A Study on Preferences and Behavioral Patterns of Chinese Tourists in Kansai Region, Japan

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Abstract

This study investigates the travel objectives and motivation both first-time and repeat Chinese tourists. We conduct a questionnaire survey of Chinese tourists at Kuromon Market as a pilot, which asked about the experiences and travel objectives for target tourists. The results indicate that the upper class people travels the most times, and the main attractive for Chinese tourists are food culture, historical culture, clean weather and beautiful environment and service in Japan.

1. Introduction

Along with reform and opening up from 1978 in China, China's economy has made a drastic growth miracle, in which the annual economic growth rate between 1978 and 2008 is 9.85%. With the economic development, national income distribution in the thirty years has been also experiencing several significant changes. Since the beginning of reform and opening up, the share of the national income accruing to labor has raised steadily, from 52.2% in 1978 to

72.2% in 1990.[1] So the new rich tourists from China are followed with interest all over the world.

From Japan's aspect, "Washoku" became to be one of Intangible Cultural Heritages in 2013, the number of foreign tourists jumped sharply. Among the tourists from different regions, the distribution is shown as South Korea (2,456 thousand), Taiwan (2,211 thousand), China (1,315 thousand), US. (799 thousand) and HongKong (746 thousand). Among the top 5 regions, there are 3 regions' tourists who are Chinese, so it is not only meaning for Kansai area but also Japan to analyze the Chinese tourists' behavior motivation.

In this paper, we conduct a questionnaire survey of Chinese tourists to create our database of visitor characteristics, frequency of visits and travel objectives, and airline information, we investigate travel objectives of both first-time and repeat Chinese tourists (323 samples) in Kansai area (Kuromon Market, Osaka), and this analysis provides an important clue to understand which kinds of motivation for the first-time tourists are, and why a first-time visitor becomes a repeat visitor. Our approach, which conducts questionnaire survey to Chinese tourists, is a unique approach. Also we separate the Chinese tourists by different rich level, and airline information, which is also our contribution to the literature.

The rest of our paper is organized as follows: section 2 reviews the relevant literature survey. Section 3 presents the research design and methodology. Section 4 gives the results of analysis base on the survey data. Section 5 discusses the empirical results, and finally section 6 concludes.

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(1)　The data is from "Adjustment of Functional Income Distribution: Thinking of the Phenomenon of National Income Inclining to Individual." *The Economic Research Journal,* 1992, No. 7.

2. Literature Survey

We conducted the literature review in this part to better illustrate and support our paper. Clottey and Lennon (2003) examined the tourists' current perception towards Lithuania, a new travel destination in Germany as well as influential variables of destination choice. The paper pointed out that there was a positive mouth communication effect between the tourists who had visited the place and those who were considering traveling to the place. For other factors that could influence the choice of tourists to the city for a second time, the study investigated the types of sightseeing spots that were likely to be visited again.

Some papers focus on the relationship between tourists' satisfaction and times of visit. Metin Kozak (2001) found the multiple relationships among satisfaction of tourists, their previous visits and behavioral intention to revisit by conducting research in two distinct destinations. The results of the study suggested that the more mature a destination was, the more possible that it would be attractive to repeat tourists. For Ledesma et al. (2005), asymmetrical information problem was mentioned to illustrate the repeated purchase behavior in the tourist market. The researchers find out that the length of stay in the tourism site and the information gained from previous visits and/or relatives and friends might increase the frequency of return to a destination. Truong and King (2009) made contribution in providing the factors determining travel behavior including the effect of cultural characteristics such as socio-demographics, travel characteristics and behavioral intentions tourist perceptions and satisfaction. Correia et al. (2007) further used a random parameter logit model to analyze the characteristics such as individual characteristics, motivation associated with the probability of revisit. Duncan Light (1996) reported that tourists were likely to be attracted to the

tourism site by an introduced new event. Edward G. McWilliam and John L. Crompton (1997) found that tour promotions such as advertising or direct mail, were effective at attracting tourists, especially those who had visited the site before. Lam and Hsu (2006) broke down the frequency of visits and cited that attitude, perceived behavioral control, and past behavior were found to be related to behavioral intention of choosing a travel destination.

