Determinants of Overall Satisfaction and Revisit Intention for Countryside Stays in Japan: Simultaneous Estimation with a Bivariate Ordered Probit Model

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To formulate a guide designed to ensure that the business of providing countryside stays becomes sustainable, we examine the impact of destination attributes on overall satisfaction and revisit intention. Further, we seek to identify the characteristics of each attribute. Among the attributes, “outdoor activities,” “staying in a farm-inn,” and “eating local cuisine” have relatively strong effects on overall satisfaction. In particular, the attributes “outdoor activities” and “staying in a farm-inn” are key areas of improvement for the rural tourism industry, as countryside stays in Japan offer relatively low rates of satisfaction with these attributes.

Keywords: Countryside Stays, Revisit Intention, Bivariate Ordered Probit Model, Rural Tourism

1. Introduction

The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF) in Japan defines the countryside stays as an excursion during which travelers, including foreign people, spend nights in the countryside and enjoy foods and activities that use rural resources (Note 1). MAFF states that countryside stays are the key factors in improving income levels and revitalizing rural economies by attracting large numbers of tourists. Moreover, they emphasize the need to ensure that providing countryside stays becomes a sustainable business in Japan and is promoted through marketing (Note 2).

To ensure that providing countryside stays becomes a sustainable business, we need to understand the determinants of overall satisfaction and revisit intention for tourists. To examine this issue, many studies have examined the causal relationship between satisfaction with destination attributes and overall satisfaction (Kozak and Rimmington, 2000; Krešić et al., 2012; Yagi and Kikushima, 2019). Similar analyses have also been performed by Sugiama and Santos (2011), Lo et al. (2011), and Grigaliunaite and Pilelienė (2014) for rural tourism (Note 3). These studies, however, examine the effects of latent variables such as scenery, atmosphere, and activities at the destination, which are derived from factor analysis. To provide useful information for countryside stays, we need to grasp the effects of more concrete destination attributes for overall satisfaction and revisit intention, such as “farming activity,” “staying in a farm-inn,” and “dining at farmers’ restaurant.” Therefore, this paper examines the effects of concrete destination attributes, and provides suggestions to ensure providing countryside stays becomes a sustainable business in Japan.

2. Framework of Analysis

1) Data

This study uses data gathered via a web questionnaire that was conducted in January 2020 by Neomarketing Inc. in Japan. We sent the screening survey to 20,000 people who live in government-ordinance-designated cities and special wards in three metropolitan areas: the Kanto, the Chukyo, and the Kinki areas. We extracted the respondents along with the population composition of each city, sex, and age group. As it is important to promote urban–rural exchange to revitalize the rural economy, we examined the travel behaviors of urban residents who live in these three metropolitan areas. Because of the scarcity of monitors, we ultimately obtained the data of 19,995 respondents (Note 4).
Among the 19,995 respondents, we considered rural tourists to be people who lived in urban areas, had stayed nights in rural areas for sightseeing purposes in the last two years (Note 5), and had participated in at least one of the attributes in Table 1. To conduct the main survey, we randomly selected 800 of these rural tourists. We excluded the responses of 49 of these selected respondents, who provided identical answers to each question except for (in some cases) one question regarding tourist motivation. Subsequently, we analyzed the data of the remaining 751 respondents. We show the characteristics of respondents and the definitions of variables in Tables 1 and 2.

2) Methods
To discern the determinants of overall satisfaction and intention to revisit, we assumed that each respondent’s overall satisfaction with a countryside stay and their revisit intention were correlated. Therefore, we used a bivariate ordered probit model that assumed a correlation between the error terms (Yagi and Kikushima, 2019).

