

THE IMPACT OF PERSONALIZATION ON CONSUMER PREFERENCE FOR RECOMMENDATION

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INTRODUCTION

Many online travel agencies (OTA) have collected users' information via varying recommender systems and in turn, to customize recommended products. Their objective is to help their users find favorable products easily by providing personalized and appealing options and subsequently increase purchase intention.

Although algorithmic recommendations are prevalent among many online commercial platforms, many others have adopted generic recommendations considering user preference. For example, Apple News, known as the most successful professional news publications, replaced algorithm-picked top stories with human-picked ones since the year of 2016 whereas its competitors were optimizing algorithm-based recommendations (Nicas, 2018). The practices from real business world provide evidence that whether algorithm-based personalized recommendations will be favorable by consumers remains equivocal, suggesting the necessity to further investigate from a user's perspective. Specifically, consumers will be more inclined to prefer one of the two types of recommendation (generic vs. personalized) and therefore, the underpinning mechanism is well-worth investigation. The motivation of the current research is to explore the two major questions: Will consumers prefer generic or personalized recommendation in online commercial context? What is the underlying mechanism of consumers' preference.

To further discuss the proposed research question, we will mainly draw on two lines of research, including personalization advertising and the role of awareness in information processing.

Previous studies have depicted personalized

advertisement as an innovative approach whereby advertisement attractiveness can be enhanced by taking consumers' needs and wants into consideration (Tam & Ho, 2006; Aguirre et al., 2015). However, whether the positive effect of personalization in advertising will also be imposed to product/service recommendation remains ambiguous. When doing online shopping, consumers take the initiative to search for products or services, whereas they passively receive personalized ads when surfing the Internet.

Consumers' preference for personalization has well been documented in previous research on advertisement (Lambrecht & Tucker, 2013). This preference stems from better fitness and congruence of personalized advertisements to consumers' interests and needs (Tam & Ho, 2006; Aguirre et al., 2015). By the same token, we postulate that personalized recommendation will also hold better fitness to consumers' needs and in turn, have better effectiveness over generic ones. Therefore, we hypothesize that personalization will improve recommendation effectiveness comparing to their generic counterparts (H1).

Nevertheless, personalization will sometimes backfire. Many have demonstrated that consumers might think personalized ads as off-putting (Stone, 2010; Tucker, 2012; Kim et al., 2018) and as a result, show reactance to them (White et al. 2008). As a matter of fact, consumers nowadays become more cautious and sensitive to the tailored information they received as firms of all kinds have been adopting algorithmic filter technique (Kim et al., 2018). The heated discussion of filter bubble on social medias has provoked broader awareness that the information we receive online are filtered and tailored based on our personal information (Pariser, 2011). To mitigate the side effect of

personalization, many companies (e.g., Facebook) voluntarily uncover the approaches they utilize to collect user information and to generate targeted contents. The underlying rationale of the transparency policies is that by increasing users' awareness of the level to which information are tailored, they will have better knowledge about the fitness and congruency of the personalized recommendation and consequently enhance the effectiveness (Summers, Smith, & Reczed, 2016; Kim et al., 2018). However, making salient how personal information is collected and utilized will by the mean time make prominent something that is not presently top of mind, namely, the fact that the information they receive are tailored. Therefore, users will commence to concern about the issue of information blindness and in turn, the effect of personalization may be buffered. Information blindness refers to phenomenon that information (e.g., articles, ads and recommendations etc.), which is presumably to be of no interests to the users, will be precluded by the algorithms (Haim, Arendt, & Scherr, 2017). Yet, majority of online commercial platforms have not revealed to their consumers what have been strengthened to and what have been hidden from them. Once consumers have the awareness of information blindness, the favorable effect of personalization is likely to be attenuated. Research on information processing further support our postulation by showing that people are generally unaware of the reason why they adopt a certain procedure when making their own judgements (Bargh, 1997). However, once they are aware of the unwarranted context effects, they are motivated to correct their prior judgments (Kardes & Wyer, 2013). Taken together, we propose the moderation role of awareness of information blindness on the relationship between personalization and recommendation effectiveness, such that the positive effect of personalized (vs. generic) recommendation on effectiveness will be buffered when the awareness of information blindness is high (vs. low) (H2).

