Does pre-visit knowledge of a country impact the destination experience of that country? When a traveler visits a destination with images of the country in which this place is located, those images could distort his/her experience and the perceived images gained from the experience. The purpose of this study is to investigate how a destination image influences impressions perceived during actual travel experiences in the context of Japan (country), Hokkaido (area), and Sapporo (destination). Two hundred twenty one participants took part in the survey. After answering the purpose of his/her trip, they responded to 75 questions concerning their first impressions of Japan, Hokkaido, and Sapporo. They went on to answer his/her personal information. Results indicated three factors for country, area, and destination: Physical Impression as hygiene factors, Place Attractiveness as motivations, Spatial Impression as impressions of cityscapes. “Backwash effects” were recognized in the cases of Place Attractiveness and Spatial Impression. In these cases the country image had an impact on the area image and the destination image. The results also implied that the previous knowledge gained from the internet, mass media, and/or guidebooks is crucial in forming the pre-visit image of a destination.

**Keywords:** nation branding, destination image, nation brands, country image

**INTRODUCTION**

Tourists’ willingness to travel to a destination relies, at least in part, on the image and expectations they have of the destination (Gallarza, Saura, & García, 2001). This hypothesis is also the focus of the country-of-origin literature which studies the effects of country image on product purchase and consumption (e.g., Han, 1989). However, unlike imported products that can be used and tested at home, a destination needs to be experienced at its original site and within its own context (Gnoth, 2002; 2007). In other
words, tourists need to physically travel there. The question therefore is whether Han’s (1989) concept of a halo-effect holds true for destinations: does prior, or vicariously obtained knowledge of a country impact the destination experience of that country, and if so, how, and how could that be measured conveniently? This effect of a country’s summary impression on individual destinations is commonly thought to also apply in the context of tourism. However, more recent research indicates a certain disconnect between, for example, the level of a country’s economic development, or its political stability including its safety, and its attractiveness as a tourist destination (e.g., Martinez & Alvarez, 2010; Nadeu et al. 2008; Stepchenkova & Morrison, 2008). To put it another way, despite the negative image a country might have with regards to some domains, it does not necessarily reflect on its attractiveness for tourists.

As both increasing affluence and globalization impact the need for travel (Frías, Rodríguez, & Castañeda, 2008), the notion of image gains importance. It is thought that whether or not a traveler decides on visiting a destination depends upon the expectations that are embedded in the image of that particular destination (Gallarza, Saura, & García, 2001). An image is the “construction of a mental representation of a destination on the basis of information cues delivered by the image formation agents and selected by a person” (Tasci & Gartner, 2007:4140). Thus, decisions of what a tourist might plan to do at a destination also depend upon the destination image (Kotler & Gertner, 2002; Nadeau, Heslop, O’Reilly, & Luk, 2008). Consequently, images are intentionally formed representations reflecting the tourist’s motivations and experiences whether they are developed physically through real travel, or virtually via word-of-mouth, or information search on the internet.

There are a wide variety of motivations for travelling. These could include escaping the surroundings of our daily lives, gaining a new perspective on life, or just plain curiosity (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Kozak, 2002; McCartney, Butler, & Bennett, 2008; Yoon & Uysal, 2005). However, to specifically investigate a destination image and how this image may change before and after a visit to the destination may further help us understand motivations for travel and causes for discrepancies in expectations and reality (Gallarza, Gil, & Cadelón, 2001). Learning how a destination is perceived, may reveal what destinations might do to address its weaknesses, to leverage its strengths, and to position itself more advantageously. The purpose of the present study is to investigate how a destination image influences impressions perceived during actual travel experiences in the context of Japan (country), Hokkaido (area), and Sapporo (destination).

The Distinctive status of Hokkaido and Sapporo in Japan

Considering their geography, climate, history, and population, Hokkaido and Sapporo have a distinctive status in Japan. Geographically, the Japanese archipelago stretches from north to south; the island of Hokkaido is situated in northernmost Japan. In terms of climate, while most of Japan is in the temperate zone, Hokkaido is in the sub-arctic zone. This disparity in climate zones results in a difference in vegetation which, in turn, results in changes of landscapes. The ratio of agricultural production in the gross regional product of Hokkaido is larger than the corresponding ratio for Japan as a whole (Japanese Government, Cabinet Office, 2005).

Today, the overwhelming majority of Hokkaido’s people are ethnic Japanese, however, at the beginning of the 1700s, there were very few ethnic Japanese there and the population was primarily Ainu (Kuwabara & Kawakami, 2008). In the late 1700s, as the Russian government embarked on a policy of southern expansion, the
Japanese government began to feel threatened by Russian encroachment on Hokkaido, and let some government officials create a detailed map of Hokkaido. By the late 1800s, and seeing that the Russians had still not expanded into Hokkaido, the Japanese government decided to develop the area and encouraged ethnic Japanese from Honshu to move to Hokkaido and to settle there. As of 2008, the population of Hokkaido was 5.8 million, and the population density 71.8 persons/km$^2$ (Hokkaido Government Overall Policy Department, 2009), which is much lower than the average population density in Japan (342.7 persons/km$^2$). The typical landscape of Hokkaido might be thought of as rural, although it includes both urban and rural locales. Figure 1 (a) shows a typical example of landscape in rural Hokkaido.

There are few traditional Japanese buildings in Hokkaido, as it was only settled by ethnic Japanese about one hundred and fifty years ago. In cases where these buildings can be found, they are constructed to adapt to the colder climates, so that they sometimes look different from traditional Japanese buildings and houses in Honshu. Many towns in Hokkaido, among which Sapporo is a good example, have grid layouts typical of modern town planning. Streets in Hokkaido towns are usually wide and broad. Along the streets, there are rows of residences, or shops side by side. These sights sometimes look more like a North American city rather than a Japanese one.

