A Way to Attract Digital Nomads to Tourist Destinations in the New Normal Era

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Abstract: In the new normal era, digital nomads are poised to play a pivotal role in driving innovation and revitalizing local economies. Their unique lifestyle and skillset can contribute to positive social and cultural changes, making them valuable assets in shaping the future of work and society. This study explores the characteristics of digital nomads based on remote work and seeks policy ways to attract digital nomads to tourist attractions. Focus group interviews (FGIs) were intended to establish policies related to digital nomads’ tourist sites in the new normal era and to provide implications for strategies to revitalize digital nomads. Each FGI’s panel consists of eight people working for working-level officials, government officials, and public organizations, and it was held three times in about two months, from January to February 2023. FGIs consist of four areas: ‘activating local tourism’, ‘digital transformation’, ‘development of wellness contents’, and ‘creating a settlement environment’. Moreover, eight strategic topics and 24 strategic tasks were derived from each strategic category. Seeking regional attraction strategies for digital nomads is meaningful in responding to paradigm shifts in the new normal era and exploring sustainable local ecosystems.

Keywords: digital nomad; new normal; tourist destination; digital transformation; FGI

1. Introduction

The non-face-to-face society caused by COVID-19 triggered the new normal trend by changing the social structure, which is not a temporary phenomenon [1–3]. New normal trends are accelerating from various service industries, such as distribution, healthcare, education, etc., to the digital economy via mobile/online [4,5]. Companies also try to perform remote work in earnest for resource efficiency and risk management [6,7]. As corporate work processes and decisions become platforms based on online networks [8,9], remote work is becoming a new working culture [10]. According to the “Survey of office workers on telecommuting after COVID-19” conducted by JobKorea [11] in 2020, 62.3% of office workers have experience in telecommuting, and 67.7% of those with experience are satisfied. Along with these changes, the new normal trend led to the emergence of “digital nomads” [12–14].

Digital nomad refers to people engaged in web design, programming, and online marketing but are not constrained by their workspace while freely choosing a workplace [15,16]. Digital nomads are expanding from some IT (information technology) companies to a new cultural form of general manufacturing and service companies as remote work becomes popular [17]. With the emergence of various regional challenges, such as population decline due to low birth rates and aging, establishing a sustainable regional ecosystem through tourism has become a pressing social concern [18–20]. In response to this regional crisis, global efforts are being made to attract digital nomads by leveraging local resources [21]. Countries worldwide are also creating visas to attract digital nomads, while more and more countries are building digital nomads villages linked to tourism [22]. The United Arab
Emirates (UAE) has recently established a Remote Work Visa (remote working visa) that allows remote workers to live for one year and is attracting professionals such as software engineers [23]. This visa provides residence ID cards to those on a visa and allows them to use most public services. In addition, local income tax payments can be exempted while legally renting accommodation or opening a bank account [24].

Academic research on digital nomads has included conceptual, essential, and applied studies. The former are studies on digital nomads’ characteristics and lifestyles [13,15,24,25], psychological foundations, and behavioral orientations [16,23,26,27]. The latter are studies on digital nomads’ digital work systems and environments [28–31], leisure and tourism behaviors, and other interests [12,32–35]. Nevertheless, more research is needed on utilizing digital nomads in the region, reflecting the new normal era, and responding to economic revitalization and sociocultural change. The presence of digital nomads can lead to enhanced local infrastructure, including improved settlement infrastructure and the provision of convenient facilities and services. Furthermore, this study suggests a strategic alternative in that it helps cope with the economic downturn of tourist destinations and improves the city’s image. Nevertheless, most of the research conducted thus far has focused on socio-psychological factors through tourist participation or industrial statistics. There is a notable lack of research on the local tourism paradigm involving digital nomads. Given that the influx of digital nomads can significantly contribute to solving regional problems, research on developing software and creating an environment for local tourism will be valuable.

Consequently, the purpose of this research is to investigate the attributes of digital nomads in the context of remote work and identify policy interventions to entice digital nomads to tourist destinations using the focus group interview (FGI) methodology. The specific purpose of this study is to investigate new normal trends after the pandemic and the current status of policies and administrative support related to digital nomads in tourist destinations through FGIs, as well as to develop strategies to revitalize digital nomads.

