Motivation Analysis of Foreign Participants to International Conferences held in Japan

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Abstract

In this paper, we analyzed the questionnaire survey conducted at the international convention held in Japan. Since it is known that venue and social event are important elements to attract participants for international convention, we focused on them. And for the foreign participants, we also analyzed the intention of visiting Japan. Then, we discussed for what is the interest and expectation by comparison in nationality and gender. Furthermore, as a result, we found some trends in the difference of nationality between Asian and Non-Asian. On the other hand, there was no clear difference in gender. These knowledge could help to organizer to make a planning of attractive convention.

Keywords: International Conventions, MICE, Questionnaire Research, Foreign Visitors, Sightseeing

1 Introduction

Recently, the number of foreign visitors to Japan is increasing year by year. The number of foreign visitors increased to 28,691 thousand (19.3% increase over the previous year) in 2017. Especially, visitors from East Asia reached 21,291 thousand including China (7,355 thousand), Korea (7,140 thousand), Taiwan (4,167 thousand) and Hong Kong (2,629 thousand) which is closing the total number of 74.2%. From the perspective of economic ripple effects, the total consumption in 2017 was estimated to be 4,416.2 billion yen (an increase of 17.8% from the previous year). From the nationality point of view, China spent 1,694.7 billion yen (38.4% of the total) , Taiwan : 574.4 billion yen (13.0%), South Korea : 512.6 billion yen (11.6%) and Hong Kong : 34.16 billion yen (7.7%) . The proportion of visitors from China and Taiwan shared 51.4% of the total consumption [1].

Among the inbound tourism businesses, MICE (Meeting/Incentive, Conference/Convention/Exhibition) is known to have high economic ripple effect. This economic ripple effect in Japan in 2017 was estimated to be about 1,590 billion yen as a whole. Among them, the international conference is about 678.9 billion yen (15% increase from the previous year). The total amount of consumption per international conference participant is estimated to be about 373 thousand

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yen, which is 2.4 times the average of about 154 thousand yen for all foreign visitors in Japan [2]. On the other hand, the revitalization of region is the important issues in Japan. It is known that the number of foreign tourists visiting to local area is not much than those visiting major cities such as Tokyo, Kyoto and Osaka. Government launched various policies and investments. Local government is acting development of inbound business by cooperation with industries, but it is still on the way. In order to attract foreign visitors to local cities by the international conference is effective idea. Accordingly, attracting international conferences could increase the number of foreign tourists visiting Japan to the area, which is effective for revitalizing the regional economy. It is important for providing services and events that take advantage of unique venues and local characteristics to attract participants to the international conventions to. In addition, it is also important for the organizer to evoke the motivation of participants to be repeaters. In planning such international conference, it is desirable that stakeholders (organizers, administrators, bureaucrats, facility operators, etc.) have a common understanding and cooperate with each other by clarifying the interests and expectations of the participants.

Therefore, in this research, we analyze the results of the questionnaire survey for the participants of the international conference, and clarify the important items concerning the meeting and social event design to improve the satisfaction of the participants. By this, it becomes possible to design services according to the interests and expectations of participants and it is possible to have high-quality conferences.

Matsuo et al. investigated the differences in motivation and satisfaction among student attendees and non-student attendees in the conference [8]. Sugiyama et al. compared the participants from Asia and non-Asian among international participants [9]. However, at the International Science Council, no research has focused on motivation and expectation based on multinational and gender. In this paper, the expectation and interests of international conference attendees are compared based on nationalities and the gender. We studied for 263 replies of questionnaire survey from three academic international conferences held in Japan in about one year. We find there are some trends in the difference of nationality, while these is no clear difference in gender.

The structure of the rest of this paper is as follows. Section 2 describes related work. Section 3 explains questionnaires surveys. Section 4 shows respondents attribute. Motivation analysis result is shown in Section 5. Then, discussion is shown in Section 6 and conclusion is mentioned in Section 7.