Individual $i$’s two latent variables $y_{ij}$ ($j = 1$ or 2), overall satisfaction and revisit intention, are determined by

$$ y_{1i} = \beta_1 x_{1i} + \epsilon_{1i} \quad (1) $$
$$ y_{2i} = \beta_2 x_{2i} + \epsilon_{2i} \quad (2) $$

where $x_{1i}$ and $x_{2i}$ are explanatory variables, $\beta_1$ and

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Table 1. Definitions and Statistics for Variables

| Name                          | Definition                                                                 | Mean  | SD   |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|------|
| Female dummy                  |                                                                           | 0.30  | -    |
| Age                           |                                                                           | 51.20 | 11.94|
| Annual income per person (2 million yen) | 1=less than 2 million yen, 2=2-4 million yen, 3=4-6 million yen, 4=6-8 million yen, 5=more than 8 million yen | 2.91  | 1.06 |
| Working hours (20 hours/week) | 0=0 hour, 1=less than 20 hours, 2=20-40 hours, 3=40-60 hours, 4=more than 60 hours | 2.07  | 1.22 |
| Household size                |                                                                           | 2.14  | 0.92 |

Attend dummies for each destination attributes last 2 years (the attend respondents=1, did not attend=0)

| Name                          | Definition                                                                 | Mean  | SD   |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|------|
| Interacting with rural residents | Interaction with rural residents                                           | 0.10  | -    |
| Farming activity               | Farming activities(rice plating, digging potatoes, etc.)                    | 0.08  | -    |
| Cooking activity               | Cooking activities(making soba, local cuisine and making)                    | 0.11  | -    |
| Making crafts                  | Craft making(straw craft, dyeing with vegetable dyes, etc.)                 | 0.09  | -    |
| Learning about a rural area    | Learning about the rural area with guide(history, culture, etc.)             | 0.11  | -    |
| Outdoors activities            | Outdoors(mountain climbing, going down stream in a boat,playing at a river, cycling, camp, etc.) | 0.30  | -    |
| Going to a tourist farm        | Tourist farm(fruits picking, milking at the ranch, etc.)                    | 0.23  | -    |
| Going to a winery or sake brewery | Visiting winery or sake brewery                                             | 0.24  | -    |
| Staying in a farm-inn          | Farm-inn                                                                   | 0.18  | -    |
| Dining at farmers' restaurant | Dining at farmer's restaurant                                               | 0.19  | -    |
| Eating local cuisine           | Eat local cuisine                                                           | 0.69  | -    |
| Relax and do nothing           | Relax and do nothing in a rural area                                        | 0.13  | -    |

Table 2. Satisfaction with Each Attribute (unit:%)

|                                | 2=Very Satisfied | 1=Satisfied | 0=Neither | -1=Unsatisfied | 2=Very Unsatisfied | Number of attendances |
|--------------------------------|------------------|-------------|------------|----------------|-------------------|-----------------------|
| Interacting with rural residents | 48.68            | 46.05       | 3.95       | 1.32           | 0.00              | 76                    |
| Farming activity               | 45.90            | 44.26       | 8.20       | 0.00           | 1.64              | 61                    |
| Cooking activity               | 46.51            | 46.51       | 5.81       | 0.00           | 1.16              | 86                    |
| Making crafts                  | 37.50            | 51.56       | 10.94      | 0.00           | 0.00              | 64                    |
| Learning about a rural area    | 40.24            | 51.22       | 7.32       | 1.22           | 0.00              | 82                    |
| Outdoors activities            | 37.61            | 52.21       | 9.29       | 0.88           | 0.00              | 226                   |
| Going to a tourist farm        | 36.00            | 50.29       | 12.57      | 1.14           | 0.00              | 175                   |
| Going to a winery or sake brewery | 40.68            | 49.15       | 9.04       | 1.13           | 0.00              | 177                   |
| Staying in a farm-inn          | 39.42            | 50.36       | 8.03       | 0.73           | 1.46              | 137                   |
| Dining at farmers' restaurant | 45.77            | 47.18       | 4.93       | 1.41           | 0.70              | 142                   |
| Eating local cuisine           | 39.88            | 53.56       | 5.78       | 0.58           | 0.19              | 519                   |
| Relax and do nothing           | 37.76            | 53.06       | 9.18       | 0.00           | 0.00              | 98                    |
| Overall Satisfaction           | 30.36            | 56.59       | 12.78      | 0.13           | 0.13              | 751                   |
| Revisit Intention              | 39.81            | 54.19       | 4.79       | 1.07           | 0.13              | 751                   |

1) In revisit intention, 2=Having revisit intention on regular basis, 1=Having revisit intention, 0=Neither, -1=Do not have revisit intention, -2=Absolutely do not have revisit intention.