Sapporo is the capital city of Hokkaido, and has the outward appearance of a large modern city. As mentioned above, Sapporo and other cities in the area have chessboard layouts. Figure 1(b) provides an example of cityscapes in Sapporo. The population of Sapporo was 1.88 million in 2006, and the population density is 1540 person/km$^2$ (Hokkaido Government Overall Policy Department, 2009). Approximately forty percent of the entire population of Hokkaido is concentrated in the greater Sapporo area. The composition of the Sapporo economy differs from other areas in Hokkaido, in that industry rather than agriculture plays a larger role, which would be similar to most large cities in Honshu.
The brand images of Hokkaido and Sapporo for overseas travelers

Hokkaido is well known in Asia, and it is especially famous in East Asia among residents of China and South Korea. The distinctive status of Hokkaido as an area featuring North American style cities and areas of natural beauty as mentioned above are well known, partly because TV dramas and movies, which are set in Hokkaido, have been broadcast or released throughout East Asia (Hokkaido Government Economic Development, 2010). In fact, some of the motivation for travel to Hokkaido cited by tourists from East Asia has been that they desired to visit the locations of these TV dramas or movies (Hokkaido Government Economic Development, 2010).

Sapporo is known throughout Asia as the home of a famous snow festival that is held every winter. During the festival, a park in the center of Sapporo becomes filled with hundreds of huge snow statues. This results in a magnificent view in which the numerous statues are illuminated by a number of tiny lights. Such a festival would be uncommon in other areas of Japan, so that this represents one of the most attractive events in Hokkaido, even for Japanese tourists. Sapporo is also known as the home to the 1972 Winter Olympic Games, the first held in Asia. Sports facilities built for the 1972 Olympics, such as the Mt. Okura jump hill, are popular sightseeing spots in Sapporo.

In contrast to the recognition in Asia, Hokkaido and Sapporo are not viewed as individually popular sightseeing spots for tourists from America and Europe. For potential travelers from these places, Hokkaido and Sapporo may simply be parts of Japan. The image of Hokkaido and that of Sapporo, which they had in their mind before their visit, may therefore not seem to differ from their image of Japan as a whole.

For a traveler from Asia, Japan is geographically closer than it is for a traveler from America or Europe. This might not seem to make a difference as, nowadays, anyone has an equal opportunity to search Web pages for travel information, as long as one can connect to the internet. Nevertheless, geographical remoteness can lead to psychological remoteness, which would seem to decrease eventual opportunities for travel. If so, then geographical remoteness may affect a traveler’s image of Hokkaido and Sapporo and therefore his/her motivation to travel to Hokkaido and Sapporo.

A traveler from Asia would likely search out detailed information not only for Japan, but also for Hokkaido and Sapporo. Thus, before this traveler comes to Sapporo, he/she would have a rather clear and concrete image of the city and the area. By contrast, a traveler from America or Europe would likely surmise that Hokkaido and Sapporo are largely similar to other areas in Japan, and only search for information concerning Japan in general. This person would visit Hokkaido and Sapporo expecting typical images of Japan, which are those commonly seen in Honshu, such as images of Buddhist temples and Shinto shrines in Kyoto, of busy cityscapes in Tokyo or Osaka, or, of countryside landscapes featuring rice fields stretching out as far as the eye can see.

An overseas traveler, especially a person from Asia, who is familiar with Hokkaido and Sapporo, will perceive both Hokkaido and Sapporo as different from the rest of Japan. When this traveler visits Hokkaido and Sapporo, he/she will likely reinforce the images held prior to visiting these locales. In contrast, an overseas traveler from America or Europe will hold only traditional or typical images of Japan, when he/she visits Hokkaido and Sapporo. Consequently,
the person may feel difficulty integrating those images into the impressions he/she perceives in Hokkaido and Sapporo.

Japanese cities are spatially limited. A tremendous number of residences, commercial facilities, and sometimes even industrial plants coexist in narrow spaces, and numerous people live among these buildings. Unlike most Japanese cities, however, Sapporo is spacious and, moreover, Hokkaido has more land area than all of Honshu. As a result the physical space between people is also greater. If an overseas traveler visits Sapporo and keeps in mind the image of a (stereo)typical Japanese city, he/she may get the impression that people in Hokkaido and Sapporo are not so lively or are rather distant. There may thus be a “backwash effect” whereby previous impressions impact how new experiences are perceived.

When a traveler visits a destination with only stereotypical images of the country in which this place is located, those images could distort his/her experience and the perceived images gained from the experience. The purpose of the present study is to confirm the backwash effect in the case of travel to Hokkaido and Sapporo, and to examine what the effects are and how they function by comparing groups of travelers in terms of travel motivation, frequency of visits to Japan, country of origin, gender, and age.

**METHOD**

**Participants**

Two hundred twenty one participants took part in the survey. All of them lived in foreign countries (outside Japan). They were all participants at the 41st Association for Computational Linguistics held at Sapporo from July 7th to July 12th, 2003.

**Questionnaire**

The questionnaire was printed on A4-paper and was two pages long (see Appendix). The questionnaire began with two questions on the first page asking participants about travel motivations, that is, whether or not the participants of the conference wanted to do sightseeing, in addition to participating at the conference itself.

After these questions, the other 25 questions asked about first impressions were put at the leftmost column in the repertory grid, which comprised 25 lines. On the right of these they were followed by another three “location” columns. At the top of the first of the three location columns was the phrase asking for first impressions of Japan: “My first impression of JAPAN in general was that...”. At the top of the second and the third were the phrase asking for the first impressions of Hokkaido: “In comparison, my first impression of HOKKAIDO was that...” and the one asking for the first impression for Sapporo: “In particular, my first impression of SAPPORO was that...”, respectively. By linking the beginning of each question in the columns at the top-left with the information in the right hand column, complete sentences could be constituted. For example, “My first impression of JAPAN in general was that People are active” which made up a complete sentence in the case of queries about first impressions of Japan. Under the location headings there was a grid containing the numbers 1 to 7 in each cell. Participants would rank their agreement with each statement with 1 indicating strong disagreement to 7 indicating strong agreement. Seventy-five cells corresponding to 75 questions in total were prepared for rating.

The 25 statements placed in the leftmost column were created as follows. First we searched
through more than 10 Japanese books on sightseeing and destination development, and we collected phrases expressing attributes about travel behavior. Then we grouped phrases that expressed a similar meaning and chose the most common phrase in each group. Consequently, 50 phrases were narrowed down and translated from Japanese into English. Based on these 50 phrases, we then constructed 50 statements that could describe the image for a destination or its area. Finally, we selected 25 statements among them. The order of the statements that participants were to respond to was quasi-randomized on the survey forms in order to avoid bias caused by order; therefore seven versions of the questionnaire in which the questions themselves were the same but in different order were prepared.

