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Tourist segmentation by the motivation –A Case of Japanese tourists

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to segment Japanese tourists by the motivation. We conducted the survey focused on Japanese tourist motivation during Golden Week, which at almost one week is one of the longest holidays in Japan. The method of segmentation is cluster analysis and it revealed four clusters. The highly rated motivational factors among the clusters are “nature,” “relaxation,” and “family/partner/friends.” Our result is useful for tourism strategy of destinations. For example, some destinations are making efforts to attract young female tourists. According to our result, the important factors of attracting them are “family” and “foods.”

Keywords: *tourist segmentation, motivation, cluster analysis, Japanese tourists*

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study is to segment Japanese tourists by the motivation. Market segmentation is one of the most important methods to promote and attract tourists effectively in both of the academic and of the practical. In case of Japan, only demographic variables (gender, age, occupation and so on) are often employed, although there are various segmentation criteria. There is the common perception that female tourists take a key role to boost tourism destination in Japan. Some destinations are making efforts to attract young female tourists. However, female young tourists are not able to be categorized into same segment. They have different benefit to same travel. For this reason, it is not enough to capture or characterize the segment by only demographic variables.

As Dolnicar (2002, 2004) has proposed the importance of “benefit segmentation” (Haley, 1968), the segmentation by the motivation provide some implications to attract tourists. In this study, we employ a posteriori segmentation with push factors which is based on Bieger and Laesser (2002).

The purpose of this study is that segmenting the tourist market into some segments by the motivation. The result of our analysis will propose the characteristics of each segment that cannot be revealed by demographic variables.

LITERATURE

There are some previous studies which considered segmentation of tourists. For review of these studies, there are two view points. One is that the market is a priori or a posteriori. As Dolnicar (2004) mentioned, almost studies targeted a particular market that is a priori studies. For example, Dolnicar and Leisch (2003) segmented the market of tourists who visit to Austria in winter season. The representative study of a posteriori segmentation is

Bieger and Laesser (2002). They revealed the segmentation of tourists in Switzerland by the motivation. The target of their research is the entire population of Switzerland, and it means a posteriori segmentation.

The other point is that the motivation factor is “push” or “pull”. Push factors are the tourists own internal forces and pull factors are the external forces of destination attributions. Pull factors are often considered as attractiveness of tourism destination. In market segmentation by the motivation, it is more suitable that is push motivation factor as variable.

One of the most popular methods of identifying segment is cluster analysis (Dolnicar, 2004, Bieger and Laesser, 2002, Jang et. al, 2002, and so on). Cluster analysis forms to some homogeneous groups (segments) by the data of pull or push motivation.

METHOD

Cluster analysis is employed as segmentation analysis in this study. The criteria of segmentation are the motivation of tourists. We conducted web-based survey research to collect data on motivation. The survey focused on Japanese tourist motivation during “Golden-week” in 2012. Golden Week at almost one week is one of the longest holidays in Japan. This study defines Golden Week as April 27 to May 6, 2012. The summary of this survey is as following:

Target: adults in their 30s-70s who resides in Tokyo.

Travel: both of domestic and overseas travel

Sample size: As a result of this survey, we got the data of motivation from 407.

Travel motivation factors that we proposed to respondents consisted of the following seven factors. For the purposes of our analysis, these factors were abbreviated and the abbreviations appear in parentheses.

- 1) For relaxation (relax)
- 2) Taking and having time for family/partner/friends (family/partner/friends)
- 3) Enjoying local nature (nature)
- 4) Enjoying local foods (foods)
- 5) Enjoying sightseeing and culture (sightseeing and culture)
- 6) For physical exercise (physical exercise)
- 7) For business/works (business/works).

The respondents considered the importance of each factor. The scale on which they answered has four levels: 1 = unimportant, 2 = rather unimportant, 3 = rather important, 4 = very important.

In addition to travel motivation factors, we also questioned the respondents’ travel profile and the demographic profile. These variables are employed to characterize the segments that were formed by cluster analysis:

Travel Profile: destination, purpose, members, amount of payment (transport, accommodation, meals and so on), and transportation mode which mainly used.

Demographic Profile: gender, age, family member, education, occupation, private car ownership, and annual income.

RESULTS

We conducted cluster analysis upon the sample to segment them into four to six clusters, which were based on the motivation data. As the result of comparing these clusters, we employed four clusters. The reasons for employing these clusters are statistical significant.

Table 1 shows the result of cluster analysis. The high rating motivation factors among 4 clusters are “nature,” “relax” and “family/partner/friends.” Each cluster was named by the high rating motivation factors. The results of the cluster analysis are also characterized by demographic variables (Table 2) and by travel profile variables (Table 3). In Table 2, the most significant variables are “gender,” “age,” and “private car ownership.” In Table 3, the variables are “destination,” “purpose,” “duration” and “payment.” The significance level of each variable is apparent.

