

Chapter 6

Tourists' Preferences for Seeing Other Tourists

6.0 Introduction

The previous chapter presented Study Three, based on a visual simulation approach and an online questionnaire, to explore the tourist-tourist encounter preferences of Japanese participants. The participants showed quite distinct patterns of encounter preferences, which were dependent on the number and the appearance of people observed. The results also supported the effectiveness of the visual approach with photographic images to simulate the encounter settings. The weakness of the study, however, was the limited size of and somewhat biased sample, which made the findings preliminary and indicative rather than well substantiated.

The fourth study extends the examination of tourist-tourist encounter preferences with the visual approach, but with more systematic and quantitative data collection. This study is particularly interested in the international differences in encounter preferences. To further investigate the encounter preferences, attempts will also be made to explain the pattern of encounter preferences found in this chapter effectively the results of the present Study Four will be discussed by focus groups in an attempt to explain the results in detail in Study Five. This chapter presents the methodologies, results, and discussion of these two studies, Four and Five.

6.1 Research Questions

The particular objective of chapter is to examine tourists' preferences towards

tourist-tourist encounters in relation to some internal and external factors. Three specific research questions were examined as follows:

Research Question 1

Do the tourists' overall preferences toward the appearance of other tourists encountered depend upon the characteristics of the observing tourist such as his/her residency (Japan/Western countries), gender (male/female), age (younger/older), party size (small/large), travel companion (alone & couple/others), and travel motive (isolation/social)?

Research Question 2

Do the tourists' overall preferences toward the number (site use level) of other tourists encountered depend upon the characteristics of the observing tourist such as his/her residency (Japan/Western countries), gender (male/female), age (younger/older), party size (small/large), travel companion (alone & couple/others), and travel motive (isolation/social)?

Research Question 3

What are the reasons for having certain encounter preferences?

6.2 Study Four

To explore the above research questions, two separate studies were conducted. The first one, Study Four, examined the research questions 1 and 2 through a questionnaire with a visual component. Based on the results of this study, Study Five was developed to explore research questions with focus groups. This section will deal with Study Four, followed by Study Five in the next section.

6.2.1 Methodology

To explore the research questions 1 and 2, a visual simulation approach was employed with edited photographic images, each containing different types of people, mixed both in terms of appearance and number of people in the setting. Using these images, an on-site self-administered questionnaire was conducted at Cairns International Airport, Queensland, Australia.

6.2.1.1 Operationalisation of Key Variables

A brief outline of internal and external factors will be developed to help clarify the structure of the questions guiding the present research.

Internal Factors: Characteristics of the Tourists as Observers

While a number of internal factors (residency, gender, age, party size, type of travelling companion and travel motive) were variables measured in this study, the most important variable was “residency” of the participants. Specifically, people from Japan and those from Western countries were compared. Here, the term “Western countries” was used to refer to European countries, as well as the USA, Australia and New Zealand. It is, at a first glance, a rather stereotypical way of defining the term, however, when the demographics of the respondents were scanned, this appeared to be the most appropriate way of grouping the respondents who are the counterparts of those from Japan. These people in each group share somewhat similar cultural background and home environment. The contrast between Japanese being collectivists and Westerners being individualists has been suggested as an important difference between these two residency based groups (Ahmed & Krohn, 1992; Nishiyama, 1996).

External Factors: Characteristics of the Tourists Being Observed

The encounters were categorised in two different ways: by the appearance and by the number of the people being observed. The number of people being observed was used to examine people's reactions to different tourist densities. The physical "appearance" of the observed tourists was also a key variable. As the objective of the study is to explore tourists' preferences toward seeing other tourists, it is believed that physical appearance is an obvious factor in the tourists being observed. "Appearance" could be categorised in many ways, however, the one that has been manipulated in this study is "Caucasian" or "Asian." The expression used in this study to describe this manipulation is "appearance." As the existing literature suggests, the in-group and out-group distinction is often made according to the physical appearance of people (Furnham & Bochner, 1986) and an easily identifiable characteristic is people's ethnic features (Pritchard, 1998). The other external factors, situational factors, were not examined in this study.

6.2.1.2 Instrument

The two-page questionnaire consisted of two sections, with an introductory statement to briefly explain the study aims and the voluntary and confidential nature of the participation. Section 1 asked for participants' preferences towards a range of photographic images. Three sets of nine edited photographic images depicting a range of different numbers and mixes of visitors at rainforest settings were shown to the survey participants. They were simply asked to choose the photo that depicted their preferred tourist setting from each set. Section 2 collected data about participants' demographic and other travel characteristics: this information was collected for comparison purposes for both research questions to identify the characteristics of the participants. While most of the information sought here is

standard in tourist survey work, the categories for travel motives were tightly focused limiting the items only to the “relationship” category of Lee (2001). This is because the specific interest of the study was in the relationship between social motives and encounter preferences.

Since the questionnaire was needed in both English and Japanese, it was originally constructed in English and translated into Japanese under the principle of back translation (Heung et al., 2001) to ensure the contents were identical to the original English version. Copies of the questionnaire in both the English and Japanese versions, are found in Appendix G.

Construction of Photographic Images

The construction of images used in the Section 1 followed the work of Manning and his colleagues (Manning et al., 1996, 1999). A selection of photographs at rainforest settings was first captured by a digital camera and provided samples of public spaces in rainforest settings in North Queensland, Australia. The images were copied into a Macintosh computer (iBook) at 2400 x 1800 pixel with a fine colour quality. Once the images were stored in the computer, Adobe PhotoDeluxe (version 2.0), an image-editing computer software, was used to create three sets (each at a different rainforest setting, namely boardwalk setting, swimming area setting, and parking area setting) of nine images. The appearance (Caucasian and Asian) and the number of the people in each photo were systematically manipulated as illustrated in Tables 6.1, 6.2 and 6.3. The images with the maximum number of people (photos g and i) were constructed first, transporting images of people selected from the above-mentioned photos in the rainforest onto the photo without people (photo a). Delicate care was taken to ensure realistic representation of the scale and size of people in the new photographic image by comparing the altered

photo to people in actual images, particularly in relation to crowd density, male-female ratio, age group ratio and, people's positions (facing forward or not). Once these images with the maximum number of people were constructed, half of the people were then removed, without replacement, to create the photos with a medium number of people (photos d and f). Photo h was intended to be the combined image of photo d plus f, so in order to create a natural appearance of photo h (maximum people, mix of Caucasian and Asian), photos d and f had to be created with this point in mind. When photos d, f, and h were produced, the procedures were repeated to create photos b and c, and then e. The whole process was repeated to make three sets of photographic images as described in Tables 6.1, 6.2, and 6.3. Those images were digitally recorded onto the computer and developed into colour photographic images. Each photo was reduced to size of 5.7 x 7.6 centimetre so that all nine photos could fit on an A4 size sheet as a set. The nine photos were randomly given new photo label numbers so that they were arranged to be printed out on the display sheet to avoid reactivity due to the order of presentation. The display sheets were then laminated for repeated use to accompany the questionnaire. Figures 6.1, 6.2, and 6.3 are the copies of the three sets of photographic images used for the survey (not laminated). The questionnaire using the visual images as simulations has been established as an effective alternative to conventional text-based measurements (Inglis et al., 1999; Manning et al., 1996, 1999; Pearce & Black, 1996).

Table 6.1 Contents of Photo A. Rainforest Boardwalk Photo

| Initial Photo Labels | Number of Asian in the Photo | Number of Caucasian in the Photo | Total Number of People in the Photo | Randomly Selected Photo Labels for Placement |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|--|---|
| photo a | 0 | 0 | 0 | photo 4 |
| photo b | 0 | 5 | 5 | photo 1 |
| photo c | 5 | 0 | 5 | photo 9 |
| photo d | 0 | 10 | 10 | photo 5 |
| photo e | 5 | 5 | 10 | photo 8 |
| photo f | 10 | 0 | 10 | photo 3 |
| photo g | 0 | 20 | 20 | photo 2 |
| photo h | 10 | 10 | 20 | photo 1 |
| photo i | 20 | 0 | 20 | photo 6 |

Table 6.2 Contents of Photo B. Rainforest Swimming Area Photo

| Initial Photo Labels | Number of Asian in the Photo | Number of Caucasian in the Photo | Total Number of People in the Photo | Randomly Selected Photo Labels for Placement |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|--|---|
| photo a | 0 | 0 | 0 | photo 3 |
| photo b | 0 | 15 | 15 | photo 4 |
| photo c | 15 | 0 | 15 | photo 2 |
| photo d | 0 | 30 | 30 | photo 8 |
| photo e | 15 | 15 | 30 | photo 6 |
| photo f | 30 | 0 | 30 | photo 5 |
| photo g | 0 | 60 | 60 | photo 9 |
| photo h | 30 | 30 | 60 | photo 1 |
| photo i | 60 | 0 | 60 | photo 7 |

Table 6.3 Contents of Photo C. Rainforest Parking Area Photo

| Initial Photo Labels | Number of Asian in the Photo | Number of Caucasian in the Photo | Total Number of People in the Photo | Randomly Selected Photo Labels for Placement |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|--|---|
| photo a | 0 | 0 | 0 | photo 9 |
| photo b | 0 | 10 | 10 | photo 5 |
| photo c | 10 | 0 | 10 | photo 1 |
| photo d | 0 | 20 | 20 | photo 3 |
| photo e | 10 | 10 | 20 | photo 6 |
| photo f | 20 | 0 | 20 | photo 2 |
| photo g | 0 | 40 | 40 | photo 7 |
| photo h | 20 | 20 | 40 | photo 4 |
| photo i | 40 | 0 | 40 | photo 8 |

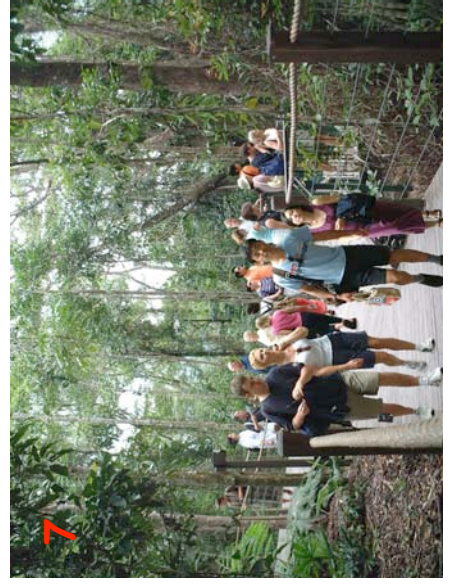
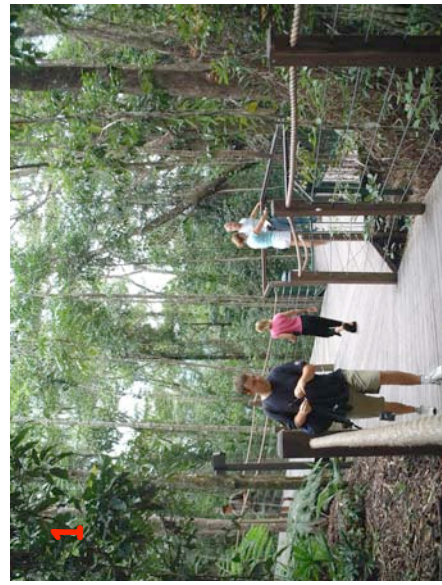
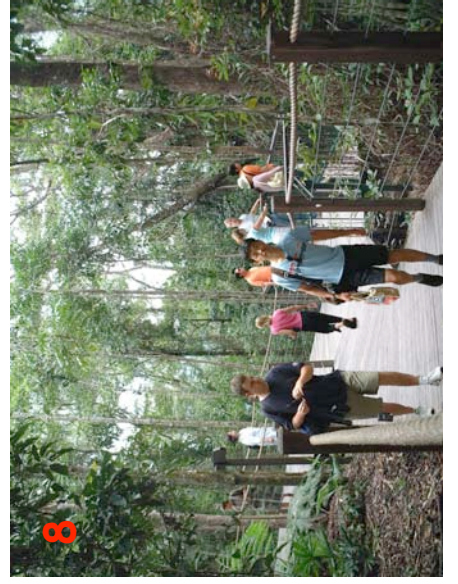


Figure 6.1 A Set of Rainforest Boardwalk Photos

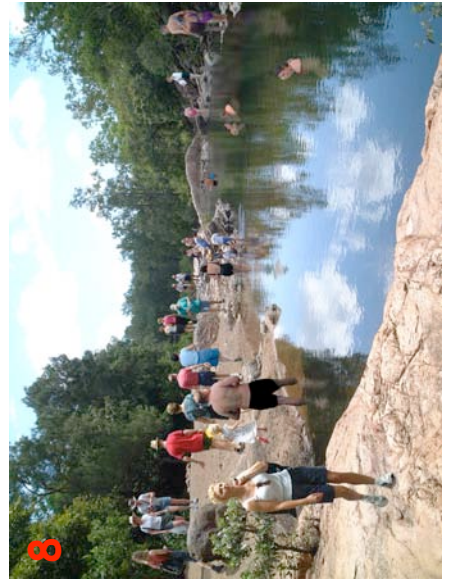


Figure 6.2 A Set of Rainforest Swimming Area Photos



Figure 6.3 A Set of Rainforest Parking Area Photos

Categorisation of Photos

The nine photos in each of the three set were systematically varied by the number and types of the people projected. As Table 6.1, as well as Tables 6.2 and 6.3, demonstrate, there were some photos with only Asians, only Caucasians, or with mixture of Asians and Caucasians. Also, there were photos with no one present, while some have a small, or larger (medium and large) number of people. In other words, the photos could be categorised in two ways emphasizing the people depicted: by appearance and by number of people to suit the research questions. Table 6.4 summarises those two categories and the initial photo labels that belong to each group. Both categories had three sub-categories. For the “Appearance of People in the Photo” category, sub-categories were: Caucasian only, Asian only, and mix of Asian and Caucasian. For the “Number of People” category, they were: nobody, small, and larger number. Data were re-coded according to those sub-categories for analysis rather than by individual photo.