At the bottom of the second page, there were questions concerning the participants’ personal information, i.e., gender, age, country of origin, place of current residence, and past travel experience. The questions about their travel experiences consisted of items asking for the frequency of visits to Japan, Hokkaido, and Sapporo, respectively.

Procedure

The survey was conducted by reading the questionnaire aloud to individual participants. The experimenters walked around the conference venue, and asked conference attendees to answer the questionnaire. Almost all the persons who were asked agreed to answer the questionnaire. Each time a question sentence in the questionnaire was read aloud by an experimenter, the participants were asked to respond to it.

To begin with, participants were asked if they visited for the purpose of solely attending the conference and not for sightseeing. Participants were asked to respond either yes or no to this question. Then they were asked if they were interested in getting to know the city of Sapporo and requested to answer with a yes or no.

Participants went on to respond to the other 75 questions concerning their first impressions of Japan, Hokkaido, and Sapporo, respectively. They were asked to rate their agreement on a rating scale of 1 to 7, considering how each statement was applicable to their impression of Japan, Hokkaido, and Sapporo. They were told that the numbers meant 1: “strongly disagree”, 2: “disagree”, 3: “slightly disagree”, 4: “neutral”, 5: “slightly agree”, 6: “agree”, and 7: “strongly agree”, respectively.

Finally, the participants were asked questions concerning personal information (gender, age, country of origin, etc.), as well as three questions about frequency of travel to Japan, Hokkaido, and Sapporo.

RESULTS

Basic statistics

Of all the 221 participants, 154 people were male, 62 were female, and 5 were unknown. By age groups, 73 people were in their 20’s, 84 were in their 30’s, 39 were in their 40’s, 10 were in their 50’s, 4 were in their 60’s, and 11 were unknown. Further looking at the participants demographically, 72 people came from Europe, 68 from America, 65 from Asia, 5 from Oceania, 1 from Africa (10 unknown), in ascending order. The most frequent country they came from was U.S. (60 people), after that was U.K. (22 people), followed by China (20 people), Korea (20 people), Germany (18 people), Taiwan (10 people). Fewer than 10 participants came from other countries.

One hundred and twenty four participants (56.1%) were visitors who came to Japan for the first time. Thirty-two participants had come for the second time and 19 participants for the third time. The rest of the participants had been to Japan more than three times. Of all the
participants, 195 (88.2%) had come to Hokkaido and Sapporo for the first time while the others had previously visited. In the same way, 198 people (89.6%) had visited Sapporo for the first time while the rest of the participants had previously visited.

The number of visits to Japan may reflect how much prior knowledge each participant had concerning Japan, Hokkaido, and Sapporo before visiting. Table 1 shows the cross-tables of visits to Japan (first time or previously visited), travel motivation (only for attending the conference or plus sightseeing), the participants’ region of residence (America, Europe, or Asia), the participants’ gender, and the participants’ general age. A chi-square test indicates no difference among the four cells of visiting frequency by travel motivation ($\chi^2(1) = 2.52, p > .11$), while there are significant differences among the six cells of visiting frequency by regions, the four cells of visiting frequency by gender, and the four cells contrasting visiting frequency by age ($\chi^2(2) = 11.37, p < .003; \chi^2(1) = 6.98, p < .008; \chi^2(1) = 6.45, p < .01$, respectively). It indicates that visiting Japan appears to be influenced by age and by the region where visitors live. The closer they live and the older they are, the higher the probability that they will have visited Japan. While of little surprise, it is what one would expect and therefore adds to our confidence in the quality of the data.

### Common structure of the images

An exploratory factor analysis was conducted for the entire data, assuming that image structures for Japan, Hokkaido, and Sapporo were the same and their individual factor loadings were different. Iterated principal factor analysis (setting the initial value of communality to $SMC$) and the scree plot criterion were used, so that three factors were extracted and then the orthogonal rotation (parsimax) was applied. After deleting the scales whose correlation coefficients with all the three factors were less than .40 in absolute values, the identical exploratory factor analysis was repeated three times. Table 2 shows the results. The proportions of variances for those factors were 22.9%, 14.4%, 13.1%, in descending order. The cumulative proportion of variances

### Table 1

**Cross Tables with the Frequency of Visits to Japan**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Motivation</th>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Generation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Conference participants</td>
<td>Tourists</td>
<td>From America</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First-time</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Previously visited</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. The term “unknown” in this section means that the experimenters have failed to fill out the needed information for some reason.
2. Other than previous experiences visiting a destination, the internet, mass media and/or travel guidebooks could also be sources of information about the destination, its area, and its country before travellers visit the destination.
3. The other regions have not been taken into account here because their populations were so small that we could not include the later analyses using SEM.
4. As statistical analysis software, SAS/STAT, the FACTOR Procedure was used.
explained was a low 50.5% which is assumed to be the case because the tourists might not have been very familiar with Hokkaido, Sapporo, or even Japan. The first factor which had the largest variance explained was named “Physical Impression”, because it describes low-level perceptions that directly relate to the five senses. The second factor was interpreted as describing “Place Attractiveness”, because of its strong causal relationship with the scales rating the landscape and the liveliness of the local people. The last factor was named “Spatial Impression”, because it strongly related to the scales depicting cityscapes.

Adopting the results of the exploratory analysis, a confirmatory factor analysis was conducted using AMOS. The scale “It has its own traditional culture” was deleted, because there were significant paths from “It has its own traditional culture” to both “Food is very delicious” and “It has many sightseeing spots” (.222, p < .001; .209, p < .001, respectively), which implied that “It has its own traditional culture” acts as a background to these statements. The final goodness of fit indexes were adequate ($AGFI = .921$, $CFI = .956$, $RMSEA = .056$). Figure 2 shows the

