

Promote Inbound Tourism in Surrounding Destinations of Mega City

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Abstract: In recent years, inbound tourism to Japan has developed rapidly. In the light of this, this study focuses on international travelers who have actually visited tourist attractions in the surrounding destinations of mega cities particularly in Tokyo. In this study compares and analyzes differences between those foreign travelers who visit Tokyo surroundings and those who do not, with an aim to provide knowledge useful for tourist destinations in Tokyo surroundings when developing promotional strategies for inbound tourism. The results showed that 1) first-time visitors to Japan visit surrounding destinations and repeat visitors are not necessarily likelier to visit the surroundings 2) visitors to Tokyo suburbs make these trips based on highly accurate and dependable information gained from Japanese relatives and acquaintances.

Keywords: inbound tourism, surrounding destinations, marketing strategy

1. INTRODUCTION

Inbound tourism to Japan has increased drastically in recent years. In 2015, the number of tourists reached 19.7 million; the goal is to increase this number to 60 million by 2030 (Prime Minister of Japan and His Cabinet (2016)). As a variety of inbound tourism measures are being developed, one question that repeatedly arises is how to draw tourists to local areas. Presently, inbound tourism demand is centered on metropolitan areas such as Tokyo, while local tourist destinations do not benefit economically from the efforts to promote inbound tourism.

Among the tourism measures of 2016, the efforts to attract tourists to local destinations by making use of tourism resources all over Japan are noteworthy. Specifically, such measures may entail transmitting information about tourist attractions that are accessible from Tokyo, Osaka, or Kyoto on one- and two-day trips (Japan Tourism Agency (2016)). However, these efforts consist solely of noting tourist attractions in areas surrounding major cities and relevant routes on the website of Japan National Tourism Organization (JNTO); suburban tourist destinations have been provided no tangible suggestions on how to develop marketing measures for inbound tourism.

Numerous international tourists visit Japanese urban centers, which indicates the potential for surrounding destinations to attract these travelers to their own tourist attractions. The question is where and how to promote these tourist attractions effectively.

In the light of this, the present study focuses on international travelers who have

actually visited tourist attractions in the surrounding destinations of mega cities. The aim of this study is to understand of these travelers' characteristics and to investigate promotion measures that take advantage of those. As a first step, we consider Tokyo as a case study, focusing on foreign tourists who have visited tourist destinations in Tokyo surrounding.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

In recent years, the means for tracing tourism statistics in Japan have improved, and we can now find several studies (such as Kohira et al. (2014)) based on statistical data, analyzing the travel behavior of foreign visitors to Japan.

Especially relevant for the present study is research that analyzes travel behavior from a base to nearby tourist attractions. Suzuki et al. (2010) clarify the behavioral characteristics of overseas visitors to the area surrounding the Narita Airport. Likewise, Stefano et al. (2016) use GPS data to examine the travel behavior of cruise ship passengers visiting ports of call by using GPS data, clarifying differences in travel behavior between clusters as defined by gender, age, and accompanying travelers.

Even so, a common factor in studies that analyze travel behavior from a base to nearby tourist attractions is that they center on transport facilities; we could find no research that frames a city as the base and analyzes travel behavior to surrounding areas. This study thus focuses on Tokyo, visited by more than half of the foreign visitors to Japan. Having framed Tokyo as a base city representative of Japan, this study tries to understand what characterizes the foreign travelers visiting its surrounding.

3. METHODOLOGY AND DATA

This study assumed that the longer visitors stay in Japan, the higher tendency that they trip to Tokyo surrounding destinations. That could be a main factor they visit to the Tokyo surroundings. Therefore, we focused on visitors from Europe, North America and Oceania because they tend to stay in Japan longer than that of a visitor from Asia. We categorized these two groups into "Visit" and "Non-Visit" to Tokyo surrounding destinations, then analyzed the statistical difference between "Visit" and "Non-Visit" by using chi-square test within each group traveler characteristics.

The data used in this study is "Consumption Trend Survey for Foreigners Visiting Japan 2014" which is provided with Japan Tourism Agency. This is a quarterly survey commenced in April 2010. Each quarterly survey contains about 7,000 samples and is obtained by face to face interview at the 10 main international airports plus one sea port in Japan. The target of the survey is a foreign visitor who waits for leaving Japan. Some socio-demographic characteristics (i.e. gender, age, nationality, purpose of visiting Japan, travel companion, length of stay and among others) are asked as well as their travel expenditure.

