

Community's perceptions and attitudes towards conservation and tourism in Miyajima, Japan

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INTRODUCTION

Tourism, conservation and the community

- Tourism involves travelling to and staying
 - in places outside the usual environment
 - not more than one consecutive year
 - for any purpose different from being remunerated (WTO)
- Conservation ensures the continuity of biodiversity around the world
- Involvement of community members in management process is a factor for success
- For long term survival of conservation and tourism, perceptions and attitudes of community members need to be understood

Miyajima and Tourism

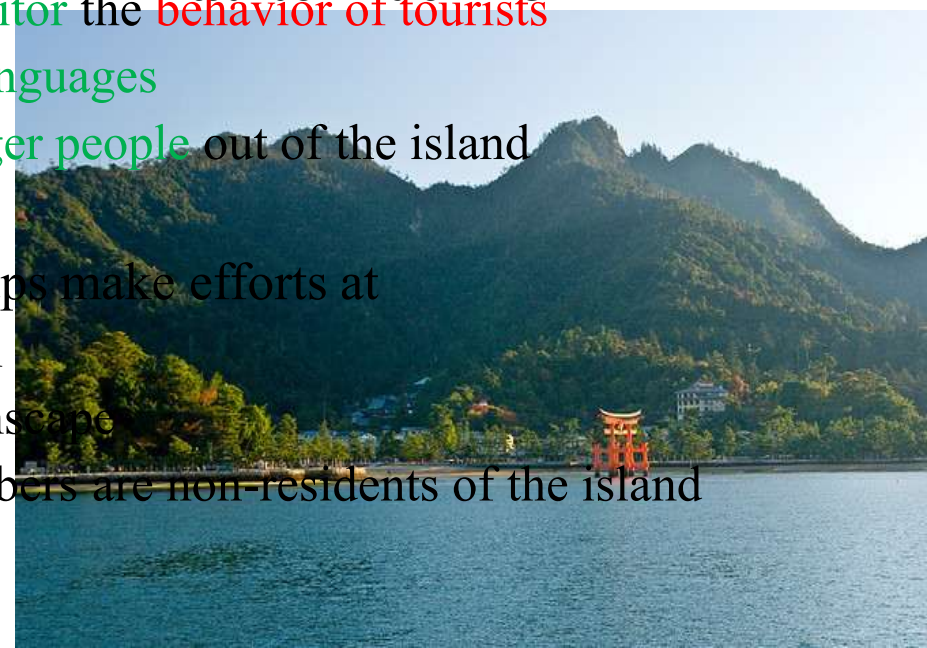
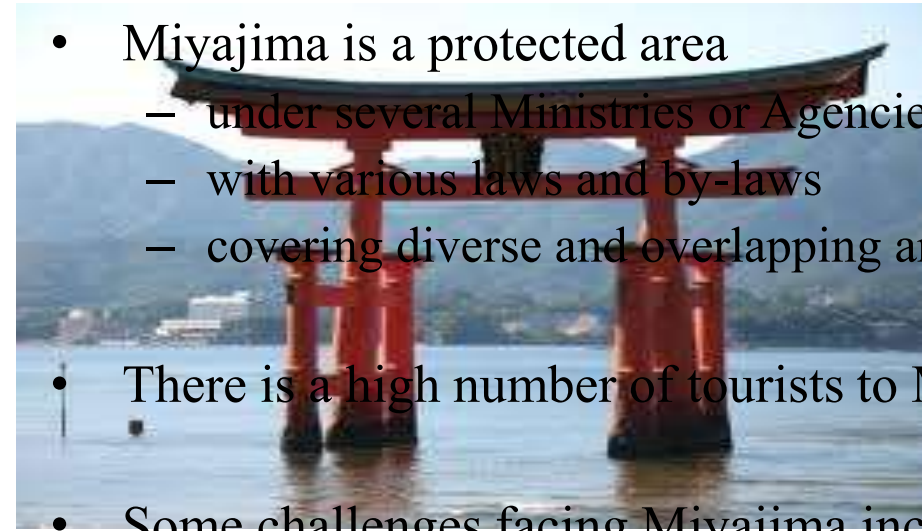
- Miyajima is a protected area
 - under several Ministries or Agencies
 - with various laws and by-laws
 - covering diverse and overlapping areas