2   Related Work

Research on international conferences has been conducted especially in Europe and the United States. Oppermann et al. explained the participant's decision-making model to the conference by four elements (1. Individual and business factors, 2. Factors of association and conference, 3. Factor of place, 4. Intervention opportunity etc.) [3]. Tanford et al. revealed important elements of attendance, satisfaction, loyalty of participants [4]. Zhang et al. modified Oppermann's model in contribution [5]. However, the research was not based on question-based research for experiments, but based only on the review of existing research ideas. Wu and Weber investigated conference attendees about the selection of venues, the perception of attributes and the importance of services [6]. Yoo and Chon have studied about five dimensions on decision-making of meeting participation : (a) stimulation of destination, (b) opportunity of professional and social networking, (c) educational opportunity, (d) safety and health situation, (e) Travel) [7].

3   Questionnaire Survey

A questionnaire survey was conducted at three academic international conferences held in Hamamatsu, Shizuoka, Japan in July 2017, Kanazawa, Ishikawa, Japan in Nov. 2017, and Yonago, Tottori, Japan in July 2018. Total number of respondents are 263 from 32 countries, including 96 Japanese. Since each questionnaire has slight difference from the others, we focused on the several questions among all. The questionnaire is asked about three elements; Section 1:"About international conferences", Section 2:"About tourism in Japan", Section 3:"Questions about respondents themselves". In this paper, we focused on the expectations of International Conference held in Japan shown in Table 1 and the intention of Japan visit shown in Table 2. Regarding answer method, it may be one choice or multiple choices form different choices. On the other case, questions are evaluated in 5 grades to measure the level of respondents. (1: least important / least agreed, 2: less important / less agreed, 3: neutral, 4 more important / more agreed, 5: most important / most agreed). Further, Table 3 is a question about respondent's personal information.

Table 1: Question items for Expectation to the international conferences held in Japan

#	Questions	Answer items
Q1	What kind of social events do you expect? (Multiple answers allowed)	1. Banquet (dinner party)
		2. Welcome Reception Party
		3. Farewell Reception Party
		4. Coffee Break
		5. Excursion
		6. Attraction (traditional dance show, etc.)
Q2	What kind of venue do you expect for the international conference held in Japan? (Multiple answers allowed)	1. Modern conference hall
		2. Museums
		3. Historic buildings
		4. Shrines / Temples / Churches
		5. Hotels
Q3	Are you interested in international conference held in local cities other than Tokyo, Osaka and Nagoya in Japan?	1. least important / least agreed
		2. less important / less agreed
		3. neutral
		4. more important / more agreed
		5. most important / most agreed

Table 2: Question items of Intention of visiting Japan

#	Questions	Answer items
Q4	Do you want to visit Japan for your sightseeing travel?	1. least important / least agreed
		2. less important / less agreed
		3. neutral
		4. more important / more agreed
		5. most important / most agreed
Q5	Do you want to visit Japan to attend an international conference?	1. least important / least agreed
		2. less important / less agreed
		3. neutral
		4. more important / more agreed
		5. most important / most agreed

Q6	Convenient transportation availability to Japan is important for you to travel to the conference venue.	1. least important / least agreed
		2. less important / less agreed
		3. neutral
		4. more important / more agreed
		5. most important / most agreed
Q7	How is the convenience of travel from your country to Japan?	1. least important / least agreed
		2. less important / less agreed
		3. neutral
		4. more important / more agreed
		5. most important / most agreed
Q8	What do you want to experience to eat Japanese food during your stay in Japan?	1. least important / least agreed
		2. less important / less agreed
		3. neutral
		4. more important / more agreed
		5. most important / most agreed
Q9	Do you expect to buy good Japanese traditional souvenir?	1. least important / least agreed
		2. less important / less agreed
		3. neutral
		4. more important / more agreed
		5. most important / most agreed
Q10	Do you want to make a time to have sightseeing in Japan after/before the conference?	1. least important / least agreed
		2. less important / less agreed
		3. neutral
		4. more important / more agreed
		5. most important / most agreed
Q11	Do you want to visit local city in Japan after/before the conference?	1. least important / least agreed
		2. less important / less agreed
		3. neutral
		4. more important / more agreed
		5. most important / most agreed
Q12	How do you think the importance of cost of sightseeing in Japan?	1. least important / least agreed
		2. less important / less agreed
		3. neutral
		4. more important / more agreed
		5. most important / most agreed
Q13	Do you expect a dinner party in international conference held in Japan?	1. least important / least agreed
		2. less important / less agreed
		3. neutral
		4. more important / more agreed
		5. most important / most agreed