METHOD

We are going to conduct two lab experiments to test the proposed hypotheses. The objective of study 1 is to examine the main effect in hypothesis

1. Participants will be randomly assigned to a 2 (recommendation: personalized vs. generic) \times 1 study. We will measure their preference to the recommended product as the representative of effectiveness. Study 2 will be designed to test the moderation effect of awareness of information blindness using a (recommendation: personalized vs. generic) \times 2 (awareness of information blindness: high vs. low) between-subject study. Then we will compare participants' relative preference for the recommended product among the four conditions.

FINDINGS

We predict that the experiment and data analysis results will be consistent to the proposed hypothesis. To be specific, study 1 will show that participants in the personalized recommendation condition express higher preference for the personalized recommended products/services. We, then, expect that study 2 will further show evidence for the moderation effect. Specifically, when relatively high (vs. low) awareness of information blindness is triggered, the positive effect of personalization on recommendation effectiveness will be eliminated.

IMPLICATIONS

The current research is theoretically impactful as it contributes to the line of theories on personalization. Existing research showed that consumers' privacy concerns were a major cause of personalization aversion (Kim et al., 2018). However, the current study suggests that privacy concerns should not be the only eclipse.

The current research is practically relevant and meaningful. As companies are leveraging advances on algorithmic recommendations aiming to better serve their users, recommender system creators and managers should pay attention to users' awareness of information blindness since they are no longer "naïve" customers without awareness of tailored information. The findings suggest that for those who have higher awareness, personalization will backfire. Therefore, practitioners might uncover the characteristics that normally predict high awareness of information blindness.

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IMPACT OF RISK AVERSION ON TOURISM CONSUMPTION: A HIERARCHICAL AGE-PERIOD-COHORT ANALYSIS

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INTRODUCTION

The outbreak of COVID19 has seriously attacked the global tourism industry. The invisible, inseparable, and vulnerable nature of tourism products make it difficult to assess the risk level of tourism activities (Yang, 2020; Mitchell & Greatorex, 1993). However, tourism is becoming a necessity of happiness for the general tourists, the bigger the proportion of tourism expenditure in family budget, the more important of the impact of risk in tourism decision-making (Roehl & Fesenmaier, 1992). The major influencing factors affecting tourism expenditure can be divided into four types: economic factors, social demographic factors, travel related factors and psychological factors (Lin et al., 2020; Tefko et al., 2020). Among which, the first three types of factors have been most frequently studied while the studies on psychological factors are much fewer. Studies examining the psychological factors are mostly confined to the travel context, such as tourist satisfaction and travel motivation, stable psychological properties; however, tourists' general perspectives and attitudes (e.g. general attitude of risk aversion) can also impact their travel behavior (Brida & Scuderi, 2013; Zhu & Deng, 2020; Williams & Balaz, 2013).

Tourists' preference and travel behavior can be changed over time. Cohort analysis can segment the effects of age, period and cohort, and determine which one is the most important time factor affecting the changes of tourism demand (Deaton, 1997). Consumers in the same birth cohort are likely to share similar life experience as they have same epochal events occurring in their lives, therefore producing a set of collective behavior characteristics and attitudes (e.g. personality), and this can further lead to significant impact in their consumption

behavior (Strauss & Howe, 1991; Rentz, Reynolds, & Stout, 1983; Meredith & Schewe, 1994). To the best of our knowledge, the application of cohort analysis in tourism studies has been found to be limited. This study thus aims to explore the impact of risk aversion on tourism consumption using cohort analysis. The Chinese urban household survey data over 2011 to 2017 will be used to investigate the influence of age, period and cohort on a two-stage decision making process: tourism participation and consumption.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Factors influence tourism consumption

Scholars have systematically reviewed the factors affecting tourism consumption and summarized into the following four categories: economic factors, social-demographic factors, trip-related factors, and psychological factors (Lin, Qin, Li et al., 2020; Tefko et al., 2020; Lin, Mao & Song, 2015; Brida & Scuderi, 2013; Wang & Davidson, 2010). Given the principle of simplicity and data limitations, few studies explored all the four categories of variables. Similarly, considering the specific data used in this study, economic factors, socio-demographic factors and psychological factors are included. The reason for not adding travel-related factors is such data cannot be observed in the CHFS survey data.