**Table 6.4 Photo Categories by Two Determining Factors:
The Appearance and Number of People in the Photos**

Photo by Appearance of People

| | Initial Photo Labels | | |
|----------------------------|----------------------|---|---|
| Caucasian Only | b | d | g |
| Asian Only | c | f | l |
| Mix of Asian and Caucasian | e | h | |

Photo by Number of People

| | Initial Photo Labels | | | | | |
|---------------|----------------------|---|---|---|---|---|
| Nobody | a | | | | | |
| Small Number | b | d | | | | |
| Larger Number | c | e | f | g | h | l |

6.2.1.3 Data Collection

The data was collected in 4 days from 4th to 7th of May 2001 at the departure lounge at Cairns International Airport, Queensland, Australia. The permission for conducting the survey had been obtained from the Cairns Port Authority prior to do the survey. Three survey assistants, tourism undergraduate students from James Cook University at the Cairns campus, were employed to assist data collection with the researcher. Direction was given to the research assistants (themselves Caucasians) that they were to approach those people with physical appearance of “Western” people with Caucasian features, while the researcher, herself Japanese, approached Japanese-looking tourists. This was done this way to reduce the influences of survey conductors upon approaching participants (Brislin et al., 1973). Applicable tourists were approached randomly by the researcher or one of the survey assistants at the survey site. They introduced themselves and briefly explained the nature of the survey to the potential participants. Confidentiality and the voluntary nature of the survey were also mentioned. When the tourist agreed to participate, the questionnaire sheet was handed to them together with three sheets of the photographic images for Section 1 of the questionnaire. To avoid confusion, the interviewers assisted the participants for the first part of Section 1 by explaining how to consult the image sheets.

A total of 686 tourists were invite to participate and 249 of them were not able to assist resulting in a rejection rate of 36.3 percent. The high rejection rate was, arguably, due to the location of the survey: often, people not able to help expressed a need for last-minute duty-free shopping at the airport as well as claiming fatigue and expressing anxiety about departing on time. The total participants (437) included 28 unusable responses due to their residency outside of the scope of the present study (that is not Japan or a Western country). Hence, the final sample size became 409,

including 208 Westerners and 201 Japanese.

6.2.1.4 Sample

Table 6.5 illustrates the demographic and other characteristics of the respondents. The percentage scores represent the valid percentages of those tourists responding to the questionnaire items. Missing data were, therefore, not included in the table.

Of the total number of participants, 53.2 percent were males and 47.7 percent were females, indicating a slightly higher number of males than females participating. While the Western respondents were slightly male dominant (55.8% males versus 44.2% females), the Japanese respondents were rather female dominant (48.7% males and 51.3% females). Still, male-female ratios here were considered fairly equally distributed.

Almost half of the Japanese respondents (48%) belonged to the age group of 25 to 35. The second largest age group was one of 46 to 55 (15%). The rest of the respondents were rather equally distributed among the age groups of 18 to 24, 36 to 45, and 56 and older (11.5 %, 12% and 12% respectively), except 1.5 percent (3 people) who were under 17 year old. Age groups of 25 to 35 (28.8%) and 18 to 24 (24.4%) composed about half of the Western respondents. The respondents in age group 36 to 45 and 46 and 55 are both 17 percent of the respondents. There were also 23 people (11%) aged older than 56, and 3 people (1.5%) are younger than 17 year old. Overall, ages of the majority of the respondents were between 18 and 35 (60% of Japanese, 52% of Westerners and 56% of the total).

Among Western participants, about one third of them were British (including

English, Scottish and Irish) and about 25 percent were Australian. The remaining Western participants were from 14 different countries, each composing less than ten percent of the respondents: U.S., German, New Zealand, Canadian, Dutch, Swedish, Belgian, French, Danish, Swiss, and Norwegian (in order of the number of respondents).

The participant distribution by the type of travel arrangements showed an interesting contrast between Japanese and Westerners. While almost 75% of Japanese participants were using some type of package tour arrangements (47% transportation and accommodation only package, and another 27% with full package tour), Westerners were more likely to be travelling individually (78%): including 60% as individually arranged trip for and 18% as backpackers. Only 23.5% of Japanese participants claimed they were travelling individually, and only 14.7% of Westerners said they were using package tours. This distribution was similar to the study results of Ritter (1987), who studied travel pattern differences between Japanese and Western Europeans, and found that Japanese preferred travelling in groups, while Westerners were more individual travelers. Thus it can be considered that participants to the present survey are rather representative of the population.

Party size ranged from one to 42. The majority of both the Japanese and Western respondents were travelling in a party of two (63% and 54%). The second most common party size for Japanese participants was three, while it was one for Westerners.

For the common party size of two, the most typical type of travel companion for the survey participants was travelling as a couple, either married or unmarried (spouse or partner only). More than 44% of Japanese participants and about 36.5

percent of Western participants fall into this category. For Japanese, friends (24.6%) and family (18.6%) were the second and third most common travel companions, while travelling alone (25.2%) and with friends (10.4%) were somewhat common for Western participants. By contrast, only 6.5 percent of Japanese participants were travelling alone, and only 6.8 percent of Western participants were with their family members.

Table 6.5 Demographic and Other Profiles of Samples

| Demographic & Other Characteristics | Japanese | Western | Total |
|---|-------------|-------------|-----------|
| Sample Size | 201 | 208 | 409 |
| Male : Female | 48.7 : 51.3 | 55.8 : 44.2 | 52.3:47.7 |
| Age Group | | | |
| < 17 year old | 1.5% | 1.5% | 1.5% |
| 18 ~ 24 | 11.5% | 24.4% | 18.0% |
| 25 ~ 35 | 48.0% | 28.8% | 38.3% |
| 36 ~ 45 | 12.0% | 17.1% | 14.6% |
| 46 ~ 55 | 15.0% | 17.1% | 16.0% |
| > 56 year old | 12.0% | 11.2% | 11.6% |
| Nationality | | | |
| Japanese | 100.0% | 0.0% | 49.1% |
| British | 0.0% | 34.6% | 17.6% |
| Australian | 0.0% | 24.0% | 12.2% |
| Others | 0.0% | 41.4% | 21.1% |
| Type of Travel Arrangement | | | |
| Package tour (transportation + accommodation) | 47.0% | 8.4% | 28.2% |
| Full Package tour | 27.5% | 6.3% | 17.2% |
| Individual travel | 21.0% | 60.5% | 40.3% |
| major tour group | 0.0% | 4.7% | 2.3% |
| backpacker | 2.0% | 17.9% | 9.7% |
| others | 2.5% | 2.1% | 2.3% |
| Party Size | | | |
| one | 7.0% | 26.4% | 17.0% |
| two | 63.3% | 54.3% | 58.2% |
| three | 10.6% | 3.8% | 7.1% |
| four | 7.0% | 7.7% | 7.4% |
| others | 12.1% | 7.8% | 10.3% |
| Type of Travel Companion | | | |
| travelling alone | 6.5% | 25.2% | 16.7% |
| spouse/partner only | 44.7% | 36.4% | 40.8% |
| friends | 24.6% | 20.4% | 22.4% |
| family | 18.6% | 6.8% | 12.7% |
| family & friends | 3.5% | 6.8% | 4.2% |
| others | 2.0% | 4.4% | 3.2% |

Additional information not presented in Table 6.4 indicates that there were substantial differences in English ability between Japanese and Western participants. Eighty percent of Western participants were native speakers of English, and almost all the other Western participants also did not find communication in English difficult. Some 66 percent of Japanese participants stated that they did not have much confidence in English communication. While about 30 percent of Japanese participants claimed that they could manage to communicate in English, less than six percent of Japanese expressed strong confidence in their English communication skills.

Furthermore, while 40.4 percent of the respondents were from English-speaking countries, most of the other participants had prior experience travelling to English-speaking destinations (including Australia) leaving only 8.8 percent of the total participants who were neither from English speaking countries nor had been to English-speaking travel destinations before.

Overall, the Japanese and Western participants in this study shared a similar demographic profile in male – female ratio, age group (when grouped in younger and older), party size (when grouped less than two and more than three), and type of travel companions (when grouped travelling alone or as a couple and others). Those four categories were therefore, both relevant and sufficiently well distributed to become variables for cross-tabulations in addition to residency (Japan and Western countries).

6.2.2 Results and Discussion

As already mentioned, the nine photos in each set were categorised in two different ways: by appearance of people category (Caucasian-only, Asian-only, and mix of Caucasian and Asian) and the number of the people category (nobody, small number and large number). Cross-tabulations were run to compare the differences in the preferences for each photo category depending upon the different variables and Pearson chi-square was used to test for any significant differences. The results of the analysis are reported under each research question related to the “Most Preferred Photos” chosen by the survey participants. The parallel analysis conducted for the “Least Preferred Photos” are reported in Appendix H.

6.2.2.1 Results -- Research Question 1:

Do the tourists’ overall preferences toward the appearance of other tourists encountered depend upon the characteristics of the observing tourist such as his/her residency (Japan/Western countries), gender (male/female), age (younger/older), party size (small/large), travel companion (alone & couple/others), and travel motive (isolation/social)?

The chi-square test results for the cross-tabulations of preferred photos (boardwalk, swimming area, and parking area) by appearance of the people category (Caucasian-only, Asian-only, and mix of Caucasian and Asian) and residency, gender, age, party size, travel companion and travel motive of the observers are summarised in Table 6.6. Those who chose “nobody in the photo” were not considered as part of data for this research question simply because the responses were irrelevant to the appearance based criteria. At the five percent level, significant differences were observed with residency for all three set of photos, with gender for “boardwalk photo” and with party size for “parking area photo”. The other variables had no significant

differences for any photos. However, considering the fact that total of 72 cross-tabulations and chi-square tests were run, it is assumed that occasional tests may show a significant difference by mere chance. Therefore, consistency was taken into account to determine the major factor influencing the observers' encounter preferences. Based on this guideline, the results indicate that the residency of the observer was the key factor that influenced their preference in all three photo settings when the photo was categorised by the appearance of the people in them.

Table 6.6 Summary of Chi-Square Tests for Research Question 1

| | | Most Preferred Photos | | |
|--------------------|------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| | | Boardwalk Photo | Swimming Area Photo | Parking Area Photo |
| Observer Groupings | Residence | * 8.92 (.012) | * 6.77 (.034) | * 8.63 (.013) |
| | Gender | * 6.29 (.043) | 1.04 (.594) | 1.61 (.448) |
| | Age group | 3.16 (.206) | 0.54 (.765) | 1.09 (.580) |
| | Party size | 1.87 (.393) | 0.16 (.922) | * 11.69 (.003) |
| | Travel companion | 0.42 (.813) | 1.85 (.398) | 2.84 (.242) |
| | Motive | 5.91 (.052) | 4.55 (.103) | 4.13 (.127) |

df = 2

chi square value (p)

* : significant difference observed (p< .05)

To explore further how residency type (Japanese or Westerner) influenced the preferences, the relevant cross-tabulation results are examined in more detail as follows.

Table 6.7 is the result of the cross-tabulation for the most preferred boardwalk photo (photos by appearance of the people category) by residency of observers. The relationship between the most preferred boardwalk photo and residency of the observers was significant at the five percent level ($\chi^2 = 8.92$, 2 df). The pattern indicated that Japanese showed preference for "Caucasian-only photos." The Japanese preference for "Caucasian-only photo" was marked compared to their preference toward "Asian-only photos." Westerner's preferences for "Caucasian-only photos" and "Asian-only photos" did not show much difference. Figure 6.4 accompanies Table 6.7 to visually illustrate the difference between Japanese and Westerners.

Table 6.7 Most Preferred Boardwalk Photo (Photos by Appearance of the People Category) by Residence of Observers

| | | Residence of Observer | |
|--|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| | | Japan (N=169*) | Western Countries (N=129**) |
| Most Preferred Boardwalk Photo Appearance Category | Caucasian Only in Photos | 100 (59) | 66 (51) |
| | Asian Only in Photos | 47 (28) | 55 (43) |
| | Caucasian & Asian Mix in Photos | 22 (13) | 8 (6) |
| | | Chi-Square (df=2) = 8.92, p < .05 | |
| Note: Cell values are counts with column percentages in parentheses * 32 Japanese who chose "Nobody in the photo" were not included ** 78 Westerners who chose "Nobody in the photo" were not included | | | |

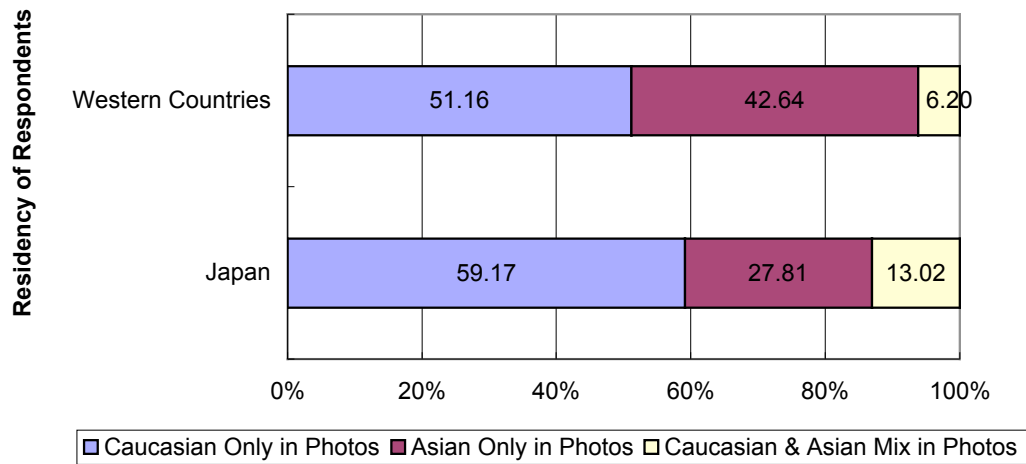


Figure 6.4 Percentage of Respondents by Residency Who Prefer Types of Photos by Appearance of People in the Photo (Boardwalk Photos)

Table 6.8 is the result of the cross-tabulation for the most preferred swimming area photo (photos by appearance of the people category) by residency of observers. The relationship between the most preferred swimming area photo and the residency of the observers was significant at the five percent level ($\chi^2 = 6.77$, 2 df). Both Japanese and Westerners showed a greater preference toward “Caucasian-only photos” than others. Japanese showed slightly more preference toward “Caucasian and Asian mix photos” than Westerners, though this category was still the least popular one. Figure 6.5 accompanies Table 6.8 to illustrate the difference between Japanese and Westerners.