Table 3: Question items of Personal information

#	Items	Choices
Q14	Age	1. 20's 2. 30's 3. 40's 4. 50's 5. 60's 6. 70's and over
Q15	Gender	1. Female 2. Male 3. Other
Q16	Nationality	( )
Q17	Occupation	1. Company Director 2. Company Manager 3. Company Employee 4. Company Temporary employee 5. Assistant Professor 6. Lecturer 7. Associate professor 8. Full Professor 9. School Officer 10. Graduate Student 11. Undergraduate Student 12. Others (_____)
Q18	Annual income	1. US$10,000 or less 2. US$10,000-29,999 3. US$30,000-49,999 4. US$50,000-99,999 5. US$100,000 or over

4   Respondents Attributes

Concerning respondents attributes, there were 263 respondents, including 96 Japanese, in 32 countries. Respondent profiles are shown in Tables 4 to 8. Table 4 shows the age distribution of respondents was 27.4% in the 20s, 24.0% in the 30s, 26.2% in the 40s, 12.5% in the 50s, 4.6% in the 60s and 4.6% in the 70's and over.

The gender distribution is shown in Tbale5. As for the Gender distribution, 21.3% of respondents were female and 73.8% of them were male.

The distribution of nationality is shown in Table 6. 42.2% of the respondents were from Asian countries (China, Indonesia, Korea, Malaysia, Philippine, Taiwan, Thai and Tibet), 36.5% were Japanese and 14.4% were participants from non-Asian countries.

The distribution of occupation is shown in Table 7. 81.7% of the respondents were faculty members and 6.8% were come from company domains.

Table 4 : Q14 Age distribution

#	Age	No. of respondents	%
1	20's	72	27.4%
2	30's	63	24.0%
3	40's	69	26.2%
4	50's	33	12.5%
5	60's	12	4.6%
6	70's and over	12	4.6%
7	Unanswered	2	0.8%

Table 5 : Q15 Gender distribution

#	Gender	No. of respondents	%
1	Female	56	21.3%
2	Male	194	73.8%
3	other	1	0.4%
4	Unanswered	12	4.6%

Table 7: Occupation distribution

#	Occupation	No. of respondents	%
1	Company Director	3	1.1%
2	Company manager	6	2.3%
3	Company employee	8	3.0%
4	Company temporary employee	1	0.4%
5	Assistant professor	24	9.1%
6	Lecturer	16	6.1%
7	Associate professor	46	17.5%
8	School officer	3	1.1%
9	Full professor	48	18.3%
10	Graduate student	70	26.6%
11	Undergraduate student	8	3.0%
12	others	13	4.9%
13	Unanswered	17	6.5%