2. Theoretical Background

2.1. New Normal Trend after the COVID-19 Pandemic

After COVID-19, the industrial paradigm has shifted to non-face-to-face business and online services [35,36]. The digital economy is further promoted, and the industry’s value chain is also changing [37]. For this reason, local governments should respond to new lifestyles and consumption trends and have a digital economic support system [25,38]. In particular, the ease and scalability of IT technology are expanding the digital ecosystem, and the individualism of Generation Z has accelerated [27,39]. Network-based platforms such as online food delivery, Netflix, and YouTube have recently proliferated as they combine with new technologies such as big data, 5G, VR/AR, and artificial intelligence [29,40].

Following the COVID-19 Pandemic, social distancing has transformed most social service areas into a non-face-to-face delivery system [35,41]. Moreover, digital innovation enables mass production and conversion to personalized services [42]. The government’s role also embodies policies related to social services, such as regular prevention of epidemics, non-face-to-face social culture expansion, and digital acceleration [43]. In particular, they overcome the anxiety and depression brought about by COVID-19 and pursue emotional satisfaction. People tend to focus on personal needs, such as self-development, relaxation, or vacation, while restoring consumer sentiment, after pandemics [41]. As a result, digital technology tends to develop into an area of service for individuals or small-scale and creative added value creation [33]. Even if COVID-19 ends in the future, a flexible working method in which face-to-face and non-face-to-face work coexist will be expected to be scouted rather than returning to the traditional working method [44].

From this perspective, many studies have focused on changes in the industrial structure of the post-COVID era and sustainable response strategies in the digital era. Bulatov and Kheifets [45] stressed that many countries will try to promote sustainable development through industries related to the fourth industrial revolution after the COVID-19 pandemic.
Dabla-Norris et al. [46] emphasized that rather than expanding existing advanced productivity, investment in innovation in information technology and human capital will have a dynamic impact on productivity and employment in the country. It also explained that because rewards for innovation evolve, most production innovations are realized and can spread to exchanges between industries and countries in the long run. Yang, Kim, and Hong [47] forecast that remote work and a so-called ‘hybrid communication system’ will become active. Most studies agree that more workers’ telework will affect colleagues or groups around them, but further research periods are required to verify achievements and evaluations that include the fairness and efficiency of the work.

2.2. Remote Work of Digital Nomads

Digital nomads use information and communication technology to handle their work and live nomadically [14,23]. They generally work remotely, carrying out tasks and goals in a typical workspace remotely from coffee shops, libraries, coworking spaces, recreational vehicles, and rental homes in other countries [48]. They live in a new lifestyle that utilizes a ubiquitous environment and take the task of developing or using software programs remotely [49]. Digital nomads carry ultra-small computers and mobile Internet and have mobility-oriented characteristics that cross multiple places and spaces without time constraints [50]. The term “digital nomad” encompasses the concept of digital convergence and extends to the term “transumer”, a combination of “trans” and “consumer” [51]. Digital convergence is intricately linked to the rise of diverse forms of digital nomads and serves as a pivotal concept that profoundly influences digital life [15,24]. Scholars categorize leisure activities into various types, including sports, relaxation, hobbies, and tourism. However, digital nomads stand out as a unique form of consumption that seamlessly blends work and leisure time, thereby introducing a novel concept [52].

These characteristics of digital nomad are perceived to be more progressive in remote work, and their behavior is advancing with digital transformation [15,23]. Remote work reduces the need for a fixed position by ensuring that the choice of location at home and work is not rigid [31,53]. Remote work increases workers’ autonomy and improves social participation opportunities, quality of life, and satisfaction with work [54]. This is a significant system to secure working opportunities for the socially vulnerable, such as women and the elderly [55]. Hannonen [23] emphasizes that digital nomad serve to flexibly change critical social issues such as unstable employment as they freely experience mobility and technological ubiquity in their daily lives.

