

The purchasing behavior of Chinese tourists at popular visiting areas in Japan

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Abstract

This study proposes a new viewpoint on the travel souvenir purchasing behavior of Chinese tourists in Japan. The purchase of a travel souvenir is typically a one-time purchase by a tourist during a visit to a location. To increase the sales of travel souvenirs, it is important to promote repeat purchases. Therefore, understanding which factors are related to increased intention to repeat purchasing is crucial. This study focuses on the visiting areas of Chinese tourists and compares them to Hokkaido, another popular destination for Chinese tourists. The study found that Hokkaido has succeeded in improving Chinese tourist awareness of specialty products, Chinese tourists have a strong intention to purchase on-line after returning home, and the purchase intention for seasonal agricultural products is particularly strong. I believe that our study makes a significant contribution to the literature because it suggests that the marketer in Hokkaido needs to challenge agricultural product online stores in China. Additionally, marketers in other area must promote their specialty products to improve Chinese tourist awareness of those specialty products.

Keywords

purchasing behavior, inbound tourism, Chinese tourist, Hokkaido, travel souvenir

1. Introduction

The number of international tourists who visited Japan in 2016 was 24.04 million, which was a 21.8% increase from the previous year (19.74 million) and the highest ever recorded [Japan Tourism Agency, 2017a].

According to the Consumption Trend Survey for Foreigners Visiting Japan, the travel expenditure of international visitors to Japan in 2016 was 3.7476 trillion yen, a 7.8% increase from the previous year (3.4771 trillion yen) and also the highest ever recorded. The expenditure on shopping for foreign visitors was 1.4261 trillion yen [Japan Tourism Agency, 2017b].

The travel expenditure of Chinese tourists was the highest ever recorded at 1.4754 trillion yen (39.4 % of the total), and shopping expenditure was 783.2 billion yen. For purchase rate and average expenditure per Chinese tourist, shopping expenditure was 123,724 yen (99.8 %), and it was the highest of all nations.

Table 1 shows that 67.2 % of tourists purchased confectionery (10,951 yen), and 57.7 % purchased other food, drink, alcohol, and tobacco (13,231yen). I consider these shopping items to be travel souvenirs. In this paper, I define a travel souvenir as the goods that a tourist purchases during travel and consumes once they have returned home.

The purchase of a travel souvenir is a one-time purchase by a tourist during a visit to a location. To increase travel souvenir sales, it is important to promote repeat purchases. I believe it is possible to promote repeat purchases through online shopping.

Small local food items are sold as travel souvenirs in Japan. Many prefectures are planning to attract Chinese tourists, but there are areas that succeed in attracting Chinese tourists and areas that do not.

According to Arima et al. [2014], the purchasing behavior of Asian tourists in Japan, including the Chinese, is similar to that

Table 1: Purchase rate and average expenditure per Chinese tourist—Tourism/Leisure

| Survey Item | Purchase Rate (%) | Expenditure (yen) |
|--|-------------------|-------------------|
| <i>Total</i> | 99.8 | 123,724 |
| Confectioneries | 67.2 | 10,951 |
| Other food, drink, alcohol, and tobacco | 57.7 | 13,231 |
| Cameras, video cameras, watches | 15.5 | 59,405 |
| Consumer electronics (PC, audio, rice cookers, etc.) | 31.8 | 37,232 |
| Cosmetics, perfume | 78.2 | 44,894 |
| Medicine, health goods, toiletries | 76.1 | 31,943 |
| Japanese clothing (kimono), folk crafts | 8.5 | 15,086 |
| Western clothing, bags, shoes | 47.3 | 46,654 |
| Manga comics, anime, character merchandise | 15.9 | 11,480 |
| Books, picture postcards, CDs, DVDs | 11.2 | 5,329 |
| Other purchases | 3.9 | 46,552 |

Source: Japan Tourism Agency [2017c].

of the Japanese for travel souvenirs, and Asian tourists showed a strong interest in local foods. According to the survey on Chinese students, there was strong interest in purchasing souvenirs and Japanese traditional meals [Oyabu et al., 2016]. According to the internet survey of Chinese tourists, the tourists with high visit-to-Japan frequency perform repeat purchases of travel souvenirs [Tsujimoto, 2017]. According to a survey of visit areas, Chinese tourists choose Hokkaido in many cases, and there is a difference according to place of residence [Hishida et al., 2012].

A few studies compared purchasing behavior among the tourist visit areas. Therefore, I focused on visiting areas and

compared them to Hokkaido where many Chinese tourists visit, and I clarified the differences in purchasing behavior between the two areas. I identified the factors related to increased and repeated travel souvenir purchases.

