Cultural Tourism in Japan: A Critical Analysis of Tourists Perceptions of Marketing and Promotional Material for Japanese Cultural Tourism

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Signed Statement

I understand the nature of plagiarism, and I am aware of the University’s policy on this.

I declare that this dissertation has not been accepted in substance for any degree previous and is not concurrently being submitted in candidature for any degree. It is the result of my own independent research except where otherwise stated.

______________________________   ______________________________
Shelly Charlesworth            Date
Abstract

“Japan never considers time together as time wasted. Rather, it is time invested.”

(Richie, 1992:29)

This study has looked at tourist’s perceptions of the marketing and promotional material used for Japanese cultural tourism. It has looked at case studies from different tour operators looking at the way they have advertised and the author has conducted primary research to find out people’s thoughts on the material, what they found appealing and what could be improved.

Questionnaires and focus groups were used by the researcher in order to gather the primary data required to successfully achieve the aim and objectives set by the researcher at the start of the project. These questionnaires and focus groups feature questions which intended to discover the opinions of the participants in relation to cultural tourism in Japan and the marketing and promotional material behind it. Results of this research have been presented in several sections which include the results of the questionnaires, the results of the focus group, the reoccurring themes in both methods and finally developing a marketing strategy for future use by the Japanese National Tourism Organisation.

After collecting the final results, the researcher analysed the results of the questionnaires, the results of the focus group, discovered the reoccurring themes in both methods and recommended conclusions for the Japan National Tourism Organisation’s promotion in the UK using the results provided from the study.

Key Words: Tokyo, Japan, Destination Marketing, International Tourists, Strategies, Motivations, Perceptions

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List of Abbreviations

BTC - Business-to-Consumer
JNTO - Japan National Tourism Organisation
PLC - Product Life Cycle
POP - Point-of-Purchase
UNWTO - The United Nations World Tourism Organisation
WTTC - World Travel and Tourism Council
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1.0 Introduction

This project analyses tourist’s perceptions of the marketing and promotional material used for Japanese cultural tourism and how this information can be used by the Japan National Tourism Organisation (JNTO) to attract more tourists.

The researcher chose to base her study on Japan, due to her personal interest in the destination. In previous years the researcher began to notice that the level of advertisement seen for places such as Japan were not at the same level as places such as the USA and Australia. Advertising can have a lot of influence on what people purchase, especially in the world of tourism. There is a lot of advertising these days for destinations in the US and even Australia yet we see nothing for Japan on TV and very little online. Anyone who is looking for a holiday will be looking at destinations which are highly advertised as they will see the advertisements and may possibly go straight to the website where the holiday is being advertised. Alternatively, if they see an advertisement in a travel agents window then they may go straight into a shop and price it up. Using this knowledge, we can say that the amount of advertising that needs to be done for Japan needs to be increased to attract more attention.

Using the knowledge gathered through secondary research, case studies and through speaking to a variety of people from the general public, the author will, at the end of this project, recommend techniques for creating marketing material that will be attractive to a wide range of people living in the UK.

1.1 Japan’s Tourism

Japan is a country with a remarkable culture that is both traditional and exciting and vibrant. Japan is old combining with new. With its capital city, Tokyo, being the most populous city in the world, Japan has something to offer for all types of tourists however not many international tourists seem to know what is available there. From the delights of Japanese cuisine on the streets of Tokyo to the wonders of the natural world in Hokkaido all the way down to Okinawa, Japan has more to offer within its chain of 3000 islands than some places do around the world (Berger, 2010:3).
In pre-modern Japan, domestic tourists often travelled on pilgrimages to Shinto shrines and Buddhist temples for religious visits and to visit hot springs (Onsen) for health reasons. Tourist destinations such as Kyoto still use these to their advantage to attract visitors in modern-day Japan with the Ryokan (a traditional Japanese inn) combining with Onsen to give travellers a more authentic experience. Other authentic experiences such as Cherry Blossom Viewing or Hanami have now become regular festivals within Japan after being celebrated for many generations, though over the years Hanami’s ‘role is more profane than religious, with an emphasis on entertainment, although they help keep ancient traditions alive’ (McClellan, 2005:9).

Cultural tourism in Japan has the prospective to create mass amounts job opportunities, both at the local level and in tourism-related industries, all year round and pull in so many more tourists but there needs to be an increase in marketing material to do so.

1.2 Research Problem

When looking online or within brochures for trips to Japan, the author noticed that it is quite difficult to find places that offer holidays to Japan and that there wasn’t much advertising for Japan which promoted it as an ideal holiday destination. Advertising can have a lot of influence on what people purchase, especially in the world of tourism. There is a lot of advertising these days for destinations in the US and even Australia yet we see nothing for Japan on TV and very little online. Therefore, something needs to be done by the JNTO to increase the amount of advertising there is for Japanese cultural tourism within the UK to make it more attractive to visitors.

1.3 Hypothesis

The main course of action for this project is to conduct mixed method research to critically analyze tourists’ perceptions of marketing and promotional material for Japanese cultural tourism and to make conclusions and recommendations for Japanese tourist boards promotion in the UK.
1.4 Research Proposal

The author will investigate the case studies of Japan’s cultural tourism and previous trends of tourism marketing within the UK. These case studies will involve primary and secondary research. The primary research will involve questionnaires and a focus group.

The questions asked in the questionnaires will aim to determine what their views of Japan as a cultural tourism destination are, what promotional material they have seen if any, what makes marketing material for a destination attractive and what could potentially deter them from going to a destination.

The questions then asked in the focus group will then determine what exactly people find attractive about a variety of different marketing materials and what they believe could be added or improved upon to make it more appealing to the UK market.

The secondary data that will be used will consist of existing literature and theory that surrounds cultural tourism in Japan, marketing strategies and tourist perceptions and image of destinations. This existing literature and theory will be found within the universities library and through tourism journals.

1.5 Structure

1.5.1 Literature Review

The Literature review will focus on the literature available on cultural tourism in Japan, marketing strategies and tourist perceptions and image of destinations. The author will then critically evaluate the findings and the results collected will help the author create a guide for the author to use when creating questionnaires.

1.5.2 Methodology

The methodology chapter will explain and justify the qualitative and/or quantitative methods chosen by the author. It will also look into the ethical considerations linked with collecting primary data in the form of questionnaires.
1.5.3 Results, Analysis and Discussion
This chapter will uncover the results collected from the primary research and show the analysis of tourists’ perceptions of marketing and promotional material for Japanese cultural tourism and how this can be used by the JNTO to attract more tourists through branding and advertising.

1.5.4 Conclusion and Recommendations
The final chapters will sum up the findings from the entire project, and will offer final observations about the strengths and weaknesses of this project and recommendations as to how the author could further her research in order to gain a more comprehensive understanding into this topic.

1.6 Research Aims and Objectives
The author decided on the aims and objectives for the study that will be followed and achieved, in order for the project to be most successful. These aims and objectives are stated below;

1.6.1 Aim
The aim of this project is to critically analyze tourists’ perceptions of marketing and promotional material for Japanese cultural tourism and to make conclusions and recommendations for Japanese tourist boards promotion in the UK.

1.6.2 Objectives
The objectives are:
1. To critically review literature on cultural tourism in Japan, marketing strategies and tourist perceptions and image of destinations
2. To complete primary research to investigate tourist’s perceptions Japanese cultural tourism promotional material and their perception of Japan as a cultural destination
3. To complete secondary data research into current cultural tourism marketing strategies of the Japanese Tourist board and three tour operators.
4. To analyse the primary and secondary research data and findings
5. To make conclusions and recommendations for the Japan National Tourism Organisation’s promotion in the UK

1.7 Summary

This chapter has justified the choice of research topic and has defined the organisation of the project. It has also specified the aims and objectives set by the author that she wishes to achieve when carrying out this project.

The next chapter is the literature review; this will examine the literature surrounding cultural tourism in Japan, marketing strategies and tourist perceptions and image of destinations.
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Literature Review

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2.0 Literature Review
This section of the dissertation will provide a critical review of literature, which supports the above research aims and objectives and will discuss the suitability of the topic. The literature that will be reviewed in this section will be based on cultural tourism in Japan, marketing strategies, destination marketing and tourist perceptions and image of destinations.

2.1 Cultural Tourism
Culture tourism is defined by the UNWTO (as cited in McKercher and Du Cros, 2015:4) “the movement of persons to cultural attractions in cities and countries other than their normal place of residence, with the intention to gather new information and experiences to satisfy their cultural needs and all movements of persons to specific cultural attractions, such as heritage sites and cultural manifestations, arts and drama to cities outside their normal country of residence.”

