

**THE USE AND PERCEIVED USEFULNESS OF INFORMATION  
SOURCES AMONGST JAPANESE OVERSEAS TOURISTS**

**THE USE AND PERCEIVED USEFULNESS OF INFORMATION  
SOURCES AMONGST JAPANESE OVERSEAS TOURISTS**

**Dr Sachiko Nishimura**

Mailing Address: 3/9 Marne Street, Alderley QLD

Telephone: +61 415 519670

E-mail: [sachikonishimura@hotmail.com](mailto:sachikonishimura@hotmail.com)

**Dr Robert Waryszak**

Senior Lecturer

School of Hospitality, Tourism and Marketing

Victoria University

PO Box 14428

Melbourne Vic. Australia 8001

E-mail: [robert.waryszak@vu.edu.au](mailto:robert.waryszak@vu.edu.au)

**Professor Brian King**

Head, School of Hospitality, Tourism and Marketing

Victoria University

PO Box 14428

Melbourne Vic. Australia 8001

E-mail: [brian.king@vu.edu.au](mailto:brian.king@vu.edu.au)

## **ABSTRACT**

This investigation into the use and perceived usefulness of information amongst Japanese outbound travellers reports on the findings of interviews conducted with over 1,200 Japanese travellers. The research examines information about a range of travel components including restaurants, attractions and accommodation at both the before and during travel stages. It was found that travel guidebooks are the most heavily used sources of information during the prior to travel phase. Correspondence analysis was used to illustrate that travel guidebooks were used particularly heavily during the prior to travel phase for information about destinations, local transport, places to visit, meals and shopping. The only component which did not show significant reliance on travel guidebooks at either the prior to or during travel phases was information about accommodation.

## **KEYWORDS**

Information sources, travel components, Japanese tourists

# THE USE AND PERCEIVED USEFULNESS OF INFORMATION SOURCES AMONGST JAPANESE OVERSEAS TOURISTS

## INTRODUCTION

According to Chen and Gursoy the search for and use of information by travellers has been one of the most 'frequently examined topics by tourism researchers' (2000: 191).

Most of the research to which they refer has focussed on the role that information plays in the travel purchase decision. This may be because of the widely held

contention that because tourism products are both intangible and inseparable, prospective travellers commonly rely on information being available at the time of the

initial travel -decision. ~~to travel linked to the intangible and inseparable nature of tourism products.~~ Consistent with the prevailing wisdom,

~~Most-most~~ research on the search for information in travel decision-making has focused on ~~pre-departure~~ destination-related choices made prior to departure (Mansfeld 1992).

In practice, tourists appear to make choices about other components of the travel experience such as activities and dining during the course of the trip and not necessarily prior to departure (Woodside 2000). Travel decision-making may occur throughout the course of the trip, especially in the case of independent travellers. In some though not all instances, the search for information may be integral to the decision-making process. Given these observations, there would appear to be merit in examining the relationship between the use of information sources and travel

decision-making as they apply to the various components of tourism both prior to and during travel. To date there have been few studies on the search for information during travel and there has been a surprisingly myopic focus on pre-trip destination choices. The few studies undertaken on the search for information during travel have largely been confined to the examination of highway visitor centres in the USA (Fesenmaier, 1994; Fesenmaier et al. 1993; Gitelson and Perdue 1987). The present study attempts to redress the balance by investigating the use of information sources about a range of travel components and the relative importance that tourists attach to various information sources when making decisions both prior to and during travel. In this paper the relationship between the various sources of travel information is displayed visually using Correspondence Analysis with a view to providing an enhanced understanding of how travelers source information to find out about the various components of travel.

Snepenger et al. (1990) have argued the need for sensitivity when collecting data for studies on travel information search and have acknowledged the limitations of the fairly rigid use/not use dichotomous format which they used in their own study. Going beyond the obvious issues of use and non-use of information, Fesenmaier and Vogt have noted the value of understanding the perceived utility or usefulness of information (1992). The present study examines both the 'use' and the 'perceived utility' of travel information sources. The findings of the study should provide an enhanced understanding of the complete information environment encountered by tourists, including the various industry segments or components.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The survey which forms the basis of the present paper involved the administration of a self-administered questionnaire. The findings that are reported are part of a larger study of tourist information search which involved a qualitative as well as a quantitative dimension. The questionnaire included sections on the use of a variety of information sources for multiple travel components, such as destination and accommodation, and the perceived usefulness of such sources. On the basis that only the users of a particular source of information for a particular travel component would be in a position to provide an evaluation of its utility, instructions were given to respondents in order to ensure that responses would be relevant. The perceived usefulness of travel guidebooks for gathering information about accommodation was, for example, only investigated amongst those who had used travel guidebooks for such purposes. The scale used for the assessment of usefulness ranged from '1' = 'not at all' to '5' = 'very useful'. Since the study is concerned with the temporal dimension of information use (for pre-departure travel decision-making as well as for travel decision-making during travel), respondents were asked to comment about their use of information sources for both the prior to travel stage and the during travel stage.

The original target population consisted of Japanese tourists to Australia. Such a target population is highly mobile around the destination and its composition changes regularly. Since the researchers were unable to access a list of tourist names and contact details, it was not possible to draw up and apply a sampling frame. As a result of this limitation, a decision was made to use purposive sampling. Whilst

purposive sampling is a form of non-probability sampling and is less than fully representative, it may provide useful information (de Vaus 2002) and was considered by the researchers to be the most practical and appropriate approach to take in the present case. Data were collected in Australia and in Japan between mid 2001 and late 2002, with 1,534 questionnaires being returned prior to the 2003 deadline.

