



BEHAVIORAL AND MOTIVATIONAL STUDY OF ADVENTURE TOURISM: A CASE OF JAPANESE VISITORS TO HAWAII

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ABSTRACT

This study focuses on the group of Japanese adventure tourists to the island of Oahu, Hawaii. Its main purpose was to test a survey instrument and a set of constructs to provide socio-demographic profile of Japanese adventure travelers to Hawaii, identify their current behaviors, explore motivations to participate in (adventure) tourism activities as well as depict environmental values and beliefs. Data were obtained from a survey of Japanese travelers who were participating in selected adventure tours conducted by tour operators to the island of Oahu, Hawaii.

In regard to the socio-demographic profile of Japanese adventure tourists to the island of Oahu, Hawaii, they can be characterized as married adults, employed full-time, having a high school/college educational background. When asked about motives of participation in specific activities, study respondents expressed positive motivations within "intellectual," "social" and "stimulus-avoidance" dimensions as opposite to the "competence-mastery" dimension (the motivational scale was adapted from Beard and Ragheb (1983), with some modifications considering the nature of activities in Hawaii). Finally, in regard to the environmental perceptions, study participants expressed high environmental consciousness and understanding of the major ecological concerns (worded as statements of the NEP scale, adapted from Dunlap & Van Liere, 1978).



BACKGROUND

Outbound international tourism growth peaked in Japan in 1980s, making the country Asia's leading generator of international tourism. The number of Japanese overseas travelers marked the record of 17 million in 2000 ("Kanko Hakusyo", 2003). Although Hawaii has been one of the most popular destinations for Japanese tourists, starting from 1997 (the peak year, accounting for 2.1 million travelers), the number of Japanese travelers to Hawaii has decreased to 1.4 million in 2002 (DBEDT, 2002b). The most visited island of Oahu has witnessed the same pattern. In 2002, about 96.0 percent of Japanese visitors to Hawaii visited Oahu, which is a drop down by 2.5 percent comparing with 1997 (DBEDT, 2002a). Possibly, Oahu's and Hawaii's travel industry have reached the saturation level for Japanese tourists.



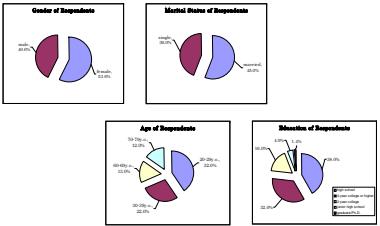
Adventure tourism is often being defined as the quest for insight and knowledge rather than risk (Walle, 1997). Cater (2000), as cited in Swarbrooke, Beard, Leckie, & Pomfret (2003), comments that "adventure tourism is fundamentally about active recreation participation and it demands new metaphors based more on "being, doing, feeling, touching and seeing, rather than just seeing." This study provides a general socio-demographic profile of Japanese adventure tourists on the island of Oahu, Hawaii, identifies their current adventure behaviors, as well as examines their motivations and environmental perceptions. Study findings can serve as a tool to support resource management decisions for the development of adventure tourism that is believed to become a significant niche market in Hawaii.



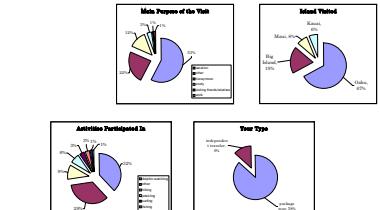
METHODOLOGY

Data for this study were obtained from a survey of Japanese travelers to the island of Oahu in Hawaii. The sample for the survey was drawn from a random sample of Japanese travelers participating in selected adventure tours conducted by tour operators on the island of Oahu (randomly selected vendors were asked to identify Japanese customers for this study.) A total of 110 respondents were asked to complete a self-administered survey questionnaire that was initially written in English and then translated into Japanese. Response rate was 63%.

