

A Review of the Concepts and Definitions Regarding Hospitality and Tourism in Japan

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1. Introduction

The concepts of hospitality have often been discussed in Japanese society in recent years because the country is aiming to be a tourism oriented nation. TV shows feature hotels and tourists destinations which provide unique services and outstanding hospitality. Since Tokyo was chosen to hold the 2020 Summer Olympics, the whole country has been arguing how to host guests from all over the world. It is a great opportunity to reconsider the meanings of “hospitality” in Japan. In addition, tourism draws national attention because tourism is believed to bring economic benefits to Japan and revitalize the community. In this circumstance, tourism is seen as one of the most important fields to be researched academically.

Both “Hospitality” and “Tourism” are used in a variety of ways in Japan and these respective research fields have been expanding rapidly in recent years. The number of researchers in the tourism field has increased and interdisciplinary research and studies on “tourism perspectives” have been carried out very often. Themes, objectives, and methodologies in hospitality and tourism studies have become diversified in recent years and it is not easy to indicate the mainstream of tourism studies in Japan (Furumoto & Noguchi 2008). As Furumoto and Noguchi (2008) pointed out, it is very important to review previous research results and integrate various ideas in tourism studies. At the same time, it is imperative for Japanese professionals to report valuable research results conducted in Japan in global academic circles and share the information internationally. Therefore this article reviews concepts, characteristics, and definitions of “hospitality” and “tourism” in Japan in comparison with those of western perspectives.

II. Literature Review and Discussion

In this paper, two main words; “hospitality” and “tourism” and their definitions, characteristics, and major conceptualizations in Japanese hospitality and tourism studies will be discussed in comparison with western views. Both scholarly articles and textbooks in this field are reviewed in order to see how these two words are used in academic and educational environments. Most of the work on Japanese hospitality and tourism research and studies are written only in Japanese. Therefore the author translated most of the Japanese concepts into English as carefully as possible in order to convey the subtle nuances of the original texts.

II – 1. Definitions of “tourism” from different perspectives

Tourism has been defined from different perspectives such as from economic and marketing points of view, sociological approaches, and statistical perspectives (Morley, 1990). Many scholars have attempted to define “tourism” by referencing to “tourists,” for example, “what tourists do, what is done for tourists and anything done with tourists” (Morley, 1990, p.4). The most often cited definition of “tourists” is by Ogilvie in 1933 from economic perspectives. “All persons who satisfy two conditions, that they are away from home for any period of less than a year and, second, that while they are away they spend money in the place they visit without earning it there” (Quoted in Morley, 1990, p. 3.) Morley (1990) cited another early definition by an International Association of Scientific Experts in Tourism, and indicated that “tourism is the sum of phenomena and relationships arising from the travel and stay of non-residents, in so far as they do not lead to permanent residence and are not connected with any earning activity.”

Tourism has been also defined by a sociological approach. Cohen defined a tourist as: a voluntary, temporary traveler, travelling in the expectation of pleasure from the novelty and change experienced on a relatively long and non-recurrent trip (Cohen, 1974, p.533). Statistical concerns led to definitions like the following example, which became a formal definition for the World Tourism Organization.

The term “international visitor” describes any person who travels to a country other than that in which he has his usual residence, the main purpose of whose visit is other than the exercise of an activity remunerated from within the country visited and who is staying for a period of one year or less (Quoted in Morley, 1990, p 5).

As seen above, the scholars have tried to define the concepts of tourism by focusing on the “place/space (where a tourist stays),” “purpose (what is the purpose of his/her stay),” “time (how long he/she stays),” and “activities (what kind of activities he/she engages in).” These focuses on tourism definitions are also seen in Japanese tourism studies and are discussed in more detail later in this article.

In contrast to the above discussion, Smith (1988) tried to define tourism from a supply side point of view. Smith considered tourism as an “industry” and stated that, “Tourism is the aggregate of all businesses that directly provide goods or services to facilitate business,

pleasure, and leisure activities away from the home environment (Smith, 1988, p183).” Tourism businesses are classified into two tiers; those businesses that would not exist in the absence of travel and those businesses which would exist at a significantly reduced level (Smith, 1988, p190). Smith’s illustration can be easily adapted and understood when learning about the tourism industry and tourism management. Sasage (2004) also talked about the definition of “tourism” from the destinations’ point of view. Pointing out the importance of community revitalization through tourism businesses, he considered tourism as the aggregate of the concepts of interaction between people who live and work in a particular area and people who visit the area for pleasure.