Within Australia, two Melbourne-based travel companies co-operated by assisting the researchers to collect information from their Japanese inbound customers. One of the companies deals with tourists sent by a wide range of Japan outbound travel agents. In this case the target audience consisted of travellers located at the more packaged end of the spectrum. The other company specialises in handling more independent Japanese travellers. In Japan, the questionnaires were administered at a university lecture with about 300 students in attendance. They were also administered to the principal researcher's acquaintances and in turn to their acquaintances who had travelled overseas over the course of the five preceding years. The latter approach constitutes a form of snowball sampling strategy and generated responses from a wide range of Japanese tourist types, including both package tour participants and independent travellers.

Incomplete responses were excluded from consideration, using the following exclusion criteria: 1) questionnaires containing responses to few or no questions; 2) those completed in full but with ticks entered into the boxes which were designed for a numerical evaluation; 3) those completed in full but showing a 'halo effect' in their answers; and 4) among the questionnaires distributed in Japan, those commenting on

overseas trips undertaken more than five years previously. By eliminating such questionnaires, the size of the usable sample was reduced to slightly over 1,200 (1,211).

---

Insert Table 1 about here

---

Table 1 exhibits the demographic profile and travel-related characteristics of the sample population. As is evident from the Table, the respondents were a diverse group of Japanese overseas tourists exhibiting a wide variety of demographic and travel-related characteristics.

## **RESULTS**

The following section reports the numbers and percentages of users of various information sources for multiple travel components. It also evaluates the perceived usefulness of the various sources as evaluated by users. Using Correspondence Analysis the number of users of each information source is then used to identify the relative positioning of each source of information. The results are presented with a view to highlighting the findings during the two stages: prior to and during travel.

### *Prior to Travel*

Table 2 shows the number and proportion of respondents who used various information sources prior to travel. Table 3 shows the mean scores which measure the perceived usefulness as evaluated by users. Superficially quantitative techniques



may appear more suitable for examining the differences in each table, such as chi-square for Table 2 and ANOVA, MANOVA or correlation analysis for Table 3. Such an approach runs the risk however of producing meaningless results because such techniques embrace only those respondents who have responded to all information sources. As already noted in the methodology section, the questionnaire was purposefully designed to ensure that only those who used a particular source could provide an evaluation. Consequently there were unequal numbers of respondents in each item and only a few respondents answered for all information sources. A simple descriptive analysis was considered to be most appropriate for handling the evaluation of this pattern.

According to Table 2, 'travel guidebook' was the information source used by the largest number of respondents during the travel stage, except in the case of information relating to accommodation. 'Travel guidebook' was used by approximately half of all respondents for all travel components (ranging from 46.2% to 56.4%). Across the multiple travel components it appears that 'travel guidebook' was used particularly heavily for 'destination', 'local transport', 'places to visit', 'meals', and 'shopping' information. 'Travel agent' (ranging from 29.8% to 45.6% of all respondents) and 'package tour brochure' (ranging from 27.3% to 41.0% of all respondents) formed the second largest group for most components. Additionally, 'travel agent' was used by the largest number of respondents for information about 'accommodation'. Considering that approximately two-thirds of all respondents participated in a package tour of some kind (as indicated in Table 1), the popularity of these two sources is understandable. As is evident from Table 2, the remaining

sources were used by a much smaller number of respondents.

---

Insert Table 2 here

---

Table 3 shows that ‘travel guidebook’ was evaluated well above the mid point of 3.00 in the five-point scale for multiple travel components (ranging from 3.52 to 3.97). Comparable results are evident for ‘WoM from family/friend’ (ranging from 3.34 to 3.78) and ‘past experience’ (ranging from 3.44 to 3.75). Interestingly and as is shown in Table 2 these sources were apparently used by a relatively small number of respondents. Components under the ‘other source’ heading recorded relatively high mean scores (ranging from 3.33 to 4.00), but were used by only a tiny proportion of respondents (ranging from 0.7% to 1.1%). These items were subsequently excluded from further analysis.

---

Insert Table 3 here

---

‘Travel guidebook’ was the most popular information source during the prior to travel stage for most of the travel components and users evaluated it relatively more highly than other sources. ‘Travel agent’ and ‘package tour brochure’ were also popular, though users did not perceive their usefulness to be as high as was the case for ‘travel

guidebook'. 'WoM from family/friend' and 'past experience' recorded higher mean scores of perceived usefulness evaluation by their users, though it should be noted that the number of users was limited.

Drawing upon the data that is included in Table 2, the relative positions of nine travel information sources were analysed for seven prior to travel components using correspondence analysis. A two-dimensional perceptual map was generated and is presented as Figure 1. The value of correspondence analysis for researching particular markets has been well documented (Churchill and Lacobucci 2002). To perform correspondence analyses leading to the formulation of the perceptual maps, the ANACOR programme was accessed using SPSS. Using spatial configurations this technique provides graphical outputs or perceptual maps which display the relative positioning of multiple information sources in relation to the various components of travel. Perceptual maps attempt to reproduce the distances between points as closely as possible to the original similarities of input data. The closeness between the sources and travel components is reflective of the extent to which a source has been used. Proximities also indicate the degree of similarity or dissimilarity among the relationships in terms of use. It should be acknowledged that this technique has no in-built procedure for labeling dimensions (Hair et al. 1998). For a perceptual map, a reliable measure of goodness-of-fit is  $R^2$  and Hair et al. have suggested that measures of 0.60 or better may be considered as acceptable (1998). In the present study the  $R^2$  of 0.87 was considered to be adequate and indicative of a good fit for the two-dimensional model.