RESULTS: SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF RESPONDENTS



RESULTS: TRIP-RELATED AND ACTIVITY-RELATED CHARACTERISTICS



RESULTS: MOTIVATIONS

The motivational scale was modified and adapted from a study on leisure motivation of scuba divers where motivations were classified into four subscales (Beard and Ragheb, 1983):

Intellectual (the extent to which individuals are motivated to engage in leisure activities involving substantial mental activities);

Social (the extent to which individuals are motivated to engage in leisure activities for social reasons);

Competence-Mastery (the extent to which individuals engage in leisure activities in order to achieve, master, challenge and compete);

Stimulus-Avoidance (the extent to which individuals engage in leisure activities in order to achieve, master, challenge and compete; and the Stimulus-Avoidance component assesses the drive to escape and get away from over stimulating life situations).

Table 1 shows the motivational items and the mean values in addition as compared to findings of other studies. Results indicate that the sample has relatively high motivation with regard to the Intellectual reasons, followed by the Stimulus-Avoidance, the Social and the Competence-Mastery reasons.

The Intellectual dimension indicated agreement (mean range = 3.3 to 4.1). In particular, respondents strongly agreed that they participated in adventure activities in Hawaii "to learn about things in Hawaii" (mean = 4.1) followed by "to have fun" (mean = 4.0). This indicates that the sample is motivated by learning, enjoyment, exploring and discovering. In the Social dimension, 63 % of the sample agreed with the item "do something I always wanted to do" (mean = 3.7) whereas the rest of the items achieved neutral to negative responses. The extent to which respondents were engaging in adventure activities for interaction with others and building friendship, was considered as neutral to moderately low (mean = 3.0, mean = 2.8 respectively). More than half of the sample disagreed with "to gain other's respect" item (mean = 2.2).

The Competence-Mastery dimension's mean values indicated disagreement (all the mean values being less than 3.0). This component assumes that the activities are physical in nature (Beard & Ragheb, 1983). Results indicate relatively low to neutral extent of agreement with items providing challenges, competence and skill improvement.

The Stimulus-Avoidance dimension indicated positive motivations for the items related to seeking rest. Half the respondents agreed that they participated in the selected activities to "relieve stress and tension" (mean = 3.5), "to relax" (mean = 3.4), many agreed with the items "to get away from daily life" (mean = 3.2) and "to avoid the hustle and bustle of daily activities" (mean = 3.0).

Table 1: Activity Motivations of Japanese Adventure Travelers and Comparison with some Previous Studies

Activity Motivations of Japanese Adventure Travelers (Adapted from Beard & Ragheb, 1983)	Motivation of the Sample (Adapted from Beard & Ragheb, 1983)	Previous Studies
Intellectual (5 items)		
To learn about things in Hawaii	4.1	✓ ✓ ✓
To have fun	4.0	✓ ✓
Because I cannot do this activity in Japan	3.6	✓ ✓ ✓
To discover new things	3.6	✓ ✓ ✓
To experience thrill	3.3	✓ ✓ ✓
Social (5 items)		
To do something I had always wanted to do	3.7	✓ ✓ ✓
To interact with others	3.0	✓ ✓
To do something differ from others	3.0	✓ ✓
To build friendship with others	2.8	✓ ✓
Because it is popular	2.6	✓ ✓
To gain other's respect	2.2	✓ ✓
Competence-Mastery (5 items)		
To see if I can like it or not	2.9	✓ ✓
To improve my skill and ability in this act	2.8	✓ ✓
To develop physical skills and abilities	2.7	✓ ✓ ✓
To keep in shape physically	2.7	✓ ✓ ✓
To challenge my abilities	2.5	✓ ✓
Stimulus-Avoidance (5 items)		
To relieve stress and tension	3.5	✓ ✓
To relax	3.4	✓ ✓
To get away from daily life	3.2	✓ ✓
To avoid the hustle and bustle of daily act	3.0	✓ ✓
Because I need to be alone	2.2	✓ ✓

*Scale 1-5: 1-strongly disagree, 2-disagree, 3-neutral, 4-agree, 5-strongly agree