2) Methods
To discern the determinants of overall satisfaction and intention to revisit, we assumed that each respondent’s overall satisfaction with a countryside stay and their revisit intention were correlated. Therefore, we used a bivariate ordered probit model that assumed a correlation between the error terms (Yagi and Kikushima, 2019).

Individual $i$’s two latent variables $y_{ij}$ ($j = 1$ or 2), overall satisfaction and revisit intention, are determined by

$$ y_{1i} = \beta_1 x_{1i} + \epsilon_{1i} \quad (1) $$
$$ y_{2i} = \beta_2 x_{2i} + \epsilon_{2i} \quad (2) $$

where $x_{1i}$ and $x_{2i}$ are explanatory variables, $\beta_1$ and
\( \beta_2 \), are vectors of unknown parameters, and \( \varepsilon_{i1} \) and \( \varepsilon_{i2} \) are the error terms. We observe two categorical variables \( y_{ji} \) \((-2 \leq y_{ji} \leq 2)\) such that
\[
\begin{aligned}
y_{ji} &= \begin{cases} 
-2 & \text{if } y_{ji}^2 \leq c_{j1} \\
-1 & \text{if } c_{j1} < y_{ji}^2 \leq c_{j2} \\
0 & \text{if } c_{j2} < y_{ji}^2 \leq c_{j3} \\
1 & \text{if } c_{j3} < y_{ji}^2 \leq c_{j4} \\
2 & \text{if } c_{j4} < y_{ji}^2
\end{cases} \quad (3)
\end{aligned}
\]
the unknown cutoffs satisfy the condition that \( c_{j1} < c_{j2} < c_{j3} < c_{j4} \). We define \( c_{j1} = -\infty \) and \( c_{j4} = \infty \) to avoid handling the boundary cases separately.

If \( \varepsilon_{i1} \) and \( \varepsilon_{i2} \) are distributed as bivariate standard normal distribution with correlation \( \rho \), the individual contribution to the likelihood function could be expressed as follows:
\[
\Pr(y_{i1} = k, y_{i2} = l) = \Phi[(c_{1,k} - \beta_1 x_{i1}), (c_{2,l} - \beta_2 x_{i2}), \rho] - \Phi[(c_{1,k} - \beta_1 x_{i1}), (c_{2,l} - \beta_2 x_{i2}), \rho] - \Phi[(c_{1,k} - \beta_1 x_{i1}), (c_{2,l-1} - \beta_2 x_{i2}), \rho] + \Phi[(c_{1,k-1} - \beta_1 x_{i1}), (c_{2,l-1} - \beta_2 x_{i2}), \rho] \quad (4)
\]
where, \( \Phi(\cdot) \) is the cumulative density function and \( k \) and \( l \) are the integer values from \(-2 \) to \( 2 \). Given the joint probability, the \( \beta_s \), \( cs \), and \( \rho \) are obtained by maximizing the following log-likelihood for the entire sample of size \( N \):
\[
\ln L = \sum_{i=1}^{N} \sum_{k=-2}^{2} \sum_{l=-2}^{2} I(y_{i1} = k, y_{i2} = l) \ln \Pr(y_{i1} = k, y_{i2} = l) \ln \Pr(y_{i1} = k, y_{i2} = l) \quad (5)
\]
where \( I \) is the indicator function that equals one if individual \( i \) chooses \( y_{i1} = k \) and \( y_{i2} = l \) , and zero otherwise (Butler and Chatterjee, 1997; Sajaia, 2008).

Moreover, to calculate the average marginal effects, the conditional probability is estimated as follows:
\[
\Pr(y_{i1} = k | y_{i2} = l, x_{1i}, x_{2i}) = \frac{Pr(y_{i1} = k, y_{i2} = l | (x_{1i}, x_{2i}))}{Pr(y_{i2} = l | (x_{1i}, x_{2i}))} \quad (6)
\]
and marginal effects (\( ME_i \)) is
\[
ME_i = \frac{\partial \Pr(y_{i1} = k, y_{i2} = l | (x_{1i}, x_{2i}))}{\partial x_1} \bigg|_{(x_{1i}, x_{2i})} \quad (7)
\]
then, \( ME_i \) are averaged over the sample (Note 6). For statistical inference, standard errors of marginal effects can be derived by a mathematical approximation procedure called the delta method, and \( z \)-values and \( p \)-values are evaluated (Wang, 2013, p.53).