In Figure 1, the 16 diamonds represent the nine information sources (in upper case) and seven travel components (in lower case) used by respondents during the prior to travel stage. A clear division is evident between the four components ‘activities’, ‘places to visit’, ‘meals’ and ‘shopping’ and the others. Of the remaining four, ‘destination’ and ‘accommodation’ in particular are situated at a considerable distance from the group at the other side of the quadrants. The closeness of points within the first grouping is indicative of a similarity of use. For this grouping, the information sources ‘past experience’, ‘newspaper/magazine’, ‘travel guidebook’ and ‘WoM from family/friend’ are located nearby, indicative of their closer association. Such an association is also evident between ‘destination’ and ‘internet’, and between ‘accommodation’ and ‘travel agent’. ‘Package tour brochure’ is situated between ‘destination’ and ‘accommodation’, indicative that use of this source is more closely associated with these travel components than with the others.

---

Insert Figure 1 here

---

As has been noted previously, ‘Travel guidebook’, was the most popular information source for respondents. In cases where components are located closely together, travel guidebooks use during the prior to travel phase appears to be related more closely to ‘activities’, ‘places to visit’, ‘meals’ and ‘shopping’, than to ‘accommodation’.

### *During Travel*

The numbers of respondents using various sources of information during travel, and their share of all respondents is reported in Table 4. Table 5 highlights mean scores derived from respondents about their perceived usefulness of information sources.

According to Table 4, travel guidebook is the most popular source of information for all travel components in the during travel stage. This finding is broadly in line with the results of the prior to travel phase. A travel guidebook was used by approximately half of all respondents (between 40.3% and 52.0%). Of the various components of travel, 'travel guidebook' was most used during travel in the case of 'local transport', 'places to visit', 'meals', and 'shopping' information. Results of a similar magnitude were reported only in the case of 'tour guide' (between 36.8% and 41.4% of all respondents). These percentages are credible given that about one-third of respondents were participating in a comprehensive package tour, (as shown in Table 1).

---

Insert Table 4 here

---

As is indicated in Table 5 respondents considered three sources of information to be more useful than others during travel. These were respectively 'travel guidebook' (ranging from 3.45 to 3.97); 'tour guide' (ranging from 3.47 to 3.94); and 'WoM from local residents' (ranging from 3.58 to 4.07). However, while the former two sources

were used by about 30-50% of all respondents as shown on Table 4, the latter was used by less than 20 % (ranging from 14.0% to 17.1%). While the mean scores of perceived usefulness for ‘other source’ were also relatively higher (ranging from 3.85 to 4.19), these items are discarded for the purposes of further analysis because of the low number of users (ranging from 1.1% to 1.6% of respondents).

---

Insert Table 5 here

---

‘Travel guidebook’ was the most popular information source during travel. In fact it was used most frequently at both the prior to and during travel phases except in the case of ‘accommodation’ during the prior to travel stage. Other relatively popular sources of information may be associated with taking ‘package tours’, namely ‘travel agent’ and ‘package tour brochure’ (during the prior to travel phase) and ‘tour guide’ (during the travel phase). ‘Travel guidebook’ was recognized as the most useful source of information prior to travel, and one of the most useful sources during travel.

It was determined by the researchers that a graphical illustration would be useful for highlighting the users during travel of the nine information sources for the seven 1 components. These make up Table 4. A two-dimensional perceptual map was produced using the correspondence analysis procedure (Figure 2). The solution generated a high  $R^2$ , 0.85, indicative of a good fit for the two-dimensional model.

From Figure 2 it is evident that information needs and use for ‘accommodation’ differ substantially from the other travel components. In the perceptual map the other components (‘local transport’, ‘places to visit’ and ‘activities’) are located relatively close together and form a group. The ‘shopping’ and ‘meals’ components appear to cluster together into another group. ‘Accommodation’, ‘internet’ and ‘tour guide’ are located relatively close together, perhaps indicative of some similarities in the pattern of use. For the first group, information sources such as ‘tour guide’, ‘onsite information centre’ and ‘WoM from other tourists’ are positioned closer together, indicative of their interrelationship. For the second group of travel components, the perceptual map suggests that ‘WoM from local residents’, ‘travel guidebooks’, ‘WoM from other tourists’, and ‘past experience’ are used more commonly.

---

Insert Figure 2 here

---

‘Travel guidebook’ was the most popular information source among respondents. The item was located almost equidistant between the first and second group. This outcome may be interpreted to mean that the use of travel guidebooks during travel relates to travel components included in both of the two groups to a similar degree (eg ‘meals’, ‘shopping’, ‘local transport’, ‘places to visit’ and ‘activities’). It is also evident that its association with ‘accommodation’ is relatively low. A relatively weak relationship between ‘travel guidebook’ and ‘accommodation’ was also seen in Figure 1, for the prior to travel phase. During this stage a closer association was indicated

between this travel component along with 'travel agent' and 'package tour brochure'. In the during travel stage, Figure 2 shows that 'tour guide' and 'internet' are situated in closer proximity to 'accommodation', indicative of their relatively strong relationship.