Digital nomads based on remote work have subjective characteristics that create common issues based on their uniqueness [56]. So, they try to highlight themselves in the community and act by placing themselves as cultural producers [36]. They can adapt quickly to new communities and surprisingly focus on new interests, but when they lose interest in them, they move their attention to other places without regret. In other words, unlike settlers, digital nomads are obsessed with speed as efficiency and prioritize early information acquisition and experience on the Internet [57]. De Almeida et al. [14] inferred that during the COVID-19 pandemic, companies could build new business systems by utilizing various online convergence tools based on IT. Digital nomads are valid as the industrial ecosystem shifts to remote digital work.

2.3. Strategy of the Tourism Industry to Attract Digital Nomads

The tourism industry contributes to sustainable urban development by creating economic effects through boosting travel consumption and creating jobs [38]. Regional tourism industry policies should be able to allocate local tourism resources efficiently and maximize tourism inclusion [59]. Strategies to foster unique or tourist attractions in the region are considered efficient [60,61]. The achievements of local tourism industry policies are determined by how tourism resources are utilized in the Community through the restructuring of tourism networks [62–64]. It is practical to form an organic network by discovering and conserving local social/cultural assets [65,66]. The regional tourism development policy
aims to create the core infrastructure of the region. In addition, it is trying to establish an innovation system and governance for tourist attractions that have public potential as they are differentiated [67,68]. In particular, it comprehensively refers to institutional and administrative efforts to facilitate visits to tourist attractions in the region and to support infrastructure for long-term stays or settlements [69].

In the global pursuit of attracting and retaining digital nomads, several key factors emerge as crucial considerations for their residency: cost of living, internet connectivity, and recreational opportunities [70]. Local governments are actively implementing various policy initiatives to entice these remote workers, including repurposing vacant spaces for satellite offices, promoting local accommodations, providing financial incentives to private businesses, establishing dedicated brokerage organizations, and developing informative websites [13,17]. Real estate developers are integrating active residential developments with digital nomads concepts, anticipating a new era of dual-living arrangements across urban and rural areas [71]. Additionally, local lodging establishments are actively participating in the transformation to accommodate remote work. For instance, hotels are repurposing their first-floor lobby facilities as co-working spaces and introducing day-use services, allowing individuals to rent rooms specifically for work purposes. For extended-stay guests, we will establish labor-intensive facilities and optimized lodging environments while providing exceptional services. Creating business-centric facilities and a well-designed accommodation environment will cater to the needs of long-term guests, ensuring a comprehensive range of services for their extended stays [12,13].

After the COVID-19 pandemic, each local government also attempted changes to revitalize tourism according to the characteristics of each region in parallel with macro-industrial countermeasures at the national level [72]. Cities with declining growth potential are likelier to seek changes in culture, tourism, and leisure industries [34,73]. Governments of each country want to restore trust in travelers by sharing quarantine experiences and providing objective information to each other. In addition, international solidarity is being strengthened to cope with changes in tourism demand and digital transformation [74]. According to the "Global Guidelines to Restart Tourism" published by UNWTO in 2020 [75], guidelines were presented in eight areas: safe and smooth border management, safe aviation, private sector cooperation, hospitality, travel agencies, meetings and events, attractions and thematic Parks, and destination planning and management. As remote work was widely implemented during the COVID-19 pandemic, local cities created a working environment necessary for navigation and setting up related service systems in tourist attractions and resorts [30,76,77]. Europe recently developed a childcare-linked shared office, an elderly-friendly living and working environment, and an intelligent working project model to activate the TICMT (telework and ICT-based mobile work) [78]. In addition, the childcare-linked shared office is a coworking space with childcare for both work and childcare. It is being implemented across Europe, including the UK, the Netherlands, Germany, Italy, Spain, and Switzerland [79,80]. The United States has enacted the Telework Enhancement Act of 2010. It is implementing policies at the federal and state levels in ways dedicated to telework in the U.S. Office of Personnel Management [25]. Jeollabuk-do Province of Korea selected areas and facilities centered on natural tourist attractions such as beaches, forests, and landscape agricultural districts and promoted pilot projects that allow them to experience accommodation, work, and leisure [81]. In essence, these cases suggest that it would be advantageous to integrate digital nomads into regional development strategies by establishing connections with local industries and community initiatives. This approach would be more beneficial than merely viewing digital nomads as transient consumers in remote areas.