The total number of respondents in 2014 was accounted to 27,681. A respondent who does not visit Tokyo, stays more than 90 days and joins a group tour organized by a travel agency is excluded in this study. As a result, 11,365 sample is used for the analysis (Table 1). With regard to the difference of travelers' characteristics between those who visited Tokyo surrounding destinations and those who did not visit, a significant difference is observed in travel companion and the main purpose of visiting Japan. An international traveler with partner or family tends to visit Tokyo surroundings compared with the visitors traveling alone

(Table 3). As for the main purpose of visiting Japan, the rate of visit Tokyo surroundings is higher those international traveler who visit Japan for tourism or leisure than those who visit Japan for business (Table 4).

Table 1. Sample size by data category

Total	n=11,365
Visitors from North America, Europe and Oceania	3,590
Visited Tokyo surroundings	1,142
Did not visit Tokyo surroundings	2,448
Visitors from Asia	7,775
Visited Tokyo surroundings	2,959
Did not visit Tokyo surroundings	4,816

Table 2. Visited or did not visit Tokyo surroundings according to nationality

Visited	Visitors from	Did not visit
	North America, Europe and Oceania	
25%	United States	27%
19%	Canada	17%
17%	UK	16%
14%	Germany	14%
11%	France	10%
9%	Australia	12%
5%	Russia	5%
Visited	Visitors from Asia	Did not visit
39%	China	31%
18%	Thailand	15%
16%	S. Korea	25%
5%	Indonesia	4%
4%	Hong Kong	6%
4%	Malaysia	5%
4%	Singapore	4%

Table 3. Comparison according to the travel companion

Visitors from North America, Europe and Oceania***			Visitors from Asia***		
Visited	Did not visit	Tokyo surroundings	Visited	Did not visit	
40%	49%	Just me	28%	33%	
24%	18%	Spouse/partner	12%	10%	
14%	10%	Family member(s)	27%	16%	
10%	11%	Work colleague(s)	18%	25%	
13%	11%	Friend(s)	16%	17%	

***Significant at 1% level

Table 4. Comparison according to the main purpose of visiting Japan

Visitors from North America, Europe and Oceania***			Visitors from Asia***		
Visited	Did not visit	Tokyo surroundings	Visited	Did not visit	
50%	43%	Tourism/leisure	53%	45%	
18%	10%	Visiting family/friends	13%	6%	
3%	4%	International conference	2%	3%	
9%	14%	Business meeting (held offsite)	5%	11%	
3%	2%	Training	7%	4%	
10%	19%	Other business	14%	21%	
7%	10%	Other	7%	10%	

***Significant at 1% level

4. INBOUND TOURISM AT TOURIST DESTINATIONS IN TOKYO SURROUNDINGS

Pursuant to conducting this study, we hypothesized that during the few days they are based in Tokyo, international tourists will venture out to the surroundings when they have extra time. Accordingly, we compared the total amount of time tourists spent in Japan with the time they stayed in Tokyo. Among all visitors to Japan from North America, Europe, and Oceania, we found that those who visited Tokyo surroundings tended to stay longer in Japan than those who did not, with the former group staying in Japan for about two weeks (Table 5). As such, the assumption is that travelers spending a comparatively long time in Japan have enough time to visit the surrounding destination. However, if it is focused on the number of days these visitors spent in Tokyo, the travelers who visited the surroundings and those who did not stayed about six nights; thus, not significant difference was noted between the two groups. Accordingly, rather than the length of stay in Tokyo, the total period of time spent in Japan was found to have a greater impact on whether international travelers visited Tokyo surroundings or not.

Table 5. Comparison based on the average time stayed in Japan and Tokyo

Visitors from North America, Europe and Oceania			Visitors from Asia	
Visited	Did not visit	Tokyo surroundings	Visited	Did not visit
14.4 nights	10.8 nights***	Average time stayed in Japan	13.3nights	9.0 nights***
5.6 nights	5.8 nights	Average time stayed in Tokyo	5.2 nights	5.9 nights***

*** Significant at 1% level

Next, considering the possibility that repeat visitors to Japan are likelier to visit Tokyo's surroundings than first-time visitors, we carried out a comparison based on the number of visits. The results show that more than half—around 52%—of first-time visitors to Japan from North America, Europe and Oceania visited the surroundings, not differing from the group that did not visit the surrounding destination (Table 6). From this, it is apparent that even first-time visitors to Japan visit surrounding destinations and repeat visitors are not necessarily likelier to visit the surroundings.