Examples of cultural tourism, even before the technical term was used, include ancient Romans visiting Greece and Egypt (Perrottel 2002:15) and Chinese scholars making journeys to see beautiful landscapes (Yan and McKercher, 2013:20).

A major example in to how cultural tourism plays a major part in today’s society is the example of the UNWTO’s world heritage sites. Major notable locations include the Tower of London, the Taj Mahal and the Great Wall of China (Boniface, 1995:5). People from all over the world will come to visit this places because they have them on a ‘Travel Bucket List.’ With tourism playing a major role in modern life, it has a major impact on destinations financially. An assessment by the WTTC in 1990, tourism accounted for 5.5% of the worlds gross national product (as cited in Boniface, 1995:5). As of 2015 this figure is at 9.8% (WTTC, 2017).

2.2 Japanese Cultural Tourism
When visiting Japan, cultural tourists show interest in Japanese culture and visit a variety of cultural hotspots including museums, forts, shrines, castles, garden, and
temples, attend musical and theatrical performances, shop in Japanese stores and sample Japanese food. As stated by Berger (2010:7), their focus is on what distinctive and unique about Japanese culture. Typically, cultural tourists visit cities such as Tokyo and more importantly Kyoto which is considered the most important city culturally in Japan. Kyoto is home to around 20% of Japan’s National Treasures and 15% of Japan’s Important Cultural Properties as well as 24 museums and 37 universities and colleges scattered throughout the city (Bender et al., 2015:292).

The JNTO lists several types of Japanese culture that tourists can take part in including tea ceremonies, viewing floral art (dating back to the 16th century), calligraphy, viewing ukiyo-e (wood block prints from the 17th-19th century), taking part in classical dancing, writing haikus and watching variety theater. (Jnto.go.jp, 2016). Lonely Planet also suggest taking part in such activities as visiting an onsen (thermal spa), and visiting shrines and temples to learn from the Buddhist monks about the history and importance of the shrines and temples (Bender et al., 2015:63)

Below is a top 10 attractions list from PlanetWare’s website:

1. Mount Fuji
2. Imperial Palace
3. Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park
4. Historic Kyoto
5. The Island Shrine of Itsukushima
6. Temple City, Nara
7. Osaka Castle
8. Chūbu-Sangaku National Park and the Japanese Alps
9. The Atsuta Shrine, Nagoya
10. Fukuoka's Castle and Ancient Festivals

(Dearsley, 2016)

Visitor numbers range from 18,000 to 1.5 million (See Japan, 2015 & CNN, 2016). Those numbers could be higher however some visitor numbers for these attractions were difficult to find. As seen above, all but one of these fall in the cultural category.
The one that doesn’t is the Hiroshima Peace Park which falls into historical/dark tourism due to its role within World War Two. However, this list shows that cultural tourism is highly sought after when coming to Japan and the fact that Japan has all these attractions and more available for tourists to visit could make it more attractive to tourists.

2.3 Marketing Strategies
Marketing strategy is ‘the process by which the organisation aligns itself with the market it is trying to serve’ (Fifield, 2007:16). Depending on the organisation and the market that it is in, marketing strategies will mean something different to another organisation. Differing factors include: the variety and nature of the market, complexity of product and/or service offered, diverse nature of technology, nature of competitors, demands of stakeholders etc. (Fifield, 2007:15). In terms of tourism, it is suggested by Faulkner (1998:298) that ‘the future of tourism as a dynamic and viable industry is dependent on the adoption of strategic approach to planning and marketing’.

Woskhnick (2016) stated that some of the best business-to-consumer (BTC) marketing strategies include: Cause marketing (a cooperative effort between a for-profit business and a non-profit organization), direct selling, cobranding, earned media, Point-of-purchase marketing (POP), internet marketing, paid media advertising, word of mouth advertising, social media and viral marketing and storytelling.
All of these are used within the tourism world to help market destinations. Due to the rise of the internet and social media, internet marketing, social media and viral marketing is becoming increasingly common.

Businesses first have to conduct a thorough analysis of the internal business drivers, the external market and the business strategy. Using this analysis, it can then develop a marketing strategy which would work best with the business aims. Finally, the business will then implement their chosen marketing material, which is dependent on their budget set out in the analysis stage, hopefully drawing in their preferred target market. Using this technique will help the business come up with the best strategy for them to be able to best brand and market their product to their
preferred target market. However, the business needs to constantly keep in mind the research that they put into the marketing to ensure that they are able to make contingencies for any potential problems that may come up in the marketing process otherwise they face losing out on profit (Woskhnick, 2016).

2.4 Tourist Perceptions of Destinations

Tourist perceptions of destinations are important for attracting new and reoccurring visitors. More and more destinations are increasing the amount of branding they do due to the fact that competition for tourists is so high. For example the JNTO not only has the tagline ‘Endless Discovery’ but it has recently developed a campaign which includes the tagline ‘Where Tradition Meets Future’ to try and encourage more tourists to visit (JNTO, 2016).

Within tourism literature, the definitions of destination value and quality are unclear due to the large amount of varied terms. The quality and value of products can “help provide an insight on how to reinvent a product and how that is then viewed by a customer” (Murphy, Pritchard and Smith, 2000:43). Destination marketing organisations have previously highlighted that quality and value is one of their key objectives when it comes to refreshing the tourism industries which are starting to perform poorly. For example after the Tunisia attacks in 2015, Tunisia put together a campaign to try and bring tourists back to the area however used the wrong type of imagery which caused offense to people leading to it being pulled (Sehmer, 2015).

Generating tourist perceptions of quality or value is “no easy task, as these experiences tend to be complex and intangible” (Zeithalm, 1988:44). Zeithalm (1988) also states that tourists will generally tailor their travels to what they can do whilst at a destination, which can be classed as niche holidays depending on what activities they have chosen to participate in. These activities will have a high impact on a tourist’s perception of a destination and its quality and value. In regards to cultural holidays, people will tailor their trips to include tours around places of cultural importance such as churches, shrines, art galleries, museums etc. If tourists find that these experiences are lacking and disinteresting, they will believe that the quality of the holiday was a poor one, due to the experiences not being as they expected, and that the value of the holiday was poor. This is why it is important for businesses to
read and develop on customer feedback to keep interest high and helping tourists believe the quality and value of the experience was high. Sites such as TripAdvisor are used by tourism businesses to find out what customers thought about their experience. It also allows them to comment on those which gives them the potential to ask for extra information regarding a point to help the business develop for the better.

2.5 Destination Marketing

The key features of a market are “the existence of a defined product or service which buyers are willing to pay for, and which sellers are eager to trade” (Law, 1995:104). Destination marketing is essentially promoting a destination to attract new and repeat visitors.

Destination managers need to keep in mind the goals they have depending on a variety of different aspects including: the destinations lifecycle stage and regional and national competition for tourists. They also need to keep other local priorities in mind but usually goals also include earning a given rate of profit from commercial operations. Some destination managers may also be concerned with developing and enhancing the life quality measures for both local residents and visitors to the area. (Pike, 2008:38)

A tourist’s choice of destination reveals the appeal to that person of a destinations attractions over those offered by other competing destinations including the destinations scenery, beaches, historical buildings, quality and variety of shopping, regions opportunities to relax or the opportunities for sporting activities.

Few local organisations, which offer products and services to tourists, have the available opportunities to be able to promote themselves outside of their immediate area and encouraging tourists’ markets to visit their organisation is difficult for them. For example, you will see leaflets and posters in places such as hotels and tourist information centres. This is where a variety of originations come in to help. Major hotel groups and tour operators or to the national airline or tourist organisations help these smaller organisations by promoting for them. This can include having leaflets in a lobby (if it’s a hotel or tourist organisation), promoting hotels along with a flight on a national airline or on tour operator’s website. (Pike, 2008:38)
Using what they have, destinations and the services they have available to guests needs to be marketed correctly to attract the right market set out by the managers and is dependent on what type of destination they wish to market it as e.g. city break, romantic holiday, family friendly.

