**TOWARDS A THEORY OF VISITORS' EVALUATION OF HISTORICAL
DISTRICTS AS TOURISM DESTINATIONS: FRAMEWORKS AND METHODS**

Taketo Naoi, Okayama Shoka University

David Airey, University of Surrey

Shoji Iijima, Okayama Shoka University

Outi Niininen, La Trobe University

Submission: July 2005

Revision: November 2005

Send correspondence to Taketo Naoi, Department of Commerce, Faculty of
Commerce, Okayama Shoka University, 2-10-1 Tsushima-Kyomachi, Okayama-shi,
Okayama-ken, Japan, Post code: 700-8601, telephone: +81 (0) 862520642, fax: +81-(0)
862556947 (email: taketonaoi@yahoo.co.jp). David Airey, School of Management,
University of Surrey, Guildford, Surrey GU2 7XH, UK, telephone: +44 (0)1483 689656,
fax: +44 (0)1483 686306 (email: D.Airey@surrey.ac.uk). Shoji Iijima, Department of

Commerce, Faculty of Commerce, Okayama Shoka University, 2-10-1

Tsushima-Kyomachi, Okayama-shi, Okayama-ken, Japan, Post code: 700-8601,

telephone: +81 (0) 862520642, fax : +81-(0) 862556947, Outi Niininen, Department of

Management and Marketing, School of Business, Faculty of Law and Management, La

Trobe University, Bundoora 3086 Australia, telephone: +61 3 9479 1229, fax : +61 3 9479

5971 (email: O.Niininen@latrobe.edu.au).

Acknowledgement

This study was funded by The Yakumo Foundation for Environmental Science, to which the authors would like to express their gratitude. The authors are also very grateful to the undergraduate students of Okayama Shoka University for kindly participating in the interviews.

TOWARDS A THEORY OF VISITORS' EVALUATION OF HISTORICAL DISTRICTS AS TOURISM DESTINATIONS: FRAMEWORKS AND METHODS

Abstract

This study aims to illustrate the complex nature of visitors' evaluation of historical districts as tourism destinations and how this complex nature can be understood and investigated. The literature review suggested a theoretical framework based on relationships between visitors' mental states and a district's features. Personal interviews employing Repertory Grid Analysis and Laddering Analysis with the use of photographs of a historical district in Takayama-shi, Japan were conducted with a sample of Japanese students. The results illustrate that these methods elucidate issues argued in past studies and may be effective in investigating visitors' evaluation of historical districts.

Keywords : visitors' evaluation; historical district; Repertory Grid Analysis; Laddering Analysis

TOWARDS A THEORY OF VISITORS' EVALUATION OF HISTORICAL DISTRICTS AS TOURISM DESTINATIONS: FRAMEWORKS AND METHODS

Visitors' evaluation of historical districts is a complex issue. In addition to the geographical expanse and diversity of places in general, many historical tourism destinations contain both past and contemporary manipulations, the latter often specifically for tourism purposes. This study attempts to explore relationships between visitors' mental states and the features of historical districts in order to understand the mixed nature of visitors' evaluation of historical districts as tourism destinations.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The Nature of Historical Districts and Visitors' Evaluations

The nature of historical districts as tourism destinations can be argued to embrace both touristic and non touristic characteristics. Commercialisation and the existence of other people are a part of the complexity of any destination. While heritage sites as tourism destinations provide visitors with opportunities to appreciate the past as their main attraction (Lynch, 1972; Millar, 1989; Moscardo, 2000), such places are often commercialised for tourism purposes (Ashworth, 1991; Hewison, 1987; McKercher & du Cros, 2002). Such commercialisation has come in for criticism from a range of authors notably for transforming historical sites into superficial objects (Boorstin, 1964;

MacCannell, 1976; Mathieson & Wall, 1982). The presence of other people at destinations, often as a result of attracting visitors, has also been described as a constraint on visitors' experience at historical sites, in terms of the consumption of the physical capacity (Misham, 1969) and spiritual values (Ellis & Heath, 1983). The concept of crowding, which is defined as a psychological stress that sometimes accompanies high population density (Stokols, 1972) and the notion of what Urry (1990) refers to as *romantic gaze*, in terms of which solitude, privacy and a personal, semi-spiritual relationship with the object is appreciated, also corroborate the negative effects of other people on visitors' evaluation.