For the explanatory variables, we used attendance for all attribute dummies and satisfaction for each attribute (Note 7). As shown in Table 2, satisfaction for each attribute is zero if satisfaction is “neither” or “did not attend”; therefore, attend dummies for each attribute mean they attended the relevant attribute and felt “neither.” As shown in Table 2, almost no respondents responded “unsatisfied” or “very unsatisfied” for satisfaction for each attribute; therefore, “neither,” which represents attendance for each attribute dummy, shows a negative image virtually. In addition, we used sex, age, annual income per person, working hours, and household size as explanatory variables. To estimate these models, we used the statistical software Stata.

3. Results and Discussion

As shown in Table 3, a positive and statistically significant correlation coefficient of \( \hat{\rho} = 0.276 \) was found between the error terms, which confirmed the usefulness of a bivariate ordered probit model.

Table 3 shows that when respondents felt “neither” about “learning about a rural area,” “outdoors activities,” “going to a tourist farm,” “going to a winery or sake brewery,” “staying in a farm-inn,” “dining at farmers’ restaurant,” and “eating local cuisine,” their overall satisfaction was significantly negatively affected. Similarly, among the attending respondents for all attribute dummies, “making crafts,” “learning about a rural area,” “staying in a farm-inn,” and “eating local cuisine” significantly negatively impacted revisit intention. These results indicate that careful examination is needed to enhance these attributes at countryside vacation destinations.

Regarding the rates of satisfaction, “learning about a rural area,” “outdoors activities,” “going to a tourist farm,” “going to a winery or sake brewery,” “staying in a farm-inn,” “dining at farmers’ restaurant,” “eating local cuisine,” and “relax and do nothing” significantly positively impacted overall satisfaction. Moreover, satisfaction with “making crafts,” “learning about a rural area,” “staying in a farm-inn,” “eating local cuisine,” and “relax and do nothing” positively impacted revisit intention. These results show that proprietors of countryside vacation
destinations must carefully manage these features of their businesses. If tourists felt “satisfied” about these attributes, the businesses could achieve high overall satisfaction and revisit intention. In particular, Yagi and Kikushima (2019), examined the determinants of overall satisfaction and revisit intention for foreign tourists in Japan. Their study showed that the satisfaction for Japanese foods had significantly positive effects for overall satisfaction and revisit intention; our study shows similar results where satisfaction for “eating local cuisine” had positive effects, as seen in Table 3. These results, therefore, show that food is an essential factor for tourists’ satisfaction, at least with tourism in Japan. In addition, among the variables which has significance effects, the percentages of the respondents who did not answer “very satisfied” or “satisfied” for “making crafts,” “outdoors activities,” “going to a tourist farm,” “going to a winery or sake brewery,” and “staying in a farm-inn” were relatively high at more than 10%, as shown in Table 2. Among these attributes, “outdoors activities” and “staying in a farm-inn” have a particularly strong positive impact on overall satisfaction. As shown in Table 1, “outdoors activities” include nature experiences such as going down stream in a boat and playing at a river. These experiences are impossible to do in urban areas and are quite popular among various people. Thus, these may be essential factors for countryside stays. Moreover, “staying in a farm-inn” is important for connecting and communicating with farmers and allows tourists to get an authentic experience of rural life. Thus, those who enjoy rural life will exhibit high overall satisfaction and revisit intention after staying in a farm-inn.