Cluster 1: This is the largest segment (40.5%). The important factors are “nature,” “foods” and “sightseeing/culture.” We named this segment “enjoying experience.” This cluster consists mainly of females aged 50–79 who own private cars. The purpose of their travel is “travel and recreation.” Their destinations are Kanto and Chubu where are nearby Tokyo, distant domestic area or overseas countries. They spent 2-6 days or 9 days and pay less than 50,000 yen or more than 100,000 yen.

Cluster 2: The important motivational factors are “relaxation,” “family/partner/friends,” “nature,” and “foods.” We named this segment the “typical family tour.” This second-largest share segment (27.3%) consists mainly of males aged 50–69 who own private cars. The purposes of their travel are “travel and recreation” or “return to hometowns.” They went to Kanto and Chubu where are nearby Tokyo for 2 or 3 days. The payment is less than 30,000 yen.

Cluster 3: The share of this segment is 21.4%. The important factors are “family/partner/friends” and “foods.” We named this segment “travel for partnership.” It consists mainly of females aged 30–49 who do not own private cars. The destinations are Kinki or Kyushu where are distant area from Tokyo. The purposes of their travel are “travel and recreation,” “return to hometowns” or “visit to friends/relatives.”

Cluster 4: The share of this segment is 10.8%. We named this segment “compulsory travel.” It has no important factors, relative to the other segments. They went back to their hometowns for 2-3 days.

Table 1

| Result of cluster analysis | | | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|--|--|--|---|---------|------|
| Factor | Cluster (number of respondents / share) | | | | F-ratio | S.L. |
| | 1 enjoying experience n = 165 40.5 % | 2 typical family tour n = 111 27.3 % | 3 travel for partnership n = 87 21.4 % | 4 compulsory travel n = 44 10.8 % | | |
| relax | 2.72 | 3.72 | 2.79 | 2.30 | 93.847 | .000 |
| family/ partner/ friends | 2.84 | 3.77 | 3.44 | 2.61 | 67.682 | .000 |
| nature | 3.09 | 3.41 | 1.92 | 1.80 | 203.247 | .000 |
| foods | 2.90 | 3.39 | 3.13 | 2.11 | 48.889 | .000 |
| sightseeing/ culture | 2.89 | 2.72 | 2.57 | 1.91 | 20.818 | .000 |
| physical exercise | 2.61 | 2.52 | 1.79 | 1.93 | 34.844 | .000 |
| business/works | 1.45 | 1.20 | 1.14 | 2.32 | 38.771 | .000 |

Note: "S.L." means Significance level.

Table 2

| Demographic variables of the 4 cluster (selected variables) | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|--|------------|------|
| Demographic | Cluster (number of respondents / share) | | | | Chi-square | S.L. |
| | 1 enjoying experience n = 165 40.54 % | 2 typical family tour n = 111 27.27 % | 3 travel for partnership n = 87 21.38 % | 4 compulsory travel n = 44 10.81 % | | |
| Gender | | | | | | |
| male | 87 | 60 | 43 | 27 | 519.341 | .000 |
| female | 78 | 51 | 44 | 17 | | |
| Age | | | | | | |
| 30-39 | 35 | 25 | 32 | 16 | 326.557 | .000 |
| 40-49 | 21 | 12 | 15 | 6 | | |
| 50-59 | 23 | 12 | 6 | 3 | | |
| 60-69 | 15 | 11 | 3 | 1 | | |
| 70-79 | 9 | 3 | 1 | 0 | | |
| Private Vehicle | | | | | | |
| own | 104 | 77 | 42 | 22 | 11.520 | .009 |
| not own | 61 | 34 | 45 | 22 | | |

Note: The number of each variable is number of respondents. "S.L." means Significance level. The variables are selected variables in analysis.