First time and repeat visitors are different in visiting intentions. Litvin (2007) revisits issues related to the travel behaviors of first time versus repeat visitors to a destination. For repeated visitors, alternative forms of entertainment availability and attendance on the visitor attraction activity were important for making repeat visitors. Tiefenbacher et al. (2000) analyzed how accessibility, physical and cultural amenities, the social setting, and the prestige of places influence repeat-tourism. Fallon and Schofield (2004) identified a significant difference between first-time and repeat segments on the secondary attractions.

And secondary attractions were the single most influential factor affecting tourists' overall satisfaction. Beaman et al. (2001) and Darnell and Johnson (2001) discussed the importance of repeat visiting and its significance in terms of both international tourism flows and of demand for individual tourist attractions as well as the transformation from first time visitor to visitors of more than one times. Okamura and Fukushige (2010) further investigated the differences in travel objectives between first-time and repeat tourists. The first time visitors were mainly travelling to enjoy looking around sightseeing spots while the repeat tourists tended to enjoy the stay, including the hotel visit and participating in events.

Based on these literature surveys, this study focus on the motivation, travel type and tourists level of Chinese tourists in Japan, we fill the gap of this field by

adding the airline information, rich level in our questionnaires to give depth analysis. And we also give the reason to discuss why Chinese tourists come and repeat travelling in Japan.

3. Research design

3.1 The reason of choosing Kuromon Market as a pilot

Kuromon Market is a 600 meter-long market with 170 stalls which offers fish, fruits, vegetables and other foodstuffs. The market has been called "Osaka's Kitchen" since it opened in the mid-Taisho Period (1912-1926), and many cooks in Osaka come here to get the ingredients. There are also many restaurants in the market where you can enjoy the Osaka's local dishes. What's more, Chinese people are interested in the food culture, and Kuromon Market is regarded as one of the most popular places by foreigners, especially Chinese, which fits for our research aim.

3.2 Questionnaire survey design

Questions[2] are designed to interview visitor characteristics, frequency of visits and travel objectives, and airline information, also based on the airline's level, personal characteristics and appearance, we divide the interviewees into three classes (upper, medium, below medium). Based on this survey, we create our survey database and analyze the Chinese tourists' motivation, results are shown in section 4.

（2） The questions of survey are supplied by the appendix.

4. Empirical analysis

4.1 Tourists constitution

Among all the tourists at Kuromon Market, Chinese take the highest proportion among them (Table 1). 47.4% are from Hong Kong which stands for the mainstream, Taiwanese stands in the second place and takes up to 36.8%. The data source accentuated on the fact that many of these people are not new here, they come to the market on every trip to Japan now and then. 7.4% people are from mainland China (excluding Hong Kong), all the rest are Chinese ethnic with other nationalities.

Table 1. Tourists' distribution

Region	Proportion (%)
Hong Kong	47.4
Taiwan	36.8
mainland China	7.4
Other	8.4

4.2 Tourists characteristics and travel type

Other than the place they come from, we may also discuss this on the perspective of sexuality, age, and experience on travelling. Most Chinese people come to this market are of family travel, these people count as 70.0%. Family travelers are unusually of higher purchase power, they do not hesitate in spending earnings in all kinds of markets in exchange of enjoyment and relaxation. Travelers with friends takes up a percentage of 28.5. It is uncommon to see a single person wandering in the market as the percentage ranks only 1.6% (Table 2). And among the people being interviewed, it is to one's surprise to see that

for most of them, the number is 44.3%, this very trip is already more than the fourth time to this country. 22.9% people have come to Japan more than once but less than four times before this time, and 9.0% people have been here once (Table 3). The high return rate indicating a distinct lure of this country on foreign tourists, as they could always find something new and interesting on each trip, such as a local market like this one.