New information and an understanding of the different factors of Chinese tourist's purchasing behavior can lead to improved planning, marketing, and the management of sales, expenditures, and opportunities in the regional Japanese tourist industry.

2. Previous Studies

According to Oh et al. [2004], although tourists' purchasing behavior is a popular and important subject, and shopping is a popular tourist activity. These two subjects have long been under-researched, and there is limited empirical research on tourist purchasing behavior.

Oh et al. [2004] stated, "Tourists often act and behave in a unique context different from day-to-day shopping. Tourism destinations are aware of the impacts and the contributions of shopping, they lack fundamental knowledge of the characteristics of shoppers".

The souvenirs that a tourist brings home have special and symbolic memories and are valued and cherished [Littrell et al., 1994].

It is important to study the valuation basis of travel souvenirs based on a consumer's purchase decision-making process. Figure 1 shows the purchasing decision-making process for travel souvenirs [Tsujimoto et al., 2013]. This process has two types of user. One is a purchaser of travel souvenirs, and the other is a recipient of travel souvenirs. Tourists buy souvenirs for themselves, friends, and family.

Tsujimoto [2015] stated that marketers should understand the post-purchase evaluation of purchasers and recipients. This study focused on evaluation alternatives, purchases, and pur-

chaser's post-purchase evaluation.

3. Method

3.1 Study population

I performed an online survey among 823 Chinese individuals (male 413, female 410) aged between 20 and 69 years in Beijing, Shanghai, Canton, and Shenzhen who visited Japan in 2013 or 2014.

3.2 Variables

The variables were the following. (1) attributes (gender, age, and occupation), (2) outline of the visit to Japan (visit frequency, length of stay, and areas visited), (3) outline of the purchased travel souvenir (brand name, cost, product category, store where purchased, recipient and evaluation alternatives), (4) the repeat purchase intention for that item.

3.3 Preliminary analysis

Eighty percent of all respondents' stays were for less than one week. Most stays were for five days (28.1 %) followed by seven days (22.4 %) and six days (13.7 %). Respondent visit areas were Hokkaido (72.8 %), Kanto (36.8 %), Chubu (28.9 %), Okinawa (28.8 %), and Kyushu (26.7 %). Hokkaido was the most-visited area.

There were 203 combinations of visit places (visit pattern). The visit patterns were Hokkaido only (15.3 %), Hokkaido and Okinawa (5.5%), Hokkaido and Kanto (4.5 %) and Okinawa only (3.9 %).

Ninety-seven percent of respondents purchased travel souvenirs. Table 2 shows that respondents' most favorite travel souvenir purchase areas (prefecture) were Hokkaido (51.0 %), Tokyo (12.5 %), Okinawa (5.7 %), Osaka (4.4 %), Kyoto (3.3 %), and Fukuoka (2.1 %). The visit pattern of Hokkaido only was 15.3 %.

Although many respondents had visited areas other than Hokkaido simultaneously, there were many respondents who had visited Hokkaido. Hokkaido is a successful area where Chinese tourists purchase travel souvenirs. Therefore, I categorized the group that visited Hokkaido (g1) and the group that visited areas other than Hokkaido (g2). I clarify the difference

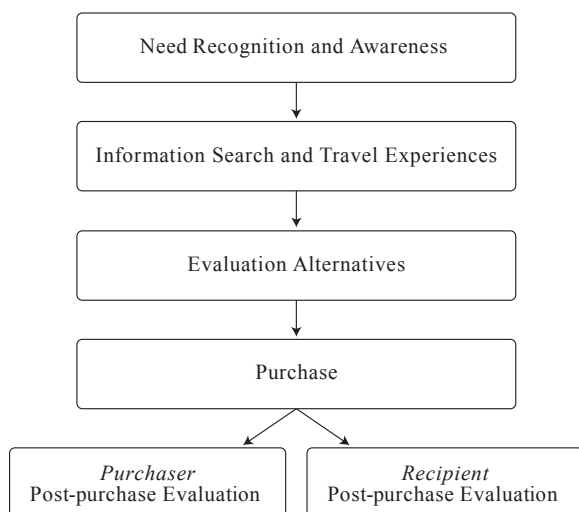


Figure 1: The purchasing decision-making process for travel souvenirs

Source: Tsujimoto et al. [2013].