Table 6. Comparison according to the number of visits to Japan

Visitors from North America, Europe and Oceania***			Visitors from Asia***	
Visited	Did not visit	Tokyo surroundings	Visited	Did not visit
52%	49%	First time	38%	30%
17%	15%	Second times	18%	16%
6%	8%	Third times	10%	10%
5%	4%	Fourth times	6%	5%
4%	4%	Fifth times	5%	6%
6%	6%	6-9 times	8%	9%
4%	7%	10-19 times	7%	10%
5%	8%	20 times and over	8%	14%

*** Significant at 1% level.

Lastly, it was hypothesized that foreign visitors who venture out to Tokyo suburbs might gather information differently from those who do not do so. We compared the differences based on a survey of what information travelers found useful before and during the visit. If the two groups indeed collect information differently and we are able to clarify what characterizes the information-gathering of the travelers who visit Tokyo suburbs, this should be useful for tourist attractions in Tokyo suburbs when devising marketing strategies for inbound tourism.

Table 7 compares responses (multiple answers) about information that was useful before the trip. The results show that those foreign travelers who visited the suburbs and those who did not tended to collect information on search sites and from other Internet sources. If we focus on the difference between foreign travelers who visited the suburbs and those who did not, a high proportion of the former group said that they found information from Japanese relatives and acquaintances useful. This trend cannot be verified in the responses (multiple answers) about information that was useful during the trip.

From the aggregate results, two things become apparent. First, visitors to Tokyo suburbs make these trips based on highly accurate and dependable information gained from Japanese relatives and acquaintances. This suggests that it is difficult to get a feel of the tourist destinations in Tokyo surroundings using only general information such as guidebooks and word-of-mouth; these do not increase the desire to travel there and only rarely lead to actual visits. Second, with regard to information found to be useful during one's visit, no difference was observed between the group that visited the suburbs and the group that did not. This suggests that it is difficult to provide information when the foreign visitors are already in Tokyo so as to persuade them to spend their extra time at tourist attractions in the surrounding destinations.

Table 7. Comparison according to the question 'Which source(s) do you feel were helpful in obtaining information about your destination prior to coming to Japan?'

Visitors from North America, Europe and Oceania**			Visitors from Asia***		
Visited	Did not visit	Tokyo surroundings	Visited	Did not visit	
14%	16%	Search engine	29%	32%	
7%	8%	Other websites	18%	17%	
10%	9%	Travel guide(s)	16%	17%	
11%	11%	Family/friends in their own country	18%	19%	
17%	15%	Family/friends in Japan	29%	24%	

** Significant at 5% level; *** Significant at 1% level.

Table 8. Comparison according to the question 'Which source(s) do you feel were helpful in obtaining information about your destination while in Japan?'

Visitors from North America, Europe and Oceania**			Visitors from Asia***		
Visited	Did not visit	Tokyo surroundings	Visited	Did not visit	
11%	9%	Tourist info desk (not in airport)	17%	15%	
9%	9%	Travel guide books	6%	8%	
22%	24%	Internet (PC)	34%	35%	
20%	21%	Internet (smartphone)	61%	65%	
20%	18%	Family/friends in Japan	30%	22%	

** Significant at 5% level; *** Significant at 1% level.

5. CONCLUSION

This study compares and analyzes differences between those international travelers who visit Tokyo surroundings and those who do not, with an aim to provide knowledge useful for tourist destinations in Tokyo surroundings when developing promotional strategies for inbound tourism. Based on an analysis of survey data showing expenditure trends for foreign visitors to Japan, it is found that, while a high percentage of long-stay visitors to Japan visit Tokyo surroundings, this was not related to the length of their Tokyo stay. Moreover, we

found no differences in visits to Tokyo surroundings in relation to total number of visits to Japan. Furthermore, it is found that the following attribute of the travelers' methods for collecting information: tourists would visit Tokyo surroundings based on highly dependable information obtained before the trip and coming from Japanese relatives and acquaintances. Having clarified the actual circumstances surrounding foreign travelers' visits to Tokyo suburbs, if we look at the information provided by tourist attractions in Tokyo surroundings, major destinations such as Nikko, Kawagoe, and Kamakura disseminate information through multi-language tourist brochures at metropolitan tourist information centers as well as by SNS and the Internet. However, other locations cannot be said to be providing information sufficiently at information desks and over the Internet. If these areas are to attract inbound tourists, they could emulate Nikko and other leading tourist areas by encouraging the dissemination of appropriate information, but they could also utilize the results of this study. It would be suggested that a highly effective approach involved having foreigners residing in Japan experience the attractions that these areas have to offer and having them become fans. In this way, it is anticipated that these foreign residents will convey the appeal of local areas to family and friends, so that they may consider visiting those places when they visit Japan.

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