Table 6 : Q16 Nationality distribution

#	Country	No. of respondents	%
1	Australia	1	0.4%
2	Austria	2	0.8%
3	Botswana	1	0.4%
4	Canada	2	0.8%
5	China	23	8.7%
6	Croatia	1	0.4%
7	Danish	1	0.4%
8	France	1	0.4%
9	German	4	1.5%
10	Greek	1	0.4%
11	Hungary	1	0.4%
12	India	4	1.5%
13	Indonesia	4	1.5%
14	Iran	1	0.4%
15	Italy	2	0.8%
16	Japan	96	36.5%
17	Korea	3	1.1%
18	Luxembourg	1	0.4%
19	Macedonia	2	0.8%
20	Madagascar	1	0.4%
21	Malaysia	1	0.4%
22	Mexico	1	0.4%
23	Norway	1	0.4%
24	Philippine	1	0.4%
25	Russia	3	1.1%
26	Slovenia	1	0.4%
27	Spain	2	0.8%
28	Sri Lanka	1	0.4%
29	Taiwan	71	27.0%
30	Thai	8	3.0%
31	Tibet	1	0.4%
32	USA	2	0.8%
33	Unknown	1	0.4%
34	Unanswered	17	6.5%
	Total	263	100%

The annual income distribution is shown in Table 8.

Table 8: Annual income distribution

#	Income range	No. of respondents	Percentage
1	US$10,000 or less	69	26.2%
2	US$10,000-29,999	44	16.7%
3	US$30,000-49,999	46	17.5%
4	US$50,000-99,999	57	21.7%
5	US$100,000 or over	16	6.1%
6	Unanswered	31	11.8%

5   Motivation Analysis

Tables 9 to 12 show the answer results for Q1 and Q2 shown in Table 1. If the number of answer = X was given, frequency was calculated by = (X / Total number of respondents). Deviation was obtained by = |Frequency – Average|. This question is for all respondents, including Japanese participants. Regarding the answer method, it may be one choice or multiple choices form different choices.

In Q1-1 Q1-2 and Q1-4, it is clear that Non-Asian participants expect more social event such as Banquet (dinner party): 0.838, Welcome Reception Party: 0.595 and Coffee break: 0.757 than other nationality participants. And Japanese participants expect less Welcome Reception Party: 0.281, Excursion: 0.156 and Attraction: 0.063 than other participants from foreign countries. From the Gender point of view, shown in Table 10, it is no big difference between Female and Male. In order to increase the appeal of the international conference, it was found that it is important to enhance banquet (dinner party) and coffee break, and Asian participants were also interested in excursions and attractions.

Table 9: Expectation to the social event in Nationality

#	Answer Items	Measure	Asian	Non-A	Japan	Ave
Q1-1	Banquet (dinner party)	Freq	0.652	0.838	0.635	0.673
		Dev	0.022	0.164	0.038	
Q1-2	Welcome Reception Party	Freq	0.491	0.595	0.281	0.424
		Dev	0.067	0.170	0.143	
Q1-3	Farewell Reception Party	Freq	0.116	0.135	0.115	0.118
		Dev	0.002	0.017	0.004	
Q1-4	Coffee Break	Freq	0.598	0.757	0.563	0.608
		Dev	0.010	0.149	0.046	
Q1-5	Excursion	Freq	0.286	0.216	0.156	0.224
		Dev	0.061	0.008	0.068	
Q1-6	Attraction	Freq	0.259	0.216	0.063	0.176
		Dev	0.083	0.041	0.113	

Table 10: Expectation to the social event in Gender

#	Answer Items	Measure	Female	Male	Ave.
Q1-1	Banquet (dinner party)	Freq	0.655	0.687	0.680
		Dev	0.025	0.007	

#		Measure			
Q1-2	Welcome Reception Party	Freq	0.491	0.405	0.424
		Dev	0.067	0.019	
Q1-3	Farewell Reception Party	Freq	0.145	0.113	0.120
		Dev	0.025	0.007	
Q1-4	Coffee Break	Freq	0.564	0.615	0.604
		Dev	0.040	0.011	
Q1-5	Excursion	Freq	0.255	0.221	0.228
		Dev	0.027	0.007	
Q1-6	Attraction	Freq	0.218	0.154	0.168
		Dev	0.050	0.014	

In Q2-1, it was clear that Modern conference hall:0.604 is the most expected venue in all nationality, especially that tendency is clear to the Non-Asian participants:0.703. In Q2-2 and Q2-3, Japanese participants have less interest in the Museums: 0.219 and Historic buildings: 0.344 than Asian and Non-Asian participants. In Q2-4, Shrines/Temples/ Churches: 0.155 is least attractive for all nationality. From Gender comparison, it was found that Female was less interested in the Modern conference hall:0.509 than Male:0.636.