Table 2. Travel type

Type (This time)	Proportion (%)
Personal	1.6
Family	70.0
Friends	28.5
Tours	0.0

Table 3. Visit frequency in Japan

Times	Proportion (%)
None	23.81
time	9.0
2-3 times	22.9
Over 4 times	44.3

About the time span of the trip, more than half (50.8%) people spend more than one week, and all others stay less than one week but more than 3 nights (Table 4). 23.5% tourists are below the age 19, they must be the lower generation being taken with their parents on the family trip. 11.2% people are of age 20-24, 17.0% of 25-29, 10.5% of 30-34, 10.5% of 35-35 (Table 5). The percentage falls down for the elder ones, this may due to the popularity of Japanese pop culture among the young people.

Now if we put all these numbers together, we could get a clear picture of the

Table 4. Residence time in Japan

Time	Proportion（%）
2 days	0.0
3 days	0.0
4-6 days	49.2
Over one week	50.8

Table 5. Age structure

Age	Proportion（%）
Less than 19	23.5
19-24	11.2
25-29	17.0
30-34	10.5
35-39	10.5
40-44	8.1
45-49	9.0
50-54	5.6
55-59	1.6
Over 60	3.1

majority Chinese people visiting the market. A family led by a young couple less than 40 year-old, with one or two children, most likely from Hong Kong or Taiwan. They are very fond of this country and keep come more than once, on a staying of more than a week for a thoron experience of Japanese culture.

Moreover, Chinese tourists from Hong Kong or Taiwan are more likely to be 'experts' in travelling to Japan for most of them are returning guests of more than four times, in contrast mainland Chinese people are usually first timer. This reveals the difference in attitude towards travelling for these tourists, Hong

Kong and Taiwanese are searching for more exploration and a deep understanding, while mainland people only want a glimpse.

Table 6. Region and travel times

Region/Times	None	1 time	2-3 times	Over 4 times	Total (%)
Hong Kong	17.0	9.2	19.6	54.25	100
Taiwan	13.5	10.1	32.8	43.7	100
mainland China	66.7	4.2	16.7	12.5	100
Others	70.4	7.4	3.7	18.52	100

4.3 Tourists classification

If we divide the group into the three classes described on former pages, the majority of Hong Kong tourists appears at the upper class and counts as 51.9%, these rich people not only use regular flight instead of low cost carriers, but also contribute a great amount of consumption on shopping and entertainment (Table 7).

But in the case of tourists from Taiwan, mainland China and other parts of the world, the peak moves to the middle class. The numbers are 42.0%, 70.8% and 81.5% respectively, and is absolutely dominating in the last two cases. It is interesting to see that, people of rich upper class have the inclination of visiting Japan again in future holidays.

The survey also contains the question of the favorite city in Japan among Chinese tourists. It is not surprising to see Osaka, which is the place this survey was conducted rated on the top as 133 people voted for it, just above the second place Kyoto at the number 103. But 126 of the 323 people being interviewed also visited Tokyo on this trip, but only 22 people voted it as the most favorite (Figure 1 and 2).