2.6 Destination Branding

Destination branding is seen as similar to branding a product or service, including whether the brand is luxury or not. As stated in Morgan, Pritchard and Pride (2004:4), “choice of holiday destination is a significant lifestyle indicator for today’s aspirational consumers and places where they choose to spend their increasingly squeezed vacation time and hard earned income have to be emotionally appealing with high conversational and celebrity value.” This is important to keep in mind when branding a destination. If a destination is looking to portray a certain image (e.g. luxury destination), then the images they use within marketing needs to reflect what image they are looking for (Gong and Tung, 2016).

Destinations such as The Maldives and Dubai are seen as luxury destinations due to their exclusiveness. In destination searches on Google, the word luxury reappears on several different links to tour operator’s websites (see appendix 7.9 for list) promoting the Maldives and Dubai. When investigating holidays to Dubai, it is clear from the tour operator website (see appendix 7.10) that this is a holiday marketed towards those with a fair amount of disposable income and are looking for an experience which is seen as “high conversational” and “emotionally appealing” (Morgan, Pritchard and Pride, 2004:4) with the images being used including artistic shots of the hotels and the surrounding areas.

Destinations such as Spain and France are seen as cheap breaks in countries like the UK. If you search these destinations on Google, the word cheap reappears on several different links to tour operator’s websites (see appendix 7.11 for list). In the UK, trips to Spain and France are traditionally marketed as cheap holidays for families, young couples and young people to take due to the fact that they are located so close to the UK and are easily accessed.
During the primary research, the researcher will ask two focus groups to view a short video from the JNTO to get their opinion on Japan as a cultural destination. For the opinions to be positive, the images and video footage used must be visually appealing to those watching, enough to engage them and to pin point select parts of the video that attracted them the most.

2.7 Advertising

Advertising is defined by the Economic Times (2016) as “a means of communication with the users of a product or service”. Advertising is an ideal way for companies to inform and persuade their consumers, no matter whether the product is tangible or intangible.

When developing an advertising campaign, the managers in charge have to decide what to do based on four different points (Davtyan and Cunningham, 2017). The below figure shows these four points.

![Figure 2.1- Advertising Decisions](image)

The advertising objectives should be set depending on what target market research was conducted, the positioning and the marketing mix. It must show what “specific communication task is to be accomplished with a specific target audience during a specific timeframe” (Kotler et al, 2015:474).

When making budget decisions, a number of factors need to be taken into account. These factors include the products stages in the product life cycle (PLC), market
share, competitive and the frequency of advertising (the more its pushed, the more expensive (Kotler et al, 2015:474).

The message decision is important as this will be one of the major ways that the consumer remembers the ad. In modern day, you can find advertisements on billboard, TV, newspapers, online on social media etc. Consumers are continuously bombarded with ads so to make a particular one stand out, it must have an effective advertising message among other things.

The media decisions are important as it will decide which is the best way to communicate with their consumers judging by the impact of the media, the major media types and the timing of the media. For example, if a company’s target market is 18-25, one of the best ways to communicate with this target market is by advertisements online and on social media.

Evaluating the advertisement will include creating surveys which consumers can complete to show whether the advertisement had any communication impact. Looking at the sales and profits is another way of determining success of the advert (Hackley and Hackley, 2015)

2.8 Conceptual Framework

Below is the conceptual framework created by the researcher. The researcher developed this framework based around the research into marketing strategies and destination branding. Figure 2.2 shows the conceptual framework which the researcher will reflect upon when developing recommendations for the JNTO using the results of the study.
2.9 Summary

This chapter has critically evaluated a wide range of literature which focuses on cultural tourism in Japan, marketing strategies, destination marketing and tourist perceptions and image of destinations.

The next chapter will focus on the research approach that the author will take to be able to put their theoretical framework into practice to achieve the aims and objectives of this project, which will eventually help construct a final marketing strategy.
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Methodology

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3.0 Methodology

This section of the report will go into detail about what research is, the types of data collection methods the researcher will use, the pros and cons of each, how the researcher will analyse the methods and the ethical considerations for the project.

3.1 Introduction

Research is defined as “not just a process of gathering information. Rather it is about answering unanswered questions or creating that which does not currently exist. It is a way of expanding boundaries in order to discover new information”. (Goddard and Melville, 2001:1).

The purpose of this research is to be able to critically analyze tourists’ perceptions of marketing and promotional material for Japanese cultural tourism and to make conclusions and recommendations for Japanese tourist boards promotion in the UK. This will be achieved by using a mix of qualitative and quantitative data.

In this chapter, the researcher will review the methods of data collection that are going to be used in this study to achieve the research aims of this study. These methods include data collection, sampling and data analysis. The researcher will also discuss the validity and reliability of the project and the ethical issues.

The chapter is broken down into sections: primary and secondary research, methodology, methods, reliability and validity and ethical considerations.

3.1.1 Primary and Secondary Research

Primary and secondary data are the two main types of data research. Primary research is “collecting original data for the specific purpose of the research” (Coles, Duval and Shaw, 2013:56). Methods of primary data collection include questionnaires, focus groups and interviews. Secondary data is “data which has been put together by another person or organisation” (Coles, Duval and Shaw, 2013:56) and usually comes in the form of journals, reports, websites and books.
The researcher is going to be using both types of data to help answer the research question. The literature review is going to consist of secondary data discussing cultural tourism in Japan, marketing strategies, destination marketing and tourist perceptions and image of destinations.

After completing the literature review, the researcher will conduct primary research using qualitative and quantitative data in the forms of online questionnaires and a focus group.

### 3.2 Methods

#### 3.2.1 Qualitative Research

Qualitative data is defined by Merriam and Tisdell (2015) as “types of information that have aspects that are unable to be measured, or are found to be approximations”. Examples of what types of research that comes under qualitative are ways such as interviews (structured, semi-structured & unstructured) and focus groups. Voice recorders or video cameras are usually used to be able to record results. Qualitative research can take place within an informal setting to allow comfort for both the researcher and the participant(s) (Rossman and Rallis, 1999) however there are specific ethical concerns that are raised, as with quantitative research, where the researcher has to ensure that the participant can ensure their anonymity if they wish and withdraw at any time if they feel uncomfortable (Coles, Duval and Shaw, 2013:123). This is where it is important to always have a consent form for the participant to read prior to the research so that they are aware of what they are taking part in.

Qualitative research will allow the researcher to have specific details and quotes about peoples answer and, with recordings, it is easy for them to back and revisit their data. Unlike quantitative, the researcher can listen to recordings whilst writing whereas quantitative requires the researcher to flip back and forth from their work to their data. Though it can mean that the researcher may have a smaller research base, the research that they will have to use will generally be more in depth and (hopefully) more useful.
3.2.2 Quantitative Research

Blaikie (2003) defines quantitative data as “any data that is in numerical form such as statistics, percentages, etc”. One common example of quantitative is questionnaires. It is an ideal way of being able to ask large groups of people questions for them to answer and can be low cost. One advantage of questionnaires is their flexibility due to the fact that both open and closed questions can be used for quantitative research (Coles, Duval and Shaw, 2013:60).

Open & closed questions are the common types of questions asked on a questionnaire. A closed question is a question that only allows you to answer with a Yes or No and an open question gives the participant the chance to give more of an in depth answer. The final results for qualitative data will be given in numbers (e.g. 55% of the people who took this survey were female). These results help give the researcher accurate statistics, which can easily be transferred to their research project.

3.2.3 Research Method

The main method for primary research the researcher will use in their dissertation are online questionnaires and focus groups.

Online questionnaires are an ideal way to get a wide range of views from people at a low cost depending on the distribution. For the purpose of their research, the researcher has chosen to distribute their questionnaires online. Online questionnaires offer a wide distribution channel for researchers at a low cost and with no interviewer bias. Improved design of questionnaire creation sites and integration of results is also plus for those who choose to use this method however there are a few cons. (Coles, Duval and Shaw, 2013:61). These include low response rate, online questionnaires being potentially unsuitable for certain subgroups, they need to be visually appealing and the researcher has no control over completion. (Balnaves and Caputi, 2001:75)

When researchers use online questionnaires to collect data, they run the risk of non-completion where participants may decide half way through that it is not worth their
time and will leave the questionnaire unfinished. One way for the researcher to avoid this is to provide a description at the start of the survey, fully stating what the purpose of the questionnaire is, what the researcher wants to achieve and why they are doing this. Doing this at the beginning of the questionnaires means participants tend to be more willing to take the time out to fill them out as they would know what the end goal of the information is. People may be more inclined to fill out surveys for students completing their dissertations, as they know the information they provide will be used well. One more issue that could stop participants from completing questionnaires is the length of time it says it will take to complete. (Coles, Duval and Shaw, 2013:60). Most questionnaires these days will have a rough time period it will take to fill out the form. But if the time is too long, then this could put people off. For example, if at the start of a survey it says that it should only take 10 minutes yet 20 minutes later the participant is still doing it then the participant is more likely to stop filling out the questionnaire. One way to stop this is testing how long it would take someone to answer the questionnaire and then state this time in the beginning statement.