Table 6.8 Most Preferred Swimming Area Photo
 (Photos by Appearance of the People Category) by Residence of Observers

| Most Preferred Swimming Area Photo Appearance Category | Residence of Observer | |
|--|--------------------------|-------------------------------|
| | Japan (N=149*) | Western Countries (N=78**) |
| | Caucasian Only in Photos | 81 (54) |
| Asian Only in Photos | 52 (35) | 28 (36) |
| Caucasian & Asian Mix in Photos | 16 (11) | 1 (1) |

Chi-Square (df=2) = 6.77, p < .05

Note: Cell values are counts with column percentages in parentheses
 * 52 Japanese who chose "Nobody in the photo" were not included
 ** 130 Westerners who chose "Nobody in the photo" were not included

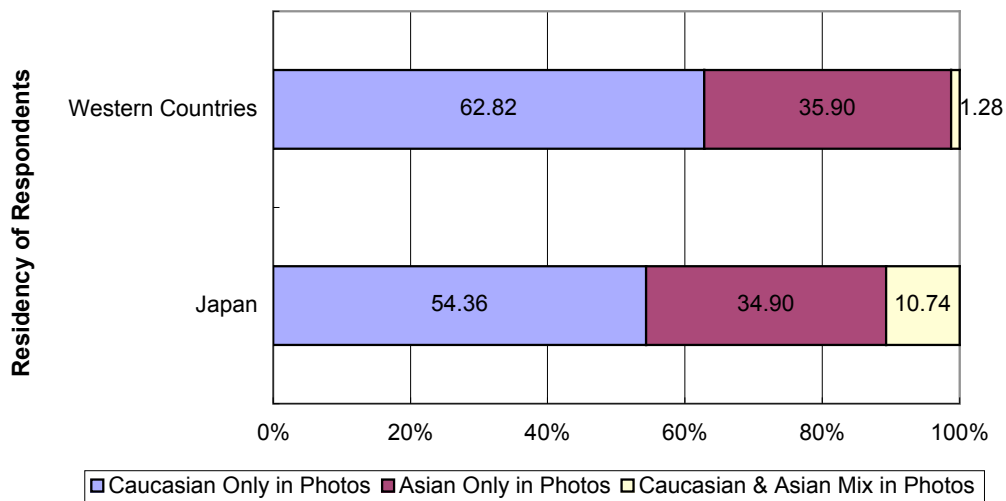


Figure 6.5 Percentage of Respondents by Residency
 Who Prefer Types of Photos by Appearance of People in the Photo
 (Swimming Area Photos)

Table 6.9 is the result of the cross-tabulation for the most preferred parking area photo (photos by appearance of the people category) by residency of observers. The relationship between the most preferred parking area photo and residency of the observers was significant at the five percent level ($\chi^2 = 8.63$, 2 df). Westerners showed a stronger preference towards “Asian-only photos” while Japanese slightly preferred “Caucasian-only photos”. Figure 6.6 accompanies Table 6.9 to visually illustrate the difference between Japanese and Westerners.

Table 6.9 Most Preferred Parking Area Photo
(Photos by Appearance of the People Category) by Residence of Observers

| | | Residence of Observer | |
|---|---------------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------------|
| | | Japan (N=167*) | Western Countries (N=133**) |
| Most Preferred Parking Area Photo Appearance Category | Caucasian Only in Photos | 82 (49) | 50 (38) |
| | Asian Only in Photos | 76 (46) | 81 (61) |
| | Caucasian & Asian Mix in Photos | 9 (5) | 2 (2) |
| Chi-Square (df=2) = 8.63, p < .05 | | | |

Note: Cell values are counts with column percentages in parentheses

* 34 Japanese who chose "Nobody in the photo" were not included

** 75 Westerners who chose "Nobody in the photo" were not included

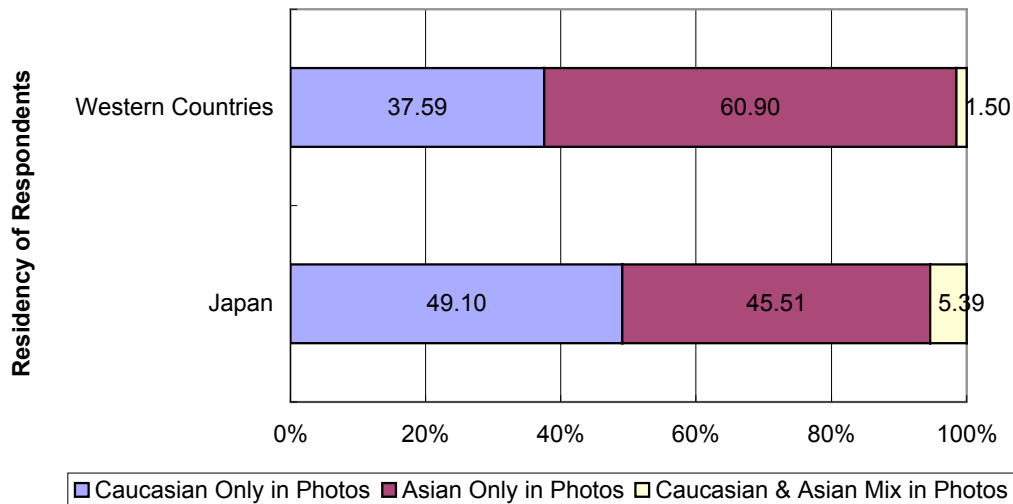


Figure 6.6 Percentage of Respondents by Residency Who Prefer Types of Photos by Appearance of People in the Photo (Parking Area Photos)

6.2.2.2 Discussion -- Research Question 1:

Do the tourists' overall preferences toward the appearance of other tourists encountered depend upon the characteristics of the observing tourist such as his/her residency (Japan/Western countries), gender (male/female), age (younger/older), party size (small/large), travel companion (alone & couple/others) and travel motive (social/isolation)?

Among all those internal variables, residency was the only one that showed a consistent pattern of significant difference for the three sets of photos tested. Therefore, the straight and simple answer to Research Question 1 is: residency of the observer influences his/her preference toward the appearance of other tourists encountered, but his/her gender, age, party size, travel companion and motive are of no or minor importance.

The survey results showed a pattern of preferences among Japanese and Westerners toward photos with different types of people mixed. In summary, Japanese preferred seeing Caucasians rather than Asians, while Westerners did not show strong preferences for either Asians or Caucasians. In other words, Japanese tended to prefer seeing people who were “foreigners” to them, and did not prefer seeing people who looked like them. On the other hand, people from Western countries did not have particular preference in this regard.

This finding is quite contradictory to the established concept of in-group/out-group evaluation in the social interaction literature. According to the social psychology literature, people differentiate strangers either as “in-group” or “out-group” in the process of relationship formation (Furnham & Bochner, 1986; Triandis, 1994). This in-group/out-group distinction is often based on physical appearance such as whether the other party look similar to one or not. People usually feel comfortable with people from the same or similar cultural background, often judged by the appearance as looking similar to themselves. People tend to be in favor of in-group people and seek their company rather than out-group, the concept called in-group favoritism. If this concept was followed, the study results should indicate that Westerners would prefer seeing Caucasians (their in-group) and Japanese, Asians (their in-group). Japanese in particular have a strong sense of belongingness and they are seen as a nationality group who travel with their own kind (Nishiyama, 1996). Yet, from the results of this study, it was apparent that encounter preference of Japanese was towards “out-group” rather than “in-group.” And Westerners did not support the concept either by not having a particular preference. There is some consistency with the literature, however, in that the Japanese as collectivists make a sharper distinction between in-group and out-group

than Westerners do as individualists (Hofstede, 1980; Ward et al., 2001).

To explore the possible explanations for this conflicting result, it is valuable to consider some issues in tourist psychology. The unique psychology of tourists is characterised by their non-ordinary time; the away-from-home, temporal nature of stay in the travel destination and their change in social roles (Jafari, 1987; Lett, 1983; Turner & Turner, 1978). It can be argued that a preference for the novel, the unfamiliar and the foreign characterises some tourist behaviour (Iso-Ahola, 1982; Kim, 1996). Especially, their expectation of seeing and experiencing the unfamiliar or something different from their home environment during their travel abroad defines the encounter as something “foreign.” As Gottlieb (1982) remarked, what is sought for in a vacation is the inversion of the everyday. On this occasion, and knowing that their stay will only be brief, people expect and prefer experiencing the unfamiliar. For Japanese especially, foreignness is an important element to be appreciated as a part of their international travel experiences (Cha et al., 1995). There is a popular and publicly accepted expression in Japanese “Never consider to be ashamed while you are travelling (Moeran, 1983.)” This expresses a psychologically unrestricted state of mind that allows people to behave the way they would not even think of behaving at home. In their home environment, Japanese are consistently aware of how other people see them and the notion of “shame” is a major dimension of social life. Coming from such a restricted society that almost prohibits playful behaviour in adult life, Japanese on vacation seek to enjoy their time-out in an extraordinary place. Their playful and relaxed holidays abroad are expected to be spent without the rules of their home country. Seeing their own people on vacation may ruin the spirit of the mood and atmosphere they seek and for which they have paid. It is analogous to the sense of escape from social rules and responsibilities referred to by Cohen and Taylor (1992).

An additional explanation is that the destination of North Queensland in Australia, a Western country, is expected to be dominated by Caucasians. Those Caucasians seen in the photos may be viewed as local Australian people as well as tourists from Western countries. Many Japanese tourists expect to see and interact with local Australian people rather than fellow international tourists (Nishiyama, 1996), thus making the Australian site with Caucasians more favourably accepted than those featuring Asians. If the destination in the study was not Australia but somewhere in an Asian country, the whole response might have been different.

Among tourists from Western countries, a strong preference towards particular groups was not found. While travelling in Australia, they seem to be prepared to see Caucasians as well as Asians. Belonging to an individualistic culture, Westerners may not make such sharp distinctions between in-group and out-group. This could be the reason why they did not care whether they see their in-group (Caucasians) or out-group (Asians). Also, as mentioned above, it is difficult to tell just by looking at the photos, whether the people they see are Western tourists or local Australian people. In a real situation, tourists can see the sequences of the other tourists' behaviour as well as hearing what they say. It might be the case, if they are there at the real setting and can distinguish between those tourists from their own country and those from other countries, then they may respond differently.

Note that the photo setting of swimming area was the only one that Westerners showed a greater preference toward Caucasian-only photos rather than to Asian-only photos. This may indicate that the particular characteristics of the setting, the swimming area, which may have an influence on the attitude because of the specific activities of the site. The exposure of the body and the relatively higher risk of

activity may contribute to this response of favouring familiar others if help or assistance is required. It could be merely due to the presentation limitations of the present study, which will be discussed later in the final chapter of this thesis.

Another explanatory point is that this particular study only measured certain kinds of tourist-tourist encounter settings, namely non-personal or indirect encounters. The results of the study, thus, only apply to the setting where there are no attempts made to approach other tourists for personal or direct contacts. Comfort of “total strangers” comes into play here as long as they are just seen but not interacting with the observers. Direct and indirect contacts are expected to bring different effects (Brislin, 1981; Pearce, 1982b). For example, when social and personal needs or favours are requested, tourists have been shown to behave more favourably to “familiar strangers” rather than to “total strangers” (Pearce, 1980). In this sense, “familiar strangers”, that is those tourists from the same or physically and culturally close countries, are preferable to “total strangers”, those from other parts of the world. The results might have been different if the survey was asking for responses about direct and personal contacts made with other tourists rather than the present simulation where the tourists are objects of gaze rather than interacting companions (Urry, 1990). When other tourists are viewed as simply the object of gaze rather than the subject of interaction, the reaction is expected to be a less personal and more detached one.

6.2.2.3 Results -- Research Question 2:

Do the tourists' overall preferences toward the numbers (site use level) of other tourists encountered depend upon the characteristics of the observing tourist such as his/her residency (Japanese/Western countries), gender

(male/female), age (younger/older), party size (small/large), travel companion (alone & couple/others) and travel motive (social/isolation)?

The chi-square test results for the cross-tabulations of preferred photos (boardwalk, swimming area, and parking area) by the number of the people category (nobody, small and larger number) and residency, gender, age, party size, travel companion and travel motive of the observers are summarised in Table 6.10. At the five percent level, significant differences were observed with residency and motive for all three sets of photos, while “travel companion” showed a significant difference for the “Parking Area Photo” alone. All other observer groupings failed to provide significant differences at the five percent level. However, as mentioned in page 24, consistency was considered to determine the key influential factors for observer’s encounter preferences. Therefore, the results indicated that the residency of the observer and motive was the key factors that influence his/her preference in all three photo settings when the photos were categorised by the number of the people in them.

Table 6.10 Summary of Chi-Square Tests for Research Question 2

| | | Most Preferred Photos | | |
|--------------------|------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| | | Boardwalk Photo | Swimming Area Photo | Parking Area Photo |
| Observer Groupings | Residence | * 43.09 (.000) | * 78.30 (.000) | * 29.52 (.000) |
| | Gender | 0.92 (.631) | 2.60 (.273) | 0.20 (.906) |
| | Age group | 3.17 (.205) | 0.84 (.656) | 1.01 (.602) |
| | Party size | 2.41 (.300) | 2.95 (.229) | 5.54 (.063) |
| | Travel companion | 2.87 (.239) | 3.54 (.171) | * 14.25 (.001) |
| | Motive | * 12.97 (.002) | * 16.08 (.000) | * 11.62 (.003) |

df = 2
chi square value (p)
* : significant difference observed (p< .05)

To explore further how these differences influenced preferences, the relevant cross-tabulation results are examined in more detail as follows.

Table 6.11 presents the results of the cross-tabulation for the most preferred boardwalk photo (photos by number of people category) by residency of observers. The relationship between the most preferred boardwalk photo and residency of the observers was significant at the five percent level ($\chi^2 = 43.09$, 2 df). Residents of Japan seemed to prefer seeing either a larger number of people or a least a small number of people. The “nobody in the photo” category was not very popular among the Japanese. By way of contrast, residents of Western countries preferred seeing a small number of people the most, but they also had strong support for the “nobody in the photo” category. The photos with a larger number of people were not very popular among Westerners. This is also visually illustrated in Figure 6.7.