## **DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS**

This study has investigated the use of information by tourists in various decision-making settings and specifically the prior to and during travel phases. The perceived usefulness of these sources of information on the part of users has also been evaluated. It was found that respondents generally make use of multiple sources of information in planning for and executing their travel arrangements. This finding provides some support for the study by Fodness and Murray (1998), which concluded that travellers are not dependent on a single source and make use of a range of information.

The present study has also shown that information is used for making travel decisions during travel as well as prior to travel. This is consistent with the findings of Woodside, who noted that tourist decisions about each element of the trip may be made at different times including the during travel phase (2000). Given this pattern it is surprising that most previous studies on travel information search and use have focused exclusively on the prior to travel phase. The present study has shown that the sourcing of information is a continuing activity which occurs throughout the course of a trip. It is recommended that future studies on travel information use give acknowledgement to such temporal dimensions with a view to ensuring that the full



range of possibilities available to travelers is taken into account.

The present study has also shown that for the sample population, travel guidebooks are the most heavily used source of information. Correspondence analysis has illustrated that travel guidebooks were used particularly heavily during the prior to travel phase for 'destination', 'local transport', 'places to visit', 'meals', and 'shopping' information (Figure 1). The same results were obtained in the case of the during travel phase with the exception of 'destination'<sup>1</sup> (Figure 2). The only component which did not show significant reliance on travel guidebooks at either the prior to or during travel phases was information about 'accommodation'.

Travel guidebooks were recognized by respondents as the most useful information source during the prior to travel phase, and as one of the most useful sources during the travel phase itself. Prior to travel, 'WoM from family/friend' and 'past experience' were perceived as being as useful as travel guidebooks. However relative to 'travel guidebook' these sources were used by a relatively limited number of respondents. The findings were slightly different in the case of the during travel phase. While 'travel guidebook' was perceived to be a more useful information source by users than 'onsite information centre', 'internet', 'WoM from other tourists' and 'past experience', it was considered to be less useful than 'tour guide' and 'WoM from local residents'. The only exception to this was the case of 'tour guide' for shopping information. Overall the 'tour guide' and 'travel guidebook' options were used by about 30-50% of respondents, depending on the relevant component. By way of

---

<sup>1</sup> This item was not included in the part of the questionnaire which asked respondents about during travel use.

contrast 'WoM from local residents' was used by less than 20 % of respondents.

Though the underlying reasons for the popularity of travel guidebooks were not specifically investigated, this study appears to offer strong support for the proposition that travel guidebooks have a decisive impact on the choices that travellers make during all stages of a trip, Travel guidebooks seem to comprise an integral part of the travel decision-making process and provide a useful source of information about a range of different activities and places. Moreover, travel guidebook use may continue over an extended period, from pre-trip planning and anticipation through to post-trip retrospective reflection. It is likely that over the course of such uses, travel guidebooks will be used repeatedly though with varying frequency and purpose.

The preference for travel guidebooks by respondents in the present study has confirmed earlier findings on information use by Japanese tourists. Previous research has reported that printed media are the preferred source of information for Japanese tourists (Uysal et al. 1990; Mihalik et al 1995; Andersen et al. 2000). In the case of the present study the 'newspaper/magazine', category which is another printed medium, was not popular amongst respondents. The question remains as to whether Japanese tourists have a category preference for printed information sources or whether they particularly like using travel guidebooks and package tour brochures. The present study has not assessed whether the popularity of travel guidebooks would also be evident among tourists from other countries, or if it is a symptom of the preference amongst Japanese overseas tourists for printed media. These issues merit further investigation.

Other relatively intensely used sources of information were related to package tours. These include 'travel agent' and 'package tour brochure' (in the prior to travel phase), and 'tour guide' (in the during travel phase). Given that approximately two-thirds of respondents were traveling on a package tour (either a comprehensive or a flexible package tour), the popularity of 'travel agent' and 'package tour brochure' during the prior to travel phase is understandable. The popularity of 'tour guide' in the during travel phase is also reasonable because approximately one-third of the respondents were travelling on a comprehensive package tour. For the purposes of future research, it would be useful to have a better understanding of the difference between travel information use and perceived utility on the basis of travel type (namely package and non-package tour tourists).

Respondents evaluated word-of-mouth information highly in terms of its usefulness for both the prior to and during travel phases. This confirms the findings of previous studies which have noted the importance of such information sources (Capella and Greco 1987; Gitelson and Crompton 1983; Gitelson and Kerstetter 1994; Bieger and Laesser 2000). It is however worth noting that the perceived usefulness of 'travel guidebook' prior to a trip was similar or significantly higher than for 'WoM from family/friends.' In the case of the present study, the number of travel guidebook users was far greater.

Like travel guidebooks, the Internet is a source of information available to tourists both prior to and during travel. However, there was no evidence that this

information source was used intensively by respondents. Respondents rated its usefulness only around the middle on the five-point scale at both stages. Information sources which were the result of direct efforts by destination marketing organisations (eg 'DMO information pack' prior to travel, and 'onsite information centre' during travel) were used relatively less frequently by respondents, and were perceived by users as being relatively less useful. Mass media, (eg 'TV' and 'newspaper/magazine') were generally the least used and were perceived as least useful as sources of information.