Moreover, we calculated average marginal effects, shown in Table 4. When satisfaction with each attribute increases one unit, the probability of selecting “2: very satisfied,” and “2: having revisit intention on regular basis,”

Table 3. Estimation Results of Bivariate Ordered Probit Model

| Degree of satisfaction for each attribute | Overall satisfaction Coef | Robust SE | Revisit intention Coef | Robust SE |
|------------------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------|------------------------|-----------|
| Interacting with rural residents         | -0.187                    | 0.294     | 0.169                  | 0.297     |
| Farming activity                         | -0.334                    | 0.346     | -0.051                 | 0.237     |
| Cooking activity                         | -0.372                    | 0.360     | -0.212                 | 0.208     |
| Making crafts                            | 0.193                     | 0.296     | 0.470                  | 0.235     |
| Learning about a rural area              | 0.634                     | 0.196 **  | 0.274                 | 0.199     |
| Outdoors activities                      | 0.755                     | 0.143 **  | 0.436                 | 0.146 **  |
| Going to a tourist farm                  | 0.546                     | 0.169 **  | 0.205                 | 0.141     |
| Going to a winery or sake brewery        | 0.502                     | 0.150 **  | 0.102                 | 0.155     |
| Staying in a farm-inn                    | 0.743                     | 0.203 **  | 0.727                 | 0.138 **  |
| Dining at farmers’ restaurant           | 0.406                     | 0.199 **  | -0.182                | 0.162     |
| Eating local cuisine                     | 0.756                     | 0.121 **  | 0.463                 | 0.104 **  |
| Relax and do nothing                     | 0.238                     | 0.107 *   | 0.313                 | 0.105 **  |

| Attend dummies for each destination attribute | Overall satisfaction Coef | Robust SE | Revisit intention Coef | Robust SE |
|-----------------------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------|------------------------|-----------|
| Interacting with rural residents              | 0.542                     | 0.423     | 0.001                  | 0.431     |
| Farming activity                             | 0.658                     | 0.501     | 0.342                  | 0.345     |
| Cooking activity                             | 0.321                     | 0.502     | 0.047                  | 0.278     |
| Making crafts                                | -0.462                    | 0.395     | -0.611                | 0.310 *   |
| Learning about a rural area                  | -0.598                    | 0.247 *   | -0.415                 | 0.248 +   |
| Outdoors activities                          | -0.666                    | 0.184 **  | -0.295                 | 0.210     |
| Going to a tourist farm                      | -0.374                    | 0.195 +   | -0.034                 | 0.192     |
| Going to a winery or sake brewery            | -0.375                    | 0.181 *   | 0.242                 | 0.215     |
| Staying in a farm-inn                        | -1.015                    | 0.258 **  | -0.922                 | 0.191 **  |
| Dining at farmers’ restaurant               | -0.488                    | 0.268 +   | 0.295                 | 0.245     |
| Eating local cuisine                         | -0.732                    | 0.172 **  | -0.403                | 0.167 *   |

| Female dummy                                | -0.042                    | 0.116     | -0.038                | 0.118     |
| Age                                          | -0.019                    | 0.004 **  | -0.007                | 0.004 +   |
| Annual income per person(2 million yen)      | 0.059                     | 0.047     | 0.012                 | 0.052     |
| Working hours(20 hours/week)                | -0.067                    | 0.043     | -0.027                | 0.044     |
| Household size                               | -0.014                    | 0.056     | 0.072                 | 0.060     |

| β (Correlation parameter)                    | 0.276                     | 0.060 **  | -1133.92              |           |
| Log pseudolikelihood                        | 0.276                     | 0.060 **  | -1133.92              |           |

1) **p<0.01, *p<0.05, +p<0.1. Baseline of attendance for each attribute dummy variables is “relax and do nothing.”
increase 18.8% and 14.4% for “outdoors activities,” 18.5% and 24.0% for “staying in a farm-inn.” In particular, if guests were satisfied with “outdoors activities” and “staying in a farm-inn,” the probability they would want to revisit regularly increased by 24.0%, making it an important attribute for acquiring repeat customers.

Moreover, age significantly impacted overall satisfaction and revisit intention; young people tended to feel satisfied with their experience and desire to visit the area again. These results could be explained by young people having less experience with rural areas than older people do, meaning they have more novel experiences.