Focus groups are an ideal way to figure out “why people think the way they do” (Coles, Duval and Shaw, 2013:56). A focus group consists of a small group of people (between 4-8) and the researcher. The success of a focus group is dependent on the level of interaction within the group that is relevant to the topic. The researcher chose to use focus groups as she can ask a select number of people from her university to take part within the focus group and conduct the focus group at the university to make it easier for everyone. This also removes the risk to any of the participants or the researcher as they are in a familiar place. (Coles, Duval and Shaw, 2013:61).

Problems that could arise from conducting focus group include not being able to find enough participants to take part. Some people may not be comfortable with the idea of sitting in a room with other people they don’t know to answer questions about a certain topic so to combat this issue, the researcher will ask a group of people she knows from her class to be able to tackle this issue. Another issue is that it may be hard to be able to keep the topic on track so to
combat this issue, the researcher will fully explain the project aim and the importance of the research before the focus group takes place to each individual person that they know what they are getting into beforehand.

Though the author may come into issues, these may be the best methods for the author to get good results. Not only can they contact students within the university and conduct the focus group in a safe space with little risk but they use social media to be able to collect a large amount of questionnaire results. Using these methods of data collections can give the author a wide range of results from a wide variety of people. Secondary research will be used within the literature review and for case studies to compare a tour operator’s way of advertising Japan as a cultural destination.

### 3.2.3.1 Questionnaire Structure

The researcher has used a questionnaire as the research method in order to collect the quantitative data, as seen in appendix 7.4.

The researcher has only designed one questionnaire to send out to the public and it is structured so that the first 6 questions give us more information about the participant themselves, the next three questions asks for the participant’s opinion on their views of Japan as a cultural destination, the promotional material they’ve seen for Japan and their opinion of what makes marketing material attractive. The next five questions are pictures from places in Japan, some stereotypical some not, and the participants are asked to write down which words best describe the pictures. The final four questions are ones which ask the participant if there are any particular cities, regions and attractions they would like to visit within Japan, whether there is anything in particular that would stop them from going and the final question asks the participant how much they are interested in going to Japan.

The questionnaire consists of both open and closed questions to give the researcher detailed answers and the total number of questions is 18. Having both open and closed questions provides the research with a mix of both qualitative and
quantitative data.

**3.2.3.2 Participants**
For the researcher to collect their quantitative data, they will create an online questionnaire which will be shared online via social media and will be able to be completed by anyone over the age of 18. Sharing the questionnaire via social media can help provide a large amount of data from a large number of people. There is no cost to handing out these questionnaires due to doing it online.

**3.2.3.3 Sampling**
Those who are over the age of 18 and have not been to the region previously can take part in the study. When the participants first open the online questionnaire, they will see the requirements for completing the questionnaire.

**3.2.3.4 Piloting**
The main reason to pilot a questionnaire before releasing it to the general public is to ensure that the questions work well and don’t leave people confused. The questionnaire will be sent to a friend of the researcher via email in a word document format so that they can check that the questions are relevant to the study and don’t cause confusion. Conducting a pilot means that when it eventually comes to the public answering the questionnaire, they are able to do it with ease and don’t feel as if it is too difficult to complete.

**3.2.3.5 Focus Group**
The researcher has chosen a focus group as the research method in order to collect the qualitative data. The researcher chose to conduct a focus group is to allow her to gain valuable information from a group of people who may potentially have different views. These different views will potentially generate discussion between participants giving the researcher more information to help with the end research. Barbour (2013:113) states that a focus groups role is to “discover why people think as they do” as well as reveal how “views are created and modified through group interaction.”
The focus group will take place in a relaxed setting based within the university library that will make the participants feel comfortable so that they can fully express their views and opinions on Japan. The focus group session will be no longer than one hour due to the researcher not wanting to take up any time seen as unnecessary by the participants.
There will be no closed questions asked so that the participants can feel comfortable enough to express their views, expand answers and encourage group interaction and discussion. It should be noted that for question 10 while the researcher only discussed two tour operators, this information gathered can be used to potentially indicate whether other tour operator websites could have an influence on a buyer depending on the factors discussed in the focus groups.

3.2.3.6 Participants
The focus group will consist of two groups of four and five people. They will all be over the age of 18 and students within the university. The reason these participants were selected is that they fit the demographic needed for the study which was over the age of 18 and has never travelled to Japan previously. The participants were selected by the researcher contacting them and asking whether they would be interested in taking part, stating what the purpose of the study was and what was going to happen during the focus group. While the participants may know each other by face and name, they may not know each other well enough to encounter a conflicts of interest when it comes to asking the questions.
Below is a table which shows the age range, number of participants and genders.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group Name</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Number of Participants</th>
<th>Gender</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FG1</td>
<td>20&amp;21</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3 Females, 1 Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FG2</td>
<td>20-22</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>All Female</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.1-Demographic Profile of Focus Groups
3.2.3.7 Sampling
Those who are over the age of 18 and have not been to the region previously can take part in the study. When selecting the participants, the researcher must make sure that the people participating have not been to the region previously.

3.2.3.8 Piloting
The focus group will not be piloted by the researcher as such however the questions will be trialled by a friend of the researcher who is not on her course to ensure that the questions are relevant to the study and don’t cause confusion. The focus group questions can be viewed in appendix 7.6.

3.3 Reliability and Validity
It is important to make sure that the results are presented as clearly as possible and in the correct order. Should the researcher fail to present them correctly, they could also interpret them wrong leading to the final recommendations to be wrong. This can cause complications for the researcher.

Due to the questionnaire being completed online through Qualtrics, the results can be automatically calculated before being transferred over to the dissertation. Once transferred over, the results will be presented using bar and pie charts. This will make it easy to be able to view the results and interpret them so that the researcher can easily recommend techniques for creating marketing material that will be attractive to a wide range of people living in the UK. However, with the focus group, the researcher need to ensure that they transcribed the focus group correctly or else they may get information wrong and come to the wrong conclusion.

3.3.1 Reliability
Reliability is described as “the extent to which results are consistent over time and an accurate representation of the total population under study is referred to as reliability and if the results of a study can be reproduced under a similar methodology, then the research instrument is considered to be reliable.” (Golafshani, 2003:598). Having reliability within a study means that there is little to no question over the results. For the researcher, this is essential.
To ensure the study is reliable and consistent, the questionnaire will be finalised with approval from the ethics committee (see appendix 7.1) before being introduced to the public online and will not be changed. The participants will be left to complete the questionnaires without the supervision of the researcher to avoid the results being bias.

When it comes to the focus group, the researcher will only use open questions to encourage participants to give honest opinions on the subject and allow discussion with other participants.

3.3.2 Validity
Validity is described as “how well the research measures what it is purported to measure” (Phelan and Wren, 2016). The validity of the data collected during the research process is dependent on whether the answers and opinions given by the participants are honest and truthful. The validity can also be helped by the professionalism of the questions and the presentation of the questionnaire and focus groups.

All data collected from the questionnaires and focus groups will be completed solely by the individual to ensure there were no influences on the answers provided.

3.4 Thematic Analysis
Thematic analysis is one of the most common forms of analysis for qualitative research. It focuses on pinpointing, examining and recording themes or patterns within the set of data. Each theme then become a category for analysis. There are six phases to thematic analysis including: familiarization with data, generating initial codes, searching for themes among codes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the final report. (Guest, MacQueen and Namey, 2012:11)

The researcher will use thematic analysis to analyse the data produced by the focus groups which will help the researcher develop recommendations in the JNTO.

3.4 Ethical Considerations
It is vital that the researcher, from the early stages of their research project, considers ethical issues, as the failure to do so could result in public harm (Oliver,
2010). The author acknowledges that ethics are the moral principles that govern a person’s behavior and affect how people make decisions and go about their lives. Please see figure 7.1 of the appendix for a copy of the approved ethics form.

In addition, the researcher prepared a list of questionnaire and focus group questions, participant consent forms and information sheets so they could be approved by the university to ensure they comply with the ethical protocol that Cardiff Metropolitan University abide by.