### Table 2

*Factor Patterns for the Overall Image Structure When Traveling to Sapporo, Hokkaido in Japan*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scales used in the survey</th>
<th>Physical Impression</th>
<th>Place Attractiveness</th>
<th>Spatial Impression</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It is extremely clean</td>
<td>.787</td>
<td>.161</td>
<td>.299</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is extremely safe</td>
<td>.753</td>
<td>.203</td>
<td>.269</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People are kind</td>
<td>.675</td>
<td>.24</td>
<td>.254</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food is very delicious</td>
<td>.666</td>
<td>.196</td>
<td>.174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public transportation is highly developed</td>
<td>.663</td>
<td>.198</td>
<td>.324</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is extremely tidy</td>
<td>.61</td>
<td>.163</td>
<td>.272</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It has its own traditional culture</td>
<td>.525</td>
<td>.325</td>
<td>.144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People are very active</td>
<td>.502</td>
<td>.312</td>
<td>.291</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It has beautiful landscapes</td>
<td>.487</td>
<td>.516</td>
<td>.128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It has many sightseeing spots</td>
<td>.289</td>
<td>.646</td>
<td>.103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There are many festivals and events in…</td>
<td>.156</td>
<td>.558</td>
<td>.187</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is always stimulating</td>
<td>.344</td>
<td>.539</td>
<td>.266</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People are innovative</td>
<td>.324</td>
<td>.524</td>
<td>.278</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is an extremely cosmopolitan place</td>
<td>.007</td>
<td>.485</td>
<td>.383</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is extremely warm</td>
<td>-.222</td>
<td>.435</td>
<td>.263</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is extremely urbanized</td>
<td>.178</td>
<td>.057</td>
<td>.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is extremely industrialized</td>
<td>.2</td>
<td>.179</td>
<td>.714</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Its is extremely populous</td>
<td>.123</td>
<td>.383</td>
<td>.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Variance explained</strong></td>
<td><strong>4.13</strong></td>
<td><strong>2.599</strong></td>
<td><strong>2.36</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Proportion of variances explained</strong></td>
<td><strong>.229</strong></td>
<td><strong>.144</strong></td>
<td><strong>.131</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cumulative proportion of variance explained (%)</strong></td>
<td><strong>22.9</strong></td>
<td><strong>37.4</strong></td>
<td><strong>50.5</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cronbach’s alpha</strong></td>
<td><strong>.906</strong></td>
<td><strong>.799</strong></td>
<td><strong>.764</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<Consequently, the goodness of fit was slightly improved.>
results. All the path coefficients and the covariance values were significant at less than the .1% level. The results indicate that the image structures for Japan, Hokkaido, and Sapporo are basically identical.

The relationship between Japan, Hokkaido, and Sapporo

Adopting the same SEM model used in the confirmatory factor analysis above, group comparisons for the cases of Japan, Hokkaido, and Sapporo were conducted¹. The final goodness of fit index was acceptable (AGFI = .892, CFI = .974, RMSEA = .025). After ensuring the “metric invariance” of the model (Toyoda, 2007), a mean and covariance structure analysis was conducted. Table 3 shows unstandardized factor averages for the three factors of each group and \( z \) values which indicate “paired comparisons” between corresponding averages for any pairing of Japan, Hokkaido, or Sapporo.

Table 3 shows that, in the case of Physical Impression, there are no differences between any two averages. In contrast, in the case of Place Attractiveness and Spatial Impression, averages for Hokkaido and Sapporo are lower than for Japan. The averages for Hokkaido and Sapporo, however, have slightly different patterns from each other.

¹Following the procedures in simultaneous analysis for multiple populations (Toyoda, 2007), individual analyses for each population (Japan, Hokkaido, and Sapporo) were conducted and made certain that each population was fit for the model. The goodness of fit indexes for each population was adequate (Japan: AGFI = .891, CFI = .969, RMSEA = .048; Hokkaido: AGFI = .889, CFI = .981, RMSEA = .037; Sapporo: AGFI = .895, CFI = .974, RMSEA = .041). Therefore, but before the simultaneous analysis for multiple populations was done, the same procedure was conducted and the model fit for each sub-population was confirmed.
In the case of Place Attractiveness, the average for Sapporo (.325) was lower than that for Hokkaido (.196), although there was no significant difference between them (z = 1.190, ns.). There was a significant difference between the average for Sapporo and the one for Japan (z = 3.018, p < .01), while there was no significance between the averages for Hokkaido and Japan (z = 1.816, ns.).

The participants visited Sapporo in early July, which is the best season to travel there. In fact, there were no rainy days during the conference. Thus, their low rating for the Place Attractiveness of Sapporo needs to be explained. Possibly, the participants underestimated the attractiveness of Sapporo. The reason for this will be clarified at the end of this section. Hereafter, such problems that are frequently confronted by peripheral places such as Sapporo will be referred to as an image problem. Sapporo may be suffering from an image problem, whereas this is not the case for Japan as a whole.

The average of Spatial Impression for Hokkaido (-.740) was significantly lower (z = 2.287, p < .05) than that for Sapporo (-.342). In addition, the averages for both Hokkaido and Sapporo were also significantly lower (z = 6.037, p < .001; z = 4.399, p < .001, respectively) than that for Japan as a whole (.000).

As has been mentioned before, both the difference of factor averages between Japan and Hokkaido, and that between Japan and Sapporo were larger in Spatial Impression than in Place Attractiveness. In Physical Impression, there was no difference of factor averages among Japan, Hokkaido, and Sapporo.

Hygiene-motivator theory (Herzberg, Mausner, & Snyderman, 1959/1993) can be applied to explain these results. Physical Impression could be considered as a hygiene factor in the terminology of Herzberg et. al. Functional aspects such as safety in a destination, food supply, and basic facilities are thought to be minimum requisites in order for a traveler to be satisfied with a trip. Let us suppose that these factors are a manifestation of a hygiene factor. If there is the danger of terrorism at a destination, or if water supply is not safe enough, and mineral

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### Table 3
**Group Comparison between Japan, Hokkaido, and Sapporo**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factors</th>
<th>Unstandardized factor average</th>
<th>z value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>Hokkaido</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Impression</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Place Attractiveness</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>-.196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spatial Impression</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>-.740</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Factor averages for Japan were set to zero in order to uniquely identify the equations. Z value shows differences between the two factor averages. *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001. A negative z value means that the lower (right) average is larger than the upper (left) average.

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1. Unlike the rest of Japan, there is no rainy season in Hokkaido.
2. Herzberg et. al (1959/1993) have been dealing with how well an employee works in the organization to which he/she belongs. The present study examines how well a traveller connects to his/her trip, and thus “work” or “labor” is replaced with “trip” or “tourism”.
water is expensive, a traveler would decide that
the destination does not satisfy the basic
requirements for a travel experience, and drop it
as a travel option. The main reason that there is
no difference among Japan, Hokkaido, and
Sapporo for Physical Impression would likely be
that overseas travelers felt that hygiene would be
satisfactory at any destinations or in any area in
Japan. Overseas travelers tend to care about
hygiene, and this was reflected in the Physical
Impressions.