Table 6.11 Most Preferred Boardwalk Photo
 (Photos by Number of the People Category) by Residence of Observers

| | | Residence of Observer | |
|--|--------------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------|
| | | Japan (N=201) | Western Countries (N=207) |
| Most Preferred Boardwalk Photo Number Category | Nobody in the photo | 32 (16) | 78 (38) |
| | Small number of people in the photo | 78 (39) | 92 (44) |
| | Larger number of people in the photo | 91 (45) | 37 (18) |

Chi-Square (df=2) = 43.09, p < .05

Note: Cell values are counts with column percentages in parentheses

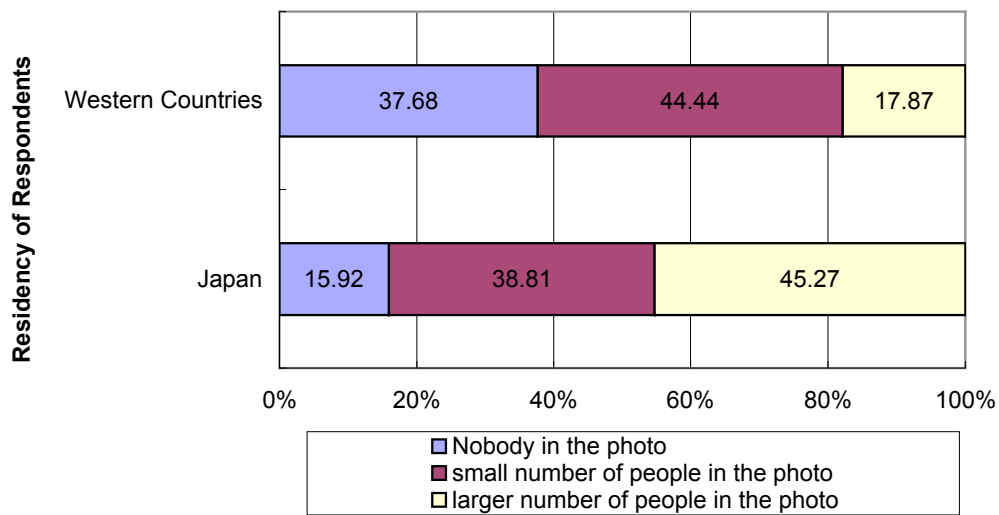


Figure 6.7 Percentage of Respondents by Residency
 Who Prefer Types of Photos by Number of People in the Photo
 (Boardwalk Photos)

Table 6.12 is the result of the cross-tabulation for the most preferred swimming area photo (photos by number of people category) by residency of observers. The relationship between the most preferred swimming area photo and residency of the observers was significant at the five percent level ($\chi^2 = 78.30$, 2 df). The Japanese preferred seeing a small number of people in the photo the most, while the nobody in the photo category and larger number of people in the photos were equally popular. On the other hand, a majority of the people from Western countries preferred seeing nobody in the photo, while some popularity was accorded to the small number of people category. The larger number of people in the photo category was not popular with the Westerners. This is also visually illustrated in Figure 6.8.

Table 6.12 Most Preferred Swimming Area Photo
(Photos by Number of the People Category) by Residence of Observers

| | | Residence of Observer | |
|--|--------------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------|
| | | Japan (N=201) | Western Countries (N=208) |
| Most Preferred Swimming Area Photo Number Category | Nobody in the photo | 52 (26) | 130 (63) |
| | Small number of people in the photo | 96 (48) | 74 (36) |
| | Larger number of people in the photo | 53 (26) | 4 (2) |
| Chi-Square (df=2) = 78.30, $p < .05$ | | | |

Note: Cell values are counts with column percentages in parentheses

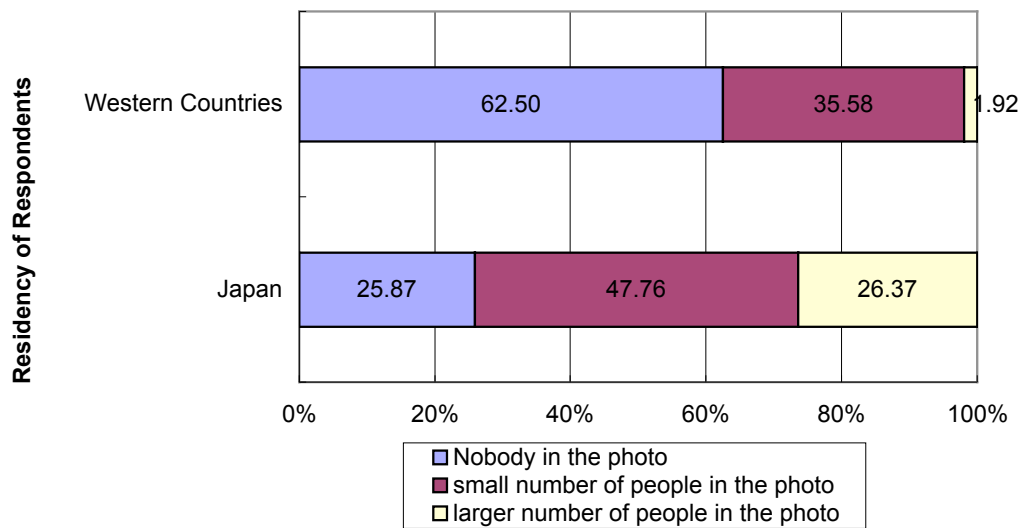


Figure 6.8 Percentage of Respondents by Residency Who Prefer Types of Photos by Number of People in the Photo (Swimming Area Photos)

Table 6.13 is the result of the cross-tabulation for the most preferred parking area photo (photos by number of people category) by residency of observers. The relationship between the most preferred parking area photo and residency of the observers was significant at the five percent level ($\chi^2 = 29.52$, 2 df). Both Japanese and Westerners preferred a small number of people in the photo the most. While Westerners preferred the nobody category to the larger number of people, Japanese participants showed an equal preference toward these two categories. This is also visually illustrated in Figure 6.9.

Table 6.13 Most Preferred Parking Area Photo
 (Photos by Number of the People Category) by Residence of Observers

| Most Preferred Parking Area Photo Number Category | Residence of Observer | |
|---|-----------------------|------------------------------|
| | Japan (N=201) | Western Countries (N=208) |
| | Nobody in the photo | 34 (17) |
| Small number of people in the photo | 132 (66) | 123 (59) |
| Larger number of people in the photo | 35 (17) | 10 (5) |

Chi-Square (df=2) = 29.52, p < .05

Note: Cell values are counts with column percentages in parentheses

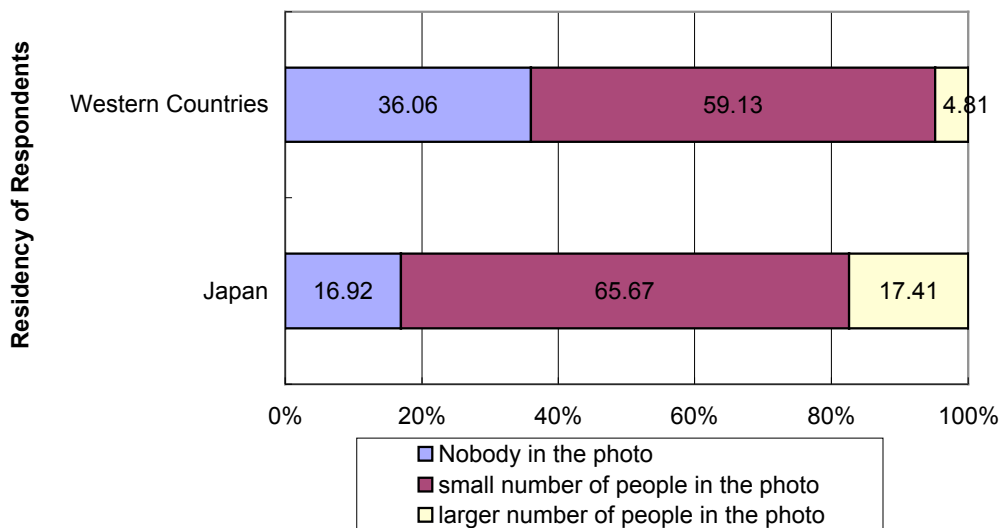


Figure 6.9 Percentage of Respondents by Residency
Who Prefer Types of Photos by Number of People in the Photo
 (Parking Area Photos)

Table 6.14 is the result of the cross-tabulation for the most preferred boardwalk photo (photos by number of people category) by motive of observers. The relationship between the most preferred boardwalk photo and travel motive of the observers was significant at the five percent level ($\chi^2 = 12.97$, 2 df). While the most preferred photo belonged to the “smaller number of people in the photo” category for both motive sub-categories, observers with low social/high isolation motive preferred nobody in the photo and those with the high social/low isolation motive preferred the larger number of people in the photo. This is also visually illustrated in Figure 6.10.

Table 6.14 Most Preferred Boardwalk Photo
(Photos by Number of the People Category) by Type of Motive of Observers

| | | Travel Motive of Observer | |
|---|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| | | Low Social / High Isolation | High Social / Low Isolation |
| | | (N=84) | (N=93) |
| Most Preferred Boardwalk Photo Number Category | Nobody in the photo | 24 (29) | 13 (14) |
| | Small number of people in the photo | 43 (51) | 39 (42) |
| | Larger number of people in the photo | 17 (20) | 41 (44) |
| Chi-Square (df=2) = 12.97, p < .05 | | | |
| Note: Cell values are counts with column percentages in parentheses | | | |

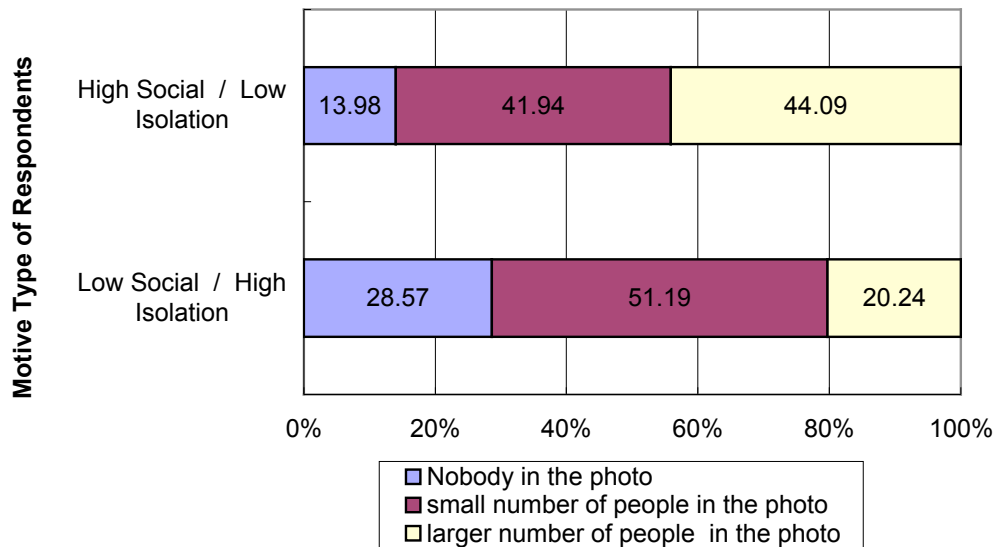


Figure 6.10 Percentage of Respondents by Motive Type Who Prefer Types of Photos by Number of People in the Photo (Boardwalk Photos)

Table 6.15 is the result of the cross-tabulation for the most preferred swimming area photo (photos by number of people category) by motive of observers. The relationship between the most preferred swimming area photo and travel motive of the observers was significant at the five percent level ($\chi^2 = 16.08, 2 \text{ df}$). People with low social/high isolation motive showed a strong preference for nobody in the photo, followed by small number of people in the photos, while a larger number of people in the photo was not very popular. In contrast, people with high social/low isolation motive preferred small number of people in the photo, followed by nobody in the photo, but a large number of people in the photo was almost equally preferred as nobody in the photo. This is also visually illustrated in Figure 6.11.

Table 6.15 Most Preferred Swimming Area Photo
 (Photos by Number of the People Category) by Type of Motive of Observers

| | | Travel Motive of Observer | |
|--|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| | | Low Social / High Isolation (N=84) | High Social / Low Isolation (N=93) |
| Most Preferred Swimming Area Photo Number Category | Nobody in the photo | 45 (54) | 25 (27) |
| | Small number of people in the photo | 33 (39) | 47 (51) |
| | Larger number of people in the photo | 6 (7) | 21 (23) |

Chi-Square (df=2) = 16.08, p < .05

Note: Cell values are counts with column percentages in parentheses

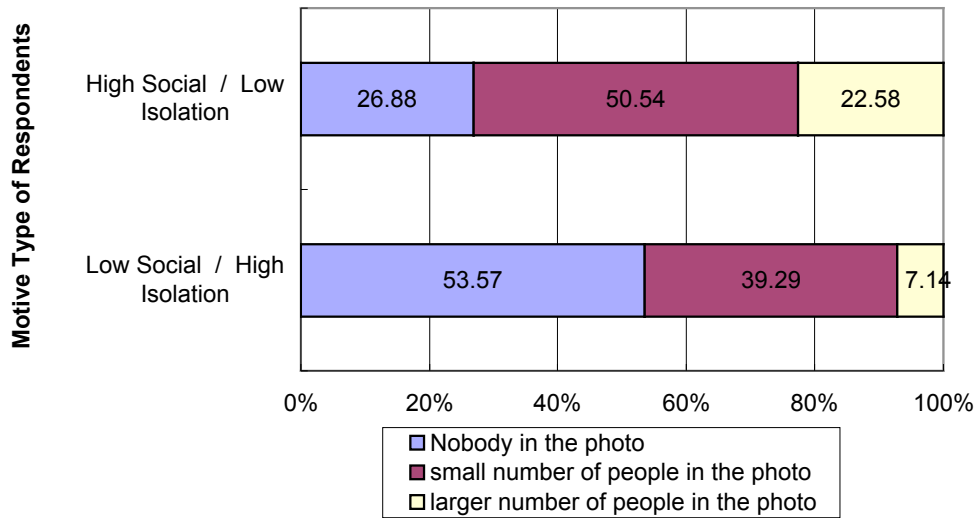


Figure 6.11 Percentage of Respondents by Motive Type Who Prefer Types of Photos by Number of People in the Photo
 (Swimming Area Photos)

Table 6.16 is the result of the cross-tabulation for the most preferred parking area photo (photos by number of people category) by motive of observers. The relationship between the most preferred swimming area photo and travel motive of the observers was significant at the five percent level ($\chi^2 = 11.62$, 2 df). While the majority of people in both motive categories preferred a small number of people in the photo, low social/high isolation motive people relatively preferred nobody in the photo. This is also visually illustrated in Figure 6.12.