It was essential that the researcher requested ethical approval so that she was aware of what research is suitable to do in certain conditions and it is also to make the individuals who take part in the study aware that there is no risk of them being treated unfairly during the research enquiry.

3.5 Summary
This chapter has reviewed the purpose of research and the relevant types of data collection methods the researcher will use, the pros and cons of each, how the researcher will analyse the methods and the ethical considerations for the project.

The next chapter will go through the results of the data collection and discuss and critically analyse the meaning of the results.
IV

Results, Analysis and Discussion

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4.0 Results and Analysis

4.1 Introduction

This chapter will uncover the results collected from the primary research and show the analysis of tourists’ perceptions of marketing and promotional material for Japanese cultural tourism. In addition, it will be demonstrated through analysis of the results how such results and perspectives can be used by the JNTO and other niche Japanese tourism organisations to attract more tourists through branding and advertising.

This chapter will be split into several sections which include the results of the questionnaires, the results of the focus group, the reoccurring themes in both methods and an analysis of the “Where Tradition Meets Future” Campaign. The results section will focus on the results of the questionnaires and the focus groups.

The results will analyse the demographic information and then will analyse the two main themes: Japanese Cultural Tourism and Marketing. Each analysed research question will state whether it refers to questionnaire results, the focus group or both. This will help create an overall analysis from the primary results which will then be further discussed in the conclusion chapter.

4.2 Results

4.2.1 Demographic Information

Out of the 50 respondents of the questionnaire, there were a total of 40 females and 10 males, aged between 18-65 years. None of the respondents were aged 66 or over. The majority of those who responded to the survey were aged 18-25 years with 30%, the second highest was the 36-45 years bracket with 24%. The reason to know this information is so that it is easy to...
figure out where they potentially are in their life cycle and whether other factors (e.g. work, children, financial stability) that would attribute to their decision about a cultural holiday to Japan.

The majority of those who answered the survey has a relationship status of ‘single/ no children’ with 42.86% of respondents. After this the ‘married/with children’ had 34.69%.

Those who had children were then asked to state ages. The only purpose of this is so that the researcher can see whether it would be easier for people to travel depending on the age of their children. The most common ages of children can be seen in the word cloud below on the right hand side. We can see that some of the most common ages include the ages of 1, 3, 10, 12, 13, 14, 20 and 21. This information will prove important in this analysis as those with younger children may be less likely to travel than those with older children.

The results of the income of the respondents illustrates that 39.58% of people stated that they had an annual income of under £9,999 followed by £10-£14,999 and £40,000-£49,999 (12.50%). This information implies that a proportion of people who answered the questionnaire may not be able to purchase a holiday to Japan or they might be able to but with years of saving and only if they are able to find the best deal for them.
The highest percentage for education attainment was Undergraduate Degree (36%) followed by Post Graduate (20%). A majority of those asked for their occupation listed it as student, other notable occupations include teacher, assistant, carer and retired.

Those who took part in the focus groups were all aged between 20-22. Seven out of the eight people were female and all were students. Section 3.2.3.6 of the methodology chapter discusses the rationale behind the decision of the samples and ages.

This demographic information is vital as it is linked to types of responses to questions where relevant. It is important to note that some questions do not include all respondents (income as an example). Respondents were given the option to answer questions that were relevant to them and could skip those that they found uncomfortable or invasive in answering. This was initially a concern however out of the 50 that answered there were still 48 respondents answered the questions therefore giving enough information for the researcher to work with.

### 4.2.2 Japanese Cultural Tourism

This section will analyse the questions from the questionnaire and the focus group which were primarily aimed at gaining information about the perception of Japanese cultural tourism and how much the respondents knew about Japan and the opportunities to holiday there.
4.2.2.1 Current Views on Japan

The vast majority of those who responded to the questionnaire stated that they saw Japan as a place to visit because of its cities such as Tokyo, Kyoto or Fukushima with 70% of respondents choosing the cities option. 20% of people said that they saw Japan as a place with lots of shrines and temples and then 2% said that they saw Japan as a place with people in lots of traditional dress. The remaining 8% (4 people) selected other and then stated their views as follows:

- “I see Japan as a busy place with business and tourism rated highly amongst travellers”
- “Never considered it”
- “I see Japan as a modern and diverse country”

It’s clear to see from these results that a majority of respondents see Japan as country full of cities rather than the cultural destination Japan represents. However, it is understandable to see why when Tokyo is featured very prominently on a large variety of promotional material for Japan as a lot of tour operators tend to try and sell Japan as a city break/shopping destination rather than a cultural destination, unless the tour operator is specialised in cultural holidays.

4.2.2.2 What would respondents do whilst there?

In the focus group, the respondents were asked:

“Q3-Hypothetically, if you were to go to Japan, what activities would you take part in while you were there?”
The respondents stated that they would take part in sightseeing, shopping and eating some of the local cuisine. One of the respondents said that they would want to try on the traditional dress and visit the local temples and shrines. One respondent said that:

“It would probably be good to do some kind of exchange where someone who lives there takes you round to show you places that aren’t touristy and benefit you.”

(Respondent 3, Group 2)

4.2.2.3 Key Attractions in Japan

Question 16 of the questionnaire looked at how attractive the prospect of visiting some of the major attractions was to those who answered the questionnaire. 26% said that they wanted to visit Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park, 24% stated that they wanted to visit Mt Fuji, 22% were interested in visiting Tokyo Disney, 12% wanted to visit the Imperial Palace, 6% wanted to visit Tokyo Tower and 10% (5 people) stated other and listed their options:

- All Attractions (three people)
- Akihabara District

The responses show that cultural attractions appeal to a majority of respondents and would be on their to-visit list if they were to ever travel to Japan. It is important to note that those who stated that their view about Japan was mainly a city destination can still incorporate cultural tourism to a city holiday as there are quite a
few cultural attractions based within city limited, one major example being the Imperial Palace.

4.2.2.4 Cities and Regions respondents would visit

20 people said that they wanted to visit Tokyo. Other suggestions people stated included Tokyo Disney, Nagano, Osaka, Hiroshima, Kyoto and rural Japan. 9 people stated that they were unsure or not interested in visiting Japan. Finally, 9 people stated that they would visit multiple cities and regions including:

- Mt Fuji and the Royal Palaces
- Tokyo, Kyoto and Osaka
- The major cities and Mt Fuji
- Tokyo, Fukushima and Mt Fuji
- Tokyo and Mt Fuji (twice)
- Kyoto, Tokyo, Hiroshima and Osaka
- And finally “no, whatever I can fit in”

These results implicate that while people may not have seen a wide range of promotional materials (if any at all), they are still aware of the places that are available to them and would still enjoy a visit. Recommendations about how this could help the JNTO are included in the conclusions chapter.

4.2.2.5 What puts the respondents off going?

Question 17 of the questionnaire focused on a variety of things that would put potential tourists off visiting Japan. It is worth noting that only 49 people answered this question.

- 46.94% of people were concerned about the

![Figure 4.7- What would put respondents of traveling to Japan?](image)
price of travel to Japan
• 18.37% of people were worried about the language barrier
• 14.29% of people were distance that they would have to travel
• 8.16% of people were concerned about natural disasters
• 4.08% of people were concerned about cultural differences
• The other 8.16% selected that there were other reasons as to why they would not go and listed the following:
  • The cost of food and drink whilst they were in Japan
  • Being a vegetarian
  • Animal cruelty

and one person stated that there was nothing that would put them off travelling to Japan.

Looking at the results, it’s surprising to see that the number of people who were concerned about natural disasters is quite low but it is understandable that a majority of people are concerned with the cost of a holiday. The researcher found that, when looking at the cost of a holiday to Japan, Lonely Planet (2017) averages the costs of a holiday to Japan start at ¥8000 (£57) per day for a budget holiday and can range up to and beyond ¥20,000 (£142) per day and when looking at flights, it isn’t easy to find return flights for cheap directly (£600+ when the researcher looked online via SkyScanner).

### 4.2.2.6 Traditional vs Non Traditional Images of Japan

Questions 10-14 of the questionnaire were a variety of traditional and non-traditional images which were used to gain an opinion from the respondents. All of the following quotes are taken from anonymous responses from the questionnaire. The reason for the following questions was to try and give the respondents a view of Japan that they might not have seen before and to see whether these new images would change their view about Japan as a cultural holiday destination. All of the images can be viewed in appendix 7.4 within the questionnaire design.
Image one was image of a port of the South Island, Okinawa. It shows a variety of islands on a sunny day surrounded by a deep blue sea.