Table 7. Tourists classification

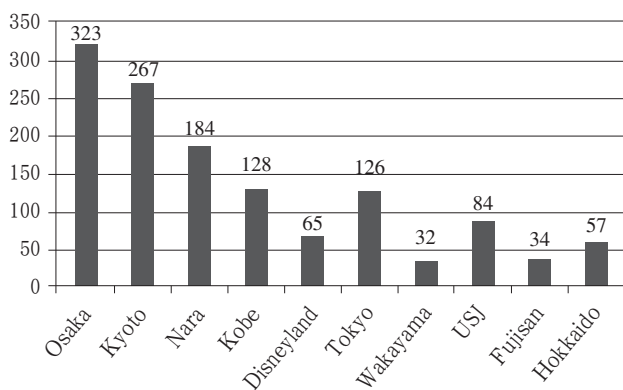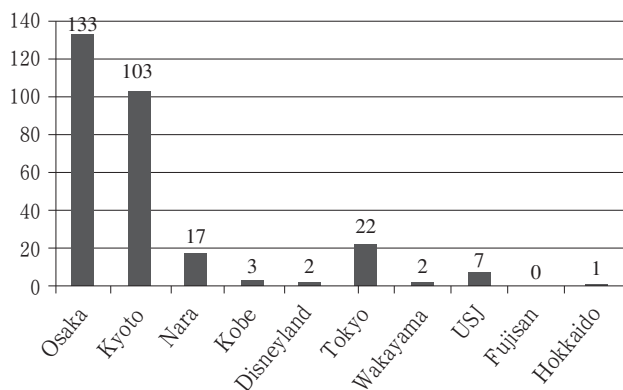| Region/Class	Less than medium	medium	upper	Total（%）
Hong Kong	7.0	41.1	51.9	100
Taiwan	31.3	42.0	26.8	100
mainland China	16.7	70.8	12.5	100
Others	18.5	81.5	0	100

Figure 1. Visit number of places

Figure 2. Favorite places

We could also see that the reason that the fame of Kuromon Market spreads among the visitors is mainly due to the guidebooks. Half of the people (161 samples) were attracted by the introduction as it is listed among the places to visit in Osaka, and 82 people get to know this place through the recommendation of acquaintances (Figure 3).

Figure 3. Kuromon Market Information Collecting
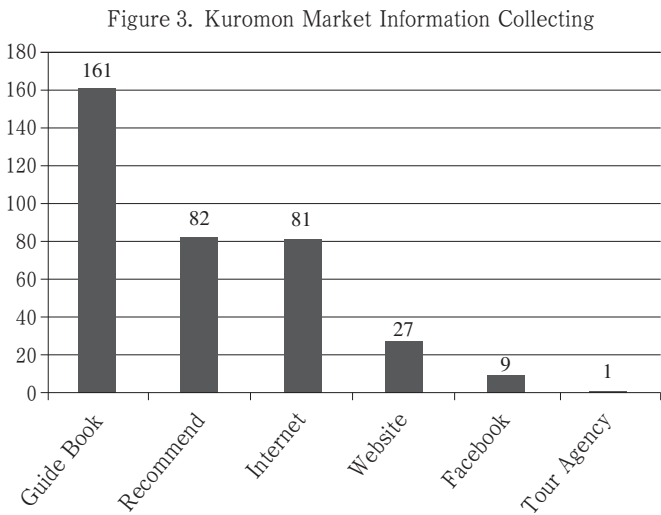
5. Results Analysis

5.1 Japan's attractiveness for Chinese tourists

Based on our survey, we discuss the reasons that Chinese tourists visit Japan more and more from there aspects as follows.

5.1.1 Japanese food's attractiveness.

First, healthy, Japanese food makes all the right choices, as they pay attention to the diet, such as fish is used more than meat, rice is over wheat, and steamed is over fried, which makes food more healthy;

Second, nature, fresh and clean, Japanese food makes you feel good and clean after you eat it; they focus on the natural quality and freshness of food;

5.1.2 Clean weather, good manners and service.

Japan is also famous for its beautiful nature environment, and high quality service. Recent days, weather pollution has become a global problem, especially in China. So Japan supplies a good opportunity for tourists to enjoy their leisure and service. It is also an important reason to attractive tourists to come to Japan.

5.1.3 Japanese historical heritage and culture.

Japan owns a long history especially Nara and Kyoto, Japan protects their history and culture very well, and the inheritance has been done perfect. As one of the most important part of East Asia culture, Japan is attractive in this meaning.