Table 2: The Purchase Area of the Most Favorite Souvenir ($n = 663$)

| Variable (Area) | Numbers | Percentage (%) |
|-----------------|---------|----------------|
| Hokkaido | 338 | 51.0 |
| Tokyo | 83 | 12.5 |
| Okinawa | 38 | 5.7 |
| Osaka | 29 | 4.4 |
| Kyoto | 22 | 3.3 |
| Fukuoka | 14 | 2.1 |
| Others | 139 | 21.0 |
| Total | 663 | 100.0 |

between the two groups and variables.

I used Pearson's chi-square to assess associations between categorical variables and was complemented by adjusted residual analysis. The tests were performed using Statistical Package for the IBM SPSS Statistics Version 22.0 for Windows.

4. Results

4.1 Differences in characteristics

Table 3 shows the results of a cross-sectional analysis, which demonstrated a statistically significant association between the two groups and the characteristics of the study population (gender, age group, place of residence, and visit frequency). Gender (g1: 46.4 % men and 53.6 % women, g2: 54.8 % men and 45.2 % women) and place of residence (Beijing g1: 20.7 %, g2: 29.8 %, Shanghai g1: 25.4 %, g2: 23.7 %, Canton g1: 23.7 %, g2: 24.0 %, Shenzhen g1: 30.2, g2: 22.5 %) showed a significant difference (Beijing and Shenzhen showed significant association by adjusted residual analysis). Age group and visit frequency were not statistically significant.

These data suggest that female tourists and tourists from Shenzhen like the travel souvenirs in Hokkaido.

4.2 Differences in product categories

The two groups and product category were significant according to the chi-square test. Therefore, the area and the purchase category were related, and the goods category of the most favorite travel souvenir differed in Hokkaido and other

areas.

Table 4 shows that seafood (g1: 23.1 %, g2: 8.1 %), pickles (g1: 1.5 %, g2: 0 %), and western confectionery (g1: 8.3 %, g2: 14.5 %) had significant differences.

These data show that local specialties, such as marine products and pickles, tend to be purchased more often in Hokkaido than other areas.

4.3 Differences in purchase store

The two groups and the purchase store category are significant according to the chi-square test. Therefore, the area and the purchase store were related, and the purchase store of the most favorite travel souvenir was different in Hokkaido and other areas.

Table 5 shows that a shop in a tourist spot (g1: 50.6 %, g2: 37.8 %), a department store (g1: 15.1 %, g2: 26.8 %), and an airport shop (g1: 6.8 %, g2: 11.7 %) showed significant difference.

The data imply that favorite travel souvenirs tend to be purchased in a souvenir shop in a tourist spot in Hokkaido. On the other hand, favorite travel souvenirs tend to be purchased in a department store and an airport shop in other areas.

4.4 Differences in evaluation alternatives

I focused on three cases where all respondents showed significant differences and western confectionery and seafood showed a significant difference in product category.

Table 3: Characteristics of the study population

| Variable | Area | | | P |
|----------------------------|--------------------|------------------------------------|---|-------|
| | Total (n = 663) | Hokkaido (g1) (n = 338, 51.0 %) | Except Hokkaido (g2) (n = 325, 49.0 %) | |
| Gender - n (%) | | | | |
| Men | 335 (50.5) | 157 (46.4) * | 178 (54.8) * | 0.036 |
| Women | 328 (49.4) | 181 (53.6) * | 147 (45.2) * | |
| Age-group - n (%) | | | | |
| 20-29 | 171 (25.8) | 93 (27.5) | 78 (24.0) | 0.054 |
| 30-39 | 166 (25.0) | 88 (26.0) | 78 (24.0) | |
| 40-49 | 169 (25.5) | 92 (27.2) | 77 (23.7) | |
| 50-69 | 157 (23.7) | 65 (19.2) | 92 (28.3) | |
| Place of residence - n (%) | | | | |
| Beijing | 167 (25.2) | 70 (20.7) ** | 97 (29.8) ** | 0.024 |
| Shanghai | 163 (24.6) | 86 (25.4) | 77 (23.7) | |
| Canton | 158 (23.8) | 80 (23.7) | 78 (24.0) | |
| Shenzhen | 175 (26.4) | 102 (30.2) * | 73 (22.5) * | |
| Visit frequency - n (%) | | | | |
| The 1st time | 273 (41.2) | 137 (40.5) | 136 (41.8) | 0.879 |
| The 2nd time | 241 (36.3) | 126 (37.3) | 115 (35.4) | |
| 3 times or more | 149 (22.5) | 75 (22.2) | 74 (22.8) | |

Notes: P Value obtained by Pearson's chi-square test.