Place Attractiveness could be considered as a
motivation factor. Even if a destination features
fundamental travel necessities, this does not
always mean that a traveler will actually decide to
visit the destination. A traveler needs an
incentive to visit in addition to these basic
services. In Place Attractiveness, the average for
Hokkaido and that for Sapporo were lower than
for Japan, as mentioned above. Supposing that
Place Attractiveness is a motivation factor, these
results would then mean that the motivation for
travel to visit Hokkaido and Sapporo is lower
than the one for Japan. All the participants in the
survey visited Hokkaido and Sapporo mainly for
the purpose of attending the conference. Thus,
most of the participants might not have had clear
images of Hokkaido and Sapporo or a strong
motivation to visit before they came these places,
even though they did have a specific image for
Japan. If so, those results imply that the
participants were able to recognize their
motivation for travel based on their travel
experiences while they were visiting Sapporo in
Hokkaido. Comparing liveliness or business of
Tokyo or Osaka, where they may have passed
through, with that of Hokkaido or Sapporo,
travelers would likely perceive that people did not
go out very much, as crowds are much scarcer in
these northern locales.

The main reason why the factor average for
Hokkaido (−.196) in Place Attractiveness was
larger than the one for Sapporo (−.325) would be
due to the physical proximity to Sapporo. That
is, Sapporo is the place where they actually visited
and stayed, while they only passed through an
airport in Hokkaido. Experiences in Sapporo
were more direct and straightforward, which
would lead to underestimating the Place
Attractiveness for Sapporo.

Spatial Impression also seems to reflect the
participants' travel experiences in the same way
as Place Attractiveness. The participants would
have seen that there is much open space at
Sapporo and Hokkaido while visiting. These
actual landscapes are considerably different from
ones in the rest of Japan, especially Tokyo or
Osaka, and this would reduce the Spatial
Impression for both Hokkaido and Sapporo.

The reason that the factor average for Sapporo (−
.486) in Spatial Impression was significantly
higher than the one for Hokkaido (−.740) would
derive from the fact that Spatial Impression was
an impression for cityscapes (see the scales for
Spatial Impression in Figure 2). Typical
landscapes are the ones seen in rural areas in
Hokkaido (see Figure 1(a)), which are totally
different from cityscapes.

As can be seen in Table 3, the absolute values of
Hokkaido and Sapporo for Place Attractiveness
were less than the values for Spatial Impression.
Considering the Place Attractiveness scales
suggest that Place Attractiveness is more
influenced by people's past travel experiences or
information gathered from the internet, mass
media, and/or guidebooks that they have read,
before visiting a place. Consequently, Place
Attractiveness might be an indirect measure. It is
possible that the indirectness of Place
Attractiveness measures may have resulted in the
apparent image problem for Sapporo that was
indicated by the results of this study. Conversely,
Spatial Impression scores suggest that it is more
affected by people's current travel experiences.

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9 The survey had been conducted before a huge earthquake happened in the northern part of Japan on March 11 2011. The results might have been slightly
different if the survey was conducted after the quake.
Therefore, Spatial Impression appears to be a direct, straightforward measure. As a result, as can be seen in Table 3, the absolute values of Spatial Impression may have been larger than those for Place Attractiveness.

The explanations for the entire group mentioned above are, so to speak, the ones for the average participant. At a later point, some group comparisons will be conducted, classifying the entire group into subgroups based on responses to the questions about participants themselves that were asked in the survey. Then the term “average participant” will be used to indicate the tendencies generally seen in Table 3. How and why the participants in each subgroup differed from those in the other subgroups or the average participant will be explained.

**Difference in travel motivation**

The entire group was divided into six groups, based on both whether or not the participants wanted to do sightseeing as well as attending the conference and whether the responses concerned Japan, Hokkaido, or Sapporo. The same SEM model as the one used in the confirmatory factor analysis was used for the groups, in the same manner as the analysis in the previous section. Table 4 indicates unstandardized factor averages for the three factors related to Japan, Hokkaido and Sapporo, and the z values between each pairing of two places.

Both the participants responded that they visited Sapporo only for the conference (mentioned as Conference participants in Table 4) and the participants who responded they visited for both the conference and sightseeing (referred as Tourists in Table 4) tended to be similar to the average participant. There were no differences in Physical Impression among Japan, Hokkaido, and Sapporo in either group. Values for Place Attractiveness decreased from Japan, to Hokkaido, then Sapporo (.000, -.175, -.343, respectively for Tourists and .009, -.253, -.389, respectively for Conference participants). Again, it seems that Sapporo has an image problem which is identical to that of the average participant (see Table 3). For Spatial Impression, the values decreased from Japan, to Sapporo, then Hokkaido (.000, -.487, -.764, respectively for Tourists and -.050, -.663, -.964 for Conference participants) which appears to make sense given the relative population densities mentioned above and the general impression of a more open countryside in Hokkaido.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Tourists</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Conference participants</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Factors</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Japan</td>
<td>Hokkaido</td>
<td>Sapporo</td>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>Hokkaido</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Impression</td>
<td>.000</td>
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<td>.051</td>
<td>.116</td>
<td>-.352</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Place Attractiveness</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>-.175</td>
<td>-.343</td>
<td>1.091</td>
<td>2.149*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spatial Impression</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>-.764</td>
<td>-.487</td>
<td>4.136***</td>
<td>3.007**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Factor averages for tourists and Japan were set to zero in order to uniquely identify the equations. Z value shows the difference between the two factor averages. *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001. A negative z value means that the lower (right) average is larger than the upper (left) average.

