries were even more seriously damaged. In Japan in 2021, the attendance recovered to 59% compared with that in 2019, however, the attendance in other countries remained less than 50%.

In comparison of the attendance in 2021 with that in 2019, the USA and Canada together showed the damage by a 62% decrease to 38%, Germany's was 35%, Holland's 37%, France's 45%, UK's 42%, and Australia's 47%. Korean was damaged most seriously and dropped to just 27% of that in 2019.

Movie theaters in New York in the USA were closed for almost one year from March 2020 to spring of 2021. In France, the government took lockdown measures in March 2020 causing movie theaters to be closed nationwide. Until mid-May 2021, the theaters repeatedly opened and closed. The situations in other European countries such as the UK and Germany were similar and in 2021, they were still in the middle of the COVID-19 pandemic and had not recover. In Korea, not all theaters were closed, however, the prevention measures continued, and it has been taking time to recover movie-goer's attendance.

The number of films a person went to see annually (the attendance divided by the population) was in each country largely decreased: in Korea, the decrease was the greatest, falling to 1.2 films (4.4 films in 2019), that of USA/Canada was 1.3 films (3.4 films in 2019), that of France was 1.5 films (3.3 films in 2019), that of Australia was 1.6 films (3.3 films in 2019), and that of the UK was 1.1 films (2.6 in 2019), all showing low numbers compared with those before the COVID-19 pandemic spread.

[fig.17/18 Comparison With Foreign Countries \[Attendance\] \(2012-2021\)](#)

Numbers of Theaters and Screens

In all seven countries, the number of screens until 2019 increased because of the increase of multi-screen theaters, however, in 2020, the number in each country decreased (except France and Japan whose number of screens slightly increased). Despite the concerns of the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, the numbers in these countries except for the USA and the UK, slightly increased in 2021. In the countries with increases, the policies to support movie theater operations were implemented in various ways.

In Japan, a number of movements began to emerge in order to encourage movie theaters and to ask for public support of the movie theaters and exhibitors such as Mini-Theater Aid Fund and SAVE the CINEMA. Similarly in other countries, filmmakers and film fans were engaged in activities to support movie theaters, and theaters themselves have endeavored to survive by employing various measures, leading the theater minimizing theater closings.

The number of screens in 2021 was 40,578 in the USA, which was much higher than those of other countries, followed by 6,193 in France, 4,931 in Germany and 4,620 in the UK.

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 34,088, and this means that there were much fewer screens compared with those in other countries. The USA's population per screen was 9,121, and France's population per screen was 10,597. In all 7 countries other than Japan, the population per screen was roughly between 10,000 and 20,000. In Japan, the number of screens was one fourth of that in the USA, one third of that in France, and one half of that in Germany and Korea.

[fig.19/20/21 Comparison with Foreign Countries \[Number of Screens\] \(2012-2021\)](#)

Box Office Income/Admission Price

What was noteworthy in 2020 was China's rise to the top position in box-office incomes exceeding the USA/Canada. In 2021, the theater attendance in the USA/Canada did not recover due to the COVID-19 pandemic, showing the big gap from that in China. In 2021, the box office income in Japan was the third largest, coming after China and the USA/Canada.

Another important change was the average theater ticket price increase in all countries, compared with that in 2020. Inflation is one factor, and it is also possible that seniors stayed home due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and their contributions to the average ticket price had occupied a significant portion of the ticket sales market, thus, the senior discounts were not reflected. In Japan, the ticket price was on average 1,410 yen, relatively higher than that of other countries, and this is one 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.

[fig.22 Comparison With Foreign Countries \[Attendance Per Screen\] \(2012-2021\)](#)

Attendance and Box Office Income Per Screen

In all the countries, the number of the annual attendance per screen (the annual attendance divided by the number of screens) became less than a half, compared with that in 2019. In Japan, the number was 28,928 in 2020, 54% of 53,739 in 2019. In 2021, the number increased to 31,141, 58% of that in 2019.

The box office income per screen in 2021 was highest in Japan, whose number was 44,390,000 yen (61% of that in 2019). This was due to the fact that there were a lower number of screens in Japan compared with those in other countries, and its admission prices were higher than those in other countries, making its attendance and box office income per screen higher. In 2021, the box office income per screen in the USA and Canada together was 11,130,000 yen; in France, it was 12,890,000 yen; in Germany, it was 10,480,000 yen; and these were roughly one third of that of Japan. The box office income per screen in these countries remained less than 50% of that in 2019. The operation for movie theaters remained challenging.