From the word cloud we can see that the main words used included: “beautiful, picturesque, tranquil, paradise, clean, inviting”.

Some full statements included:

- Looks like the Mediterranean. Not how I pictured Japan
- It looks to be a very clean and picturesque place to visit. I really like the lack of high rise hotels in this picture
- Fairly rural, not particularly developed, warm, beaches, unpolluted, calm, tranquil
- Pretty, almost like a type of paradise. Not what you’d think at first when you hear ‘Japan’
- Beautiful!! It’s looks idealic and relaxing, definitely a holiday destination.

Image two shows a traditional Japanese home surrounded by woodland on a grey seemingly winter day. From the word cloud we can see that the main words used included: “traditional, quiet, historical, educational, stunning, representative”.

Some full statements included:
• Traditional and what I expect Japan to be like
• Whilst the weather is clearly not always blue skies and sunshine, this image shows us some beautiful historic architecture. A place I know I would like to visit, rain or shine
• Traditional culture, historic, educational, unique, beautiful, uncrowded
• More in keeping with the perceived image but still appealing, enticing.
• Looks old and full of history. I would enjoy being there

Image three shows the Sapporo Snow festival, which celebrates Winter and ice sculptures, in full swing. A giant snow castle can be seen with seven people stood in front of it in traditional dress as if they are about to give a speech. From the word cloud we can see that the main words used included: “colourful, intriguing, cultural, fun, cold, celebration”. Some full statements included:

• Looks like it’s some type of event. Everyone seems to be having a nice time
• This is clearly a popular winter attraction. Japan is clearly very proud of it’s cultural heritage and likes to celebrate it
• This appears to be more directed towards tourism promoting Japanese culture and heritage.
• Colorful and traditional, something that would definitely attract tourists
• Traditional, interesting. Makes me want to know what is going on
Image four shows Otaru, a small town 30 minutes away from Hokkaido’s capital city Sapporo, with a river running through it. It looks busy with lots of locals. From the word cloud we can see that the main words used included: “Christmassy, city style, modern, quiet, surprising, European”.

Some full statements included:

- Doesn’t strike me as Japan... would be one of the last countries I’d say this was a scene of.
- I don’t generally associate snow, canals or the style of housing on the right with Japan. I like architecture and I really like what I see in this image.
- An interesting contrast of architectural styles within a city
- Not the kind of weather I imagined for Japan!
- Picturesque and perfect for tourists to take pics
- Looks European, Not as crowded as I was expecting

Image five shows a tradition Ryokan (hotel) with the bed set up. Traditionally the Japanese would sleep on the floor on their futons. From the word cloud we can see that the main words used included: “traditional, typical, interesting, authentic, cramped, uncomfortable”.

Some full statements included:
Looks like it would be uncomfortable to sleep on. Looks cramped
Traditional and not something I would fancy sleeping on because it’s so low
Traditional culture but modern amenities, basic, clean,
Very cultural and 'Japanese', perspective of a more homely life as opposed to purely attracting tourists
Very plain, not sure if it is a spa room or hotel room? Not somewhere I would want to go

Overall, some of the more traditional images were what respondents expected to see with respondents stating that they were “Traditional and what I expect Japan to be like” whilst also showing the respondents a new side of Japan that they would have expected with respondents being very surprised at the image of an Okinawan port town, calling it ‘Beautiful!! It’s looks idealic and relaxing, definitely a holiday destination’, proving to the researcher that the use of non-traditional or stereotypical imagery really captures the attention of those who see it.

4.2.3 Marketing and Promotional Material
This section will analyse the questions from the questionnaire and the focus group which were primarily aimed at gaining information about the marketing and promotional material currently used for marketing Japanese cultural tourism, what the respondents felt were the best at capturing their attention and what the respondents expect from marketing and promotional material.
4.2.3.1 What forms of Marketing and Promotional Material have been seen?

Upon completing the primary research and analysing the results, it was clear to see that the JNTO are not currently doing enough to market themselves to a UK audience as 52% of people and seven out of the eight respondents from the focus groups had said that they hadn’t seen any forms of marketing and promotional material for Japan as a cultural tourism destination.

Out of the options then available on the questionnaire,

- 12% of people said online advertisement
- 8% of people said TV advertisement
- 8% of people said Tour operator Brochure
- 6% of people said Tour operator website
- 6% of people said newspaper
- 4% of people said tourist board website

And 4% of people selected other and stated that they had seen marketing and promotional material on trip advisor and in magazine articles.

One respondent in the focus groups stated that they had seen some advertising on social media (Facebook), stating:

"Well now the internet has cookies, it can track what you look at and suddenly Facebook is posting loads of adverts. That’s the only kind of advertising I’ve seen."

(Respondent 4, Group 2)
Another respondent from the focus group stated that they had only really ever seen pictures of other people’s own holidays to Japan rather than any promotional material from the JNTO themselves. The focus group agreed that overall Japan wasn’t a very well marketed country and could do more due to the fact that they hadn’t seen any form of material in any form and 52% of the respondents for the questionnaire said the same.

4.2.3.2 What attracts respondents to certain types of Marketing and Promotional Material?

On the questionnaire, respondents were asked what is it about a piece of marketing and promotional material that makes it attractive to them. Out of the options available on the questionnaire, the respondents selected the following:

- 46% of people said that interesting pictures were key to attracting their attention
- 16% of people said that detailed information pulled them in
- 16% of people said that professional design was important to them
- 14% of people said that money off deals were important to them when looking at promotional material
- 6% of people were tend to look at which company was promoting

And two percent of people said that bold words/slogans were was attracted them to marketing and promotional material.
The JNTO can use this information to their advantage when planning their promotional material. Section 4.2.3.4 is an analysis of the current promotion for the JNTO named ‘Where Tradition Meets Future’ where it is pointed out that their use of footage within the campaign came as a pleasant surprise to the respondents of the focus groups which helps prove that people do look more for interesting images when looking at marketing and promotional material. On the JNTO’s website, the first thing that can be seen is the “Where Tradition Meets Future” campaign, which means that they understand that people respond well to images being used in promotional material.

4.2.3.3 STA Travel VS Virgin

Both of the focus groups were asked to view the Japan specific pages on the STA Travel and Virgin websites. STA is a company which tailors their holidays to younger people around the age of 18-25 whereas Virgin is more for people aged 30 and over. The reason these companies were chosen is due to the fact that when searching for holidays to Japan, these companies came up first and they are also easily recognisable to the participants of the focus groups. The respondents were then asked what aspects of each website were appealing to them, the main differences between the two websites, the pros and cons of each and finally, which company they would choose to book with and why.

Group one were all in agreement that the STA Travel website was a very plain and had the basic information, stating that “there isn’t much that’s representative of the destination” (Respondent 2, Group 1). For group one, the view of the website was negative however group two said the opposite. They all agreed while it was plain, it was keeping with the companies’ style. They stated that it was user friendly and it looked very accessible for all the different types of information a potential tourist might need. One aspect that a respondent liked was that there was a variety of links at the bottom of the page which highlighted some of the most popular trips including ski trips, tailor made trips and tours.
As for Virgin, group one said that they liked the use of colours on the page and stated that it had a better layout than STA Travel. It had all the basic information including currency and some basic language on there to help prospective tourist make a decision. Group two were once again on the opposite end of the scale. They all agreed that there was too much writing on the page and would have preferred seeing the use of imagery a bit more. They also didn’t like the fact that the colour red and the brand were very prominent on the page. One respondent said:

“I’m not a fan of the red. I feel like it’s just…it’s trying to enforce the brand upon the country” (Respondent 4, Group 2)

The main differences that were pointed out by each of the groups included:

- Virgin is clearly aiming for a different market (families with older children, empty nesters)
- STA gave more information on the types of trips they had and basic information such as visa information, currency and language
- STA focused more on the essentials of the holiday (e.g. accommodation transport) whereas Virgin were focussing more on the activities
- The layouts made a difference in deciding which brand they’d choose

One of the last questions in the focus group was:

“Q10-Based on the promotional material you’ve seen from both companies, which company would you book with and why?”

Group one decided that Virgin was the website that they would use if booking a holiday to Japan due to the more professional layout and the information provided. One respondent said that it made them want to investigate more. They also said that the Virgin brand helped influence their decision.