Out of two questions about travel motivation, the first question “I have come here only for the conference, not for sightseeing” was used for...
The general tendency of significance patterns in \( z \) values was also similar to those of the average participant in all the cases of Physical Impression, Place Attractiveness and Spatial Impression. Examining the \( z \) values in detail, however, it seems that the values for the participants who answered that they were only attending the conference (not sightseeing) were closer to the values for the average participant. The reason for this is simple. The average participant was thought not to have clear images of Hokkaido and Sapporo, even if they had a clear image of Japan. The same situation would be true of the Conference participants. These participants did not have a strong motivation to travel to Hokkaido and Sapporo, as the purpose for this journey was simply business. There were also no differences in the frequencies for visiting Japan, Hokkaido, and Sapporo between Conference participants and Tourists (see Table 1). Taking this into account, a subtle difference in \( z \) values between the groups could be inferred from the difference of how much knowledge members of each group had about Hokkaido and Sapporo. The sightseers are likely to have searched for information on Hokkaido and Sapporo on the internet or used a guidebook, so they already had some images in place when they came to Hokkaido and Sapporo. This variable could therefore be seen as bringing out subtle differences between the perceptions of pure conference and sightseeing participant. The general impression of the three places moves into the same directions, however, because of the sightseers’ better information, their opinions are firmer or more pronounced.

**Difference in the frequency participants visited Japan**

For almost all the participants, this was their first visit to both Hokkaido and Sapporo, and for approximately 60% it was also their first visit to Japan. Based on whether the participants had previously visited Japan, and whether the responses were to statements about Japan, Hokkaido or Sapporo, the participants were divided into six groups, and a group comparison concerning the frequency of visits to Japan was conducted. The results are shown in Table 5.

Table 5 shows a tendency similar to the previous results. Both the participants who came to Japan for the first time ("First-time" in Table 5) and the participants who previously visited Japan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factors</th>
<th>First-time</th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td></td>
<td>Unstandardized factor average</td>
<td>( z ) value</td>
<td>Unstandardized factor average</td>
<td>( z ) value</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>Hokkaido</td>
<td>Sapporo</td>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>Hokkaido</td>
<td>Sapporo</td>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>Hokkaido</td>
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<tr>
<td>Physical Impression</td>
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<td>.357</td>
<td>.199</td>
<td>.156</td>
<td>.051</td>
<td>.064</td>
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<td>Place Attractiveness</td>
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<td>-.322</td>
<td>1.189</td>
<td>2.236*</td>
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<td>.045</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spatial Impression</td>
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<td>-.602</td>
<td>-.422</td>
<td>3.634***</td>
<td>2.779**</td>
<td>-1.189</td>
<td>.356</td>
<td>-.659</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Factor averages for first-time and Japan were set to zero in order to uniquely identify the equations. \( z \) value shows the difference between two factor averages. *\( p < .05 \), **\( p < .01 \), ***\( p <.001 \). A negative \( z \) value means that the lower (right) average is larger than the upper (left) average.
(“Previously visited” in Table 5) have a tendency identical to the average participant, and the results for participants who had visited Japan more than once were even closer to that of the average participant.

The same speculation as used in the previous section would hold true for the results here. The difference between the first-visit participants and the previous-visit participants seems to come from the difference of how well each group of participants knew Hokkaido and Sapporo before their visit. The participants who have had previously visited Japan would have clearer images of Hokkaido and Sapporo, resulting in this difference.

Comparison based on where tourists came from

Using the responses to the question for country of origin, the participants were classified into American, European, or Asian grouping. Based on their area of origin, America (North America or South America), Europe, or Asia, and whether the data were for responses to statements concerning Japan, Hokkaido, or Sapporo, the entire data were divided into nine groups and a group comparison in terms of the participants’ origin was conducted. Table 6 shows the results in the cases of Japan, Hokkaido, and Sapporo, respectively.

It’s easily seen from the $z$ values at Table 6 that the participants from Asia have completely different tendencies compared to the participants from America and Europe. While the latter two groups have a tendency similar to the average participant, in the case of the participants from Asia, there were no differences among any factor averages in either Place Attractiveness or Spatial Impression.

There were no differences in the Place Attractiveness factor averages for participants from Asia, as mentioned above, whereas there were significant differences between Sapporo and Japan for participants from America (.394 vs. .000, $z = 2.150, p < .05$) and Europe (.496 vs. -.189, $z = 2.060, p < .05$). Seemingly, Sapporo does not have an image problem for the participants from Asia, unlike for those from America or the ones from Europe. The experiences of participants from Asia in Sapporo appear to be what they expected.

The difference between participants from Asia and from America and Europe cannot be attributed to the frequency of visiting Sapporo or

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 6</th>
<th>Group Comparison Based on Participants’ Region of Origin</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>America</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unstandardized factor average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hokkaido</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sapporo</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hokkaido</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sapporo</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Factor averages for America and Japan were set to zero in order to uniquely identify the equations. $z$ value shows the difference between two factor averages. *$p < .05$, **$p < .01$, ***$p < .001$. A negative $z$ value means that the lower (right) average is larger than the upper (left) average.
Hokkaido, because for most participants, this was the first visit. Therefore, differences in Place Attractiveness for the two groups could depend on how they searched for information about Sapporo before the visit.

As for Spatial Impression, there were no differences at all for participants from Asia. In contrast, all the differences in factor averages in participants from America and from Europe were significant, with the exception of the difference between Hokkaido and Sapporo for participants from Europe (-.907 vs. -.651, z = 1.629, ns). As described in Table 1, participants from Asia had visited Japan more frequently than those from America and from Europe. More than half of the participants from Asia had visited Japan previously, while the number of participants from America who had previously visited Japan was almost the same as the number for participants who were here on their first visit. There were significant differences among four cells of visiting frequencies for the participants from Asia as well as those from America (χ²(1) = 10.78, p < .001). In contrast, for many of the participants from Europe, this was their first trip to Japan. There is also a difference among the four cells for the participants from Europe and from America (χ²(1) = 5.53, p < .02). These results suggest that the participants from Asia would have had the most knowledge about Japan, the participants from America would have had the second most, and the ones from Europe would have the least knowledge. Many of the participants from Asia had previously traveled to Japan. Even though they did not have any previous travel experiences to Sapporo or Hokkaido, they may have searched out information about Sapporo and Hokkaido, because of their geographical and psychological closeness to these places. They may have had expectations about Sapporo, Hokkaido and Japan, which may explain the non-significant differences in factor averages for Spatial Impression in participants from Asia.

In passing, all the values of Physical Impression in the participants from Asia and Europe were lower than the ones in the participants from America, although none of the differences between them were significant. There might be some reason for this, as there have been almost no variations over any of the values of Physical Impression in the previous analyses discussed before the present section.