5.1.4 Expense and time cost

Compared to the Europe and US., Japan is a good choice for a short trip, which costs less money and time, especially for the ones who are not easy to get a long time vacation, it is casual for them to enjoy their holiday. Also the distance is short relatively, so the payment of airline becomes cheap, which is also an attractive point.

However there is also an interesting finding from our survey is that Osaka becomes the most popular place, and Kyoto takes the second place. We try to explain this phenomenon.

5.2 Interesting finding: the difference between Osaka and Kyoto

As the number of flights departs from Kansai International airport rises, the tourism in Kansai area is benefited and prospered. When people come to the

conception of Kansai, the two main cities in the area are Osaka and Kyoto. To visit Kyoto, people visit temples, shrines and other cultural relics as it has been the capital of this country for thousands of years. But gourmets would go to Osaka. The survey was conducted in Kuromon Market, which is said to be "the kitchen of Osaka".

If we see through the data provided by the national bureau of tourism, the most often visited Japanese city by people from all countries is no doubt Tokyo as it owns the largest airport in the country. But there is a variety in the second hottest city. Korean people visit Fukuoka (26.70%) more often than Osaka (22.70%) due to the close location, Americans visit Kyoto (22.70%) more often than Kanagawa (18.50%) and Osaka. But for Taiwanese, Hong Kong and Chinese, Osaka ranks at the second place with the rate 24.00%, 23.50% and 40.00% respectively.[3]

Table 8. Japan's provincial level cities visit rate

Order	South Korea	Taiwan	Hong Kong	China	US.
1	Tokyo 30.50%	Tokyo 37.40%	Tokyo 40.90%	Tokyo 59.50%	Tokyo 63.90%
2	Fukuoka 26.70%	Osaka 24.00%	Osaka 23.5%	Osaka 40.00%	Kyoto 22.70%
3	Osaka 22.70%	Kyoto 18.70%	Kyoto 13.70%	Kyoto 25.80%	Kanagawa 18.50%

6. Conclusion

In this paper, we investigated the travel objectives and motivation of both first-

(3) The data source is by Official Travel Guide "Foreign Tourists' Consumption Trend" Report 2013

time and repeat tourists using a questionnaire survey of Chinese tourists that asked about their experiences and travel objectives in the Kansai area in Japan. We applied statistics to analyze the data collected from our survey at Kuromon Market as a pilot. From the empirical results, we found that repeat tourists is the main form of all Chinese tourists in Japan. Also Hong Kong contributes most to more than 4 times group. Relative long time journey is welcomed by the tourists, and the age structure shows young trend. What's more, Hong Kong tourists show an upper level in their tour in Japan.

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Appendix：

1）So far, how many times have you traveled abroad？
1. None   2. Once   3. 2-3 times   4. More than 4 times

2）How long will you stay in Japan？
1. 1-2 Days   2. 3-4 Days   3. 5-6 Days   4. More than 1 week

3）How are you traveling？
1. by yourself   2. with friends   3. with family   4. Tour group

4）How many times have you been to Japan？
1. None   2. Once   3. 2-3 times   4. More than 4 times

5）Where do you come from？
1. Hong Kong   2. Taiwan   3. mainland China   4. Others

6）Where do you plan to go in this trip？
1. Osaka   2. Kyoto   3. Nara   4. Kobe   5. Disneyland
6. Tokyo   7. Wakayama   8. USJ   9. Fujisan   10. Hokkaido

7）Where is your favorite place？
1. Osaka   2. Kyoto   3.Nara   4.Kobe   5. Disneyland
6. Tokyo   7. Wakayama   8.USJ   9.Fujisan   10. Hokkaido

8）How do you get to know about Kuromon Market？
1. The website of Kuromon Market   2. Guidebook
3. Recommendation from friends or acquaintances
4. Advertisement from travel agency
5. Facebook   6. Internet

9）What do you like about Kurumon Market？

10）Gender

11）Age

12）What airline do you use in this trip？