Moreover tourism concepts have been illustrated by using “a model of tourism” which shows various areas and factors involved in tourism, for example, Morley tried to illustrate the model of tourism by using three dimensions; “Tourist” (the person doing the traveling and staying), “Tour” (destination, organization and facilities that are the experience of the tourist), and “Other” (external parties such as governments, societies, economies and people indirectly involved). There are more views and definitions to be discussed but this paper focuses on Japanese definitions and concepts of hospitality and tourism.

II – 2. Definitions of tourism in Japan

In this section the author describes how concepts and definitions of “tourism” are discussed in Japan. First of all, “tourism” is generally translated into Japanese as “*kanko* (観光),” where “*kan*” means “to see” in general, and “*ko*” means “light” (Japan Tourism Advising Council, 2003). “Tourism” and “*kanko*” are not exactly the same in meaning as a direct translation from one language to another is often difficult. The English word “tourism” has a broader meaning than the word “*kanko*” and therefore it would be inappropriate to use these two words interchangeably. The English word “tourism” is also used in the form of Katakana notation, “*tsurizumu* (ツーリズム),” like “*eko tsurizumu* (eco tourism),” and “*gurin tsurizumu* (green tourism.)” Satake (2010) suggests we should use the Katakana version of tourism not “*kanko*” because it does not cover all aspects of tourism. In this way, the Katakana word “*Tsurizumu*” can show a clearer meaning which matches the meaning of the English word. As explained above, “tourism” can have three forms in Japan: “*Kanko* (観光),” “*tsurizumu* (ツーリズム)” and the English form “tourism.” The concepts of these three forms are not clearly defined and various usages were found. Textbooks, dictionaries and other tourism related articles illustrate tourism from three main ways.

First, the concepts of “tourism” and “*kanko*” are introduced by etymological aspects. The English word “tourism” has its origin in the Latin word, “*tornus*” which includes “tourism,” “tourism phenomena” and “tourism activities” (Okamoto, 2009). On the other hand, the word “*Kanko*” is believed to have originated from a Chinese phrase in “*I Ching* (易經)” (Mizoo, 2009, Imai, Ooba, & Sasage, 2011, Okamoto, 2009). This Chinese phrase 觀國之光。利用賓于王。 has several translations when translating it from Chinese to Japanese. In general, it is translated as “to see the light of the country,” or “it is good to show our country’s beautiful scenery,

novelty and unique goods to visitors.” (Ohashi, 2010, Okamoto, 2009, Mizoo, 2009, and Imai et al., 2011) Many scholars have advocated this word origin but there are some criticisms about this interpretation. Ueda (2010) insists that the word “*kanko*” comes from a different Chinese expression. In a regular dictionary, Daijisen (Matsumura, 2001), “*kanko*” is simply defined as “to see scenery, historical places, and customs of other countries or regions.” “*Kanoko*” does not usually include business travel.

Second, tourism is defined based on governmental policies in Japan. *Kanko Kihon Hou*, the Tourism Basic Act, was established in 1963 (renamed in 2007 as the Tourism Nation Promotion Act). This law requires the government to present a report related to the tourism situation and its policies to the Diet every year. Therefore a White Paper on Tourism has been published every year since 1964 (Okamoto, 2009). However, neither the Tourism Basic Act nor the Tourism Nation Promotion Act includes definitions of “Tourism.” Instead, an official definition of “tourism” is only seen in a report from the Japan Tourism Policy Council. For many years, the definition based on the response by the Tourism Policy Council in 1969 was used and cited among scholars. The latest official definition can be seen in the report “General Direction In Which Japan’s Future Tourism Policy Should Be Set” submitted by the Tourism Policy Council to the Minister of Transport in 1995. The definition is shown below.

In this proposal, tourism should be defined as “various activities to be conducted by individuals in their leisure time outside the sphere of their daily lives for the purpose of feeling, learning and enjoying” (Cited in Kanko Gyosei Kenkyukai, 1995, p. 173).

It is said that “tourism” was defined in this report from three aspects; time, space, and purpose (Okamoto, 2009). This definition seems rather broad and abstract so that the following seven basic concepts proposed by the Council will help us understand tourism in Japan. As seen below, tourism is considered as the center of the nation’s economic and social development in the 21st century.

1. Everybody has the right to travel.
2. Japan should strive to become a nation based on leisure tourism activities, not just a nation based on manufacturing.
3. The tourism industry is a key industry which can lead the Japanese economy in the 21st century and create new employment opportunities.
4. Large-scale reform should be carried out in the domestic travel system.
5. Tourism enables people to discover and create culture and develops areas.
6. International tourism will promote mutual understanding between Japan and the rest of the world and correct Japan’s trade imbalance.
7. Tourism should be the good protector of a culture heritage, natural environment and local traditions.