Table 11: Expectation to the venue in Nationality

#	Answer Items	Measure	Asian	Non-A	Japan	Ave
Q2-1	Modern conference hall	Freq	0.571	0.703	0.604	0.604
		Dev	0.033	0.099	0.000	
Q2-2	Museums	Freq	0.384	0.351	0.219	0.314
		Dev	0.070	0.037	0.096	
Q2-3	Historic buildings	Freq	0.527	0.514	0.344	0.453
		Dev	0.074	0.060	0.109	
Q2-4	Shrines / Temples / Churches	Freq	0.170	0.189	0.125	0.155
		Dev	0.015	0.034	0.030	
Q2-5	Hotels	Freq	0.321	0.432	0.438	0.384
		Dev	0.062	0.049	0.054	

Table 12: Expectation to the venue in Gender

#	Answer Items	Measure	Female	Male	Ave.
Q2-1	Modern conference hall	Freq	0.509	0.636	0.608
		Dev	0.099	0.028	
Q2-2	Museums	Freq	0.327	0.313	0.316
		Dev	0.011	0.003	
Q2-3	Historic buildings	Freq	0.436	0.456	0.452
		Dev	0.016	0.004	
Q2-4	Shrines / Temples / Churches	Freq	0.109	0.159	0.148
		Dev	0.039	0.011	
Q2-5	Hotels	Freq	0.400	0.385	0.388
		Dev	0.012	0.003	

The answer results for Q3 mentioned in Table 1 is shown in Table 13 and Table 14. It was found that no big difference for level of interest to the international conference held in local city in Japan both in Nationality and in Gender.

Table 13: Interest of international conference held in local city in Nationality

#	Question items	Meas-ure	Asian	Non-A	Japan
Q3	Interest of international conference held in local city	Mean	3.76	3.53	3.76
		SD	0.96	0.83	0.96

Table 14: Interest of international conference held in local city in Gender

#	Question items	Meas-ure	Female	Male
Q3	Interest of international conference held in local city	Mean	3.50	3.66
		SD	0.84	0.99

Tables 15,16 and Figures 1, 2 show the answer results for Q13 to Q22 shown in Table 2. Regarding the answer method, questions are evaluated in 5 grades to measure the level of respondents. (1: least important/least agreed, 2: less important/less agreed, 3: neutral, 4 more important/ more agreed, 5: most important/most agreed). These questions were only for foreign participants. In terms of comparison between Asian and Non-Asian participants, answer results of Q7:Δ0.53, Q9:Δ0.43, Q10: Δ0.40 and Q11: Δ0.37 were eye-catching. In Q7, it was observed that much important for Asian than Non-Asian participants to have convenience of travel to Japan. Asian countries are geographically close to Japan relatively. And transportation methods are diversified, so participants have many options for convenience such as cost and time. On the other hand, it is presumed that Non-Asian participants have limited choices because of limited transportation methods. In Q9, Asian participants have much interest for Traditional souvenir than Non-Asian. It is well known that Asian people, especially Chinese tourists, love shopping in Japan. In Q10, Asian participants have much interest in the sightseeing after convention than Non-Asian. In Q11, Asian have also much interest in the after convention in local city. In addition, it is noteworthy that the level of interest of Asian participants was always higher than Non-Asian participants for all questions. It is estimated that Asian Participants were found to be interested in not only participating in international conferences, but also sightseeing and shopping than rather than Non-Asian participants.