4. Conclusion

In this paper, we examined what attributes are important for influencing overall satisfaction and revisit intention for tourists who had stayed in the countryside. The data showed that “making crafts,” “learning about a rural area,” “outdoors activities,” “going to a tourist farm,” “going to a winery or sake brewery,” “staying in a farm-inn,” “dining at farmers’ restaurant,” “eating local cuisine,” and “relax and do nothing” are very important attributes that affect overall satisfaction and/or revisit intention. In particular, the percentages of those who did not answer “very satisfied” and “satisfied” regarding the attributes of “making crafts,” “outdoors activities,” “going to a tourist farm,” “going to a winery or sake brewery,” and “going to a farm-inn” were relatively large at more than 10%; these attributes can therefore be the focus of improvements. Moreover, among these attributes, satisfaction with “outdoors activities” and “staying in a farm-inn” had strong positive impacts on overall satisfaction and revisit intention. If the respondents were satisfied with “staying in a farm-inn” and “outdoor activities,” the probability they would want to revisit regularly increased by 24.0% and 14.4%, respectively; hence, businesses should carefully focus on these attributes.

As mentioned above, we discerned the characteristics of destination attributes and the relationship with overall satisfaction and revisit intention in countryside stays. One limitation of this research is our need to distinguish tourists’ characteristics and then conduct the same analysis to grasp the relationships between tourists’ characteristics and each attribute by using bigger data. Our hope is that this paper can be utilized as a guide to help run sustainable tourist businesses in rural areas.

(Note 1) See MAFF’s website.

(https://www.maff.go.jp/j/nousin/kouryu/nouhaku/arikata-20.pdf) (Accessed June 1, 2020) (in Japanese).

(Note 2) See MAFF’s website.

(https://www.maff.go.jp/j/nousin/kouryu/170203.html) (Accessed June 1, 2020) (in Japanese).

(Note 3) Ideas of these studies are based on the measurement methods of service quality such as SERVQUAL model by Parasuraman et al. (1988),

| Overall Satisfaction | Revisit Intention |
|----------------------|-------------------|
| 1:Satisfied          | 2:Very satisfied  | 1:Having revisit intention | 2:Having revisit intention on regular basis |
| Interacting with rural residents | 0.015 | -0.047 | -0.038 | 0.056 |
| Farming activity     | 0.027 | -0.083 | 0.012 | -0.017 |
| Cooking activity     | 0.030 | -0.093 | 0.048 | -0.070 |
| Making crafts        | -0.016 | 0.048 | -0.107* | 0.155* |
| Learning about a rural area | -0.052** | 0.158** | -0.062 | 0.090 |
| Outdoors activities  | -0.061** | 0.188** | -0.099** | 0.144** |
| Going to a tourist farm | -0.044** | 0.136** | -0.047 | 0.060 |
| Going to a winery or sake brewery | -0.041** | 0.125** | -0.023 | 0.034 |
| Staying in a farm-inn | -0.060** | 0.185** | -0.165** | 0.240** |
| Dining at farmers' restaurant | -0.033* | 0.101* | 0.041 | -0.060 |
| Eating local cuisine | -0.062** | 0.188** | -0.105** | 0.153** |
| Relax and do nothing | -0.019* | 0.059* | -0.071** | 0.103** |

1) **p<0.01, *p<0.05
which suggests that service quality will be measured by five specific dimensions. However, Lo et al. (2011) said that past studies conducted in a variety of settings suggest that the five SERVQUAL dimensions are not universal and applicable for all services. In fact, many studies have examined the effects of various attributes for service quality like tourist satisfaction studies that were mentioned above; thus, this study also examines the effects of various attributes.

(Note 4) Although there are scarcities of five respondents, the share of scarcity is only 0.025%. Moreover, many studies have collected much less data via mail surveys; for this reason, we determined that these scarcities did not present an issue.

(Note 5) To distinguish between rural and urban areas, we used subjective classifications that were used in Cabinet Office (2014). For our working definitions, we said: "Rural areas have many farms and forests, as well as prosperous agricultural forestry industries and fisheries. Urban areas are non-rural areas."

(Note 6) See more details from Beaumais and Giannoni (2017).

(Note 7) When we say “attend” or “attendance,” we refer to whether the respondent engaged in that attribute/activity during their countryside stay.

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