(Cited in Kanko Gyosei Kenkyukai, 1995, pp.173-179)

It is very interesting to see how Japanese Tourism Policy Council encourages people to

travel by using the phrase “Everybody has the right to travel” and tourism is considered to change people’s lives by seeing cultural and economic richness that tourism may bring. These seven concepts can be fundamental principles for Japanese tourism even though they were proposed in 1995. However, as the Japan Tourism Advisory Council indicated the needs to reform the concept of “tourism,” the definition of “tourism” should be examined to fit the current tourism conditions and prospective social changes in the 21 century, and it should be clearly stated in law.

Finally, international definitions are also used in Japan. The tourism definition suggested in UNWTO is often cited in books, textbooks and dictionaries (Okamoto, 2009, Yamashita, 2011). According to the Tourism Satellite Account: Recommended Methodological Framework 2000 (TSA:RMF2000) ;

“Tourism is defined as the activities of persons traveling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes not related to the exercise of an activity remunerated from within the place visited” (Cited in Satake, 2010, p.92) .

The latest version of the definition of tourism was reported by TSA in 2008.

“ Tourism is more limited than travel, as it refers to specific types of trips: Those that take a traveler outside his/her usual environment for less than a year and for a main purpose other than to be employed by a resident entity in the place visited. Individuals when taking such trips are called visitors” (Cited in Satake, 2010, p.92) .

Several important concepts related to tourism have been introduced into Japan through translation of works by Marriott, Bormann and other foreign scholars. Mizoo (2009) summarized their concepts of tourism and illustrated tourism from two different perspectives. “Tourism, in a broad sense, covers all travel except commuting to school and work.” In the narrower sense, tourism consists of three elements: (1) temporary movement outside of his/her home and workplace, (2) activities at the destination, and (3) the destination which has facilities and business sectors to satisfy travelers’ needs. Ohashi (2010) sees that Japanese definitions of tourism focus more on “seeing” customs, sights, and historical places rather than “staying” at the destination. On the other hand, the western views on tourism emphasize the aspect of “staying” as people visiting the destination within 24 hours are often categorized as daily visitors not tourists.

All three words: Tourism, *Kanko* (観光), and *Tsurizumu* (ツーリズム) will be widely used in Japanese society, especially in business settings from now on. These meanings have remained confused in spite of scholars’ attempts to clarifying their meanings. However, researchers in Japanese tourism studies should clearly define the concept of tourism when they conduct research. The words; Tourism, *Kanko*, and *Tsurizumu* should be used with distinctive meanings consistently (Satake, 2010).

II – 3. Defining hospitality

In this section, definitions of “hospitality” will be explored. The word “hospitality” originates from the Latin word, “*hospes*,” meaning assurance of safety for a guest. In many discussions on a suitable definition for hospitality, an equal relationship between the host and the guest was included as their basic concept. A simple definition of “hospitality” is found in the Dictionary of Leisure, Travel, and Tourism (Russell, 2006) and it defined tourism as “friendly and welcoming treatment given to guests.” King (1995) reviewed the literature and indicated that hospitality in general has four characteristics.

- (1) Hospitality is a relationship between individuals, who take the roles of host and guest.
- (2) This relationship may be commercial or private (social).
- (3) The keys to successful hospitality in both the commercial and private spheres include having knowledge of what would invoke great pleasure in the guest, and delivering it flawlessly and generously.
- (4) Hospitality is a process that includes arrival, which involves greeting and making the guest feel welcome, providing comfort and the fulfillment of the guest’s wishes, and departure which includes thanking and invitation to return (King, 1995, pp. 228-229).

There are challenging views regarding the “host-guest” relationship as Arramberri suggested using a “service provider-consumer” relationship for commercial tourism, however many scholars consider the “host-guest” relationship as the center of the hospitality encounter. O’Gorman introduced a different aspect of hospitality by indicating Telfer’s hospitality motivation. According to Telfer, there is distinction to be made between hospitality for pleasure and hospitality that is born out of a sense of duty (O’Gorman, 2007, p191). Telfer added that “people engage in a hospitable act from one or more of these motives or from mixed motives” (Quoted in O’Gorman, 2007, p191). This concept is not described in King’s summary of hospitality but the motivation behind hospitality may play a significant role when understanding hospitable behaviors. Derrida differentiated between the “law of hospitality (unconditional hospitality)” and “laws of hospitality (conditional hospitality).” He considered that unconditional hospitality is impossible and hospitality is always conditional (Cited in O’Gorman, 2007, p191). Hospitality is often misunderstood as a generous, honorable, and noble behavior of human beings, but hospitality is always conditional as Derrida pointed out. This is a prerequisite of hospitality which people do not usually notice.