Few previous attempts have been made to collect data regarding the usefulness or importance of travel information sources (Snepenger et al. 1990; Fesenmaier and Vogt 1992). The present study has adopted an approach which allows for the collection of data about perceived usefulness as well as for use/non-use dichotomous data. This constitutes a useful addition to earlier attempts to evaluate sources of information, (eg studies by Bieger and Laesser (2001), Capella and Greco (1987), and Fesenmaier and Vogt (1992)). Unlike these previous studies which measured information sources for whole trips, the present study has investigated the issue in detail by asking respondents to evaluate sources of information for each travel component.

This study has provided practical insights into how diverse segments within the Japanese outbound travel market make use of travel information sources. It should provide useful background information for the development of marketing programmes targeted at each segment of this significant market, (eg group-based

travellers). The study has identified a heavy reliance on guidebooks amongst Japanese overseas tourists in both the prior to and during travel stages. From a destination marketing perspective, it is important to recognise that the most commonly referenced sources of travel information are not necessarily those over which the destination exercises direct control. The study has found that there were few sources of information other than guidebooks accounting for an equivalent number of users: the exceptions were the case of travel agents and package tour brochures during the prior to travel phase; and tour guides during the travel phase. These three sources are provided directly by the travel and tourism industry, unlike guidebooks which are produced by peripheral forces. Whilst the degree to which guidebooks actually generate demand for travel may be limited, they appear to be more widely used than has sometimes been assumed. This suggests that there may be an opportunity to use guidebooks not only to influence destination choice but also as an influence over on-site behaviour.

It should be acknowledged that the sampling method used in the present study may be a potential source of error. The original intention of examining Japanese tourists to Australia did not proceed because of problems with the data collection and the study was subsequently broadened to consider Japanese overseas tourists generally. In the absence of a sampling frame, respondents were selected on a non-random basis. Although the survey respondents constituted a relatively broad cross-section of all Japanese overseas tourists, there is no guarantee that they were representative of this population. It is recommended that sampling strategies are modified for the purpose of future research. In this context, sampling those who are in airport departure

lounges returning from a destination country would be ideal.

This study would benefit from replication in other contexts and using alternative samples. The scope of the present study has been confined to outbound tourists from a single country within the Asia-Pacific region, namely Japan. For tourists from other countries, from different cultural backgrounds and with different travel information needs, travel information preferences may differ. The present findings cannot automatically be generalized beyond the specific setting of the study, which suggested that caution should be exercised when applying them to different populations. To assess the external validity of the findings, the study would benefit from being replicated in other parts of the world, such as Europe.

## REFERENCES

- Andersen, V., Prentice, R., & Watanabe, K. (2000). Journeys for Experiences: Japanese Independent Travelers in Scotland. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, 9, 129-151.
- Bieger, T., & Laesser, C. (2000). Information Sourcing by Swiss Travellers: A Market Segmentation Approach. *Tourism Analysis*, 5, 125-130.
- Bieger, T., & Laesser, C. (2001). Segmenting Travel on the Sourcing of Information. In, Mazanec, J.A., Crouch, G.I., Ritchie, J.R.B., & Woodside, A.G.(eds.), *Consumer Psychology of Tourism (Volume 2)*. Wallingford: CABI Publishing, 154-167.
- Capella, L.M., & Greco, A.J. (1987). Information Sources of Elderly for Vacation Decisions. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 14, 148-51.
- Chen, J.S., & Uysal, M. (2002). Market Positioning Analysis: A Hybrid Approach. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 29 (4), 987-1003.
- Churchill, G.A., & Iacobucci, D. (2002). *Marketing Research: Methodological Foundations (8<sup>th</sup> Edition)*. Fort Worth: Harcourt College Publishers.
- de Vaus, D.A. (2002) *Surveys in Social Research (5<sup>th</sup> Edition)*. Allen&Unwin, Crows Nest.
- Fesenmaier, D.R. (1994). Traveler Use of Visitor Information Centers: Implications for Development in Illinois. *Journal of Travel Research*, 33, 44-50.
- Fessenmaier, D.R., & Vogt, C.A. (1992). Evaluating the Utility of Touristic Information Sources for Planning Midwest Vacation Travel. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, 1 (2), 1-18.
- Fesenmaier, D.R., Vogt, C.A., & Stewart, W.P. (1993). Investigating the Influence of

- Welcome Center Information on Travel Behavior. *Journal of Travel Research*, 31, 47-52.
- Gitelson, R.J., & Crompton, J.L. (1983). The Planning Horizons and Sources of Information Used by Pleasure Vacationers. *Journal of Travel Research*, 21, 2-7.
- Gitelson, R., & Kerstetter, D. (1994). The Influence of Friends and Relatives in Travel Decision-Making. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, 3 (3) 59-68.
- Gitelson, R.J., & Perdue, R.R. (1987). Evaluating the Role of State Welcome Centers in Disseminating Travel Related Information in North Carolina. *Journal of Travel Research*, 25, 15-19.
- Hair, J.F., Anderson, R.E., Tatham, R.L., & Black, W.C. (1998). *Multivariate Data Analysis (5th Edition)*. Upper Saddle River: Prentice-Hall International.
- Mansfeld, Y. (1992). From Motivation to Actual Travel. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 19, 399-419.
- Mihalik, B.J., Uysal, M., & Pan, M.-C. (1995). A Comparison of Information Sources Used by Vacationing Germans and Japanese. *Hospitality Research Journal*, 18/19 (3/1), 39-46.
- Snepenger, D., Meged, K., Snelling, M., & Worrall, K. (1990). Information Search Strategies by Destination-Naive Tourists. *Journal of Travel Research*, 29 (Summer), 13-16.
- Uysal, M., McDonald, C.D., & Reid, L.J. (1990). Sources of Information Used by International Visitors to U.S. Parks and Natural Areas. *Journal of Park and Recreation Administration*, 8, 51-59.
- Woodside, A.G. (2000). Introduction: Theory and Research on the Consumer Psychology of Tourism, Hospitality and Leisure. In, Woodside, A.G., Crouch, G.I.,



Mazanec, J.A., Oppermann, M., & Sakai, M.Y.(eds.), *Consumer Psychology of Tourism, Hospitality and Leisure*. Wallingford: CABI Publishing, 1-17.