Risk aversion

Plog is the first scholar to pay attention to the difference of tourists' risk behaviors. In his famous classification of leisure tourists, "allocentrics" pursue novelty and love taking risks and have moderate risk tolerance. Psychocentrics, on the other hand, avoid taking risks. Differences

exist in destination choice between these two groups: allocentrics would choose safer destinations, while psychocentrics would choose risky destinations (Plog, 1973). Subsequent studies also found the differences in other tourism behaviors (e.g. Quintal et al, 2010; Sweeney et al., 1999; Vogt & Fesenmaier, 1998). However, most of the risk factors involved in tourism decisions studies are in specific travel context, such as risk perception (Williams & Balaz, 2013). Conversely, risk aversion is an inherent property of tourists, namely “the consistent tendency of choice of consumers facing different risk levels” or “consumers’ willingness to accept risk” (Schroeder et al., 2007; Weber et al., 2002). Although both risk perception and risk aversion significantly affect behavioral intentions, a recent study shows that the impact of risk aversion is stronger in the context of epidemic (Zhu et al., 2020), so it is necessary to link tourism studies with more general risk aversion (Larsen et al., 2009). People with different levels of risk aversion have different consumption behaviors (Wansink, 2004). In the context of travel, risk-aversers are likely to pay more attention to the consequences of travel, so have a lower willingness to travel (Zhu & Deng, 2020). Tourism studies on risk aversion commonly identified a negative relationship between risk aversion and tourism consumption (Zhang, 2014; Tse & Crotts, 2005). One exception is Parka and Nicolaub (2018), who found that, tourists tended to increase tourism consumption to reduce anxiety through price-quality mechanism in the context of highly information sensitive and asymmetry.

APC model

Opperman (1995) was the first scholar to introduce cohort analysis into tourism research. He found cohort an important factor to influence German's travel pattern and destination choices. Similarly, Scholars from different countries have confirmed that cohort do have an impact on destination choice, tourism participation and tourism consumption behavior (You & O 'Leary, 2000; Alegre & Pou, 2004; Gardiner et al., 2013). Recent research by Zuo and Lai (2020) found that there is a significant housing wealthy effect in China, and the moderating effect of age and cohort is significant. Later, scholars have extensively applied cohort analysis to other topics such as tourist

preferences (Gray et al., 2003) and attitudes change of residents in tourist destinations (Huh & Vogt, 2007). These studies all confirm the effectiveness of cohort analysis in exploring tourist behaviors and attitudes change.

Data and Model

The data used in this study are from the China Household Financial Survey (CHFS), a national survey project carried out by the China Household Financial Survey and Research Center. Stratified three-stage sampling method and proportional sampling according to the size measurement are applied in the project, and all samples are adjusted by weight, ensuring the randomness and representativeness of the sample (Li et al., 2016). A valid sample of 45,837 Chinese urban households from 29 provinces over 2011 to 2017 is included in the study. Among them, 6,178 households were registered in 2011, 17,999 in 2013, 12,088 in 2015 and 9,572 in 2017. Variables and basic description are shown in Table1. Risk aversion is measured by the question used in the Survey of Consumer Finances (SCF). Numerous studies have confirmed the high reliability and validity of the SCF-approach and concluded that it is an appropriate method to measure risk aversion (Hanna & Lindamood, 2013; Grable & Lytton, 2001; Gutter et al., 1999).