Group two said that, at this point of time in their life, they would use the STA Travel website however if they were to go with older family members or as a luxury holiday then they would choose Virgin. Group two were all in agreement that by booking a
holiday to Japan through the STA Travel website, they feel like they would get more for their money than if they were going to travel with Virgin.

4.2.3.4 Analysis of “Where Tradition Meets Future” Campaign

The video ‘Where Tradition Meets Future’ is a new advertising campaign developed by the JNTO which launched on the 7th November 2016. The purpose of the campaign was to promote inbound tourism from Europe (JNTO, 2016).

The 3 minute long video (Youtube.com, 2017) contained footage from 45 separate locations in Tokyo, Kyoto, Kumano and Ise. The video zips through the locations focusing on modern sites such as the Tokyo Skytree and the National Museum of Emerging Science and Innovation through to more traditionally cultural sites such as the Great Buddha of Nara and the Sagano Bamboo Forest Road in Kyoto (JNTO, 2016).

During the research process, the researcher conducted focus groups where this video was shown to two septate groups. They were then asked ‘What is your impression of Japan based on the video?’ and ‘What did you like about the video? What stood out for you the most? Was there anything you disliked?’.

Using the focus group transcript (appendix 7.8) and some literature from chapter two, the researcher will analyse the video in terms of attracting the audience and the impression it left on them.

The overall impression that was gained from the video from the two focus groups was a positive one. Comments made about the video included some which pointed out how vibrant the video was whilst also showing the traditional side of it all. One respondent said that the video showed that Japan has “got a lot to offer. There are modern and traditional elements on offer. There’s a bit of something for everyone”. A few of the respondents stated that they wanted to visit Japan after watching the video due to the fact that it does have a lot to offer. One respondent said “The video makes me want to go because I know I could have a little city break and then go see the natural areas”. Just from these few comments, it is clear to see that the
campaign is having a positive effect so far due to the comments being made however to be able to solidify this statement, further research will be needed.

The things that stood out the most for the respondents included the use of cultural dress within the video and the architecture. One respondent said “they seem proud of their culture”. Another respondent stated that the fact that Geishas were used within the video stood out as it was something they recognised but were surprised at seeing the waterfalls as “you sometimes forget about them because of Tokyo being so dominant”. The fact that the architecture and traditional dress have caught the eyes of those watching the campaign shows how influential those images are and by taking this information into account, it’s clear that one again the campaign has done exactly what it has intended to do and captured the audience’s attention by showing something that can be easily recognised and then followed up with something that isn’t expected, further peaking the audience’s interest.

All the respondents within the focus groups agreed that there was nothing that they disliked about the footage. The main thing the respondents all agreed on that they liked was how the footage kept bringing it back to the temples and trying to link tradition in with the modern world, especially with Japan being one of the main leaders in technology development. Linking this information with literature found within chapter two, the main themes to come out of this are Japanese cultural tourism, tourist perceptions and destination branding. Using both the literature and the information collected from the focus group the researcher will analyse further.

During the video, there was a high use of footage from a variety of shrines and castles which are regularly associated with Japanese cultural tourism. Some of the respondents pointed out that the architecture was aesthetically appealing to them. Footage in the video was shot in locations such as Tokyo, Kyoto, Kumano and Ise. Kyoto is considered the most important city culturally in Japan. Kyoto is home to around 20% of Japan’s National Treasures and 15% of Japan’s Important Cultural Properties as well as 24 museums and 37 universities and colleges scattered throughout the city (Bender et al., 2015:292). Using the architecture from shrines
and castles has worked for capturing the audience’s attention and they know that, by seeing the footage, that they can expect a cultural holiday as buildings like shrines and castles is what they associate culture with.

Looking at questions one and two within the focus group transcript (appendix 7.8), both groups stated that they knew nothing or knew very little when it came to Japan as a cultural tourism destination. It is hard for people to have an opinion on a destination if they know nothing or very little about the destination in the first place. As stated in chapter two, Tourists will generally tailor their travels to what they know about a destination and what they can do whilst there (Zeithalm, 1988:44). Due to the participant’s limited information, the researcher was able to introduce them to new information to develop their perception of Japan as a holiday destination. The researcher gave them access to sites where they could look for information and develop a perception at their own pace which was then discussed with the researcher.

After viewing the video, the opinions of the respondents changed. Respondents said that they were very interested in travelling to Japan as they are now aware of what kind of an experience they could expect from Japanese cultural tourism also stating that ‘it’s not like anywhere else’. This shows that, just from viewing the video, the respondents from both focus groups generated a perception on the quality and value of a potential holiday to Japan and said that it would be worth it because of the experiences available to them.

As stated in chapter two, Destination branding is seen as similar to branding a product or service, including whether the brand is luxury or not. Morgan, Pritchard and Pride (2004:4) stated that “choice of holiday destination is a significant lifestyle indicator for today’s aspirational consumers and places where they choose to spend their increasingly squeezed vacation time and hard earned income have to be emotionally appealing with high conversational and celebrity value.” When linking this to the ‘Where Tradition Meets Future’ campaign, some comments that the respondents made during the focus groups stated that the footage shows that:
“It doesn’t seem to be aimed at families and I would say it’s not going to be an affordable holiday. It would be something that you have to save up for a lot of time for and research what kinds of trips are there, how long are they” (Respondent 3, group 2)

While this comment may not exactly point to Japan being seen as a luxury destination, it shows that it’s not exactly a cheap break destination either. The campaigns use of modern and cultural footage shows that a holiday to Japan is meant to be an educational experience that will leave a lasting impression on the tourist. These tourists will then go on to share this experience with family and friends, making the holiday an ‘emotionally appealing with high conversational value’ trip. (Morgan, Pritchard and Pride, 2004:4).

Overall it’s clear that the campaign is doing exactly what it is intended to do. It draws in its viewers and surprises them with new footage that they have never potentially seen before whilst showing them something familiar to keep them engaged. The campaign is designed to show the audience that Japan is a place where there is much to learn in an environment that is both old and new, providing potential tourists with new experiences to give them a holiday which they will talk about for years to come.

4.3 Discussion (34)
This section will focus on the analysis of the results and will discuss any reoccurring themes found within the research. These points will also then be back up by literature found within chapter two.

4.3.1 Reoccurring themes (540)
Throughout the primary research, the researcher noticed that there were some reoccurring themes showing up again and again.

First of all, respondents knew very little about Japan and commented that they had seen very little to no marketing promotion for JCT. Another issue highlighted what
people expect to see in Japan is that it mainly revolves around the large cities (e.g. Tokyo). As a long distance destination for the UK with a flight lasting around 12 hours, the promotion needs to really make people want to consider going. Images including some traditional Japanese imagery plus some non-traditional ones were shown to participants of the questionnaire and the overall views of images shown in questionnaire was positive. The ‘Where Tradition Meets Future’ campaigns use of modern and cultural footage shows that a holiday to Japan is meant to be an educational experience that will leave a lasting impression on the tourist, making the holiday an ‘emotionally appealing with high conversational value’ trip. (Morgan, Pritchard and Pride, 2004:4).

Another trend was that the price of travel was a concern for the respondents in the questionnaire with 46% of the respondents selecting that option. It was also noted within the focus groups that a trip to Japan doesn’t look like an affordable trip and “It would be something that you have to save up for a lot of time for” (Respondent 3, Focus Group 2).

When doing the primary research, a question was asked regarding the annual income of the respondents. 39.58% of people stated that they had an annual income of under £9,999 and 12.50% said £10-£14,999. Clearly this type of an income does not bode well for those who do decide they wish to go as it means that if they want a ‘once in a lifetime’ experience then they will have to be saving up for a long time. Lonely Planet (2017) averages the costs of a holiday to Japan start at ¥8000 (£57) per day for a budget holiday and can range up to and beyond ¥20,000 (£142) per day and when looking at flights, it isn’t easy to find return flights for cheap directly (£600+ when the researcher looked online via SkyScanner). For those who are trying to save money, this may then put them off going.

Another concern is seasonality. During the spring time, around April and May, the cherry blossom trees bloom and is particularly popular as a tourist attraction as such (both domestic and international). Looking at statistics since 2013, its clear to see that every year since then there has been a rise of around 200,000 visitors on
average during the month of April which coincides with the cherry blossoms blooming. (Japan Tourism Marketing Co., 2017). This will obviously cause some fluctuation in pricing due to the rising number of people travelling to parts of Japan for this phenomenon.