3. Research Method
3.1. The Issues of Research

This study conducted the focus group interviews (FGIs) to find ways to revitalize the tourism economy by attracting digital nomads to the region after the COVID-19 pandemic.
Through the discussion of the subjects, ideas can be created and shared, opinions can be expressed, and qualitative information from various perspectives can be collected [82]. To secure the feasibility of this research, the topic was specified as “revitalizing the local tourism economy in the new normal era” and “a plan to attract digital nomads by local governments”.

To guarantee the feasibility of this investigation process and eliminate any uncertainties regarding pending issues in advance, the target area was restricted to Gangwon State, Korea. This region is relatively close to the Seoul metropolitan area and offers numerous natural and cultural tourist attractions in Korea [83]. On the other hand, Gangwon State is experiencing the most rapid depopulation due to low birth rates and aging compared to other regions of Korea [84]. Most areas rely heavily on the tourism industry, making them vulnerable to economic fluctuations. Therefore, research on revitalizing the economy and establishing a sustainable social ecosystem by attracting digital nomads to Gangwon State would be a relevant and optimal topic for exploration. To investigate viable strategies through focus group interviews (FGIs), this study presents the subsequent research issues based on the theoretical foundation and diverse instances about digital nomads and the revitalization of tourism.

Research issue 1—What are the strategic categories and topics for attracting digital nomads to tourist destinations in the new normal era?

Research issue 2—What are the tactical challenges for attracting digital nomads to tourist destinations in the new normal era?

3.2. Recruitment and Procedures for FGI Interviewers

To achieve the research purpose, FGIs proceeded to refine data by finding, indexing, and charting topics based on framework analysis presented by Ritchie and Spencer [85]. To ensure the ethical treatment of participants throughout the research process, the study’s objectives, methodologies, and procedures were thoroughly explained during the recruitment phase. A research participation agreement was signed as a formal document to solidify their involvement. In addition, researchers secured the reliability of qualitative data by creating an atmosphere for panels to present creative opinions, only designing communication processes, and not defining goals or encouraging the development of solutions [86]. The data analysis methodologies are transparently shared with the panels, guaranteeing the accuracy of their reports. This practice upholds the reliability and consistency of qualitative data while minimizing potential biases in interpretation. The FGIs of this study were intended to be composed of representatives of working-level officials who practiced digital convergence or were involved in local tourism and economic policies. The interview panels comprised eight people, including four working-level industry officials practicing digital transformation and service convergence and four public officials and public institution experts in charge of policies and administration attracting digital nomads. As shown in Table 1 below, all subjects were selected by referring to their CVs after being recommended by those with more than ten years of practical experience to ensure that they conform to the purpose of the study.

Table 1. Characteristics of the expert panel.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>Affiliation</th>
<th>Working Years</th>
<th>Remark</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Industries</td>
<td>IT Marketing, ***Cube</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Panel #1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industries</td>
<td>IT Platform Business, **Biz-On</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Panel #2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industries</td>
<td>Hospitality F&amp;B, ***Resort</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Panel #3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industries</td>
<td>Hospitality MICE Planning, **Media</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Panel #4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 1. Cont.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>Affiliation</th>
<th>Working Years</th>
<th>Remark</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Public and administrative</td>
<td>Industrial Bureau, **Provincial Government</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Panel #5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>agencies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public and administrative</td>
<td>IT Support, **City Hall</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>Panel #6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>agencies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public and administrative</td>
<td>4th Industrial Convergence, ***Promotion Agency</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>Panel #7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>agencies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public and administrative</td>
<td>Convergence Innovation, **Techno Park</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Panel #8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>agencies</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*: All FGI participants provided their individual consent, and their affiliations are marked with an asterisk (*) followed by the number of initials in their name.