The traditional cohort analysis is confronted with the identification problem. Many scholars proposed improved models, one of which is the Hierarchical Age-Period -Cohort Model (HAPC) proposed by Yang and Land (2006), which is used in sociology research widely. HAPC model grasps the fact that period and cohort are contextual factors at a higher level by placing them at the second level and age at the first level, the linear relationship between age, period and queue is broken, thus there is no identification problem (Yang & Land, 2013).

Expected Findings and Potential Implications

This study intends to test the following hypotheses.

H1: risk aversion negatively impacts tourism participation, namely, tourists with higher degree of risk aversion are less likely to travel.

H2: risk aversion negatively impacts the level of tourism consumption, namely, tourists with higher degree of risk aversion are more likely to

spend less.

H3: There is a positive relationship between birth cohort and tourism participation. Tourists in younger cohort are more likely to travel.

H4: There is a positive relationship between birth cohort and the level of tourism consumption. Tourists in younger cohort are more likely to spend more.

H5: Cohort can moderate the relationship between risk aversion and tourism participation.

H6: Cohort can moderate the relationship between risk aversion and tourism consumption.

This study can make a few contributions to the existing literature. First, it evaluates the impact of general risk aversion attitudes with a particular focus on testing the age-period-cohort effects. The HAPC model used in sociology research is introduced to tourism studies, providing future researchers a valuable and helpful analytical tool for testing the cohort effects on tourism demand. Second, the findings of the study can obtain better understanding into the difference of tourism consumption behaviors across different age cohorts, which can help enterprises master consumers' attitudes towards products and make appropriate marketing strategies (Rentz, Reynolds, & Stout, 1983; Meredith & Schewe, 1994).

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FACTORS INFLUENCING DOMESTIC TOURISM SPENDING OF THAI HOUSEHOLDS

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INTRODUCTION

In the past decade, tourism has become one of the pillars of the Thai economy. It brings the highest income into the country compared to the major export products of Thailand and tourism balance is almost double the trade balance. In 2019, the tourism economy can directly and indirectly add value to the gross domestic product about 18%. It contributes approximately 12% of the total employment (about 4.4 million people) which is more than the whole employment within the manufacturing sector (Ministry of Tourism and Sports, 2020). In that year, Thailand was visited by more than 39.8 million foreigners, generating income about 1.93 trillion Baht (the fourth highest in the world) and earning income from Thai tourists about 1.08 trillion Baht, totaling 3.01 trillion Baht. This data reflects the dependences on the foreign market of Thai tourism, which accounts for 71% (or about two-thirds) of total tourism revenue of Thailand.

However, in 2020, the situation of COVID-19 pandemic affect tourism all over the world including Thailand, especially the foreign tourist market which cannot travel to Thailand. This situation makes various sectors related to tourism try to stimulate and turn to focusing on the Thai tourist market. Although, it cannot completely replace the foreign tourist market, but it will help the tourism sector to remain driven instead of stopping/dissolving business. Therefore, to provide information for the policy maker to stimulate domestic tourism spending of Thai households, the objective of this study is to analyze the factors influencing the spending on domestic tourism of Thai households. The results from this study will be useful in marketing, planning, and setting

guidelines for promoting and stimulating domestic tourism in order to generate income and drive Thai tourism during the period that it is not yet possible to get foreign tourists.

METHOD

This study applied a regression analysis to develop a model of factors influencing domestic tourism spending of Thai households. The data set of domestic tourism spending of Thai households is the secondary data obtained from of the socio-economic survey of the National Statistical Office Thailand (NSO) in 2019. The sample size of this study is 1,272 samples. In this study, domestic tourism spending includes spending on accommodation, food, transportation, souvenirs and others products related to tourism. The group of factors that determine domestic tourism spending of Thai households is a factor at the household level which obtained from the literature review and determined by the completeness of the data. These factors consist of the monthly income of the household, region of residence, municipal residence, the proportion of members who earn income per total household members, the proportion of required expenditure to total expenses, and the proportion of members of the dependent age (children and seniors) to all members within the household.