* Statistically significant association by adjusted residual analysis ($p < 0.05$).

** Statistically significant association by adjusted residual analysis ($p < 0.01$).

Table 4: Differences in the product purchasing category

| Variable (Category of products) | Area | | | <i>P</i> |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|--|---|----------|
| | Total <i>n</i> = 663 (100 %) | Hokkaido (g1) <i>n</i> = 338 (51.0 %) | Except Hokkaido (g2) <i>n</i> = 325 (49.0 %) | |
| Western confectioneries | 75 (11.3) | 28 (8.3) * | 47 (14.5) * | 0.000 |
| Japanese confectioneries | 307 (46.3) | 152 (45.0) | 155 (47.7) | |
| Pickles | 5 (0.8) | 5 (1.5) * | 0 (0) * | |
| Seafood | 104 (15.7) | 78 (23.1) ** | 26 (8.0) ** | |
| Agricultural products | 26 (3.9) | 9 (2.7) | 17 (5.2) | |
| Delicatessen | 46 (6.9) | 24 (7.1) | 22 (6.8) | |
| Seasoning | 29 (4.4) | 11 (3.3) | 18 (5.5) | |
| Drink and alcohol | 49 (7.4) | 24 (7.1) | 25 (7.7) | |
| Tea leaves | 6 (0.9) | 1 (0.3) | 5 (1.5) | |
| Others | 16 (2.4) | 6 (1.8) | 10 (3.1) | |

Notes: *P* Value obtained by Pearson's chi-square test.

* Statistically significant association by adjusted residual analysis ($p < 0.05$).

** Statistically significant association by adjusted residual analysis ($p < 0.01$).

Table 5: Differences in purchasing stores

| Variable (Category of shop) | Area | | | <i>P</i> |
|--|---------------------------------|--|---|----------|
| | Total <i>n</i> = 663 (100 %) | Hokkaido (g1) <i>n</i> = 338 (51.0 %) | Except Hokkaido (g2) <i>n</i> = 325 (49.0 %) | |
| A manufacturer's or a producer's direct management store | 153 (23.1) | 86 (25.4) | 67 (20.6) | 0.000 |
| Shop in a tourist spot | 294 (44.3) | 171 (50.6) ** | 123 (37.8) ** | |
| A department store | 138 (20.8) | 51 (15.1) ** | 87 (26.8) ** | |
| Shop in an airport | 61 (9.2) | 23 (6.8) * | 38 (11.7) * | |
| Shop in a highway truck stop | 4 (0.6) | 1 (0.3) | 3 (0.9) | |
| Shop in a railway station | 3 (0.5) | 3 (0.9) | 0 (0.0) | |
| Others | 10 (1.5) | 3 (0.9) | 7 (2.2) | |

Notes: *P* Value obtained by Pearson's chi-square test.

* Statistically significant association by adjusted residual analysis ($p < 0.05$).

** Statistically significant association by adjusted residual analysis ($p < 0.01$).

One evaluation alternative was significant according to the chi-square test in three cases. Table 6 shows that "It was a specialty product of the visit area" (g1: 55.9 %, g2: 36.0 %) was significantly different. For western confectionery, "it was a specialty product of the visit area" (g1: 50.0 %, g2: 19.1 %) and "It was a favorite package" (g1: 0 %, g2: 23.4 %) were significantly different. For seafood, "It was a specialty product of the visit area" (g1: 66.7 %, g2: 42.3 %) and "It was explained in Chinese" (g1: 7.7 %, g2: 30.8 %) were significantly different.

These data suggest that the most favorite travel souvenir in Hokkaido has an evaluation alternative of a specialty product of the visit area. On the other hand, other areas have evaluation alternatives if the tourist favors the packaging (western confectionery) and if the POP advertisements for a product is written in Chinese (seafood).

4.5 Differences in repeat purchase intention

We found that 87.6 % of respondents had repeat purchase intentions for purchase travel souvenirs in Japan if the item could

be purchased through an Internet shopping site. To increase the sales of travel souvenirs, it is important to promote their repeat purchase.

Two groups and three types of repeat purchase intention or the purchased travel souvenir in Japan are significant according to the chi-square test. Therefore, the area and some repeat purchase intentions were related.

Table 7 shows "If the travel souvenir (food) purchased for Japanese travel can be purchased from an Internet shopping site" (disagree g1: 0.9 %, g2: 4.2 %), "I would like to purchase agricultural seasonal products such as fruit" (agree g1: 75.0 %, g2: 62.4 %, disagree g1: 6.2 %, g2: 12.1 %), and "I would like to purchase if goods are shipped from within China" (agree g1: 64.8 %, g2: 57.2 %, disagree g1: 10.2 %, g2: 16.3 %) showed significant differences.