The focus group interviews (FGIs) were conducted on three separate occasions between January and February 2023 at the Gangwon Techno Park meeting room in Chuncheon, Korea. The purpose of the FGIs was to analyze the interviews of the participants and identify the key themes and experiences that emerged from the discussions. To achieve this, the content of the interviews was carefully reviewed and categorized based on the similarities in the participants' statements [82]. The first interview was conducted so that interviewers could freely explore and discuss the region’s current status, role, and viable services to attract digital nomads. The second interview set a strategic category based on opinions and discussions collected from the first interview survey. In the third interview, the details of the strategic topic were discussed based on the strategic categories set in the second interview. The detailed tasks were supplemented, and all the interviewees agreed and concluded. The findings demonstrated reliability and validity in terms of truth value, neutrality, consistency, and applicability [87]. To enhance the validity of the categorized data, the research employed a combination of qualitative content analysis, constant comparison method, thematic analysis, and discourse analysis methods, as outlined in Table 2.

Table 2. FGIs Methodologies and Analysis.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FGI</th>
<th>Procedural Framework</th>
<th>Review Methods</th>
<th>Research Process</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st FGI (20 January 2023)</td>
<td>Finding thick descriptions (meaning, process, context, etc.)</td>
<td>Qualitative content analysis</td>
<td>Prologue→introduction→discussion(exploration/exit questions)→closing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd FGI (3 February 2023)</td>
<td>Categorizing and clustering strategies</td>
<td>Constant comparison method and thematic analysis</td>
<td>Q&amp;A and level of analysis(LoA) (comparison of categories/themes/subthemes)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd FGI (17 February 2023)</td>
<td>Setting thematic strategies and tactical challenges</td>
<td>Discourse analysis</td>
<td>Validity(convergence→agreement→coverage→linguistic details)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. Research Results
4.1. Vitalization of Local Tourism

Local governments should find attractive tourism resources unique to the region and develop specialized content to satisfy the tourism needs of digital nomads [81]. Infrastructure shall be reorganized to promote digital nomads’ local tourism activities, and local marketplaces shall be revitalized through organic links of tourism services [74]. In addition, it is necessary to improve tourism infrastructure so that digital nomads can easily access and conveniently use local tourist attractions [88]. In particular, it was discussed that care should be taken to develop various tourism services and plant a friendly local image so that digital nomads can stay in the region and visit tourist attractions frequently. It is imperative
that we examine the work–life integration elements of the digital nomads lifestyle and develop tactics to foster community engagement.

“There may be several items in the settlement conditions of digital nomads, but they need to figure out what they need most in the early stages of settlement in the region. If you go to a place you don’t know for the first time, you may be curious about the infrastructure of nearby areas, such as community offices, hospitals, and convenience stores. In the future, we will probably look for places to enjoy in our leisure time, such as attractions, entertainment, and restaurants”.

(Panel #1)

“Digital nomads are very self-centered and active lifestyles, so they seem to be early adopters and active in consumption. There seems to be a tendency to buy digital products. By reflecting their tendency, we need to create a market that can satisfy their desire to buy high-tech products”.

(Panel #2)

“However, local cities are relatively less aware of this digital transformation. It would be a good alternative to build an omnichannel trading system that can compensate for these weaknesses”.

(Panel #4)

“Most of our resort’s visitors are short-term guests for sightseeing or leisure purposes. Therefore, there is still little enough convenience for long-term stay or remote workers. However, if the demand for remote workers such as digital nomads increases, preparing a facility reinforcement and service strategy for long-term stay is worth preparing. Of course, the various devices and office rental contracts needed for teleworking should be improved to meet their needs”.

(Panel #3)

“Tourist attractions are also organized mainly for short-term residents, and local governments tend to support and promote only famous and popular tourist attractions. However, we need to think about developing a hiking course or an activity program that remote workers can easily access and experience comfortably”.

(Panel #7)

4.2. Digital Transformation

Local cities should use digital transformation as an opportunity to respond to the market and innovate the industrial structure. In particular, tourism and non-face-to-face IT services have become more necessary due to social distancing and regulations on the use of closed spaces. In alignment with the fourth industrial revolution, all industries, including tourism, should proactively embrace information technology and strategically leverage data-driven customer experience (DCX) to promote tourism [13,89]. It also proposes to boost local tourism by changing awareness of digital nomads in policy, technology, and education and forming an ecosystem.

It is necessary to discover tourism services that can be easily converted into local ICT technology and develop converged tourism infrastructure and services that digital nomads can experience [34,45]. Accordingly, it was discussed that an integrated platform for remote work should be developed so that digital nomads can access online and perform remote work without inconvenience in the region. It was also crucial for the digital advancement of MICE facilities, where digital nomads can communicate with various industries and businesses in the region and find new jobs.