Table 6.16 Most Preferred Parking Area Photo
(Photos by Number of the People Category) by Type of Motive of Observers

| | | Travel Motive of Observer | |
|---|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| | | Low Social / High Isolation | High Social / Low Isolation |
| | | (N=84) | (N=93) |
| Most Preferred Parking Area Photo Number Category | Nobody in the photo | 30 (36) | 14 (15) |
| | Small number of people in the photo | 47 (56) | 62 (67) |
| | Larger number of people in the photo | 7 (8) | 17 (18) |
| Chi-Square (df=2) = 11.62, p < .05 | | | |
| Note: Cell values are counts with column percentages in parentheses | | | |

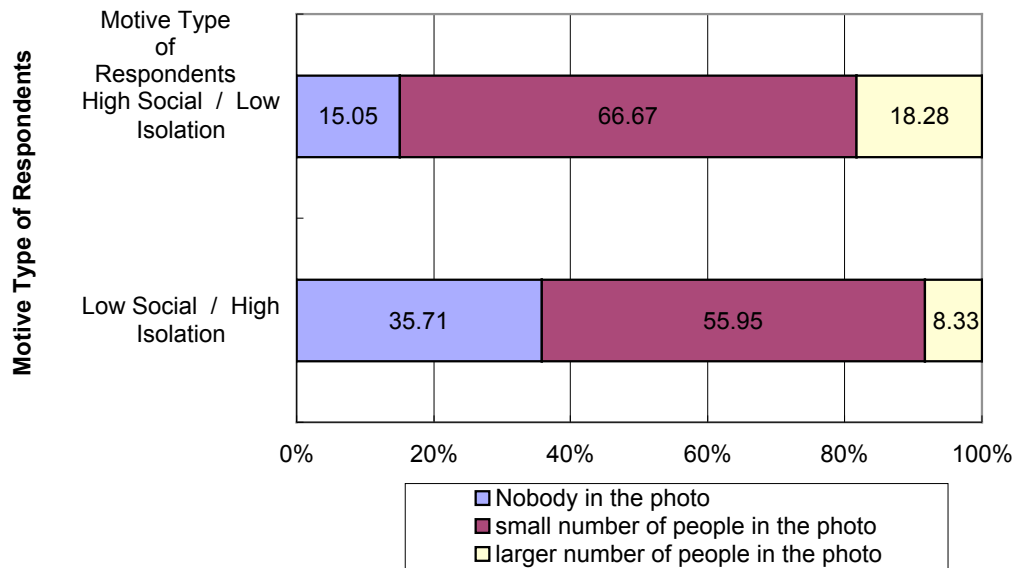


Figure 6.12 Percentage of Respondents by Motive Type Who Prefer Types of Photos by Number of People in the Photo (Parking Area Photos)

6.2.2.4 Discussion -- Research Question 2:

Do the tourists' preferences toward the numbers (site use level) of other tourists encountered depend upon the characteristics of the observing tourist such as his/her residency (Japan/Western countries), gender (male/female), age (younger/older), party size (small/large), travel companion (alone & couple/others), and travel motive (social/isolation) ?

Among all these internal variables, residency and motive were the only ones that showed a consistent pattern of significant differences with all three sets of photos tested. Therefore, the straight and simple answer to Research Question 2 is: residency and motive of the observer influenced his/her preferences toward the number of other tourists encountered, with limited effects due to his/her gender, age, party size, and travel companion.

The study results showed that the residents of Japan and Western countries have different preferences toward the number of other tourists they encounter: Japanese preferred a small or larger number of people, while Westerners preferred the absence of people or a small number of people. Also, travelling motive had a pattern of relation with the preferences for the number of people encountered: those who had high social and low isolation motives preferred a small or a large number of people to be around, while those who had low social and high isolation motives preferred an absence of people or a small number of people. These results challenge those of many existing encounter studies at recreation settings which examined visitors' tolerance level to the user density based on the assumption "more people, less tolerable" (cf. Schneider & Hammitt, 1995; Watson et al., 1994).

The pattern of the results between residency and preferred number of people and motive and preferred number of people were similar. Although it is not a perfect match, it appears to be safe to conclude that the residency and travel motive are closely linked. That is, Japanese have tendency to emphasise social, rather than isolation travel motives, while Westerners tend to have isolation motives rather than social ones. This assumption is supported by a number of existing research studies and cultural analyses (Ahamed & Krohm, 1992; Hofstede, 1980; Nishiyama, 1996; Pizam & Sussman, 1995; Woodside & Jacobs, 1995; Ward et al., 2001; Yuan & McDonald, 1990).

Considering that the social motive relates to a preference to encounter more people and the isolation motive is linked to a preference for encountering less people, there is a particular power in the study results since they were all in a rainforest, a natural environment. Even in this environment it appears, Japanese emphasise social motives.

Another possible explanation may be the difference of the home environment among the travellers, which is associated with their residency. Those who come from a relatively crowded area may find it more comfortable to be in the presence of others rather than with no one at all. Japan is known to be a country with a dense population: they may be more used to a larger number of people being around and may feel comfortable in their presence, while people from Western countries may not share the same view.

While familiarity with a high number of people may be one explanation, another possibility is a sense of safety. There are people who find comfort in crowds while some may have a little tolerance in other people's presence. Japanese are reported to be people who are concerned about safety matters when planning and during travel (Ahmend & Krohn, 1992). Perhaps in the foreign land, being with a few others or worse still, no one at all, might mean unsafe and hence a situation to be avoided. This may be especially so when majority of Japanese tourists who participated in the survey do not have much confidence in their communication skills in English.

These results carry several implications. First, it can be suggested that the so-called crowding norm at a given tourist destination held by a tourist may differ from one nationality to another. Also, it is possible to offer some explanations of the nationality differences by noting home environment differences as well as nationality characteristics. Further, there is a relationship between travelling motives and encounter preferences, which appear to be closely linked to the nationality of the subject.

Overall, Study Four provided a number of findings and produced some pertinent explanations. The following section of this chapter is based on the Study Four findings in an attempt to further explore the reasons for the nationality differences in encounter preferences.

6.3 Study Five

While the discussion section above may be an attempt to answer Research Question 3, “what are the reasons for having certain encounter preferences?”, it was from the researcher’s perspective: it would be helpful to have more data that confirms or augments these suggestions. Study Five was conducted to play such a role based on attribution theory, that is people’s explanations or attempts to find the cause of behaviour (Antaki, 1982). It collected personal opinions and thoughts to explain the differences in encounter preferences through focus groups. To be specific, this study was a follow-up study for the previous study, and served as a supporting explanatory section to the quantitative data gathered in Study 4. The major objective of the study was to explore the reasons and interpretation for the international differences in encounter preferences between two groups (Japanese and Westerners), which were revealed from the results of Study 4. It was anticipated that the outcomes could be examined through the application of the attribution theory to find the distinctiveness, consensus, and consistency of the pattern of reactions toward tourist-tourist encounters. Since the pattern of the encounter preference was available from the results of Study Four, Research Question 3 could be stated more precisely so that it was more manageable. The following were three research questions set for this study all developed from Research Question 3 stated earlier in this chapter.

Research Question 3-A

What are the reasons for the international differences in encounter preferences regarding the appearance of people being observed?

- a) Why do people from Japan prefer to see Caucasian-looking people?
- b) Why do Westerners have no particular preference for the appearance of people?

Research Question 3-B

What are the reasons for the international differences in encounter preferences regarding the number of people being observed?

- a) Why do Japanese prefer a small or larger number of people?
- b) Why do Westerners prefer an absence or a small number of people?

Research Question 3-C

What kind of factors would probably influence and change the patterns of encounter preferences?

6.3.1 Methodology

For this study, focus groups were employed. As discussed in Chapter 2, focus groups are used to supplement other methods or used as triangulation in multi-method research strategies. Finn et al. (2000) recommended employment of focus groups to test generalisation and theories developed by other methods. More detailed discussion on focus groups has already been provided in Chapter 2.

6.3.1.1 Instrument

A semi-structured question list was developed following the guidance of Krueger and Casey (2000) to ensure the natural, effective and logical sequence of

the discussion. Since this investigation sought data from some Japanese, the English question list was first constructed and then translated into Japanese to create a Japanese version. The Japanese questionnaire was translated back into English to ensure the contents were identical to the original English version. The question sequence with the actual questions asked and a time allocation plan is shown in Appendix I.

Pilot tests

As Krueger (1994:68-69) remarked, focus group interviews are not pilot tested in the same way as in a questionnaire survey for practical and productivity reasons. Rather, this study took the advice of Krueger (1994:68-69) and undertook four pilot test procedures pertinent to focus groups.

The first pilot test recommended by Krueger was to have the question route reviewed by people with knowledge of the topic to ensure “the logical and sequential flow of questions and the ability of probes to elicit the information desired” (Krueger, 1994:68). The question list was reviewed by two members of the research team: a tourism scholar and a postgraduate tourism student, both of whom had a understanding of the current project as well as tourist psychology. After their review, minor changes were made for wordings and some unnecessary questions were removed. The second pilot test was conducted with selected representatives of the target audience as individual interviews (Krueger, 1994:68-69). Two people from Western countries and two Japanese were asked individually to make comments on the questions, as well as other aspect of the project plan, such as the recruitment procedure, place of the sessions and incentives. It was confirmed that the questions were reasonably straightforward and there were no major problems in employing the items generated at step one. The third pilot test Krueger suggested

(1994:69) was actually the first focus group discussion session. It was suggested that the facilitator reflect on the wording and sequencing of the questions after the first focus group. No major changes were needed, thus the first “pilot” discussion was included in the later analysis. The final pilot test recommended by Krueger was to seek comments from participants at the conclusion of the focus group. This was done with all the focus groups to ensure the discussion was comprehensive and covered the topic. No major comments were made from the participants that suggested the need for change.

6.3.1.2 Data Collection

Participants and Recruitment

Having only limited time and financial resources, participants were recruited through a volunteer-basis. Participants were obtained from those who responded to notice board advertisements of the focus group discussion and also through personal contacts of the researcher both in Australia and in Japan. When potential participants responded, a screening test was run to confirm that they were suitable for the topic of discussion; that is whether they were from Japan or Western countries. If they were qualified, “a follow-up recruitment e-mail” were sent to remind them of the time and place of the session (Appendix J). Two sessions each for Western and Japanese focus groups were conducted, all sessions included three to four participants.

Facilitator

In order to avoid influencing the participant’s responses, it was decided that the researcher would not play the role of a facilitator in the discussion sessions. A tourism postgraduate student with a psychology background at James Cook University (Australian female) was appointed as a discussion facilitator for those

Westerner sessions, and a linguistic postgraduate with a psychology background (Japanese male) was appointed for Japanese sessions. They were informed of the nature and aims of the study and were given precise instructions as of how to guide the discussion. Prior to the actual discussion sessions, they received training with a written manual and several meetings were held to discuss the project. They also participated in the reviewing process of the question list, which assisted them to become more familiar with the project. Since the researcher herself was not present at the actual discussion sessions, briefings before and after each session were held to review the key issues of the focus group.

Procedures

a) Discussion Groups with Western Participants

Discussion sessions took place in a small seminar room in the Business Department at James Cook University. Both of the two discussion sessions were held in October, 2001. After welcoming the participants, the facilitator made a brief overview of the nature of discussion and also provided rules to follow during the session. The facilitator started with the opening question and then led the group discussion. The durations of the discussion were between sixty and ninety minutes. The whole discussion sessions were audiotape recorded.

First, opening questions were asked of all the participants and they were given an initial opportunity to speak up one by one around the table. This was just a simple question, e.g., "Tell us your name and where you are from." Introductory and transition questions followed the opening question. This was to prepare the participants for the topic of the main discussion. Participants were shown two photographs, one of them capturing a reef setting and the other a rainforest setting. Both photographs contained no people. Participants were asked which setting they

would prefer to visit. The photos used are listed as Appendix K. Then the participants were shown the same photographs used in the Study 4; three sets of nine photos at the rainforest and were asked their preferences. All the participants were asked to select the most and least preferred photos from each set and to explain the reasons for the selection.

The facilitator then explained Study 4, and how it was conducted. The facilitator also summarised the results of the study. The summary of the study results were shown in a table form (see Appendix L): Japanese tend to prefer photos with Caucasian-looking people (rather than Asians) and with small or larger volume of people, on the other hand, Westerners showed no particular preferences regarding the appearance of people, and with nobody or small volume of people. Participants were asked to explain why there were differences in encounter preferences through a number of semi-structured questions. Four questions were given: "Why do you think Japanese prefer the photo with Caucasian-looking people?", "Why do you think Westerners do not have particular preferences in appearance of the people in the photo?", "Why do you think Japanese prefer a small or larger number of people in the photo?", and "Why do you think Westerners prefer an absence or a small number of people in the photo?" After discussion of those four questions, the facilitator asked another question, "Do you think these patterns of preference always happen? Can you think of any factors that would change the patterns?" Further, nine photos of different natural attractions (Appendix M) were also shown as stimulation for the discussion and the participants were asked "Are there any natural settings in these that would not fit the pattern of the general preferences we have discussed?" The session was then concluded by the facilitators and participants being warmly thanked for their assistance.

b) Discussion Groups with Japanese Participants

A small seminar room in the language Department at University of the Ryukyus (Okinawa, Japan) was booked and the discussion sessions took place there. Both of the two sessions were held in December, 2001. The facilitator was a linguistics postgraduate student with a psychology background at University of the Ryukyus. Except for the fact that all the directions and discussions were in Japanese, the procedures followed those of the discussion groups with Western participants.

All the sessions lasted between 70 to 100 minutes. A transcript was made based on the audiotape and the contents were analysed. Care was taken to integrate frequency, specificity, emotion and extensiveness as advised by Krueger and Casey (2000).

6.3.2 Results and Discussion

The results of the study are reported here under each research question. Note, all through this section, that “frequency” was related to how frequently the particular theme or factor was discussed, does not just refer to one participant mentioning an item more than once. Rather, “frequency” is related to how often different participants mentioned the same thing or how extensively the matter was discussed.

6.3.2.1 Results -- Research Question 3-A

What are the reasons for the international differences in encounter preferences regarding to the appearance of people being observed?

a) Why do people from Japan prefer to see Caucasian-looking people?