Table 15: Question items of Intention of visiting Japan in Nationality

#	Question items	Meas-ure	Asian	Non-A	Δ
Q4	Sightseeing travel to Japan	Mean	4.38	4.07	0.31
		SD	0.74	1.12	-0.37
Q5	International conference held in Japan	Mean	4.25	4.12	0.13
		SD	0.79	0.89	-0.10
Q6	Importance of transportation	Mean	4.43	4.27	0.16
		SD	0.81	0.86	-0.05
Q7	Convenience of travel to Japan	Mean	4.26	3.73	0.53
		SD	0.86	1.13	-0.26

			Mean	4.44	4.15	0.28
Q8	Japanese food	SD	0.72	0.83	-0.12
Q9	Traditional souvenir	Mean	3.99	3.56	0.43
		SD	0.95	1.06	-0.11
Q10	After convention of sightseeing	Mean	4.33	3.93	0.40
		SD	0.81	0.99	-0.18
Q11	After convention at local city	Mean	4.25	3.88	0.37
		SD	0.76	0.92	-0.16
Q12	Importance for cost of sightseeing	Mean	4.06	3.98	0.09
		SD	0.76	0.74	0.02
Q13	Expect for dinner party	Mean	4.04	3.86	0.18
		SD	0.94	1.08	-0.14
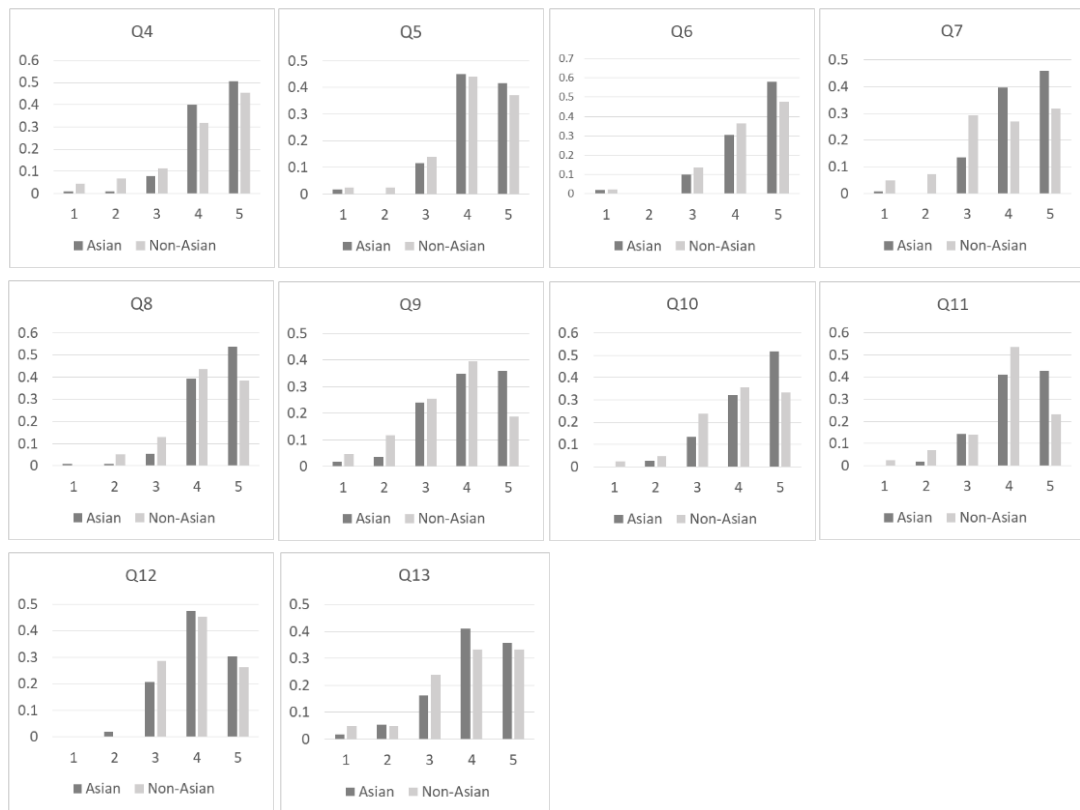
Figure 1: Comparison in Nationality