Table 1

Respondent Sociodemographic and Travel-Related Characteristics (N=1,211)

		N	%
Destination Region*	Australia	234	20.1
	North America	308	25.4
	Europe	229	18.9
	North-East Asia	199	16.4
	South-East Asia	170	14.0
	Other region	62	5.1
Type of tourist	Comprehensive Package Tour	358	29.6
	Flexible Package Tour	482	39.8
	Independent Traveller	371	36.0
Purpose of Travel	Holiday	916	75.6
	Visiting Friends/Relatives	98	8.1
	Business	61	5.0
	Study	80	6.6
	Other	56	4.6
Duration of Trip	Up to 10 days	960	79.3
	More than 11days	251	20.7
Previous Visit to the Destination Region	First time	816	67.4
	Repeater	395	32.6
Overseas Travel Experience in General	Less Experienced	663	54.7
	More Experienced	548	45.2
Gender	Male	409	33.8
	Female	802	66.2
Age	18-25	345	28.5
	26-35	361	29.8
	36-55	299	24.7
	56 and over	206	17.0
English Fluency	Not fluent at all	409	33.8
	In-between	379	31.3
	More fluent	423	34.9

\*‘North America’ includes Canada and USA; ‘North East Asia’ includes China, South Korea and Taiwan; ‘South East Asia’ includes Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.

Table 2

Number of Users of Travel Guidebooks and Other Information Sources as a proportion of All Respondents (N=1,211) : Prior to Travel (Multiple Response)

	Travel Agent		Package Tour Brochure		Travel Guidebook		TV		Newspaper/ Magazine		Internet		DMO Information Pack		WoM from Family/ Friends		Past Experience		Other Source	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Destination	552	45.6	497	41.0	681	56.2	216	17.8	220	18.2	336	27.8	226	18.7	416	34.4	403	33.3	13	1.1
Accommodation	542	44.8	425	35.1	535	44.2	147	12.1	171	14.1	266	22.0	184	15.2	301	24.9	324	26.8	9	0.7
Local Transport	431	35.6	339	28.0	643	50.6	141	11.6	160	13.2	213	17.6	210	17.3	287	23.7	345	28.5	9	0.7
Places to Visit	411	33.9	380	31.4	683	56.4	162	13.4	188	15.5	244	20.2	217	17.9	352	29.1	326	26.9	9	0.7
Activities	372	30.7	309	25.5	560	46.2	152	12.6	168	13.9	212	17.5	189	15.6	295	24.4	311	25.7	9	0.7
Meals	393	32.5	340	28.1	631	52.1	163	13.5	184	15.2	212	17.5	184	15.2	374	30.9	355	29.3	9	0.7
Shopping	361	29.8	330	27.3	666	55.0	161	13.3	194	16.0	209	17.3	188	15.5	364	30.1	364	30.1	10	0.8

DMO: Destination Marketing Organisation

WoM: Word-of-Mouth

Table 3

Perceived Usefulness as Evaluated by Users of Travel Guidebooks and Other Information Sources: Prior to Travel

	Travel Agent		Package Tour Brochure		Travel Guidebook		TV		Newspaper/ Magazine		Internet		DMO Information Pack		WoM from Family/ Friends		Past Experience		Other Source	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Destination	3.50	1.04	3.38	0.96	3.97	0.90	2.83	1.05	3.10	1.21	3.67	1.03	3.12	1.11	3.78	1.05	3.75	1.11	3.92	1.26
Accommodation	3.46	1.14	3.19	1.03	3.37	1.16	2.01	0.99	2.57	1.28	3.46	1.29	2.68	1.17	3.42	1.31	3.44	1.24	4.00	1.41
Local Transport	3.07	1.18	2.72	1.10	3.76	1.05	1.93	0.96	2.41	1.24	3.06	1.38	3.13	1.21	3.34	1.32	3.57	1.21	4.00	1.22
Places to Visit	3.22	1.15	3.23	1.09	3.96	0.94	2.62	1.14	3.06	1.30	3.30	1.25	3.15	1.18	3.69	1.24	3.49	1.21	3.78	0.97
Activities	2.98	1.15	2.95	1.06	3.70	1.03	2.41	1.07	2.85	1.28	3.19	1.30	3.08	1.06	3.50	1.30	3.53	1.18	3.67	1.41
Meals	2.69	1.11	2.27	1.11	3.52	1.10	2.53	1.13	3.02	1.31	3.01	1.31	2.78	1.14	3.64	1.23	3.54	1.11	3.33	1.32
Shopping	2.27	1.14	2.67	1.10	3.62	1.05	2.52	1.18	3.07	1.34	3.01	1.32	2.80	1.16	3.57	1.26	3.62	1.14	3.40	1.17