There were some common responses from both Westerners and Japanese to

this question. All four focus group sessions came up with and all participants agreed with the explanation that Japanese visitors want to see and experience something different in Australia compared to what they have at home and Caucasians represent the notion “different.” “They came all the way to experience something different. The last thing they want to see or feel is that they are still at home. There is no point coming to visit other countries then (Australian female)” or “You don’t want to see Japanese while you travel foreign countries. You are away from home and don’t have to see the same people. If you see Japanese you may feel the holiday abroad atmosphere is spoiled: you don’t feel that you are overseas, though you came all the way (Japanese male)”. While many of the opinions voiced did not particularly identify what seeing Caucasian means to the Japanese, expect for the “different” than back home, one Japanese participant suggested that the Japanese might view Westerners as a part of the scenery. Also, both Westerner and Japanese participants seemed to agree that Caucasians correspond to local people in Australia for the Japanese and that Japanese want and expect to see local people. “Japanese associate local Australians with Caucasian – seen on TV and the like. So Japanese feel it is natural to see Caucasians in Australia (Japanese male)” and “Asian tourists may want to see beautiful scenery but if they are in Australia, seeing local people enhances their experience. They expect to see local people actually (Australian female)”. Another point mentioned by a Japanese participant was that Japanese are not used to mixing with Caucasians and feel it would be felt as a special experience, considering the Japanese history and environment at home, which is rather isolated from the rest of the world and far away, especially from the Western world. One Western participant also recognised that Caucasians can be Australian domestic tourists but “also international tourists, who can provide the atmosphere of a tourist place (Australia male)”.

There are also responses unique to Japanese participants. From both of two Japanese sessions, participants talked about Japanese's "Akogare (admiration/adoration)" for Western culture and people. Japanese female started "I think it is the same reason for Japanese preference in Western movies over Japanese movies. Image of Westerners, blond hair, long legs, etc... Japanese prefer seeing Westerners for perhaps – 'Akogare'? Especially at overseas travel, I would like to see many Westerners, people different from me." Then another female in the same session agreed saying that Japanese have "Akogare" toward Westerners and something Western is fashionable. In the other session, a Japanese male repeated the same explanation, "Japanese, or perhaps other Asians as well, have "Akogare" toward the Western world or Westerners. Westerners attract more attention, positive attention, from Japanese. Look at all those advertisement featuring Western people (in Japan)! Perhaps many Japanese think they want to go to somewhere those Westerners go and do the same things? Japanese seems to wish to have some contact with Westerners."

b) Why Westerners have no particular preference in appearance of people?

There were also some common responses from both Westerners and Japanese to this question. The most repeated explanation that Westerners were used to seeing many different people. "Western countries are more multi-cultural and they are used to having many different kinds of people around so it doesn't matter to them (Australian female)". "I think Western countries have different ethnic groups and they are used to such environments with different people (Japanese female)".

One session with Westerners had a rather hard time understanding this

question, even though they successfully provided some explanations to the previous questions for Japanese preferences. “(to the facilitator) Do you mean that when the Japanese were asked they preferred the picture with least Japanese people in there? (the facilitator nodded) Which is very funny because that is not something we looked at. (all participants laugh) We did look at people or no people. (“yes” from another participant) More than where they might be from. (“yea, which is funny” from the other participant)” The group discussed the matter for a while and wondered if it is due to cultural differences: Westerners focus on the density of people rather than appearance of people while the appearance is also important for Japanese. One Japanese session came up with the similar conclusion that Westerners do not pay much attention to who others are: “Perhaps it is due to nationality characteristics. They don’t mind who are around them. Japanese on the other hand often care who is around and how other people see them. Maybe Westerners are accustomed to not being concerned about what type of ethnic groups are around (Japanese male)”.

One Japanese session also related Westerners’ having no particular preference to their having more specific reasons for travel. “Probably because they have specific purposes. They are there for sightseeing, so they don’t mind who is around them. They went to the rainforest to see nature, not people. Nature is the reason and people are not. So the appearance of people did not bother them (Japanese male)”. When the facilitator asked whether the reason for Japanese tourists visiting the rainforest is also nature, the participants replied, “Japanese may not have such clear purposes. Perhaps they are not used to travel yet?” and mentioned that many Japanese tourists take an already-arranged package tour and that they might be there at the rainforest simply because it was a part of the package rather than their own choice.

6.3.2.2 Discussion -- Research Question 3-A

What are the reasons for the international differences in encounter preferences regarding the appearance of people being observed?

Figure 6.13 illustrates the results of the Research Question 3-A addressed above. This is to compare the different views Japanese and Westerners have toward Asians and Caucasians in Australia.

For Japanese, Caucasians encountered at Australian rainforest settings are viewed very positively due to the several factors. Caucasians represent a “difference” from back home, which counts as a special travel experience (Gottlieb, 1982) for Japanese. Caucasians could be seen as the local people at the travel destination, Australia, and Japanese tourists expect to see them there. Caucasians also can be viewed as other international tourists from other countries, who add to the atmosphere of popular tourist destination as well as excitement (MacCannell, 1989). Overall, seeing Caucasians in Australia itself is already a satisfying tourist experience. Moreover, “Akogare” of Japanese toward the Western world seems to have yet another positive enhancement by having, albeit indirect, contact with people from there. This is somewhat similar to what Jost and Ignatow (2001:196) pointed out as out-group favoritism shown by people from the South toward Northerners. Seeing Asian-looking people represents ordinary, everyday experience to Japanese because Asian-looking people correspond to Japanese people whom they see all the time at home. Thus seeing Asian-looking people is the opposite end of the spectrum of tourist experience to Japanese.

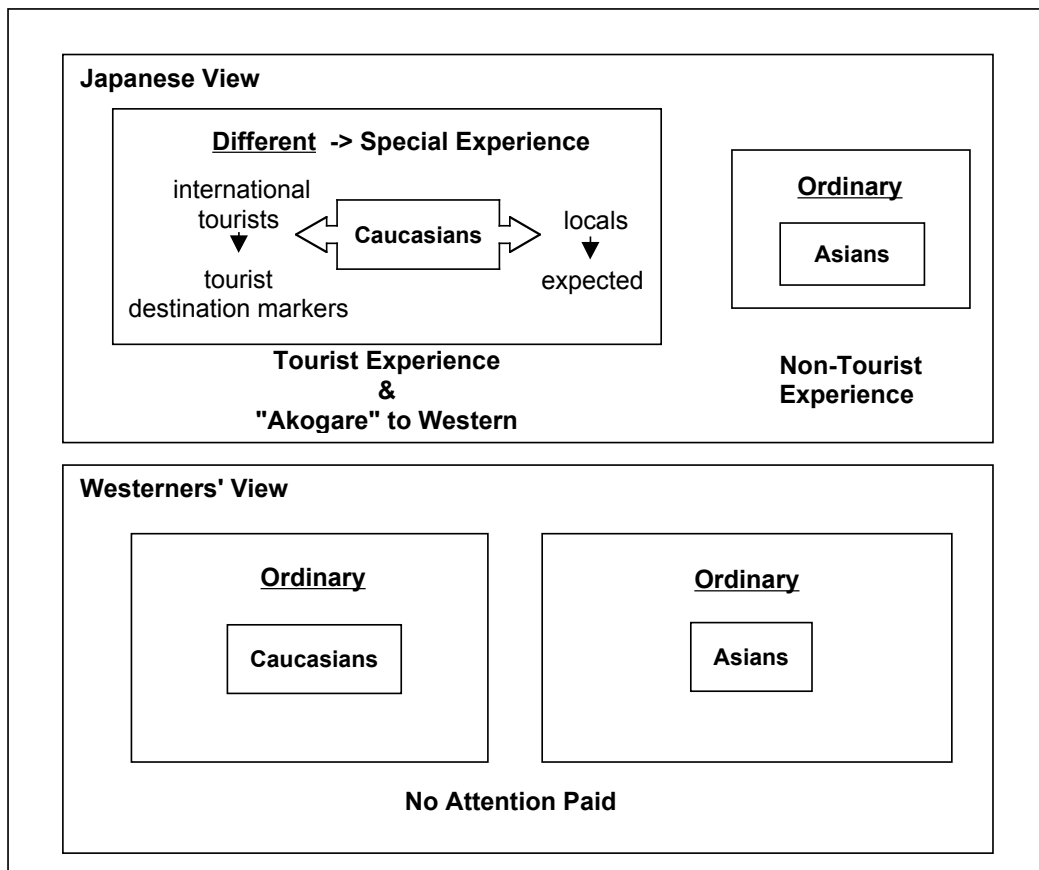


Figure 6.13
How Japanese and Westerners See Asians and Caucasians in Australia

On the contrary, for Westerners, both Caucasians and Asians encountered at Australian rainforest settings are viewed rather neutrally and there are no strong preferences toward either of them. For Westerners, both Caucasians and Asians are not unfamiliar because they are relatively used to mixing with people of different ethnic backgrounds at home. In addition, the Westerners are concerned with individual-approvals to nature and they are not likely to pay much attention to people around them. Summarising these points develops the conclusion that seeing either Caucasian or Asian would not relate to the Westerner's tourist experience.

6.3.2.3 Results -- Research Question 3-B

What are the reasons for the international differences in encounter preferences regarding the number of people being observed?

a) Why Japanese prefer small or larger number of people?

Common responses from both Western and Japanese discussion sessions to this question were grouped into three themes: Japanese's safety concern at unfamiliar places; home environment; and characteristics of Japanese (Asian) culture. Among these, the issue of the safety concern was voiced most frequently and most intensively and by some Japanese participants, most personally. "Security and safety concern. They are at a strange and unfamiliar place, so they would feel more comfortable having people around rather than alone (Australian male)". One Australian female wondered "Japanese tourists would think of the Australian bush as being a dangerous place, perhaps?" All Japanese participants agreed that the safety issue is critical for Japanese tourists. "Japanese may feel insecure if they visit a place where nobody's around especially when it is his/her first travel abroad (Japanese male)".

The densely populated home environment of Japanese was the second most frequently mentioned explanation. Both Westerners and Japanese in the focus group sessions seemed to have a common understanding that Japanese are used to many people around them and would be uncomfortable with open space. "Japan is highly populated and we are used to being in such an environment and having a lot of people around. Going to a place without any people may make one feel unsettled (Japanese female)" or "make one nervous (another Japanese female)".

The third common theme, characteristics of culture, can be summarised by a

comment of an Australian male “Asian cultures are still communal and Western cultures are very much like individual-oriented. So Asian people are more comfortable with people around them.” A Japanese female also observed “Japanese tend to go in a group. Being in a group makes us feel comfortable.”

There were three more issues pointed out in the Japanese sessions. One of them is perhaps strongly related to safety issues uncertainty. “If there is no one around, I might have no idea where to go I will worry and become anxious. It is good to have people around so that I can find out where to go and what to do (Japanese female)”. Another explanation was made by a Japanese male about the language issue, which is related to the previous comment in a sense that Japanese tourists want to have people around for uncertainty avoidance. “Because Japanese carry uncertainty in their communication skills, they may feel safe and comfortable to have people around.” The other point was raised by two Japanese males, “Japanese tend to want to go somewhere where other people go. ‘There should be something worth going and visiting because there are people going there’, they believe, and “People may feel and enjoy the atmosphere of ‘visiting a popular spot’ with many people around.”

b) Why Westerners prefer an absence or a small number of people?

The common response to this question from both Western and Japanese groups was that of related to enjoyment in a natural setting. “Because they (the photos) are all natural settings. We want to have solitude to appreciate and enjoy the beauty of nature (Australian female)”.

Sessions with Western participants explained this preference in a number of different ways. Many talked about how they were not used to crowded settings,

which was quite the opposite to the Japanese not being used to open space. Some said that they want to go away from crowds when going on holiday because they want to be alone with their family or travelling group. "It seems to me that Westerners prefer open space. Perhaps we like to relax in nature without any people around -- enjoying the natural setting when travelling much more than Japanese do (Australian female)". Perhaps related to this, others emphasised the value of a private holiday. "The main thing when you go away, you are sure to have your paradise just by yourself and you don't really want to share it with anyone else because you are on holiday." Another Western participant concluded that it can all be explained by the Western culture, the culture that appreciates quality time alone: "That may have a lot to do with the way we were brought up with. It is more a culture sort of thing... I cannot really picture myself enjoying being anywhere in the photo with so many people around me. I think, in our culture, we seek not so much isolation but peace, of having -- quality of time?"

The sessions with Japanese participants came up with different explanations. One Japanese female mentioned that her image of Westerners is those who appreciate private space. So crowds of people do not work for Westerners. Another Japanese female mentioned that it may have something to do with Westerners value of individual unique experience: "Westerners may not want to do what other people do. Enjoying one's special experience that no one else has, and maybe they want to tell people how special it was afterwards?" Another issue pointed out by Japanese participant was that Western tourists do not need any people around unlike Japanese do. "Compared to Japanese who are likely to have language difficulty in foreign countries, most Westerners usually can speak English and feel all right. They can relax in solitude without worrying too much. Language is quite a big issue." Another Japanese male contemplated the issue for some time

and came up with the explanation “I wonder whether Westerners don’t care about safety and security. I don’t believe they don’t care at all but they still want to go somewhere where there is nobody..... Maybe something to do with individualistic characteristics of theirs, I reckon.”

6.3.2.4 Discussion -- Research Question 3-B

What are the reasons for the international differences in encounter preferences regarding the number of people being observed?

Figure 6.14 illustrates the results of Research Question 3-B comparing Japanese and Westerners’ views of other people at the rainforest settings in Australia. For Japanese, the presence of other people is perceived rather positively. For one thing, people are viewed as “comfort” by Japanese partly because Japanese belong to a communal or collectivistic culture, as characterised by Hofstede (1980), and the presence of other people is readily accepted, and partly because Japanese are most likely to come from a densely populated home environment and feel comfortable with many people around. Also, Japanese in an unfamiliar foreign environment with probable language difficulties see other people as a safety and a security factor. This view is linked to the work of Ahmed and Krohn (1992), who included risk avoidance as an element of Japanese consumer behaviour. It is also related to the nature of “uncertainty avoidance” of Japanese as a collectivist culture (Hofstede, 1980). Japanese also view other people as potential helpers who they can follow for where to go and what to do “just in case”, which echoes another element of Japanese behaviour described by Ahmed and Krohn (1992), namely “dependency.” Moreover, other people around signifies “fun”, which enhances the sense of visiting popular spot — other tourists are seen as stimulation and marker to the tourist destination (MacCannell, 1989) by Japanese.