The answer results in Gender are shown in Table 16. It is observed that no significant difference between Female and Male. Among such tendency, Q9 : Δ0.25, Q5 : Δ0.18, and Q4/Q6/Q13 : Δ0.15 were slight higher than the others. In Q9, Female has much interest in "Traditional souvenir" than the Male. If we take into account the result of Q5, Female might have much interest in Japan itself than Male. As its evidence, interest level of female was always higher than male's.

Table 16: question items of Intention of visiting Japan in Gender

| No.	Question items	Measure	Female	Male	Δ
Q4	Sightseeing travel to Japan	Mean	4.43	4.28	0.15
		SD	0.63	0.93	-0.30
Q5	International conference held in Japan	Mean	4.35	4.17	0.18
		SD	0.61	0.89	-0.28
Q6	Importance of transportation	Mean	4.50	4.35	0.15
		SD	0.59	0.91	-0.32
Q7	Convenience of travel to Japan	Mean	4.21	4.12	0.09
		SD	0.69	0.98	-0.29
Q8	Japanese food	Mean	4.41	4.32	0.09
		SD	0.63	0.82	-0.19
Q9	Traditional souvenir	Mean	4.10	3.86	0.25
		SD	0.74	1.01	-0.27
Q10	After convention of sightseeing	Mean	4.36	4.25	0.11
		SD	0.77	0.88	-0.11
Q11	After convention at local city	Mean	4.28	4.15	0.13
		SD	0.64	0.86	-0.22
Q12	Importance for cost of sightseeing	Mean	4.13	4.00	0.13
		SD	0.65	0.79	-0.14
Q13	Expect for dinner party	Mean	4.05	3.90	0.15
		SD	0.78	1.10	-0.32
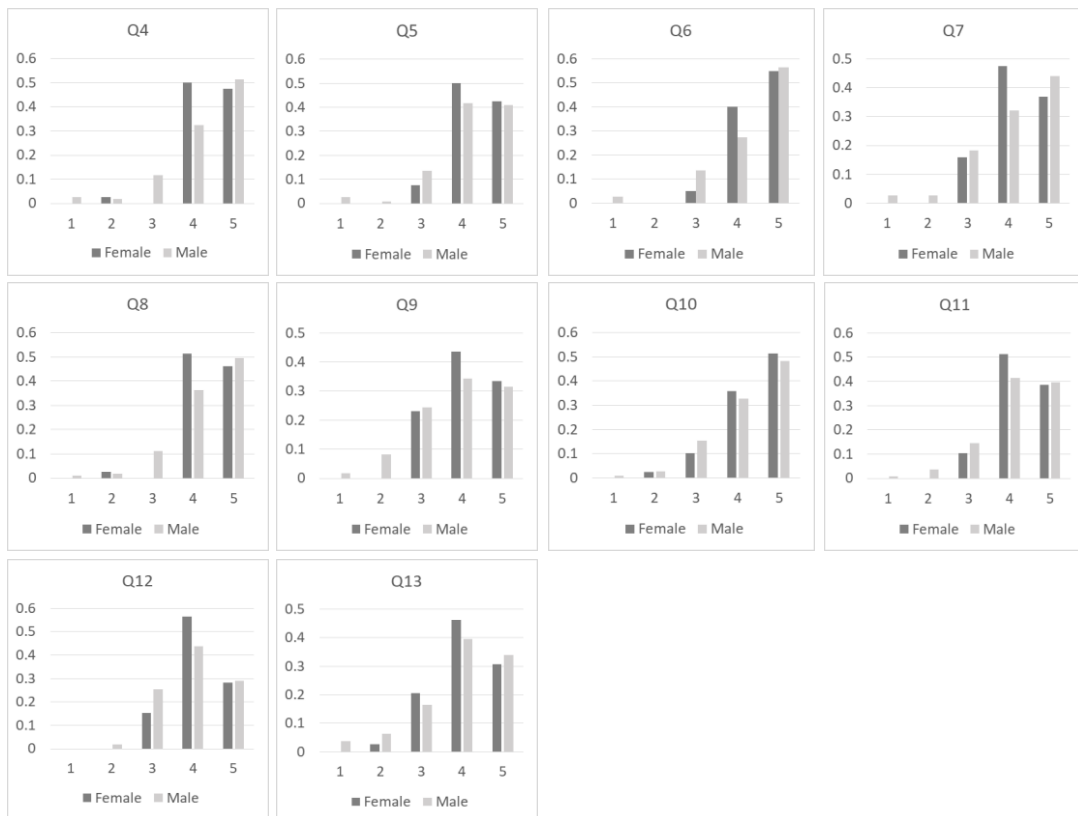
Figure 2: Comparison in Gender