DMO: Destination Marketing Organisation

WoM: Word-of-Mouth

Table 4

Number of Users of Travel Guidebooks and Other Information Sources as a proportion of All Respondents (N=1211): During Travel (Multiple response)

	Tour Guide		Travel Guidebook		Onsite information centre		Internet		WoM from Local Residents		WoM from Other Tourists		Past Experience		Other Source	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Accommodation	474	39.1	488	40.3	228	18.8	125	10.3	214	17.7	170	14.0	292	24.1	14	1.2
Local Transport	465	38.4	576	47.6	289	23.9	117	9.7	264	21.8	182	15.0	327	27.0	19	1.6
Places to Visit	501	41.4	628	51.9	284	23.5	125	10.3	293	24.2	198	16.4	305	25.2	16	1.3
Activities	439	36.3	531	43.9	267	22.0	120	9.9	275	22.7	186	15.4	282	23.3	17	1.4
Meals	461	38.1	611	50.5	242	20.0	111	9.2	327	27.0	207	17.1	339	28.0	18	1.5
Shopping	446	36.8	630	52.0	231	19.1	108	8.9	296	24.4	201	16.6	350	28.9	13	1.1

WoM: Word-of-Mouth

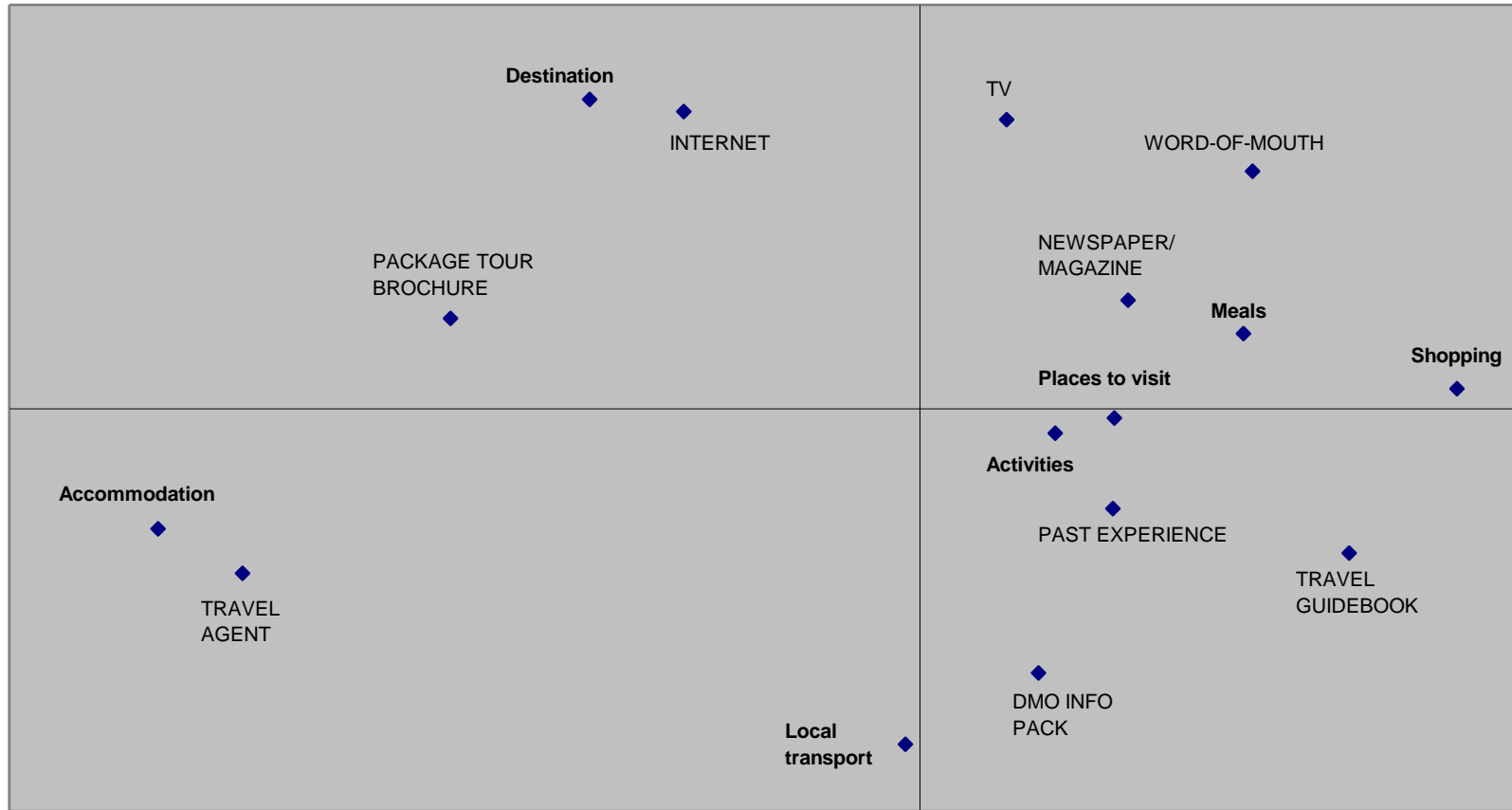
Table 5

Perceived Usefulness as Evaluated by Users of Travel Guidebooks and Other Information Sources: During Travel