FINDINGS

Survey data from the National Statistical Office in 2019 showed that Thai households spend about 1,400 Baht for domestic tourism. The result of coefficient estimation of the model of factors influencing domestic tourism spending of Thai households found that a 1% increase in household

income per month would encourage households to spend for domestic tourism about 0.45% with a statistical significance at the 0.01 level.

The households residing in the Bangkok Metropolis and Vicinity have been spent for domestic tourism higher than households in other regions while households in the northern region spend lower than other regions for this type of expense with a statistical significance at the 0.01

level. Moreover, households in the municipality have spent higher on domestic tourism than those outside the municipality. It was also found that the proportion of household members with income, and the proportion of necessary expenses (expenses for consumption goods) were two variables that had a statistically significant opposite influence on household spending on tourism at the 0.01 level of confidence.

Table 1. The estimation of the coefficient of a model of factors influencing domestic tourism spending of Thai households

variables	coefficient	t-statistic	Variance inflation factors (VIF)
constant	2.620	6.179***	-
Monthly income	0.446	13.979***	1.382
Region			
– Bangkok Metropolis and Vicinity	0.038	0.557	2.001
– Central	-0.121	-2.127**	2.293
– Northern	-0.133	-1.990**	1.916
– Northeastern	-0.100	-1.693*	2.043
Municipal residence	0.166	3.959***	1.232
Proportion of household members who earning income	-0.239	-3.113***	1.879
Proportion of required expenditure	-0.309	-2.881***	1.438
Proportion of dependent members	-0.056	-0.764	1.789
$R^2 = 0.255$; Adjusted $R^2 = 0.250$; F-statistic = 47.949***; Breusch-Pagan-Godfrey = 4.280***; n = 1,272			

Note: solving heteroscedasticity problem with Huber-White-Hinkley heteroscedasticity consistent standard errors and covariance method

CONCLUSION

The objective of this study was to analyze the factors influencing the domestic tourism spending of Thai households. Results of the study showed that household income remains a key factor in determining domestic tourism spending for Thai households. Households in the municipality have higher domestic tourism expenditures than non-municipal households. While the households that had a large proportion of members who had to work to earn income compared to all members will be lower domestic tourism spending. This may be due to time spending on work to earn money, which caused the lack of time available to travel together. In the meanwhile, households with a high proportion of essential expenditures will also spend less on domestic tourism.

Regarding the results of this study, there are some recommendations for stimulating domestic

tourism of Thai households. In the short-term, the government may set policies or measures to reduce the burden of expenses on domestic tourism of the household, for example, supports some tourism expenses or some type of spending. As well as set a long weekend, so that households can spend their free time together in traveling. In the long-term, the related authorities should encourage or support the tourism entrepreneurs to upgrade the tourism products to satisfy the high-income tourist group. That is because this group of tourists will spend more on tourism than other tourists. However, they also need better quality services too.

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THE FEATURES OF FIT IN JAPAN FOCUSED ON THE EXPERIENCE OF PAST VISITS

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INTRODUCTION

Background: The number of inbound foreign tourists in Japan has grown from 19 million in 2016 to 32 million in 2019. Along with this quantitative change, the increase in foreign tourists who arrange their travels and have also been observed. Independent tourists, as a percentage of all inbound foreign tourists, increased from 60.5% in 2006 to 75.4% in 2019. In this study, a tourist who travels overseas by making their own arrangements, is referred to as an FIT (Foreign Independent Tourist). "Tourism Vision Supporting Tomorrow's Japan", which is the national target of tourism policy formulated in 2016, aims to increase the number of repeat visitors, the days of staying in Japan and the number of foreign tourists visiting the rural areas. Japan Tourism Agency (2017) reported that repeat visitors from Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong and China tend to be FITs and select different destinations, compared to first-time visitors from these countries. It is expected that the diversification of inbound tourism brings the widespread expansion of benefits of tourism in Japan.