From these data, I find that respondents who selected the most favorite travel souvenirs in Hokkaido tended to have repeat purchase intentions for that souvenir. Additionally, respondents want to buy seasonal agricultural products in Japan.

Table 6: Differences in evaluation alternatives

| Variable (Evaluation alternatives) | Area | | | <i>P</i> |
|---|---------------------------------|--|---|----------|
| | Total <i>n</i> = 663 (100 %) | Hokkaido (g1) <i>n</i> = 338 (51.0 %) | Except Hokkaido (g2) <i>n</i> = 325 (49.0 %) | |
| <i>Whole</i> | 663 (100) | 338 (51.0) | 325 (49.0) | |
| It was a specialty product of the visit area. | 306 (46.2) | 189 (55.9) ** | 117 (36.0) ** | 0.000 |
| <i>Western Confectioneries</i> | 75 (100) | 28 (37.3) | 47 (62.7) | |
| It was a specialty product of the visit area. | 23 (30.7) | 14 (50.0) ** | 9 (19.1) ** | 0.009 |
| It was a favorite package. | 11 (14.7) | 0 (0) ** | 11 (23.4) ** | 0.005 |
| <i>Seadoods</i> | 104 (100.0) | 78 (75.0) | 26 (25.0) | |
| It was a specialty product of the visit area. | 63 (60.6) | 52 (66.7) * | 11 (42.3) * | 0.037 |
| It was explained in Chinese. | 14 (13.5) | 6 (7.7) ** | 8 (30.8) ** | 0.006 |

Notes: *P* Value obtained by Pearson's chi-square test.

* Statistically significant association by adjusted residual analysis ($p < 0.05$).

** Statistically significant association by adjusted residual analysis ($p < 0.01$).

Table 7: Differences in repeat purchase intention

| Variable (Evaluation alternatives) | Answer | Area | | | <i>P</i> |
|--|----------------------------|---------------------------------|--|--|----------|
| | | Total <i>n</i> = 630 (100 %) | Hokkaido (g1) <i>n</i> = 324 (51.4 %) | Except Hok- kaido (g2) <i>n</i> = 306 (48.6 %) | |
| If the souvenir (food) can be purchased on an Internet shopping site, I would like to purchase it again. | Agree | 552 (87.6) | 231 (89.8) | 261 (85.3) | 0.024 |
| | Neither agree nor disagree | 62 (9.8) | 30 (9.3) | 32 (10.5) | |
| | Disagree | 16 (2.5) | 3 (0.9) ** | 13 (4.2) ** | |
| I would like to purchase seasonal agricultural products such as fruit. | Agree | 434 (68.9) | 243 (75.0) ** | 191 (62.4) ** | 0.002 |
| | Neither agree nor disagree | 133 (22.1) | 61 (18.8) * | 78 (22.1) * | |
| | Disagree | 57 (9.0) | 20 (6.2) ** | 37 (12.1) ** | |
| I would like to purchase goods if they are shipped from China. | Agree | 385 (61.1) | 210 (64.8) * | 175 (57.2) * | 0.046 |
| | Neither agree nor disagree | 162 (25.7) | 81 (25.0) | 81 (26.5) | |
| | Disagree | 83 (13.2) | 33 (10.2) * | 50 (16.3) * | |

Notes: *P* Value obtained by Pearson's chi-square test.

* Statistically significant association by adjusted residual analysis ($p < 0.05$).

** Statistically significant association by adjusted residual analysis ($p < 0.01$).

Respondents also want to buy products that are shipped from China.

5. Conclusion

I found that there were differences between the two groups and the variables - gender, place of residence, product category, purchase stores, evaluation alternatives, and repeat purchase intentions.

Hokkaido is one of the most successful areas for inbound tourism. Many Chinese tourists visit, and Hokkaido has succeeded in improving Chinese tourist awareness of specialty products.

Chinese tourists have a strong intention to purchase on-line after returning home, and the purchase intention for seasonal agricultural products is particularly strong. The marketer in Hokkaido needs to challenge agricultural product online stores in China. Additionally, marketers in other areas must promote their specialty products to improve Chinese tourist awareness

of specialty products.

A limitation of this study is that respondents were living in four big cities in China. Therefore, the results presented here show a purchasing behavior trend for urban dwellers in China.

Finally, future research needs to focus on the recipient's post-purchase evaluation.

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