Hospitality is often discussed based on organizational practices and from a commercial point of view (Lynch, Molz, McIntosh, Lugosi, & Lashley, 2011). However, there are other active debates regarding hospitality, for instance, Brotherton and Wood’s approach focuses on the two themes; hospitality as a means of social control; and hospitality as a form of social and economic exchange (Lynch et al., 2011). Similarly, Derrida indicated the two levels of hospitality, which led to political issues of immigrant policy. O’Gorman summarized the work of Jacques Derrida whose writings have greatly influenced other scholars in hospitality studies.

Derrida defines hospitality as inviting and welcoming the “stranger.” This takes place on two levels: the personal level where the stranger is welcomed into the home; and at the level of individual countries (O’Gorman, 2007, p191).

Hospitality can be discussed from different perspectives, analyzed deeply and debated philosophically, but it should be clearly and simply defined for educational settings. In this respect, King’s four characteristics of hospitality are useful for educators and students to understand its concepts.

II – 4. Hospitality and *Motenashi* in Japan

The direct translation of “hospitality” into Japanese would be “*Motenasi*” or “*Omotenasi no Kokoro*,” which is related to the guest’s satisfaction as well as the host’s contentment by caring for the guest (Kagawa, 2007). Tokyo Olympic bid ambassador Christel Takigawa used the word “*omotenashi*” in her speech to the IOC in August. She repeated this Japanese word to show Japanese value and the word suddenly attracted significant attention from the entire society in Japan. According to her speech, *omotenashi* means a spirit of selfless hospitality and she stated that... one that dates back to our ancestors... yet is ingrained in Japan’s ultra-modern culture. “*Omotenashi*” explains why Japanese people take care of each other... and our guests... so well (The Mainichi, 2013). However, the word “hospitality” is not clearly understood in Japan. Ozawa (1999) illustrated that there are three usages found regarding the word “hospitality.” They are “Hospitality,” “Hospitality Mind,” and “Hospitality Industry.” He stated that “Hospitality” is to provide goods and acts which satisfy the guest’s feeling in a mutual relationship. “Hospitality Mind” is the actual state of the mind when people engage in hospitable acts. Finally the term “Hospitality Industry” is often used in Western countries, but not in Japan. He insisted that the clear distinctions between these three meanings are needed.

Hattori (2008) defines hospitality from a new perspective which applies not only to business settings but also to our daily lives in our relationships with others. Hattori (2008) defines “hospitality” in his book, *Introduction to Hospitalityology*, as follows.

Definition of Hospitality in the narrow sense:

The humanity to establish interrelationship appropriate to become equal with Reciprocal Satisfaction (Hattori, 2008, p.73).

Definition of broad Meaning of Hospitality:

On the assumption of the dignity of life, social morality which consists of the principle of reciprocity and Pluralistic Intercreation beyond the limit of each community or country (Hattori, 2006, p.117).

Maeda (2007) discussed the basic concepts of hospitality by indicating five characteristics; (1) Hospitality does not mean specific or certain behaviors. (2) Hospitality is derived voluntarily. (3) Hospitality is non-profitable. (4) Providers of hospitality are ordinary people, not professionals or skilled workers. (5) Hospitality (welcoming others with pleasure) is

a basic principle for human beings. Maeda illustrated that the word hospitality has been used as a business term as a result of “a service-efficiency oriented society.” The word was also introduced with the hope of raising people’s awareness of “emotional, spiritual and people-oriented service” in business. According to Maeda (2007), the concept of “service to customers” was first introduced by Tetsuzou Inumaru who experienced western style services in the early 1900s. Later he proposed a Japanese style hotel service called “Teikoku Hosteru Jyussoku (The Ten Principles of the Imperial Hotel Tokyo) which includes “courtesy/manner,” “modesty,” and “appreciation.” But he didn’t use the word hospitality or related words. Maeda insists that hospitality should be used as a basic non-profitable behavior of human beings and it should be clearly distinguished from any activities in business settings which are conducted for profits. He claimed that any hospitable behaviors in business should be described as “service.”