However, one positive thing to note is that at the end of the survey and focus groups, the respondents were asked if they were interested in visiting Japan after seeing the images and footage during the research process and all agreed that they would, once again proving that using imaginary that consumers don’t usually associate with Japan, surprising them and causing their interest to peak.

4.4 Summary (94)

This chapter has uncovered the results from the primary research and shown the analysis of tourists’ perceptions of marketing and promotional material for JCT using both secondary and primary and how this can be used by the JNTO to attract more UK tourists through branding and advertising.

The final chapter will sum up the findings from the entire project, and will offer final observations about the strengths and weaknesses of this project and recommendations as to how the researcher could further her research in order to gain a more comprehensive understanding into this topic.
V
Conclusion

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5.0 Conclusion

5.1 Introduction
The final chapter consider various parts of the project and reflect upon them and draw conclusions. The chapter will be split into several sections which will review the at the aims and objectives, show the final conclusion of the findings, state the strengths and weaknesses of this project and produce recommendations for the industry and academia, for future improvement upon this topic.

5.2 Aims and Objectives
The aim of this project was to critically analyze tourists’ perceptions of marketing and promotional material for Japanese cultural tourism and to make conclusions and recommendations for the JNTO and their promotion of cultural tourism to Japan in the UK.

The researcher gained enough information from the questionnaires and focus groups to be able to effectively analyse how well current Japanese promotional material works so far and what they could do to improve. Using the findings from section 3 in chapter 4, the researcher was then able to recommend some suggestions as to how the JNTO could better prepare their marketing campaigns in the future.

The objectives are:

6. To critically review literature on cultural tourism in Japan, marketing strategies and tourist perceptions and image of destinations
7. To complete primary research to investigate tourist’s perceptions Japanese cultural tourism promotional material and their perception of Japan as a cultural destination
8. To complete secondary data research into current cultural tourism marketing strategies of the Japanese Tourist board and three tour operators.
9. To analyse the primary and secondary research data and findings
10. To make conclusions and recommendations for the Japan National Tourism
Chapter two critically analysed a variety of topics including cultural tourism in Japan, marketing strategies and tourist perceptions, completing the first and third objectives.

The researcher conducted 50 questionnaires and focus groups which focus on gaining insight to tourists’ perceptions of Japanese cultural tourism promotional material and their perception of Japan as a cultural destination, completing the second objective.

Chapter four analysed the primary and secondary findings which helped the researcher come up with recommendations, completing the final two objectives.

5.3 Final Conclusion of the Findings

The results established key main points which the JNTO could consider when preparing the next marketing campaign.

There needs to be more focus on Japanese culture within marketing material as a lot of people see Japan as a place with its focus on its cities. However due to the recently published campaign this could have made up for this point. Further research must be conducted after an extended period.

There needs to be potential for tour operators and the JNTO to work together to make Japan a more accessible destination to visit financially. This could include putting together multi-tickets to multiple attractions within specific regions (a practice which happens in Orlando, Florida), Possible multi-centre holiday deals for those who want to see a range of attractions in Japan and food package deals for those concerned about the price of food and drink.

The JNTO needs to show how adaptable Japan has become in terms of adding multiple languages to their signage. This will help encourage those who were worried about the language barrier to potentially consider a holiday.

Another key point was that surprising images work! The use of imagery within the “Where Tradition Meets Future” campaign as well as the images within the
questionnaire showed that people didn’t always want to see what they traditionally know Japan to be.

The JNTO could also consider more strategically where adverts are placed. If the JNTO want to attract more UK visitors, then finding out where they see advertisements the most is essential. However due to the recently published campaign this could have made up for this point. Further research must be conducted after an extended period of time.

According to the focus groups, the layout and design of a tour operator’s website does influence consumer’s decisions. If a website is easy to navigate, includes interesting images and filled with important information, the consumer will be more likely to book.

The analysis of the current campaign shows that it is having a positive effect on people’s perception of Japan as it draws in its audience and surprises them with new footage that they have never potentially seen before whilst showing them something familiar to keep them engaged. This was supported by the fact that some of the non-traditional images within the questionnaire pleasantly surprised some of the respondents.

### 5.4 Strengths and Weaknesses of the Project

This section of the dissertation will look at the strengths and weaknesses of the research and how the weaknesses could be turned into strengths in future.

#### 10.1.1 Strengths

During the dissertation, there were a variety of strength that came from the research. Since the themes of this dissertation were very specific (e.g. marketing, Japanese cultural tourism etc.) it meant that the researcher had no trouble in finding relevant books and journal articles within the university library.

It was also very easy to find people who were able to take part in the focus groups due to the fact that the researcher knows no one who has been to Japan and the participants were very willing to take part, making the primary research process a
smooth ride. Another strength from the dissertation came from the results. After analysing the results of both the questionnaire and the focus group together, it was then part of the process to establish conclusions from the study.

Overall, the researcher considers that the dissertation topic represented a contemporary marketing challenge and that the primary research was able to provide relevant an interesting insight to this topic however there were some weaknesses.

10.1.2 Weaknesses
During the dissertation, the researcher found that there were several points which she felt weakened the study. For example, during the literature review, the researcher tried to find visitor numbers for each of the top 10 cultural attractions however she struggled to find them so further research is needed by the JNTO to give others on an international level an insight into how well the attractions are doing.

One of weakness that the researcher found was that the “Where Tradition Meets Future” campaign is still very young and it is currently unknown how well it is doing. Further research is needed in the future to scope the success of “Where Tradition Meets Future” campaign. The best time to do this would probably be after the campaign has been live for one year.

5.5 Recommendations for Industry
The recommendations that the researcher established for the industry were:

1. **Multi-centre Package Deals**- A lot of the participants of the primary research stated that if they were to visit Japan, they would most likely visit multiple places while there. One recommendation would be to create package deals for tourists which include multiple destinations. This would look to potential tourists as an excellent deal and would potentially save them a lot of money.

2. **Multi-Attraction Tickets**- Putting together multi tickets to multiple attractions (which happens in Orlando, Florida), possible multi-centre
holiday deals for those who want to see more of Japan and food package deals for those concerned about the price of food and drink

3. **A potential culture exchange program**- In the focus group, it was noted that an exchange where someone from the local area to show tourists more authentic options for cultural tourism would be an excellent idea as it benefits the tourist who sees true culture at its finest without all the tourist’s gimmicks and the local gets to share their knowledge and even potentially develop a friendship.

4. **Increased marketing techniques**- If the JNTO truly wish to start marketing to a UK audience then they understand that a lot of people may not have seen any promotional material from them to date. A solution for this could be to increase their understanding of where their marketing material is viewed the most and boost the amount of marketing on that media. For example if social media is the one used the most, then the JNTO should boost their marketing on this platform as much as they can with smaller boosts to the ones used less.

5.6 Recommendations for Further Research

For further research around this topic and expand on it further, the researcher established the following:

1. **Limitations to Research**- The researcher found finding journal articles somewhat challenging due to lack of access that wasn’t provided by the university. It may be ideal for the university to review which academic journals may be useful to students and grant access. This situation is different in every university so may not apply to some academics

2. **Ensure access to a wide variety of willing participants prior to primary research**- Finding more people to take part in the questionnaires was also challenging however she managed to get enough to be able to come up with a solid set of results and was able to properly develop a conclusion

3. **Try out other methods of primary research**- The researcher used focus groups and questionnaires. Another ideal method would be interviews which could help provide a more in depth analysis for future research
4. **A visit to Japan, while not essential, may help** - For a researcher to be able to visit Japan and potentially bring back some tourist booklets produced by the JNTO in Japan as well as some souvenirs to show research participants to see whether the items interest them

5.7 **Summary**

This final chapter summarised the aims and objectives that the researcher achieved as a result of the research, the final conclusions, the strengths and weaknesses of the project and some future recommendations for the researcher.

Within this project, the researcher has developed and presented some final conclusions for the JNTO to use in future marketing research in UK tourist perceptions using the conceptual framework developed in chapter two.

In conclusion, the researcher set out to discover how tourists perceive Japan as a cultural tourism destination and how marketing and promotional material play a major role in creating their views. The author believes that while they are doing well, more could be done to attract a UK market. Cultural tourism plays a major part in Japanese tourism due to the fact that Japan is a very cultural society and is proud of that fact. More needs to be done on the JNTO’s part to develop and attract more UK tourists to Japan as there defiantly is interest, just not enough marketing and promotional material.
VI

References