By way of contrast, others come to an opposite view suggesting that the need for commercialisation can be based on visitors' wish for familiarity (Cohen, 1972; Krippendorf, 1987) and contemporary facilities (Ashworth, 1988; Ashworth & Tunbridge, 2000). The favourable effects of the presence of others are also implied by the concept of the *collective gaze*, in terms of which the presence of other people is necessary to give atmosphere to the experience of a place (Urry, 1990). Further, some authors suggest that crowding in certain situations may be experienced as exhilarating or arousing (Argyle, Furnham & Graham, 1981; Hull, 1990) or may be perceived as contributory to social affiliation (Ditton, Fedler & Graefe, 1983 cited in Manning, 1985; Graham & Burge, 1984).

These arguments suggest that visitors' evaluations of historical districts as tourism destinations could relate to several evaluative dimensions, such as the place's spiritual value, or the sense of stillness or stimulation, according to visitors' mental states.

The Structure of Visitors' Evaluation of Tourism Destinations

The complex nature of evaluation of a historical district as a tourism destination can be investigated with reference to relationships between several components. In previous studies, two components, - cognitive and affective (Baloglu, 1999, 2000, 2001; Baloglu & McCleary, 1999a, 1999b; Beerli & Martin, 2004; Gartner, 1993; Pike & Ryan, 2004) - have emerged as important in destination image. Cognitive components relate to the physical features (Hanyu, 1993) and can be regarded as derived from fact (Boulding, 1956) whereas affective components are concerned with the emotional quality of the destination (Hanyu, 1993). Many authors have claimed that affective components are derived from cognitive components (Anand, Holbrook & Stephens, 1988; Baloglu, 1999, 2000; Baloglu & McCleary, 1999a; Woodside & Lysonski, 1989).

A means-end chain model provides a basis to describe the attributes of an object as the means to achieve certain objectives, which are then used as the measures to achieve more ultimate objectives (Gutman, 1982). In this way, the hierarchical relationships between cognitive and affective components and mental states can be indicated. Visitors'

mental states can further vary in their degree of concreteness. For instance, *want* is usually regarded as a manifestation of *need* while *value* is defined as “a belief about a desirable end-state that transcends specific situations and guides selection of behaviour” (Solomon, Bamossy & Askegaard, 1999, p.104). These arguments suggest the existence of hierarchical relationships between mental states.

IMPLEMENTATION, ANALYSES AND RESULTS

This study employed personal interviews using *Repertory Grid Analysis* and *Laddering Analysis* with photographs as stimuli. Repertory Grid Analysis attempts to extract subjects’ constructs, which are the actual discrimination that subjects make between phenomena, by providing them with several sets of elements to be compared. Laddering Analysis is based on the previously argued means-end chain model (Gutman, 1982), and repeatedly asks subjects why a certain thing is favourable/unfavourable/important (ladder-up) or how they think any objects should be in order to meet their objectives (ladder-down) (Sanui, 1995). The outlines of this set of interviews are described in Table 1. The explanations about the implementation and analyses are largely simplified for reasons of space. For further details, refer to Naoi, Airey, Iijima and Niininen (2005).

The use of photographs as stimuli has advantages in eliciting subjects’ responses to features of a historical district in that they can show a diversity of visual features which

otherwise are difficult to present. Twenty-three settings within and around Sanmachi, in the middle of Takayama-shi, Gifu-Prefecture, Japan, were photographed under conditions varying mainly in the degree of conservation and the prominence of stores. These settings were chosen because of their preserved historical environments, and their touristic and commercial characteristics. For each setting, several photographs were taken that vary in terms of the way people (no people, a few people, many people and so on) and vehicles appeared. In total, 58 photographs were selected as the stimuli.

The authors classified the extracted components into cognitive components, affective components, wants, and needs. More abstract components, values, such as those that Gutman (1982) describes as “desirable end-states of existence, [that] play a dominant role in guiding choice pattern” (p.60) and “a type of consequence for which a person has no further (higher) reason for preference” (p.64) were not extracted here. The authors categorised the extracted components at each level into groups that share similar meanings.

Thereafter, a tree figure that shows hierarchical relationships between components was created for the whole group of subjects through the calculation of the frequencies of the relationships between components. As reported in the study by Klenosky (2002), Klenosky, Gengler and Mulvey (1993), Naoi, Airey, Iijima and Niininen (2006) and Reynolds and Gutman (1988), both positive and negative relationships were counted.