6   Discussion

6.1 Insight of motivation analysis

Concerning results for expectation to the social event shown in Tables 9 and 10, we found that Non-Asian participants expect more social event such as Banquet (dinner party), Welcome Reception Party and Coffee break than other nationality ones. And Asian participants except Japanese expect much for Excursion and Attraction. From the Gender point of view, shown in Table 10, it is no big difference between Female and Male.

In the results of the expectation to the venue shown in Tables 11 and 12, it was clear that Modern conference hall was the most expected venue in all nationality, especially for the Non-Asian participants. Japanese participants have less interest in the Museums and Historic buildings than foreign participants. It is remarkable that Shrines/Temples/Churches that Japanese feel the value was the least attractive for all nationality. From gender comparison, it was found that Female was less interested in the venue than Male.

In the interest to the international convention held in a local city, it was no big difference for tendency by both in nationality and in gender, shown in Table 13 and Table 14.

Concerning results for intention of visiting Japan shown in Table 15 and 16, it is estimated that Asian participants were found to be interested in not only participating in international conference but also sightseeing and shopping after convention, than Non-Asian participants. It is noteworthy that the level of interest of Asian participants was always higher than Non-Asian participants for all questions. In terms of comparison between Asian and Non-Asian participants, in Q7, it was observed that much important for Asian than Non-Asian participants to have convenience of travel to Japan. In Q9, Asian participants have much interest for Traditional souvenir than Non-Asian. In Q10 and Q11, Asian participants have much interest in the "sightseeing after convention" and "after convention in local city" than Non-Asian. From gender comparison, it was not observed big difference.

6.2 Elements of attractive international convention

From the social event program point of view, if the organizer of the international conference wishes to answer the expectations of the participants, it is considered that it is important to enhance banquet (dinner) and coffee breaks. These social events are more expected by all participants. If you want to attract more Asian participants, it would be better to propose excursions and/or attractions that are touristic events. They have much interested in the sightseeing in Japan.

In terms of the conference venue, it is found that Modern Conference Hall was the most expected by all participants. Location of venue is also important. It is important for them the convenience of transportation. On the other hand, Shrines/Temples/Churches was the least expected by all of them.

These findings could be useful for the organizer to make a successful convention planning for the participants.

7   Conclusion

In this paper, we analyzed the questionnaire survey conducted at the international convention held in Japan to know what is interest and expect of the participants to the convention. Especially, we focused on the social event program and venue. From planning of the international convention point of view, the venue is one of the most important elements to attract participants. And social events are also indispensable programs to increase the satisfaction of participants. Therefore, in this survey, we discussed for what is the interest and

expectation by comparison in nationality and gender. As a result, we found some trends in the difference of nationality between Asian and Non-Asian. On the other hand, there was no clear difference in gender. These knowledge could help to organizer to make a planning of attractive convention.

In future research, it is necessary to perform much questionnaire survey on a continuous basis in order to increase the number of respondents and accumulate data.

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