Literature Review: Hashimoto (2013) conducted a theoretical study on the transformation and frequency of travel by focusing on the trend toward individualization in Japanese outbound tourism. Although it is assumed that FITs in Japan also have changed their trends, have different trends among foreign tourists in Japan, it is not yet clear. As practical examples, multiple studies have been conducted to examine the behavior of inbound foreign tourists to Japan from 2000 onward. Furuya et al. (2015), Kurihara et al. (2015), Yabe (2016), Furuya et al. (2016), Matsui et al. (2016) and Yabe

et al. (2019) are typical cases. These previous studies were based on the results of "the Survey on Inbound Foreigners' Spending Behavior", which is the statistical survey conducted by government every year. They found some holistic trends (e.g., the cross-nationality comparison of the visited places, length of their stay, conducted activities) among foreign tourists in Japan. Kurata et al. (2010) reviewed existing methods and examined more detailed survey to understand inbound foreigners' behavior in Japan. They pointed the importance to extract the stay at individual destinations and specific patterns in tourism behavior, and the limitation of the analysis based on the statistical survey. Although it is assumed that increasing FITs make positive impacts on the tourism industry where have not benefited before, effective methods to measure them has not been established.

Purpose: The objective of this study is to elucidate the visiting trends among FITs in Japan by more individualized survey, with the aim of examining the effective direction to extend benefits of inbound tourism in Japan. We made a survey about destinations and itinerary of FITs, and did analysis through a comparative verification that focuses on the visiting experience.

METHOD

Overview: We carried a questionnaire survey and presumed two types of FITs: First Time Visitors and Repeaters. To elucidate if FIT Repeaters stay longer in Japan and visit rural areas as the Government expects, set the following null hypotheses against which to analyze the survey results. We divided Japan into 8 regions based on

the definition of Matsui et al (2016). Additionally, we define “prefectures in rural areas” as the prefectures other than those located in three major metropolitan areas based on the definition of Yabe (2016).

Hypotheses:

- H1: Repeaters tend to stay across more regions or more prefectures.
- H2: Repeaters tend to visit and stay more prefectures in rural areas.
- H3: Repeaters tend to stay longer at each destination in Japan.

Questionnaire survey: A 365-day period between July 1, 2017 and June 31, 2018 was designated as the survey period. During the period, we asked all the foreign tourists staying at the accommodation SAWANOYA in Tokyo to participate in the survey when they checked in. The survey was conducted in English. It was consisted of 37 questions including respondents' literary, the number of Previous visit to Japan and places they traveled to during their stay in Japan. Both printed

forms and online forms were used to conduct the survey.

Analysis: Based on the each answer, we presumed two types of FITs: First Time Visitors and Repeaters. The significant differences between the sample means in both groups were evaluated using an independent-samples t-test. The responses subject to this study were regarding six items shown in Table 1.

FINDINGS

727 valid responses were obtained. 617 responses were collected through the printed forms, and 110 responses were online forms. Of the 727 responses, 5 responses selected “Travel Agency” as “Means for Making Appointment of SAWANOYA”. Those responses were excluded from this paper, and we analyzed the remaining 722 responses with regard to trends among FITs in Japan. The results of analyses are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Result of Analysis between two groups of FITs

No	First Time Visitors			Repeaters			t
	N	mean	SD	N	mean	SD	
1 Length of the stay in Japan	393	16.58	13.06	302	18.20	30.82	-0.8877
2 Number of destinations	393	4.201	2.254	302	4.003	2.407	-0.1940
3 Sorts of visited prefectures	380	3.639	1.966	294	3.340	2.024	-0.0000
4 Sorts of visited regions	380	2.642	1.175	294	2.500	1.285	0.0000
5 Sorts of the prefectures in rural areas	380	1.284	1.506	294	1.582	1.815	-4.539 **
6 Length of their stay at each destination	359	3.297	1.793	283	3.865	3.059	-5.541 **

** $p < 0.01$

Note: In the analysis based on answers through printed form, No 5 and 6 has significant difference ($p < 0.01$) In the abased on answers through online, no significant difference were shown, because of the small sample size.