**Difference in participants’ gender**

The participants were classified into six groups, in terms of gender and responses to statements about Japan, Hokkaido, and Sapporo. A SEM model identical to the ones used in the previous sections was used for group comparison between genders. Table 7 shows the results.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 7</th>
<th>Group Comparison Based on Gender Differences</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>Factors</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Japan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Impression</td>
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<tr>
<td>Place Attractiveness</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spatial Impression</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note Factor averages for male and Japan were set to zero in order to uniquely identify the equalizations. Z value shows the difference between two factor averages. *p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001. A negative z value means that the lower (right) average is larger than the upper (left) average.*
As can be clearly seen from Table 7, the significance pattern of the male participants was closer to that of the average participant. Whereas there was a significant difference in Place Attractiveness between Sapporo and Japan for males (\(z = 2.516, p < .05\)), females showed no difference (\(z = 1.453, ns\)). On the other hand, females indicate significant differences (\(z = 3.098, p < .01; z = 2.195, p < .05\), respectively) in Spatial Impression both between for Japan (-.071) and Hokkaido (-.731), and between Japan and Sapporo (-.503). This pattern was repeated in the males’ perceptions albeit far more distinctly as their significance values were far higher (Japan vs. Hokkaido \(z = 5.040, p < .001\); Japan vs. Sapporo \(z = 3.686, p < .001\)).

**Difference between 20 and 30-year olds**

The entire group was classified into six groups, in terms of the participants’ general age and their responses to statements about Japan, Hokkaido, or Sapporo. An identical SEM model to the one used in previous comparisons was used for group comparison between two age groups (participants in their twenties and thirties).

Table 8 shows the results.

As shown in Table 8, the results for participants in their twenties and thirties were different from that of the average participant. Participants in their 20s indicated no significant difference in Physical Impressions nor in the Place Attractiveness; neither did those visitors in their 30s. However, while those in their twenties saw a significant difference in Spatial Impressions between Hokkaido and Japan (\(z = 2.908; p < .01\)), those in their thirties not only recognized this difference as more pronounced (\(z = 3.687; p < .001\)) but they also perceived clear differences between Japan and Sapporo (\(z = 2.860; p < .01\)). We assume that these latter results are due to age and, especially for those around 20 years of age, due to the lower frequency of exposure to Japan. However, this as well as a few other results we needed to speculate on, are worthy of further research in the future, not only because these results make sense but they would also further back up our main interest in this research, namely, that there is a “backwash” or framing effect through the nature, frequency, and sequence of prior exposure.

<table>
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<td>Unstandardized factor average</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Sapporo</td>
<td>Japan</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
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<td>.000</td>
<td>-.689</td>
<td>-.354</td>
<td>2.908**</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Note. Factor averages for 20s and Japan were set to zero in order to uniquely identify the equations. Z value shows the difference between two factor averages. *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001. A negative z value means that the lower (right) average is larger than the upper (left) average.
DISCUSSION

In the present study, the overseas travelers who visited Sapporo in Hokkaido mainly for the purpose of attending an international conference were asked to rate the kind of impressions they have for Japan (country), Hokkaido (area), and Sapporo (destination) on scales given on a questionnaire. Their responses were analyzed using explanatory factor analysis, confirmatory factor analysis, and statistical equation modeling with average structures. As a result, it was found that there were three factors, i.e., Physical Impression, Place Attractiveness, and Spatial Impression which were commonly held true for country, area, and destination. Among these factors, Physical Impression was considered to describe the hygiene factor (Herzberg et al., 1959/1993), that is, to what degree basic functional services, such as safety at the destination, or a drinkable water supply, are present. Place Attractiveness was thought to reflect motivation factors, i.e., what might encourage travelers to actually plan and go on a trip. Lastly, Spatial Impression was considered to be descriptive of impressions of cityscapes, crowdedness and urbanization of a place.

Comparing the unstandardized factor averages of Physical Impression, Place Attractiveness, and Spatial Impression among Japan, Hokkaido, and Sapporo, no differences were recognized in the case of Physical Impression. This means that overseas travelers took for granted that fundamental travel services were of satisfactory standards at any destination or in any area in Japan.

In the case of Place Attractiveness and Spatial Impression, the factor averages for Japan were higher than those for Hokkaido and Sapporo. In Place Attractiveness, there were significant differences between the factor average for Japan and for Sapporo, although there was no significant difference between Japan and Hokkaido. It is suggested that, for this sample, Sapporo has an image problem. In Spatial Impression, the factor averages for Japan were significantly higher than those for Hokkaido and Sapporo. The results provide a good explanation of the difference in the way that cityscapes are described. In addition, factor averages for Sapporo were also significantly higher than those for Hokkaido. The results were understood as representing the difference in descriptions of urban or rural areas.

In this study, backwash effects were recognized in the cases of Place Attractiveness and Spatial Impression. In these cases the country image (the image of Japan) had an impact on the area image (the image of Hokkaido) and the destination image (the image of Sapporo). However, the effects were larger for Spatial Impression than for Place Attractiveness, which may have been because Spatial Impression is more influenced by direct experience. It is suggested that the same effects could occur for Physical Impression, although there was not such an effect for Physical Impression in the present study.

The results in the study can be clearly explained if we were to assume three different knowledge sources in travelers’ minds: 1. previous travel experiences, 2. information from the internet, mass media, and/or guidebooks, 3. the current travel experience itself, as participants formed impressions for places they visited. The Physical Impression, Place Attractiveness, and Spatial Impression that travelers have in their minds are thought to undergo constant change based on these knowledge sources available to the travelers.

The assumptions of the effect of these knowledge sources agree with the results in multiple-group analyses that were carried out subsequently. First, the participants’ data were divided into groups according to responses to the question asking about the purpose of their
visit (conference only, or conference and sightseeing). The participants who responded “conference only” tended to be closer to the average participant than those who also were interested in sightseeing, although there were no significant differences between them. Secondly, the participants were classified into groups based on responses that they were visiting Japan for the first time or had previously travelled to this country. The tendency in participants who had previously visited Japan was closer to that of the average participant. The result suggests that this difference might come from the experience of previously visiting Japan and therefore having more knowledge about Japan, Hokkaido, and Sapporo.