	Tour Guide		Travel Guidebook		Onsite information centre		Internet		WoM from Local Residents		WoM From Other Tourists		Past Experience		Other Source	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Accommodation	3.65	1.05	3.45	1.19	3.22	1.26	3.22	1.36	3.58	1.36	3.25	1.36	3.53	1.20	4.14	1.17
Local Transport	3.76	1.01	3.82	1.02	3.62	1.17	2.97	1.20	3.98	1.20	3.43	1.30	3.67	1.14	4.00	1.20
Places to Visit	3.94	0.96	3.97	0.89	3.58	1.11	3.08	1.20	4.00	1.14	3.59	1.30	3.53	1.20	4.19	0.91
Activities	3.76	0.96	3.73	0.98	3.59	1.13	3.23	1.27	3.90	1.15	3.49	1.24	3.52	1.12	3.94	0.97
Meals	3.58	1.03	3.64	1.03	3.19	1.18	3.00	1.19	4.07	1.10	3.53	1.25	3.64	1.07	4.11	0.90
Shopping	3.47	1.08	3.70	1.02	3.21	1.21	3.06	1.26	3.92	1.21	3.43	1.27	3.67	1.05	3.85	1.21

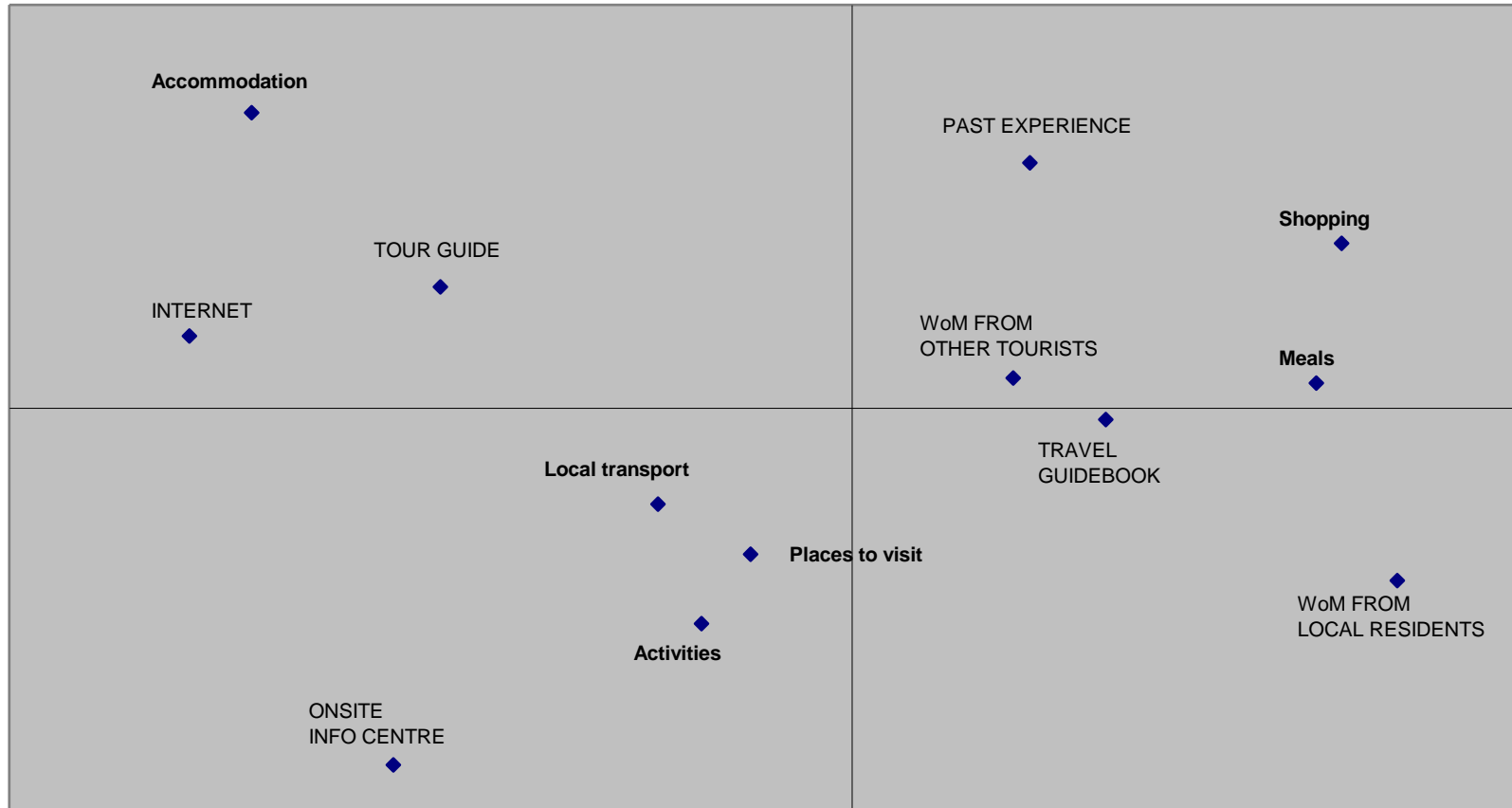
WoM: Word-of-Mouth

Figure 1  
 Perceptual Map of Information Source Use by Japanese Overseas Tourists: Prior to Travel



**Bold:** Travel Component  
 CAPITAL: Travel Information Source

Figure 2  
 Perceptual Map of Information Source Use by Japanese Overseas Tourists: During Travel



**Bold:** Travel Component  
 CAPITAL: Travel Information Source