Takeuchi (2007) has a different attitude towards the use of the word “hospitality” in business settings and concluded that an “emotional service” and an “extension of hospitality” are derived from totally different spirits. “Emotional service” is a professional attitude, while “extension of hospitality” means an altruistic behavior. Takeuchi tried to differentiate between the concepts of “service” and “hospitality,” though these two concepts are misused. Takeuchi explained that this confusion arises because of the guest’s inability to distinguish between the emotional service presented by the host on duty as a business activity and hospitality extended as an interpersonal interaction. As Takeuchi pointed out, hospitality is such an abstract concept that a certain hospitable act can be interpreted as required service or as an extension of hospitality. Thus, hospitality should be discussed from receiver’s perspectives, such as, the guest’s and customer’s points of view.

Yamajo (2008) elucidated that hospitality includes both “hospitality spirits” and “hospitable behaviors.” He described similarities and differences between “service” and “hospitality.” Yamajo sees “service” as providing quality and efficient service which can be simplified, standardized, and specialized. Service can be written down in a manual for staff to follow. On the other hand, “hospitality” is to pay careful attention to guest’s individual needs which are not written in manuals. Hospitality emphasizes “mutual relationship between staff and guests,” and the staff create and share the guest’s delight. Yamajo also discusses the Japanese cultural aspects of “*motenashi*,” and argues that “*motenashi*” consists of three important elements; “smiling,” “greeting,” and “bowing.” In general, the concepts of “*motenashi*” and “hospitality” are associated with the appropriate manners of hosts. Hotels and service related companies in Japan provide so-called “hospitality” training which focuses on employees’ learning the appropriate manners, polite greetings and anticipation of the guest’s needs. It seems very important in Japanese culture to know how to bow, how to smile, how to greet guests, and how to use honorific expressions. However, is this concept important to people in other countries? Should polite behaviors and appropriate greetings be considered as the main parts of hospitable acts when meeting guests from other countries? Do people from different cultures place more value on something else when extending cordial hospitality? These

questions have not yet been answered clearly in literature. Therefore it is significant to learn how people in other countries define hospitality and how they think about “hospitality” in Japan.

The concept of hospitality has been discussed from a variety of perspectives, but it is not easy to come to a consensus on this issue. There should be a clear distinction between hospitality and service as Maeda insists. The word hospitality has already been used in business settings widely and will be used in the future. It is impossible to separate basic concepts of hospitality from the general usage of hospitality in business settings. In this case, hospitality should be considered as the hospitable behaviors of staff to meet the needs of guests. Unlike the concept of service, hospitality cannot be standardized nor written as simplified procedures which provide a standard service for guests.

III. Conclusion

This article has reviewed the concepts and definitions regarding “hospitality” and “tourism.” As languages change based on social norms and people’s values, the words “hospitality” and “tourism” will be used differently; that is, in the ways people like to use them. When educating students who are prospective workers in this field, clearer and more practical concepts of hospitality and tourism are necessary. What do we have to know about hospitality? What should educators teach regarding hospitality and tourism concepts? These questions should be answered soon. In addition, these concepts and words of hospitality and tourism are also understood and used from Japanese cultural perspectives in Japan. Therefore, Japan should have clear definitions of these words, as well as, an understanding of how people in other countries use these words. Better understanding of what these words really mean to people in different cultures will help Japan to become a more accessible tourism destination for foreign visitors. Lastly, scholars should clarify the definitions of these words when conducting their research. Consequently, it will help the Japanese hospitality and tourism industries to be more adaptive and efficient, which will lead to the growth of tourism and the revitalization of the Japanese economy.

IV. Limitations of Further Study

The conceptualizations and definitions of the words “hospitality,” and “tourism” have been discussed in the field of the hospitality and tourism studies in this paper. However these concepts need to be reviewed from different perspectives which show the current condition of a changing society. The relationship of tourism and hospitality with diverse issues, such as, gender, ICT, globalization etc., should continue to be studied in the future.

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[Abstract]

A Review of the Concepts and Definitions Regarding Hospitality and Tourism in Japan

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As Japan's economy continues to slow, it is believed in Japan that the hospitality and tourism industries will improve the current economic condition of Japan and revitalize local cities and towns. The government and industries have made substantial efforts to make Japan a more attractive travel destination for international tourists. However, this article presents the argument that hospitality and tourism must be studied more holistically with attention to both current theoretical and academic viewpoints. In this paper, two main words - "hospitality" and "tourism" -and their definitions, characteristics, and major conceptualizations in Japanese hospitality and tourism studies are discussed in comparison with western views. Although the concepts of hospitality and tourism have been discussed from a variety of perspectives, it is not easy to come to a consensus on this issue. Thus, Japanese academics should clarify definitions of these words when conducting academic research.