Indirect relationships were not included given their large number and hence the very complicated tree figure for each subject. However, so as to ensure that significant relationships were not missed, the tree figure that illustrated direct relationships between components for the whole group was created through several steps. Firstly, frequencies of five or more were categorised into components based on similarities in their meanings. These components were then re-categorised into a smaller number of groups through the scrutiny of all the direct relationships between affective components and needs/wants, and then all the direct relationships between the cognitive components and the re-grouped affective components. In this way significant relationships could be found by grouping any components with similar meanings into one.

These analyses generated Figure 1, which includes components shown in Table 2. The direct relationships between a pair of components appear in the figure only when frequencies are five or more. In Figure 1, in Horiuchi's (1998) terms, one *context*, related to social environment ("My daily life is tiring") is observed in addition to cognitive components, affective components and mental states.

DISCUSSION

Due to limited space, only the findings related to crowding, commercialisation and modernity are reported here. As far as the presence of people is concerned, this was

perceived to be touristic/famous and active and contributed to mental states such as “seeing/visiting something famous”, “being convinced that the place is worth visiting” and “seeking something outside daily life”, and to be negatively related to “quietness and oldness” and obstruct the pursuit of those objectives and relaxation. While some findings suggest the negative effects of other people as implied by some arguments about crowding (Schreyer & Roggenbuck, 1978; West, 1982; Womble & Studebaker, 1981) and romantic gaze (Urry, 1990), the effects could also be positive when regarded as relevant to “activeness” as suggested by some theories of crowding (Argyle et al, 1981; Hull, 1990) and the concept of collective gaze (Urry, 1990). Some findings also show that shops are contributory to traditional/touristic/unique and active atmospheres, which disagrees with some of the negative views about the perception of commercialisation (Boorstin, 1964; Herbert, 1995; Mathieson & Wall, 1982). However, at the same time relationships between modern signs and new atmosphere imply negative impacts of commercialisation. These results suggest that whether the effects of shops are favourable or not can be determined by whether they are old-looking or not. Relationships between vehicles and newness, an ordinary atmosphere, danger and the perception that the district is minor as a tourism destination, indicate the negative effects of modernisation. A relationship is also observed between vending machines and a new atmosphere. While these results indicate that the

opportunities for visitors to appreciate the past are the main attraction (Lynch, 1972; Millar, 1989; Moscardo, 2000), vending machines also seem to relate to convenience.

CONCLUSIONS

The results of this study suggest the efficacy of the methods in investigating the mixed effects of some variables such as the presence of other people or commercialisation on visitors' evaluation of a historical district as a tourism destination. Although limited in scope for generalisation due to the limited sample size, this study provides indicators to a method, to theories and to achieving management objectives.

REFERENCES

Anand, P., Holbrook, M.B., & Stephens, D. (1988). The formation of affective judgements: the cognitive-affective model versus the independence hypothesis, *Journal of Consumer Research*, 15(3), 386-391.

Argyle, M., Furnham, A., & Graham, J.A. (1981). *Social Situations*, Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Ashworth, G.J. (1988). Marketing the historic city for tourism. In B. Goodall & G. Ashworth (Eds.), *Marketing in the tourism industry: the promotion of destination regions* (pp. 162-175), London: Croom Helm.

Ashworth, G.J. (1991). *Heritage planning: the management of urban change*, Groningen, The Netherlands: Geopers.

Ashworth, G.J., & Tunbridge, J.E. (2000). *The tourist-historic city: retrospect and prospect of managing the heritage city (advances in tourism research series)*, Oxford, UK: Pergamon.

Baloglu, S. (2001). Image variations of Turkey by familiarity index: information and experiential dimensions, *Tourism Management*, 22(2), 127-133.

- Baloglu, S. (1999). A path analytic model of visitation intention involving information sources, socio-psychological motivations and destination images, *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, 8(3), 81-90.
- Baloglu, S. (2000). A path analytic model of visitation intention involving information sources, socio-psychological motivations and destination images. In A.G. Woodside, G.I. Crouch, J.A. Mazanec, M. Oppermann & M.Y. Sakai (Eds.), *Consumer psychology of tourism, hospitality and leisure* (pp. 63-90), Wallingford, UK: CABI.
- Baloglu, S., & McCleary, K.W. (1999a). A model of destination image formation, *Annals of Tourism Research*, 26(4), 868-897.
- Baloglu, S., & McCleary, K.W. (1999b). U.S. International pleasure travelers' images of four Mediterranean destinations: a comparison of visitors and nonvisitors, *Journal of Travel Research*, 38(2)[November], 144-152.
- Beerli, A., & Martin, D. (2004). Tourists' characteristics and the perceived image of tourist destinations: a quantitative analysis – a case study of Lanzarote, Spain, *Tourism Management*, 25(5), 623-636.
- Boorstin, D.J. (1964). *The image: a guide to pseudo-events in America*, New York: Atheneum.