About forty percent of the participants had visited Japan previously, although most of the participants had not visited Hokkaido or Sapporo. Taking this into account, there is a possibility that this previous experience in Japan would strengthen their image of Japan, and in turn affect their images for Hokkaido and Sapporo. In other words, the previous experience of visiting other places in a country might affect the image formation of the present destination.

Third, the entire group of participants was divided into three subgroups according to their country/area of origin. The results revealed that the image structure of the participants from Asia was completely different from the image structure of the average participant. Specifically, in both dimensions of Place Attractiveness and Spatial Impression, there were no differences between the images of Japan, Hokkaido, and Sapporo. In contrast to the participants from Asia, the image structure of participants from America, and those from Europe were closer to the image of the average participant.

The participants from Asia were thought to be familiar with not only Japan, but also with Hokkaido and Sapporo. By contrast, the participants from America and Europe came to Hokkaido and Sapporo, not knowing a great deal about these locales, although they are somewhat familiar with Japan. Such differences in prior knowledge of Hokkaido and Sapporo should be responsible for the results in the study.

The comparison based on the country/area of origin of the participants also implied that the previous knowledge gained from the internet, mass media, and/or guidebooks is crucial in forming the pre-visit image of a destination and its surrounding area. On a business trip to an overseas destination, a traveler rarely does an extensive search for information on the destination and its area beforehand, as compared with a traveler who is about to embark on a sightseeing trip. Thus, a business traveler’s image of a particular destination and its surrounding area may be vague. Meanwhile, the traveler may already have a well-formed image of the country that he/she is going to visit on the business trip. When a traveler visits a destination having only the image of the country in mind, he/she then must form a destination image and an image of surrounding areas during the actual visit to these locales, and this will distort the decisions that he/she makes at the destination.

The participants from Asia seemed to have a clear image of the ways in which Hokkaido and Sapporo are different from other areas or typical cities in Japan. The main reason for this would be that these participants searched for information about Hokkaido and Sapporo on the internet and/or read guidebooks on these areas. It would be important to explore in detail how such previous knowledge works for overseas travelers.

The tourism policies taken by the Japanese government have been centered on the main island, Honshu. On the top of the Web page of JNTO (Japan National Tourism Organization),
one can see several photographs (http://www.jnto.go.jp/jpn/). The images of Japan that overseas travelers would gain from these photos are ones of Japanese traditional culture or historical Japan, but they are far different from images that would represent present-day Hokkaido or Sapporo.

The typical image of Hokkaido, to which marketers could reasonably appeal, would be the image of the countryside shown in Figure 1(a). The typical image of Sapporo is an image of a planned city that was regularly partitioned, such as the image in Figure 1(b). Travelers seeing these images may feel that Hokkaido, including Sapporo, is spacious and one can move about easily without the problems of congestion or crowding. There is much personal space between people, as compared to Honshu. Tourism in Hokkaido provides comforts that Honshu or Asia often cannot. The same holds true of Sapporo, despite the fact that Sapporo is actually a large and populous city.

Countries in the world have been competing to attract tourists from overseas. Strategic branding for a country, area and/or destination is needed by governments and public administration sectors (Cai, 2002). Results indicate that the influence of the image participants hold of Japan strongly affects that of Sapporo and Hokkaido. While the differences in Spatial Impressions are visible and the most obvious, and while the participants’ physical experience of Sapporo are pronounced in the Place Attractiveness impressions, the impressions of Hokkaido are vague for Westerners and ambiguous for Asians.

Sapporo seems to have an image problem as all participants judged it as the least attractive of all places. Although it is difficult to judge a comparison of one city versus the attractiveness of the country as a whole, the result nevertheless highlight that Sapporo does not feature strongly in the minds of conference-goers, be they at Sapporo for just the conference, or for sightseeing as well. This conclusion is supported by the fact that all segmentations (by age, motives, origin) have the same tendencies in their evaluations. In addition to these findings highlighting that Sapporo may need to focus on its image towards Westerners, it is surprising to register that Asians see no difference in any of the dimensions across all three places. Tourists need an opportunity to develop coherent brand image structures that relate the images they have of the country, the area, and the destination to each other. This is a task for country and destination branding. In order to accomplish this, travel motivations need to be examined in more detail for destinations, areas, and countries as a whole, that is, how travel motivations change and evolve throughout the exposure, from the time before a person visits a country, up to when the visit is completed. Understanding this type of change in perception through framing and backwash effects will be important to overseas tourism in the future as more and more destinations seek entry into decision-makers’ evoked sets of choice.

This particular study has found some very interesting results as they pertain to a small sample of visitors to Sapporo. The interpretation of this data underlines the recommendation that future research would do well to focus further on how the halo of the existing image influences the actual experience.

REFERENCES


APPENDIX

The questionnaire used in this survey.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>My first impression of JAPAN was that:</th>
<th>In comparison, my first impression of HOKKAIDO was that:</th>
<th>In particular, my impression of SAPPORO was that:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is extremely safe</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I found few people understand English</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>People are innovative</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Public transport is highly developed</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goods are extremely expensive</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is extremely populous</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is extremely warm</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is not like Asia</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There are many young people</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
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<tr>
<td>There are many festivals and events in ..</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is an extremely cosmopolitan place</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questions</td>
<td>My first impression of JAPAN was that:</td>
<td>In comparison, my first impression of HOKKAIDO was that:</td>
<td>In particular, my impression of SAPPORO was that:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is extremely tidy</td>
<td>1= Strongly disagree 4= Neutral 7= Strongly agree</td>
<td>1= Strongly disagree 4= Neutral 7= Strongly agree</td>
<td>1= Strongly disagree 4= Neutral 7= Strongly agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is extremely spacious</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food is very delicious</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is extremely urbanized</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You can buy anything you want</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People are kind</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is extremely industrialized</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It has its own traditional culture</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It has many sightseeing spots</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
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<tr>
<td>It is always stimulating</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
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<tr>
<td>It has beautiful landscapes</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is extremely clean</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People appear expressionless</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please circle your gender. Male Female What is your age? ___ Years old

Which city/country did you come from? ________________________ Times

How many times have you been to JAPAN so far? ___ Times

How many times have you been to HOKKAIDO so far? ___ Times

How many times have you been to SAPPORO so far? ___ Times