[fig.23 Comparison With Foreign Countries Admissions and Box Office Income \(2020\)](#)

The Ratio of Multi-Screen Theaters

In France and Korea, theater attendance dramatically dropped due to the COVID-19 pandemic, however, the numbers of theaters and screens have not largely changed. In 2020-2021, they were slightly increasing.

The ratio of multi-screen theaters was highest in Korea with 3,063 screens out of its nationwide total of 3,254 screens, occupying 94.0%. Their number of screens increased by 200 during the last year. In Japan, the multi-screen theaters share was also high at 88.1%.

In France, the ratio of the number of screens of multi-screen theaters was as low as 44.4%, and the number of multi-screen theaters was 240, while that of other types of theaters was 1,788, much more than the former. (In France, the definition of a multi-screen theater is one with 8 screens or more, while that of other countries is one with 5-7 screens or more. This difference affects France's statistics.) 1,305 theaters among the above were recognized as "Cinema d'art et d'essai (Art house cinema, similar to the mini-theaters in Japan) screening diverse films different from multi-screen theater programming, and financially supported by the national and local governments. In addition, there were 2,028 theaters in France, more than 3 times as many as the 596 theaters in Japan. 73% of middle- and small-sized cities, towns and villages each

have a movie house, making people feel that they are close to diverse types of film programming.

[fig.24/25 Comparison with Foreign Countries \[Ratio of Multi-Screen Theaters of Number of Screens\] \(2017-2021\)](#)

Number of Films Released

In France, Germany, and Australia, the number of released films in 2020 each became about a half of that in the year before, however, their numbers recovered to 60~70% in 2021. On the other hand, Korea released 1,693 films in 2020 and 1,637 films in 2021, almost same as that in 2019. Their number of attendance per film remained less than 30% of that in 2019.

In Japan, the ratio between Japanese and foreign films released in 2019 matched the ratio of their box office incomes at 54% vs. 46%. This proportion was well balanced, and dependence on Hollywood films was lower compared with other countries, therefore, when the releases of many Hollywood films were postponed in 2020, its impact was kept low. However, the balance between domestic and foreign box-office incomes was drastically broken, making the ratio of the box office income of Japanese and foreign films 76.3% vs. 23.7% in 2020. In 2021, the gap was widened to 79.3% vs. 20.7%.

[fig.26 Comparison with Foreign Countries \[Number of Films Released\] \(2012-2021\)](#)

Long-Term Public Support System to Theaters

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, preservation, broadcasting and streaming. 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, cinematheques, and independent screening, together offering highly diverse films.

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

During the emergency situation caused by the worldwide COVID-19 pandemic, film

administration organizations like CNC, BFI, and KOFIC initiated policies protecting movie houses and exhibitors.

In Japan, there is no such support, and more than 130 mini-theaters nationwide are operated independently, not only in big cities, but also in mid-sized and small cities, and this situation in Japan is seen abroad as a “miracle.” However, this miracle will not continue forever. During the last 20 years, around 300 movie houses closed, and cities, towns and villages without a movie house has been spreading. The small-sized movie theaters’ operations are approaching their limitations supported by their worker’s sense of devotion and sacrifices. We have to re-examine the film promotional policies, and supports to movie theaters and assistance programs responding to the film exhibitors are eagerly expected.

* 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"
<https://www.motionpictures.org/research-policy/>

France : Centre National du Cinema et de l'Image Animee (CNC)
 "Bilan du CNC"
<https://www.cnc.fr/professionnels/etudes-et-rapports/bilans>

The United Kingdom : British Film Institute (BFI)
 "Statistical Yearbook"
<https://www.bfi.org.uk/industry-data-insights/statistical-yearbook>

Germany : Filmförderungsanstalt (FFA)
 "FFA Info"
<http://www.ffa.de/studien-und-publikationen.html>

Australia : Screen Australia
 "Fact Finders"
<https://www.screenaustralia.gov.au/fact-finders/>

Korea : Korean Film Council 영화진흥위원회 (KOFIC)
 "Korean Film Industry"
<http://www.koreanfilm.or.kr/eng/publications/books.jsp>

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