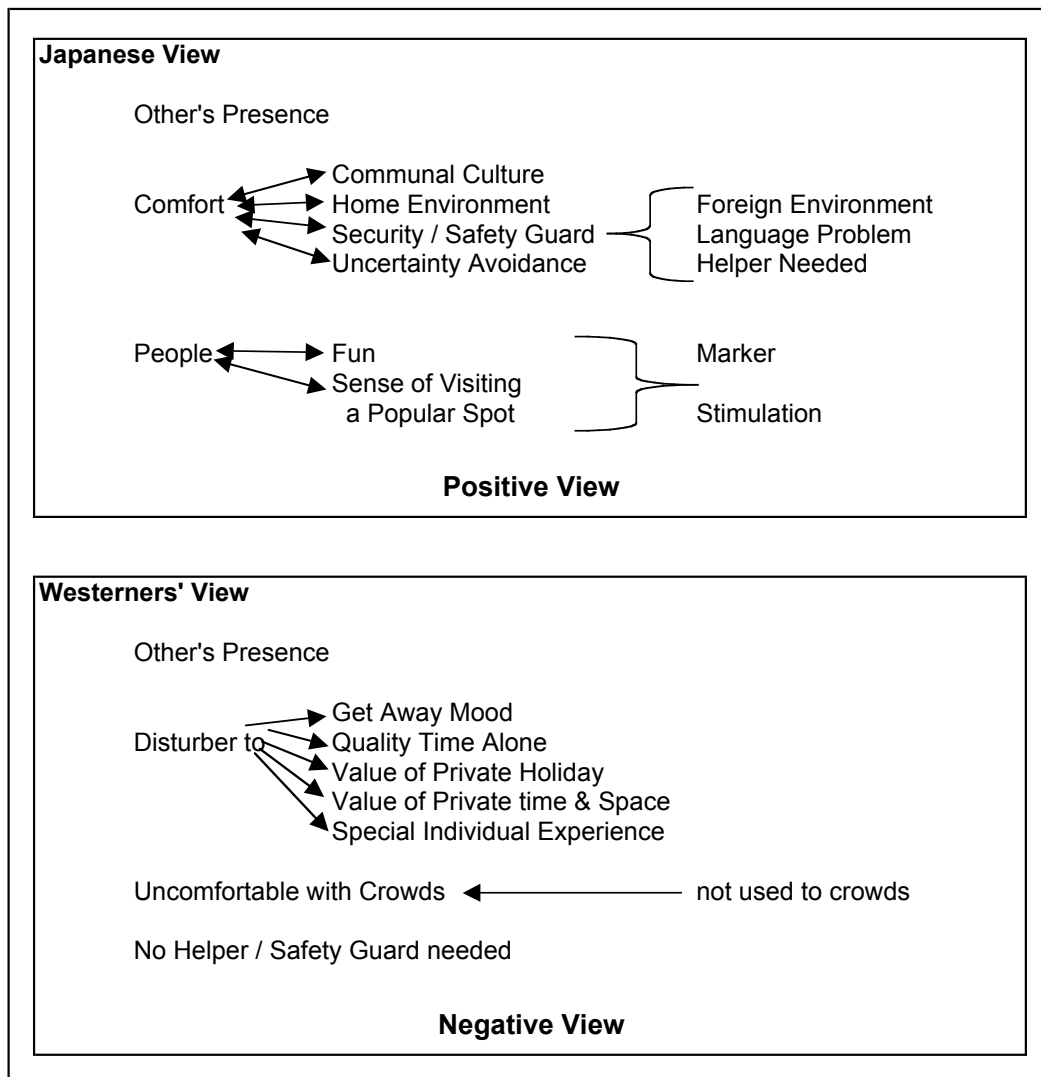


Figure 6.14 What Other Tourists Mean to Japanese and Westerners

On the other hand, other tourists are not seen as positively by Westerners. Other people's presence at the rainforest settings were taken as a negative effect, or rather disturbing to what Westerners are looking for there. Westerners seem to emphasise the notion of get away from it all, quality time alone, the value of the private holiday and private time and space, and value individual and special experiences when they visit the rainforest in Australia, all of which are disturbed by the presence of other people around, especially a crowd. Also, Westerners are

likely to be used to open space at home and a crowded situation bothers them. Since they do not look for helpers or security assistance, having other people around provides a rather negative effect. Many of these listed reasons can be explained with cultural factors: for example, the individualistic orientation that emphasises individual needs and goals, feminine characteristics that focus on quality of life, and low uncertainty avoidance with tolerance for the ambiguity and the novel (Hofstede, 1980).

It is also noticeable in this context that most of recreation encounter research in leisure studies have been conducted in United States and other Western societies, and it now appears that the results and findings of these studies may not be able to be applied with other nationality groups or particularly to people from Asia and Japan.

6.3.2.5 Results -- Research Question 3-C

What kind of factors would probably influence and change the patterns of encounter preferences?

There were quite active discussions in every session regarding the factors that may change the preference patterns. Overall, the most frequently discussed factor was the country of the visit. Every participant in all the sessions showed a common understanding that if the setting of the photos was not Australia, the responses would have been different. Both Western and Japanese groups agreed that Western tourists would prefer seeing Asians if they were visiting an Asian country because domestic tourists are seen as the local people international tourists expect to see. Also both Japanese sessions thought that Japanese would take seeing Asian-looking people in an Asian destination as quite natural and seeing Caucasians rather

strange. “Perhaps for Japanese they feel strange to see too many Westerners in Asian countries. A few is all right because it may bring ‘international tourist spot’ atmosphere (Japanese male)”. Another Japanese male also mentioned the effect of the destination country to the Westerner’s preference in number of people. “Westerners may want to have more people around in unfamiliar environment so that they feel safe and comfortable.” In fact, this factor of destination country is the only factor the focus group participants came up with which may change the Westerner’s and Japanese encounter preference patterns and possibly reverse the findings. The other factors discussed were more individual variations and a combinations of subgroups of people who might respond differently.

For one Australian female, the preference in appearance of people to encounter related to her own experience: “I just realise that the first time I visited Surfer’s Paradise [in Australia], I was really surprised that there was so many Asians there. It was, to me, really like Japan rather than any place in Australia. I don’t know. I think I even felt a bit uncomfortable with the fact that there were hardly... I couldn’t see ... I did not see any locals. I don’t know who lives there. I have no idea what they look like, but... I stayed there for three days, which was enough, I guess. I must admit I felt a bit uncomfortable having so many Asians... well, no it didn’t make any difference whether they were Asians or Scottish or they were French.. It wouldn’t have been mattered. I was just the fact there were the groups of people from the same area in the place I was not expected to see them. So it was not because they were Asian or anything. They could be any nationality, any area.”

The second most frequently discussed factor was age. However, there were different interpretations of this factor among the participants. An Australian male

thought that older people appreciate quietness so they would prefer fewer people than younger people would, while an Australian female suggested that older people were concerned with safety issue and they may feel comfortable with people around them. An opinion of a Japanese male corresponded to the later comment: he mentioned older people want people around and younger ones are all right when alone or with fewer people around because they can be adventurous. An Australian male pointed out that age can be the factor to change the preference not only in the number of people to encounter but also the appearance because “Older people can be more prejudiced actually. Because the way they were brought up with the war -- that would have really affected -- the type of the people they don’t want to see around”, which was agreed by another “Yes, those people would feel different about the people from a younger generation who have grown up in a more diverse culture. So it wouldn’t be an issue for younger people. They wouldn’t even think about it.” Yet another Australian female mentioned age as a factor in a different light: while others were talking about the age of the observers, this participant mentioned the age of the observed tourists that matters. She said she did not mind “seeing people of my age or older but not younger teenagers who tend to make a lot of noises. I don’t feel I fit in. You know, out of place?”

Another frequently mentioned factor was attraction or activity type. There was a common agreement that some activities need “a good crowd” to be active and exciting. “If it is bush walking or safari, you probably want to have some other people with you. You probably need a big group of people to be more active and excited (Australian female)”. Other settings mentioned in the sessions that need relatively more people are theme parks and festivals but an Australian female also mentioned rather broadly “popular tourist spot”, “Different tourist spots. You expect to see crowds at popular tourist spot. We expect to see all different people there.

People from different places, all over the world, perhaps?” Also, differences between city and natural settings were discussed. The common understanding seems to be that man-made built attractions are considered to be for people to visit. In fact, when the photos of the parks were shown to the discussion participants, they all had the same opinion: parks are there for people to visit and it is very strange to see nobody there. Many seem to believe that tourists are more likely to expect a city to be crowded and to accept the crowds. “It would be strange not to see people in a city. Westerners would perceive a city being crowded as quite natural (Japanese female)”. Also, when shown the photo of the reef snorkeling setting, practically everyone in the sessions agreed that activities like this need people around, both for safety reasons and also to enjoy the atmosphere and the excitement.

“Reasons or motive of the visit” was another key influential factors for focus group participants, both Westerners and Japanese, mentioned. One Australian female observed that a person would appreciate solitude regardless of the fact that he/she is Westerner or Japanese if his/her purpose of the visit is to see the beauty of nature. One Japanese male also mentioned that the specific purpose matters: “If one has a specific reason for the visit, people are not of major concern. Perhaps it is preferred that there are not many people around to be bothered.” Closely related to this, one Australian female also mentioned the type of the holiday expected as an influential factor.

The other factors both the Western groups and Japanese groups raised was the size of the travelling group. However, the interpretation was different. An Australian female said “People in a big group probably don’t mind seeing people around. But if you are travelling in a small group, sometimes you want to be alone

with your travelling companion but not with other strangers. If you are travelling alone, though, you may want to see people around more because of safety reasons?”, while a Japanese male answered “If you are travelling alone, you may want to have people around so that you won’t feel too lonely. If you are travelling in a group, you may not want to have other bunch of people around because you feel already safe with your own travelling group”.

Local language familiarity was also mentioned by both Westerner and Japanese groups. When one Australian female mentioned “It is quite frustrating going to the place where you don’t speak the local language yourself. I would look for somebody who speaks English if I go to some place I don’t speak the local language wherever it is.”, another agreed “I need help! I need company!” Also a Japanese male mentioned “Those Japanese who do not mind having nobody may be those who are used to travel and/or have no problem in language.”

Personality was also mentioned by both a Westerner and a Japanese. An Australian female mentioned that regardless of the nationality or any other factors, some people like quiet settings and others like crowded excitement. Also a Japanese male said “If there are any Japanese who prefer absence of people, they may be a few of those who know what they want. They must know why they are travelling and have a strong belief in it. Those Japanese tend to avoid crowds of people because they really want to experience the destination itself.”

Also when shown the photo of rather abandoned wilderness bush, all Western and Japanese sessions mentioned that it is dangerous to go there alone and they need some company. Yet some also thought it is not the place to expect to see a lot of people either.

In the Western focus group sessions, the home environment was mentioned briefly, too. Home environment might affect in a way what kind of people density and mix of different appearances of people one is used to.

There were further factors that some Japanese groups raised as influential in shaping the encounter preferences. Those were: length of the trip, image of the destination, travel experience, and season and time of the visit. Regarding the length of the trip, it was mentioned that as the stay in a foreign country lengthened, even for those who first preferred seeing Caucasians rather than Asians or Japanese they would want to see fellow Japanese. "In Japan, we see Japanese alone. So we expect to see Westerners when we travel abroad (to the Western destination). Yet, when actually surrounded by Westerners alone, it is a relief to see Japanese. If I saw Japanese after seeing so many Westerners, I am sure I would feel happy as if I saw my old friend (Japanese female)." The image of the destination seems to be an important issue as it was mentioned that "If the destination has a positive safety image, perhaps through promotion, the preference for the number of people to encounter by Japanese would change. If there is not a safety concern, Japanese preferences for the number of people would become similar to Westerners (Japanese male)." Travel experience seems a key issue, too. "Those Japanese who travel abroad a lot may feel all right without people around (Japanese male)." While season was mentioned in relation to the image ("winter seems too lonely to be alone"), time of the visit is more to do with safety concern. "At night, the safety concern becomes stronger. Perhaps even for Westerners, they may want to have people around to feel safe at night. Also, for Japanese, they may want to have the same nationality people (Japanese) to feel secure at night rather than total strangers from other countries (Japanese male)."

6.3.2.6 Discussion -- Research Question 3-C

What kind of factors would probably influence and change the patterns of encounter preferences?

Results of the Research Question 3-C, can be presented as a list of the items the focus group participants raised as factors which would influence the encounter preference patterns. These results are summarised in Figure 6.15. It is not implied that these factors do influence the encounter preferences nor that these are the only factors. This figure merely illustrates the items discussed in the discussion groups in internal and external categories.

| Internal Factors | External Factors |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● reason for visit <ul style="list-style-type: none"> specific / non-specific ● size of travelling group ● age ● personality ● home environment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> crowded/open space homogeneous/heterogeneous ● local language familiarity ● expectations ● length and stage of the trip ● travel experience | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> People Observed <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● age Setting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● country ● activity type ● attraction type <ul style="list-style-type: none"> natural/man-made ● season ● time ● image of destination |

Figure 6.15

Possible Influential Factors to Encounter Preferences – from Focus Groups

Comparing these influential factors suggested by focus groups to the existing

literature, the factors listed here have some similarities and differences. Some factors seem to be supported by leisure and psychology literature, while others appear to be rather unique to tourism settings with no directly related supporting evidence in the existing literature (refer Figure 6.16).

“Reason for the visit” was suggested by focus groups as one of the influential factors for encounter preferences. The focus group participants proposed that the tourist may not want to see other tourists around if he/she has a specific reason to visit the place, such as to enjoy the beauty of nature. Some supporting literature is found in leisure studies and behavioural studies. Leisure researchers examined the relationship between recreationists’ encounter reactions and “goal orientation” and found that dissimilarities in the goal orientations bring conflicts (Ruddell & Gramann, 1994; Gibbons & Ruddell, 1995). In addition, one of the 10 hypotheses for the causes of recreation conflict of Jacob and Schreyer (1980) states “the more specific the expectations of what constitute a quality experience, the greater the potential for conflict.” Moreover, one of the factors influencing perception discussed in psychology and behavioural literature is “motives.” It is claimed that motives stimulate individuals and may exert a strong influence on their perceptions (Robbins, Waters-Marsh, Cocioppe & Millett, 1994). Such existing literature seems to support “reason for the visit” or motivation of the trip as an influential factor in the encounter preferences in tourism settings.

Tourists’ travel experience was also suggested as an influence on the encounter preferences by the focus groups. It was suggested that the more experienced tourists, even if they are Japanese, may prefer the absence or a small number of other people around. “Previous experiences” have been examined and some studies found that more experienced recreationists are more sensitive to the

encounter conflicts (Hammit & McDonald, 1983; Schreyer, Lime & Willimans, 1984; Vaske, Donnelly, Wittman & Laidlaw, 1995; Willimas, Schreyer & Knopf, 1990) in the leisure studies, which may have some relevance to the influence of travel experience on the encounter preferences. However, what the focus groups suggested seems to have more to do with diminished safety concerns and fewer language difficulties that the focus group participants particularly associated with the experienced tourists who do not need to have many other tourists around when travelling abroad.