Table 3

| Travel profile of the 4 cluster (selected variables) | | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|---|------------|------|
| | Cluster (number of respondents/share) | | | | Chi-square | S.L. |
| | 1 enjoying experience n = 165 40.5 % | 2 typical family tour n = 111 27.3 % | 3 travel for partnership n = 87 21.4 % | 4 compulsory travel n = 44 10.8 % | | |
| Travel profile | | | | | | |
| Destination | | | | | 56.26 | .036 |
| Hokkaido | 11 | 3 | 2 | 3 | | |
| Tohoku | 15 | 7 | 11 | 5 | | |
| Kanto | 41 | 41 | 25 | 7 | | |
| Chubu | 63 | 40 | 22 | 20 | | |
| Kinki | 7 | 8 | 12 | 2 | | |
| Chugoku | 5 | 2 | 1 | 3 | | |
| Shikoku | 1 | 0 | 3 | 0 | | |
| Kyushu | 5 | 3 | 5 | 2 | | |
| Okinawa | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | | |
| Asia | 10 | 4 | 9 | 1 | | |
| Hawaii/Guam | 4 | 2 | 0 | 1 | | |
| North America | 3 | 0 | 1 | 0 | | |
| Europe | 2 | 3 | 1 | 0 | | |
| Oceania | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | | |
| Purpose | | | | | | |
| T/R(Individual) | 122 | 77 | 43 | 7 | 121.258 | .000 |
| T/R (Package) | 19 | 7 | 6 | 1 | | |
| hometowns | 8 | 18 | 23 | 16 | | |
| relatives | 2 | 5 | 11 | 5 | | |
| wedding/funeral | 2 | 0 | 2 | 5 | | |
| business trip | 1 | 0 | 0 | 3 | | |
| other | 11 | 4 | 2 | 7 | | |
| Duration | | | | | | |
| 2 | 39 | 31 | 25 | 15 | 565.981 | .009 |
| 3 | 59 | 34 | 25 | 13 | | |
| 4 | 24 | 20 | 15 | 9 | | |
| 5 | 15 | 9 | 10 | 3 | | |
| 6 | 12 | 2 | 5 | 0 | | |
| 7 | 3 | 6 | 5 | 1 | | |
| 8 | 3 | 5 | 2 | 2 | | |
| 9 | 10 | 4 | 0 | 1 | | |
| Payment | | | | | | |
| less than 30,000 | 77 | 64 | 47 | 31 | 545.565 | .000 |
| 30,001 ~ 50,000 | 41 | 20 | 12 | 8 | | |
| 50,001 ~ 100,000 | 28 | 15 | 23 | 4 | | |
| 100,001 ~ | 19 | 12 | 5 | 1 | | |

Note: The number of each variable is number of respondents. "S.L." means Significance level. The variables are selected variables in analysis.

"T/R" means Travel and Recreation. "hometowns" means return to hometowns. "relatives" means visit to relatives/acquaintances. 1 US dollar = about 90 yen as of February 2013.

Table 4 shows a summary of the characteristics of each cluster. Table 4 also provides some findings, indicating that the majority of tourists are female and tourists' ages tend to skew older across all four clusters. At present, some destinations are making efforts to attract more young female tourists. For such destinations, our results suggest that the most important factors for attracting young female tourists are "family" and "foods."

Table 4**The Characteristics of segments**

| | 1 enjoying experience n = 165 40.54 % | 2 typical family tour n = 111 27.27 % | 3 travel for partnership n = 87 21.38 % | 4 compulsory n = 44 10.81 % |
|-----------------|---|--|---|--------------------------------------|
| Demographic | | | | |
| Age | 50 - 79 | 50 – 69 | 30 - 49 | 30 – 59 |
| Gender | female | male | female | male |
| Private vehicle | own | own | not own | not own |
| Travel profile | | | | |
| Destination | Hokkaido, Tohoku, Kanto, Chubu, Asia, Hawaii/Guam | Kanto, Chubu, Okinawa, Europe | Kinki, Kyushu, Asia | Chubu |
| Purpose | T/R (individual), T/R (package) | T/R (individual), hometowns | T/R (individual), hometowns, relatives | hometowns |
| Duration | 2-6 days, 9days | 2-3 days | 2-4 days | 2-3 days |
| Payment (yen) | less than 30,000 30,001 ~ 50,000 100,001 ~ | less than 30,000 | less than 30,000 50,001 ~ 100,000 | less than 30,000 |

Note: “T/R” means Travel and Recreation. “hometowns” means return to hometowns. “relatives” means visit to relatives/acquaintances. 1 US dollar = about 90 yen as of February 2013.

CONCLUSION AND RELEVANCE TO INDUSTRY

The most meaningful contribution of this study is to provide the segment of tourist by the motivation in Japan. Our result shows that there are four segments of tourist market in “Golden-week”. As we mentioned above, “Golden-week” is one of the longest holidays and it is really precious time for people in Japan. Revealing the segment of tourist by the motivation is very meaningful for tourism strategy in Japan. The result of this study has contribution for the academic and the practical, although the research target of our research is only people who reside in Tokyo.

Some assignments to improve this study have remained. The research target of this study is a part of people in Japan. The sample size should be extended. In this study, our research target is only people who reside in Tokyo. Because of this, other regions are also should be covered as the research target. These are future assignments.

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