“We need to expand our IT infrastructure linked to residential facilities so that digital nomads can live together, make friends with colleagues nearby, and meet naturally to share their interests and work efficiently”.

(Panel #3)
“Affordable rental homes are most needed so that the younger generation can relax and work, and the development of recreational office towns is needed. So I hope they can do their simple cooking there or use microwaves to use their time in busy lives”.

(Panel #4)

“Since the spread of COVID-19, most industry labor and management have already agreed on mobile offices or telecommuting-type tasks. Some IT companies and start-ups seem to have already introduced new work trends. It is necessary to establish teleworking facilities and platforms that provide various business support services to support remote work in preparation for the spread of digital nomads”.

(Panel #5)

“Digital nomads need a recreational residence to enjoy the natural environment rather than accommodations such as motels and guest houses. There will be much approval if you build networking offices for digital nomads and introduce programs that allow you to relax, leisure, and exercise in a clean environment”.

(Panel #7)

“These days, Generation Z continues to look for a variety of job information and tends to move immediately when a company that suits them appears, rather than being bound by one organization. To use these behavioral characteristics well, if we hold industrial fairs or job-seeking events in the region, we can achieve win-win results”.

(Panel #8)

4.3. Developing Wellness Contents

With the end of the COVID-19 pandemic and the gradual recovery of daily life, wellness that can heal has emerged as a social issue. Accordingly, the discovery of local resources should be prioritized so that digital nomads can enjoy wellness [90]. Tourism policy should develop a life tourism program in which digital nomads communicate, live with residents, and enjoy local food and attractions. In addition, there was an opinion that investment in wellness R&D was necessary so local wellness content could be developed and attractive as sustainable tourism products. In particular, content should be advanced so that wellness can be experienced anytime, anywhere through digital media such as AR, VR, and IoT. In particular, the wellness industry is assessed as a sector that leverages big data more effectively than other sectors [91]. The primary objective is to create a platform that can seamlessly integrate with local infrastructure and professionally utilize healthcare devices or systems.

“To develop wellness content, we need to define the unique characteristics of our region and first think about which resources and how to utilize them. Discovering and commercializing wellness content that can differentiate it from other regions can increase the possibility of boosting tourism”.

(Panel #1)

“Local governments and industries should consider developing local wellness products so that various age groups can like and experience them together. Local governments should collect policy ideas and support related industries so that various age groups can like and experience wellness products. Local governments should statistically identify the characteristics of wellness demand and consumption propensity in our region and provide customized support for regional specialization projects related to the sixth industry”.

(Panel #2)
“For wellness content to be differentiated and sustained from other regions, local companies must continue to invest in research and development. Since most R&D investments are not easily guaranteed for long-term results, they should be grouped to newly combine the ideas and technologies of digital nomads”.

(Panel #4)

“Digital nomads can share their lifestyles and health patterns, while local companies can cluster to develop new well-being content. In order to do so, it is necessary to establish a medical technology R&D center in the region to recruit talented medical personnel and technicians”.

(Panel #6)

“Recently, the National Statistical Office and the Korea Tourism Organization have also provided various big data on tourism activities and consumption. From demographic statistics such as region of origin, age, gender, and occupation of digital nomads, various data such as place of credit card use, amount of use, place of use, length of stay, and means of transportation can be comprehensively analyzed. Moreover, identifying consumption propensity and behavioral movements in their regions helps distribute related policies and administrative support resources”.

(Panel #7)

“Digital products such as AR and VR become an alternative to indirectly experiencing local wellness content to potential customers who have not visited our region in person. Recently, more and more people are checking their health patterns using wearable devices. Combining these tendencies with the office environment would be good to check the time and activities of office and leisure together”.