Boulding, K.E. (1956). *The image: knowledge in life and society*, Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.

Cohen, E. (1972). Toward a sociology of international tourism, *Social Research: An International Quarterly of the Social science*, 39(1), 164-182.

Ditton, R.B., Fedler, A.J., & Graefe, A.R. (1983). Factors contributing to perceptions of recreational crowding, *Leisure Sciences*, 5(4), 273-288.

Ellis, A., & Heath, A. (1983). Positional competition, or an offer you can't refuse. In A. Ellis & K. Dumat (Eds.), *Dilemmas of Liberal Democracies* (pp. 1-22), London: Tavistock.

Gartner, W.C. (1993). Image formation process. In M. Uysal & D.R. Fesenmaier (Eds.), *Communication and channel systems in tourism marketing* (pp. 191-215), New York: Haworth Press.

Graham, J.H., & Burge, R. (1984). Crowding perception determinants at intensively developed outdoor recreation sites, *Leisure Science*, 6(2), 167-186.

Gutman, J. (1982). A means-end chain model based on consumer categorization processes. *Journal of Marketing*, 46(2), 60-72.

Hanyu, K. (1993). The affective meaning of Tokyo: verbal and nonverbal approaches, *Journal of Environmental psychology*, 13(2), 161-172.

Herbert, D.T. (1995). Heritage places, leisure and tourism. In. D.T. Herbert (Ed.), *Heritage, tourism and society* (pp. 1-20), New York: Mansell.

Hewison, R. (1987). *The heritage industry: Britain in a climate of decline*, London: Methuen.

Horiuchi, K. (1998). Proposed research framework for factors and scales of product hedonic values, *Japanese Association of Industrial/Organizational Psychology Journal*, 11(2), 135-146.

Hull IV, R.B. (1990). Mood as a product of leisure: causes and consequences, *Journal of Leisure Research*, 22(2), 99-111.

Klenosky, D.B. (2002). The “pull” of tourism destinations: a means-end investigation, *Journal of Travel Research*, 40(4)[May], 385-395.

Klenosky, D.B., Gengler, C.E., & Mulvey, M.S. (1993). Understanding the factors influencing ski destination choice: a means-end analytic approach, *Journal of Leisure Research*, 25(4), 362-379.

Krippendorff, J. (1987). *The holiday makers: understanding the impact of leisure and travel*, Oxford, UK: Butterworth Heinemann.

Lynch, K. (1972). *What time is this place?*, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

- MacCannell, D.(1976). *The tourist: a new theory of the leisure class*, Los Angeles: University of California Press.
- Maki, K. (1994). *Gairokeikan ni okeru hyoukakouzou* [The structure of evaluations of townscape], unpublished doctoral dissertation, Tokyo Institute of technology.
- Manning, R.E. (1985). Crowding norms in backcountry settings: a review and synthesis, *Journal of Leisure Research*, 17(2), 75-89.
- Mathieson, A., & Wall, G. (1982). *Tourism-economic physical, and social impacts*, London: Longman.
- McKercher, B., & du Cros, H. (2002). *Cultural tourism*, New York: The Haworth Hospitality Press.
- Millar, S. (1989). Heritage management for heritage tourism, *Tourism Management*, 10 (1), 9-14.
- Misham, E. (1969). *The cost of economic growth*, Harmondsworth, UK: Pergamon.
- Moscardo, G. (2000). Cultural and heritage tourism: the great debates. In B. Faulkner, G. Moscardo, & L. Eric (eds.), *Tourism in the 21 century: lessons from experience* (pp. 3-17), London: Continuum.