RESULTS: ENVIRONMENTAL VALUES AND BELIEFS

The New Environmental Paradigm (NEP) scale was originally developed by Dunlap and Van Liere in 1978 to analyze environmental attitudes of various groups. In this study, eight value statements were adopted from the NEP framework in order to measure environmental perceptions of study participants (falling into three categories/dimensions: Balance of Nature, Limits to Growth, and the Role of Humanity in Nature). Respondents were asked to answer each of the statements on a 5-point Likert-type scale (1 = "strongly disagree", 2 = "disagree", 3 = "neutral", 4 = "agree", 5 = "strongly agree"). Table 2 reports the distribution of responses for each of the statements, in percentages, along with the mean scores on a 5-point scale. Overall, respondents showed a high degree of acceptance of all NEP dimensions offered. However, it should be also noted that some of the NEP scale items were worded in the way when actual agreement with the statement indicates rejection of it.

"Balance of Nature": most of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with all three items (all mean scores were greater than 3.0). More than 95% of respondents agreed and strongly agreed with the statement "Human must live in harmony with nature in order to survive" (mean score=4.3). The second statement – "When humans interfere with nature, it often produces disastrous consequences" – scored lower overall (mean score=4.2). Finally, about 13% of respondents disagreed/strongly disagreed with the third statement – "The balance of nature if very delicate and easily upset", versus 73% who answered positively.



"Limits to Growth": respondents showed an overall positive attitude towards all three items, although mean scores were lower comparing to the first NEP dimension ("Balance of Nature"). However, it is interesting to note that 41% of respondents answered "neutral" on the statement "We are approaching the limit to the number of people that the earth can support". Furthermore, over 20% of respondents disagreed with the statement "There are limits to growth beyond which our industrialized society cannot expand." It is possible that rather high negative percentages attributed to these items, could be explained merely by a conceptual problem discussed above, as the terms used for wording of the items, might be perceived differently nowadays then when developed (Lalonde and Jackson, 2002). "Humanity Over Nature": the two statements within this dimension scored least, showing respondents' rejection of the items (both mean scores were lower than 3.0). At the same time, responses within this dimension were widely distributed, mainly falling into the "neutral"/"disagree"/"strongly disagree" part.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean*
Balance of nature (3 items)						
Human must live in harmony with nature in order to survive	41.9	53.2	0	1.6	3.2	4.3
When humans interfere with nature, it often produces disastrous consequences	38.1	54	4.8	0	3.2	4.2
The balance of nature is very delicate and easily upset	23.8	49.2	14.3	7.9	4.8	3.8
limits to growth (3 items)						
We are approaching the limit to the number of people that the earth can support	39.3	45.9	11.5	0	3.3	4.2
There are limits to growth beyond which our industrialized society cannot expand	16.4	34.4	41	1.6	6.6	3.5
Human must be created to rule over the natural environment to suit their needs	15.3	40.7	23.7	13.6	6.8	3.4
Humanity over nature (2 items)						
Humanity was created to rule over the natural environment to suit their needs	8.2	14.8	34.4	26.2	16.4	2.7
Humans have the right to modify the natural environment to suit their needs	3.3	6.6	31.1	27.9	31.1	2.2

*Scale 1-5: 1-strongly disagree, 2-disagree, 3-neutral, 4-agree, 5-strongly agree



DISCUSSION

This study provides a socio-demographic profile of Japanese adventure travelers to Hawaii, identifies their current behaviors, explores motivations to participate in (adventure) tourism activities as well as depicts environmental values and beliefs. Motivations of Japanese adventure travelers to Hawaii were measured using Beard & Ragheb's scale (1983) which proved its applicability to the study. Specifically, respondents identified Intellectual, Stimulus-Avoidance, Social and Competence-Mastery motives of participation in activities. Also, environmental perceptions of Japanese adventure travelers were measured using the New Environmental Paradigm scale (adapted from Dunlap & Van Liere, 1978). Although investigation of such a complex domain as ecology and travelers' perceptions of ecological problems, needs a multidimensional approach, study findings report that survey respondents express high environmental consciousness and understanding of the major ecological concerns (worded as statements of the NEP scale). Further investigation of adventure travel market and comparative niche markets are recommended.