(Panel #8)

4.4. Creating a Settlement Environment

Local cities should create a stable foundation for providing efficiency and ensuring the quality of life for residents, tourists, and digital nomads who visit the region in the long or short term. In addition, local governments should pay attention to foreign tourists or digital nomads so they do not feel uncomfortable. We need to look at foreign cases related to attracting digital nomads and explore the improvement of the visa and settlement environment needed in the region. Local cities should strengthen international connections and have easy socio-cultural exchanges and physical and spatial connections with the surrounding rural areas and small and medium-sized cities. Since most digital nomads are the younger generation, creating digital infrastructure and learning conditions and expanding cultural and leisure facilities, welfare, and health facilities in connection with the local community will be necessary. The establishment of a settlement environment could provide an alternative solution to address the challenges of social and cultural polarization, thereby fostering community restoration [15,39]. By implementing a collaborative network specifically designed for digital nomads, local communication and information exchange can be facilitated, leading to the consolidation of social capital and the development of a sharing economy [90,92].

“For local cities to overcome the current extinction crisis, migration policies should be established, and support for start-ups should be expanded so that many younger generations can settle in cities and adapt to their communities independently”.

(Panel #1)

“In particular, if people who pursue a creative and leading life, such as digital nomads, move in to create a start-up environment and professionals or freelancers needed for new businesses come to the region, the region is likely to be a young and vibrant city”.
“As COVID-19 hits the world, I think young people’s desire for movement may have increased. If you provide local consumption vouchers or encourage the use of local currency to meet these needs, it can catalyze the attraction of digital nomads”.

“More people will hope for a local settlement if local governments foster digital education such as data literacy and Web 3.0 so that remote workers who travel to the region can use the data freely. These educations are likely to appeal to young people and middle-aged people who want to re-employment or start new businesses”.

“As these digital education projects improve the urban image and revitalize industrial ecosystems related to the fourth industry, many digital nomads will likely want to settle down”.

“Many factories and schools in the area are no longer in use. Suppose we regenerate these spaces into cultural spaces such as offices, laboratories, and studios to settle digital nomads. In that case, local governments can save many resources, and the younger generation can reduce the cost burden and naturally feel the city’s historical culture”.

“Most digital nomads work irregularly or uniformly, so they often do not care about their health. I hope local governments expand cultural and leisure facilities and open medical facilities and medical checkups to them cheaply. I think they will pay much attention if they provide an opportunity to check their health and enjoy cultural welfare. By expanding facilities and services exclusively for residents to the outside, various facilities and services can be managed more efficiently”.

4.5. FGIs’ Results

Consequently, FGIs encompass four domains: ‘activation of local tourism’, ‘digital transformation’, ‘development of wellness contents’, and ‘creation of settlement environment’. Moreover, eight strategic topics and twenty-four tactical challenges related to each strategic category were derived. In ‘activation of local tourism’, two strategies were composed: ‘activation of local marketplaces’ and ‘development of nomadic tourism’, and six tactical challenges were derived. The ‘digital transformation’ field consists of two strategies: ‘smart tourism service’ and ‘DCX-linked MICE’, it has derived six tactical challenges. The field of ‘development of wellness content’ consists of two strategies: ‘convergence service’ and ‘wellness R&D’, and derived eight tactical challenges. The field of ‘creation of settlement environment’ consists of two strategies: ‘creation of settlement conditions’ and ‘expansion of settlement space’, and derived eight tactical challenges. An integrated strategy for these FGIs’ results are shown in Table 3.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Thematic Strategies</th>
<th>Tactical Challenges</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Activation of local tourism</td>
<td>• Guidance and sales of stay-at-home living products</td>
<td>• Seeking omnichannel and developing products</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Providing local market vouchers</td>
<td>• Improving long-term accommodation and convenience facilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development of nomadic tourism</td>
<td>• Producing and distributing remote walker tour pass</td>
<td>• Designing digital signage and information in tourist attractions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smart tourism service</td>
<td>• Developing innovative services linked to residential facilities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Digital transformation</td>
<td>• Establishment of recreational office towns and rental platform governance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DCX-linked community</td>
<td>• Design of teleworking facilities and service platforms</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Local business and investment online/offline briefing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Convergence service</td>
<td>• Opening a job fair linked to local enterprises</td>
<td>• Digital transformation of MICE facilities and services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development of wellness contents</td>
<td>• Development of products based on the sixth industry</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Design of hybrid office interior and intelligent services</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wellness R&amp;D</td>
<td>• Promoting well-being activities and leisure programs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Wellness R&amp;D cluster for digital nomads</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Creation of settlement conditions</td>
<td>• Analysis of digital nomad’s lifestyle and wellness patterns</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Expansion of settlement space</td>
<td>• AR, VR, IoT utilization, and big data management of wellness content</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Establishment of youth migration policies and support for start-ups</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Provide digital nomads vouchers or incentives</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Training in data literacy and Web 3.0 to public officials</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Securing coworking space using local industrial complexes</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Expansion of cultural leisure facilities utilizing local idle spaces</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Expansion of community-linked welfare/health institutions</td>
<td></td>
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DCX—data-driven customer experience; AR—augmented reality; VR—virtual reality; IoT: Internet of Things.
5. Conclusions
5.1. Theoretical and Practical Implications