Regarding the number of sorts of prefectures, the mean for First Time Visitors was 3.64 prefectures, and that for Repeaters was 3.34 prefectures. These mean values for both groups did not present any significant difference. And regarding the number of sorts of regions that they have visited, the mean for First Time Visitors was 2.64 regions, and that for Repeaters was 2.50 regions. These mean values for both groups did not present any significant difference. Therefore, the null hypothesis H1 was rejected.

Regarding the number of sorts of the prefectures in rural areas, the mean for First Time Visitors was 1.28 prefectures, and that for Repeaters was 1.58 prefectures. A significant difference was recognized between these mean values for both groups ($p < 0.01$). Therefore, the null hypothesis H2 was not rejected. It was indicated that the Repeaters tend to visit more prefectures in rural areas than the First Time Visitors do.

Regarding the average length of their stay at each destination, the mean for First Time Visitors

was 3.30 nights, and that for Repeaters was 3.87 nights. A significant difference was recognized between these mean values for both groups ($p < 0.01$). Therefore, the null hypothesis H3 was not rejected. It was indicated that the Repeaters tend to stay longer at their each destinations than the First Time Visitors do.

Taking consideration that the hypothesis H2 and H3 were not rejected though hypothesis H1 was rejected, it is thought that Repeaters tend to visit rural prefectures in one or a small number of regions in Japan. In other words, it is thought that there is no tendency for Repeaters to trip across the multiple regions and visit various rural areas and prefectures all over Japan, in comparison First Time Visitors.

Regarding the length of the stay in Japan and the number of destinations, both of the mean values for First Time Visitors and Repeaters did not present any significant difference. It could not be said that Repeaters tend to extend their staying days and visit more destinations in Japan.

CONCLUSION

In this study, we examined the dynamics of FITs visits to Japan, focusing on their visiting experience and places they visited in Japan. FITs to Japan with visiting experience, compared to FIT who visited Japan for the first time, had longer average number of nights stayed per place, and the number of visits to prefectures in rural areas tended to increase. On the other hand, there were no significant differences in the number of days spent in Japan, the number of cities and places visited, the number of prefectures visited, and the number of rural areas visited, depending on the experience of visiting Japan.

Based on the results, theoretically, it is assumed that if the number of nights stayed per place visited increases and the length of stay of the entire inbound trip does not increase, the number of places visited will decrease. However, such a tendency was not recognized in this study. The following two points can be considered as this factor.

The first factor is the proficiency in traveling by FITs visiting Japan. It is assumed that FIT who arranges accommodation and transportation on its

own during travel, gains the ability to streamline entry and departure routes and travel in Japan by accumulating experience, and can secure more time to stay at each destination. Thus, it is considered that even if the stay days in Japan as a whole are the same, the stay days in the visited places can be extended without reducing the number of visited places. This hypothesis should be examined in the future by analyzing questions related to transportation and route selection.

The second factor is caused by the analysis. In this study, we focused on the difference between the mean values for each sample, and used the t-test as an analysis method. As a result, it was possible to quantitatively grasp the difference in the number of places visited and the number of visits to prefectures in rural areas. On the other hand, tourists of recent days generally consider travel schedules in consideration of vacation schedules based on the solar calendar. For this reason, it is assumed that the number of travel days is specifically and frequently selected to be 7 days or 14 days. Therefore, when analyzing the number of travel days, verification using a method other than the parametric test method that assumes a normal distribution of the population is also required.

This study suggests that FITs tend to choose rural areas as destinations for their second and subsequent trips to Japan and stay for long periods at each destination. Regarding the expanding benefits of tourism from popular and standard metropolitan areas to suburban and rural destinations, it is thought that attracting Repeaters of FITs is a effective direction in Japan. On the other hand, the tourists spending by FITs in Japan also has not been clarified. Considering the increase of FITs going forward, it is important to continue verification based on the characteristics of the results of existing surveys of different sizes and subjects, and to clarify their dynamics and intentions.

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