- Naoui, T., Airey, D., Iijima, S., & Niininen, O. (2005). Advancing and testing a theory of how visitors assess historical districts: with use of repertory grid analysis and laddering analysis, *Proceedings of The Fourth CPTHL Symposium: Consumer Psychology of Tourism, Hospitality, and Leisure Research*, Montreal, Canada.
- Naoui, T., Airey, D., Iijima, S., & Niininen, O. (2006). Visitors' evaluation of an historical district: repertory grid analysis and laddering analysis, *Tourism Management*, 27(3), 420-436.
- Pike, S., & Ryan, C. (2004). Destination positioning analysis through a comparison of cognitive, affective, and conative perceptions, *Journal of Travel Research*, 42(4)[May], 333-342.
- Reynolds, T.J., & Gutman, J. (1988). Laddering theory, method, analysis, and interpretation, *Journal of Advertising Research*, 28(1)[February/March], 11-31.
- Sanui, J. (1995). *User needs no Kashika Gijyutsu* [Methods for visualization of user needs], *Kigyo Shindan* [The assessment of enterprises], 1995 January, 31-38.
- Schreyer, R., & Roggenbuck, J.W. (1978). The influence of experience expectations on crowding perceptions and social-psychological carrying capacities, *Leisure Science*, 1(4), 373-394.

- Solomon, M., Bamossy, G., & Askegaard, S. (1999). *Consumer behaviour: a European perspective*, New York: Prentice Hall Europe.
- Stokols, D. (1972). On the distinction between density and crowding: some implications for future research, *Psychological Review*, 79(3), 275-277.
- Urry, J. (1990). *The tourist gaze*, London: Sage.
- West, P.C. (1982). Effects of user behaviour on the perception of crowding in recreation settings: an urban case-study, *Leisure Sciences*, 9, 87-99.
- Womble, P., & Studebaker, S. (1981). Crowding in a national park campground: Katmai National Monument in Alaska, *Environment and Behavior*, 13(5), 557-573.
- Woodside, A.G., & Lysonski, S. (1989). A general model of traveler destination choice, *Journal of Travel Research*, 27(4), 8-14.

Table 1: Outlines of the Interview: Repertory Grid Analysis and Laddering Analysis

Period:	9 March 2004 – 16 June 2004
Subjects:	30 Japanese undergraduate students. Male: 15, Female. Only one female student had visited Takayama-shi.
Duration:	40 minutes – 1 hour and 30 minutes
Stimuli:	58 photographs taken in and around a Japanese historical district
Procedure:	<p>Each subject classified the 58 photographs into five levels according to their own preference as places to visit for sightseeing. The photographs were then placed in five lines in front of the subject so that their preference gradually decreased from top to bottom. Thereafter, they were asked the following questions.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. “What causes differences in your preference between the photographs in line 1 and line2? ” Then, the same questions were asked as for the differences between line 2 and 3, between line 3 and 4, and between line 4 and 5. 2. “Please state anything that causes differences in your preference between any lines.” The procedure until “2” was also employed in Maki (1994). 3. “Please select the most preferable photograph for you. What makes the photograph the most preferable?” 4. “Please select the least preferable photograph for you. What makes the photograph the least preferable?” 5. “Please state anything that causes differences in your preference among photographs in any single line.” <p>Once a subject stated one component, <i>ladder-up</i> or <i>ladder-down</i> types of questions (Sanui, 1995) were then asked.</p>

Table 2: Extracted Components

Elements		Frequency
Cognitive Aspects (11)		
C1	Rickshaws	27
NC1	Vehicles other than Rickshaws	30
NC2	People (mainly visitors)	29
NC3	Shops	30
C20	Guides	15
C25	Modern Signs	7
C38	Telephone Masts/Modern Tall Buildings	11
C39	Vending Machines	8
C41	Ordinary Private Houses	24
NC4	Plants	19
NC5	Old Houses	25
Affective Aspects (9)		
NA1	Old	28
NA2	Touristic/Famous	30
A15	For Local People	11
NA3	Unique/Not Normal-Daily-Life-like	29
NA5	A Sense of Activity	25
NA4	Calm/Restful/Quiet	16
A27	Dangerous (Traffic)	14
A31	Convenient	10
A32	Easy to Understand	12
Wants (5)		
W1	Riding on a Rickshaw	18
W4	Queuing	6
W5	Walking	20
W6	See scenery/Townscape/Houses	19
NW1	Shopping	23
Needs (6)		
NN1	Doing Things Freely	15
N3	Seeing/Visiting Something Famous	11
N10	Experiencing/Obtaining Something to Show/Tell Others	11
N11	Relaxing/Resting/Slowing Down	21
NN2	Seeking Something outside My Daily Life	16
N14	Convincing Myself that I Have Visited the Right Place	13
Context (Social Environments) (1)		
Con2	My Daily Life is Tiring	9
Combination (2)		
Com1	A Shop with People	10
Com2	A Shop with No People	9

Figure 1: Relationships between Cognitive/Affective Components and Mental States