The entry of the new normal era after the COVID-19 pandemic has marked a new digital transformation era. A new work environment has emerged that allows freedom of time and space, which was not possible in the past, and digital nomads are spreading around the world with digital transformation. As the economically active population decreases, local cities need a new sustainable tourism strategy [58,73]. With the advent of the digital nomad concept, research has been conducted on regional regeneration and revitalization [93]. In the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, addressing regional challenges requires the development of distinctive tourist destinations that combine social objectives, economic value creation, and regional characteristics, distinguishing them from conventional regional development strategies [36,72].

The tourism industry is currently encountering novel challenges stemming from evolving consumer preferences and environmental shifts, both of which are influenced by the advent of emerging technologies. Attracting digital nomads is considered a tourism strategy that can revitalize the region and innovate the tourism industry creatively and convergently [50]. This research study sought to ascertain the viability of the digital nomads attraction strategy as a means for tourism destinations to establish a distinctive and innovative social ecosystem, thereby achieving sustainable competitive advantage [61,62]. FGIs verified phenomenological analysis by more interactive research design by presenting the categorization, theme, and tactical challenges of local tourism and local government roles to attract digital nomads [85]. The focus group interviews substantiated the phenomenological concerns via a more interactive research methodology. The study outlined the classification, subject, and strategic challenges of local tourism, as well as the function of local governments in drawing digital nomads. The qualitative study exploring the regional attraction strategy of digital nomads can be understood as conceptualizing the academic significance of digital nomads and contextual verification of paradigm change.

The digital nomad attraction strategy can have practical implications in four categories derived from FGIs. Digital nomads can revitalize the local tourism economy using commercial districts and tourist attractions. The area shall improve convenience facilities and services for long-term residents and develop various tour programs. The digital transformation of tourist destinations is closely related to smart tourism and MICE business. As local facilities and services are digitized, DCX-enabled office spaces and convenience facilities can be newly constructed, jobs can be created, and industries can be revitalized through MICE. Wellness content should be able to revive the region’s unique characteristics and promote well-being activities where digital nomads and locals can be harmonized. In addition, wellness R&D should be able to streamline costs through industrial clustering and leverage digital media to produce a variety of wellness content. Digital nomads are increasingly seeking out destinations that offer wellness content and DCX platforms [94]. This trend is supported by prior studies that have found that qualitative research based on constructivism epistemology can reveal important insights into the needs and preferences of digital nomads. The research results also align with the broader trend in local tourism toward an approach that emphasizes the overall context. Ultimately, the region should focus on policies and administrative support to create a residential environment for digital nomads. A sustainable settlement environment should be created by utilizing local public infrastructure and idle resources and supporting the start-up and education of young people.

5.2. Suggestions for Future Research

This study has some limitations even though it has developed a viable strategy. The focus on the new normal society needed to be more comprehensive to consider digital nomads’ intrinsic psychological needs and behaviors. The FGIs of minority groups in the same region limits the generalization of derived policies. Future studies will shed light on adverse effects such as conflicts with residents, McDonaldization, and touristification in
local cities due to the influx of digital nomads, and research on establishing a harmonious and sustainable tourism city system will be meaningful. Furthermore, a comprehensive analysis should be conducted to identify the critical factors that are essential for developing innovative leisure content and fostering an environment at tourist destinations that effectively caters to the evolving leisure behaviors of digital nomads.

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