“Expectation” was also mentioned in the focus groups, and behavioural studies support this factor as it is accepted that expectation can distort one’s perceptions (Robbins et al., 1994). The “age” of the observing tourist as an influential factor for encounter preference seems to be partly supported by one of the Jacob and Schreyer’s hypotheses (1980), which mentioned tolerance for lifestyle diversity in relation to prejudice. One of the issues about “age” sensed in the attributions was that some of the people from an older generation can be rather prejudiced because of their experiences of wars. Younger people may be more open and tolerant to other due to less direct experiences and education. Although the issue related to “age” voiced in the focus groups, which actually contradicts previous suggestions is that “older people may prefer quietness without other people” while “older people may be concerned about safety and security issues more than younger people and may prefer to have many other people around.” There is little directly related literature to support these ideas.

| Factors Suggested by Focus Groups | Supporting Evidence from Literature |
|---|--|
| Internal Factors | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reason for visit specific / non-specific | dissimilarities in the goal orientations bring conflicts (Ruddell & Gramann, 1994; Gibbons & Ruddell, 1995); Jacob & Schreyer (1980) proposition; motives stimulate individuals and may exert a strong influence on their perceptions (Robbins, et al. 1994) |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Size of travelling group | no corresponding literature |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Age | Tolerance for Lifestyle Diversity in relation to prejudice (Jacob & Schreyer 1980) |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Personality | no corresponding literature (too broad) |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Home environment crowded / open space homogeneous / heterogeneous | no corresponding literature |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Local language familiarity | no corresponding literature |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Expectation | expectations can distort one's perceptions (Robbins, et al. 1994) |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Length and stage of the trip | adjustment profiles of culture learners and travellers make U curve (Furnham & Bochner 1986) |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Travel experience | more experienced recreationists are more sensitive to the encounter conflicts (Hammit & McDonald, 1983; Schreyer, Lime & Willimas, 1984; Vaske, Donnelly, Wittman & Laidlaw, 1995; Willimas, Schreyer & Knopf, 1990) |
| External Factors | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Age of the people observed | no corresponding literature |
| Setting: | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Country | no corresponding literature |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Activity type / attraction type natural / man-made | Pattern of user satisfaction level and level of use depend on the attraction type (Glasson, Godfrey & Goodey 1995) |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Season | no corresponding literature |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Time | no corresponding literature |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Image of destination | no corresponding literature --> relate to the expectation |

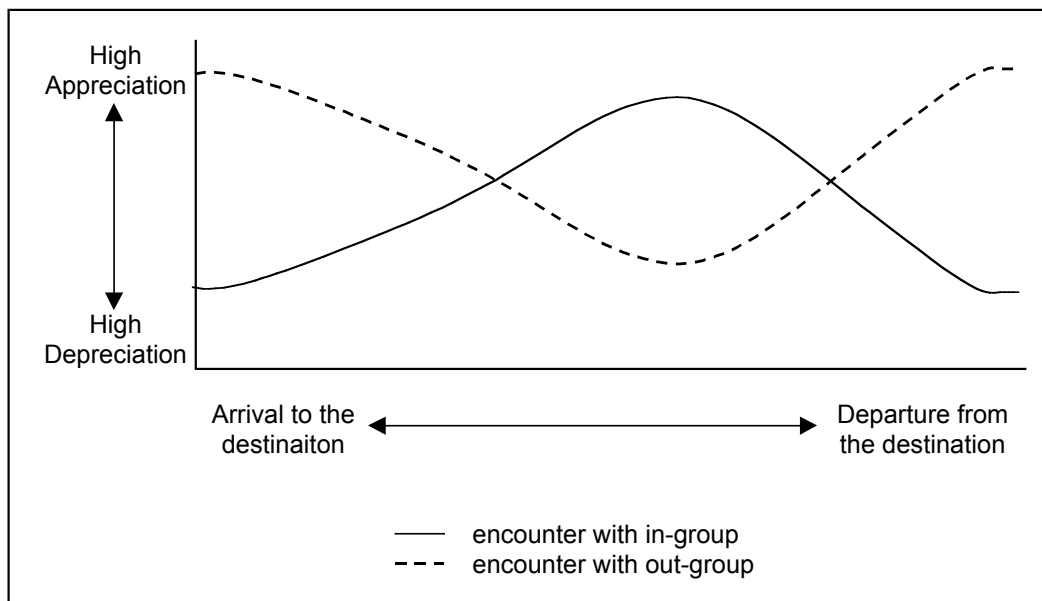
Figure 6.16

Possible Influential Factors to Encounter Preferences Suggested by Focus Groups and Supporting Evidence from Literature

As an external factor, the focus groups suggested that “activity type” and “attraction type” may affect the encounter preferences of a tourist. Leisure studies have also found that pattern of user satisfaction level and level of use depend on the attraction type (Glasson, Godfrey & Goodey 1995). Their study indicated that the certain attraction types requires many people to bring the excitement they need while other attraction types may be appreciated in solitude rather than in a crowd. This should be similar in tourism settings as well as the focus groups predicted that many natural settings would be appreciated without many people around, but some man-made attractions, such as theme parks, need to have good crowds to bring the appropriate atmosphere.

Another interesting point is that one participant mentioned the “length and stage of the trip” as an influential factor to the encounter preferences. A Japanese female who voiced this item claimed that the same tourist could, over the duration of the trip, change his/her attitude to other tourists. According to her example, she would be happy not to see other Japanese tourists when she travelled overseas at the beginning of the trip, but as the time goes by she would miss Japanese and seeing familiar Japanese faces would make her comfortable and pleased. The point here is that tourists may go through different psychological stages during their trips as illustrated in Figure 6.17. While the model shown here is simply based on the hypothesis, yet it is somewhat similar to the principle of what Furnham (1984) and Furnham and Bochner (1986) argued for the adjustment profiles of culture learners and travellers. At the early stage of the trip, tourists are excited to see all the “foreign” things at the travel destination. At this stage, out-group people, locals and other international tourists alike, are appreciated to be around. However, as time goes by, the tourists may become somewhat “foreigned-out” and start looking for something familiar to feel comfortable. That is when, as a Japanese female in

the focus groups mentioned, the tourist would like to see in-groups more than out-groups, familiar strangers more than total strangers. However, then, as the end of the trip approaches, the tourists may start looking for “foreign” experiences knowing that they will go back home to the ordinary very soon. The U curve pattern may be repeated more than once as the length of the trip extended. In fact, the travelogue analysis study, reported in the earlier chapter, found that some encounter episodes expressed a high appreciation toward seeing and contacting the tourists from the same nationality as they started missing home. This tourist psychology and behaviour associated with the stage of the trip requires more attention for a better understanding of tourists.



**Figure 6.17 Hypothesised Model:
Effects of the Stage of the Trip to the Encounter Preferences**

Other factors discussed at focus groups did not find much supporting literature, mainly because most of them were strongly related to the special features of tourism:

relocation. As internal factors, the home environment of the observing tourists and their familiarity with the language and culture of the visiting place would be only applicable in a tourism situation, but can be predicted to have strong influences on their encounter preferences. Among all external factors, all the focus group participants agreed that country of the visit would influence and actually would alter the encounter preferences by nationality altogether if the setting is in an Asian country: Westerners would prefer to see Asians and Japanese might not show distinct preferences associated to the appearance of people to encounter. In other word, tourist's encounter preferences associated with the appearance of other tourists are influenced by his/her residency on one hand and the country of the visit on the other. It is a very interesting point which related to the psychological distance of the travel destination and the expectation to the experiences. It seems that the more exotic the travel destination is to the tourist, the larger his/her expectations would become to the destination to be "different" including the people there or the less tolerance he/she would have for encountering in-groups which represent the "ordinary".

6.3.2.7 Discussion with Attribution Theory

While the study results contradict the social psychology and social interaction literature, it appears for the focus groups that the participants were not repeatedly surprised by the results. For example, no one questioned the results and no one said this could not be right or true or the results were a mistake. Only occasionally did the focus group participants report the results as puzzling or unusual.

There were two occasions when focus group participants were puzzled or confused. The first one was when the Western group trying to understand that the study results reported that Japanese preferred to see Caucasian-looking people

rather than Asian-looking people. In the process of their attempt to figure out or rather understand why Japanese distinguish Caucasian-looking people from Asian-looking people while they did not make such judgment, one female constantly mentioned that she, as well as the other focus group member with her and most of the Western survey participants in Study Four, did not notice the difference in appearance of people in the photo but the density of people were major concern to her when choosing the preferable photo. She concluded that “consensus” was low for this preference in the photo setting, interpretation of which lead to the attribution of cause to “internal” factors. She then related this issue with her recent reading about cultural differences in which different cultures see things differently with a different target to focus on. The final explanation she reached was that Westerners focus more on the density of people while Japanese would focus more on the appearance of people.

The second puzzlement occurred when a Japanese male was unable to imagine why Westerners preferred an absence of people while he himself prefer having people around to feel safe and comfortable. He seemed to have difficulty understanding why the safety issue is not of concern for the Western participants who preferred nobody in the photo. He eventually worked out that the “consensus” was low between his reaction and ones of Westerners, and interpreted that the explanation to the cause of this difference should relate to internal attribution. The specific explanation he arrived at was the cultural difference, individualistic Westerners in particular.

For the Research Question 3-C, focus group participants provided a list of factors that may influence encounter preferences. These internal and external forces of control, summarised in Figure 6.18, were developed through the focus

group participants' interpretation in searching for the attribution of causes as summarised in Figure 6.15. It is interesting to observe that attribution theory can be adapted to an imaginary situation: the question to the focus group participants was not directly asking "why did this happen?" requesting them to explain the causes, but rather asking "what may change the preferences?" requesting them to provide the possible causes of change, that is when the distinctiveness would be high or, consensus would be low or consistency would be low.

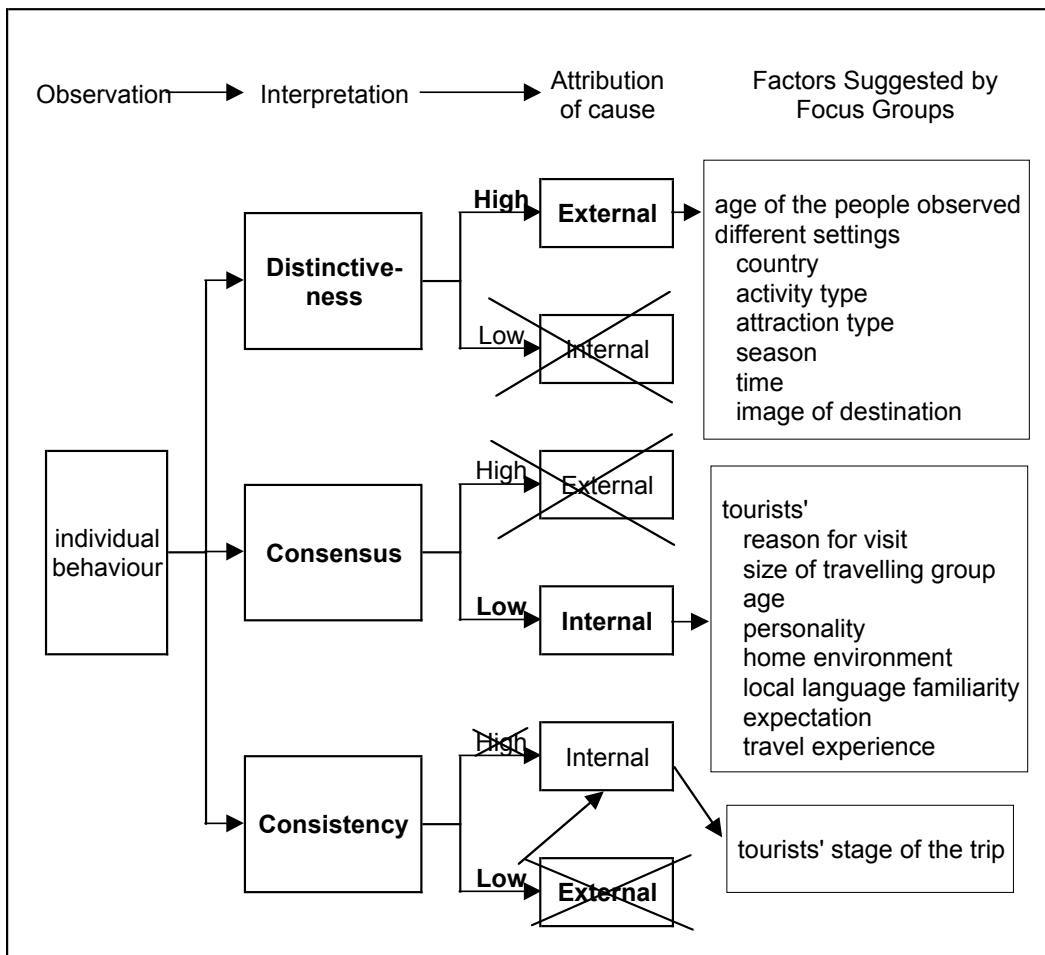


Figure 6.18

Factors Suggested by Focus Groups Examined through the Attribution Theory

Focus group participants related different behaviour over different situations (high distinctiveness), to external factors, including age of the people observed but mostly associated with different encounter settings: different country of the visit, different activity or attraction type, different season or time, and various images of tourist destination of the visit. Participants also identified that characteristics of the observing tourists can influence the behaviour and uniform behaviour may not be expected (low consensus) depending on reason for the visit, size of travelling group, age, personality, home environment, local language familiarity, expectations and travel experience. While all these internal factors can fit in the attribution theory's framework as attributions of cause, one item is rather out of place: "stage of the trip." A Japanese female who voiced this item claimed that the same tourists can be, over the time of the trip, change his/her attitude to other tourist. According to her example, she would be happy not to see other Japanese tourist when she travels overseas at the beginning of the trip but as the time goes by she would miss Japanese and seeing familiar Japanese faces would make her comfortable and pleased. What this Japanese female focus group participant was saying is consistency would be low, or the same responses from the same person over time may not be expected, and are affected by the different stage of her trip. According to the attribution theory, the cause of the force should be an external factor if consistency is low. Yet, the tourist's stage of his/her trip is an internal factor. As already discussed in the previous section, this factor is very unique and interesting one and deserves more detailed examination.