- There is a high number of tourists to Miyajima

- Some challenges facing Miyajima include:

- **No tourism policy** to **regulate** and **monitor** the **behavior of tourists**
- Lack of personnel trained in **foreign languages**
- **Aging population** and **migration younger people** out of the island

- Park volunteers and other volunteer groups make efforts at
 - **keeping the island's environment clean**
 - **preserving Miyajima's traditional townscape**
 - **majority of the volunteer groups' members are non-residents of the island**



Itsukushima shrine

Mount Misen

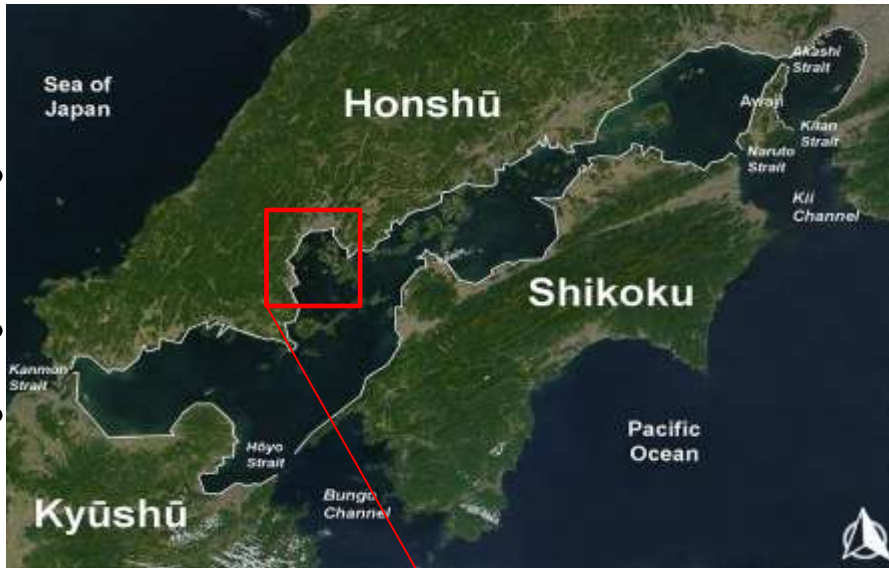
- This study assumes that:
 - Perceptions and attitudes towards tourism and conservation are:
 - dependent on costs and benefits
 - significantly influenced by demographic factors

Objective

- The major objective of the study is to assess community perceptions and attitudes toward tourism and conservation in Miyajima

METHODOLOGY

Study site



Site



Major tourists' sites in Miyajima

– Itsukushima Shinto Shrine,

– the sea in front of it
431.2ha

- Miyajima is mostly forested
- Population is about 3,500

Data collection and analysis

- Questionnaires
 - including closed and open-ended questions
 - 74 community members
 - 24 people working in Miyajima
- Data analysis
 - Frequencies and percentages
 - Pearson Chi-square

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1: Demographic data and characteristics of respondents

Characteristics	Group	Miyajima Community Members		Respondents working in Miyajima	
		Frequency (n=74)	Percentage (%)	Frequency (n=24)	Percentages (%)
Gender	Male	47	63.51	15	62.50
	Female	27	36.48	9	37.50
Age	< 30 years	2	2.70	3	12.50
	30-50 years	17	22.97	9	37.50
	51-70 years	33	44.59	9	37.50
	>70 years	14	18.92	-	-
	No answer	8	10.81	3	12.50
	Education	Junior High	11	14.86	2
	Senior High	20	27.03	6	25.0
	University	33	44.59	13	54.17
	Others	10	13.52	3	12.5
Occupation	Civil servant	9	12.16	9	37.50
	Souvenir shop	21	28.38	7	29.17
	Hotel business	1	1.35	1	4.17
	Tour operator	-	-	2	8.33
	Unemployed	23	16.22	-	-
	Others		41.90	5	20.83
Native of Miyajima	Yes	46	62.16	6	25.0
	No	27	36.49	17	70.83
	No answer	1	1.35	1	4.17
Duration of living in Miyajima	Not living here	-	-	8	33.33
	<10 years	12	16.22	1	4.17
	11-30 years	15	20.27	5	20.83
	31-50 years	18	24.32	3	12.5
	> 50 years	26	35.14	2	8.33
	No answer	3	4.05	5	20.83

Trend of tourism in Miyajima

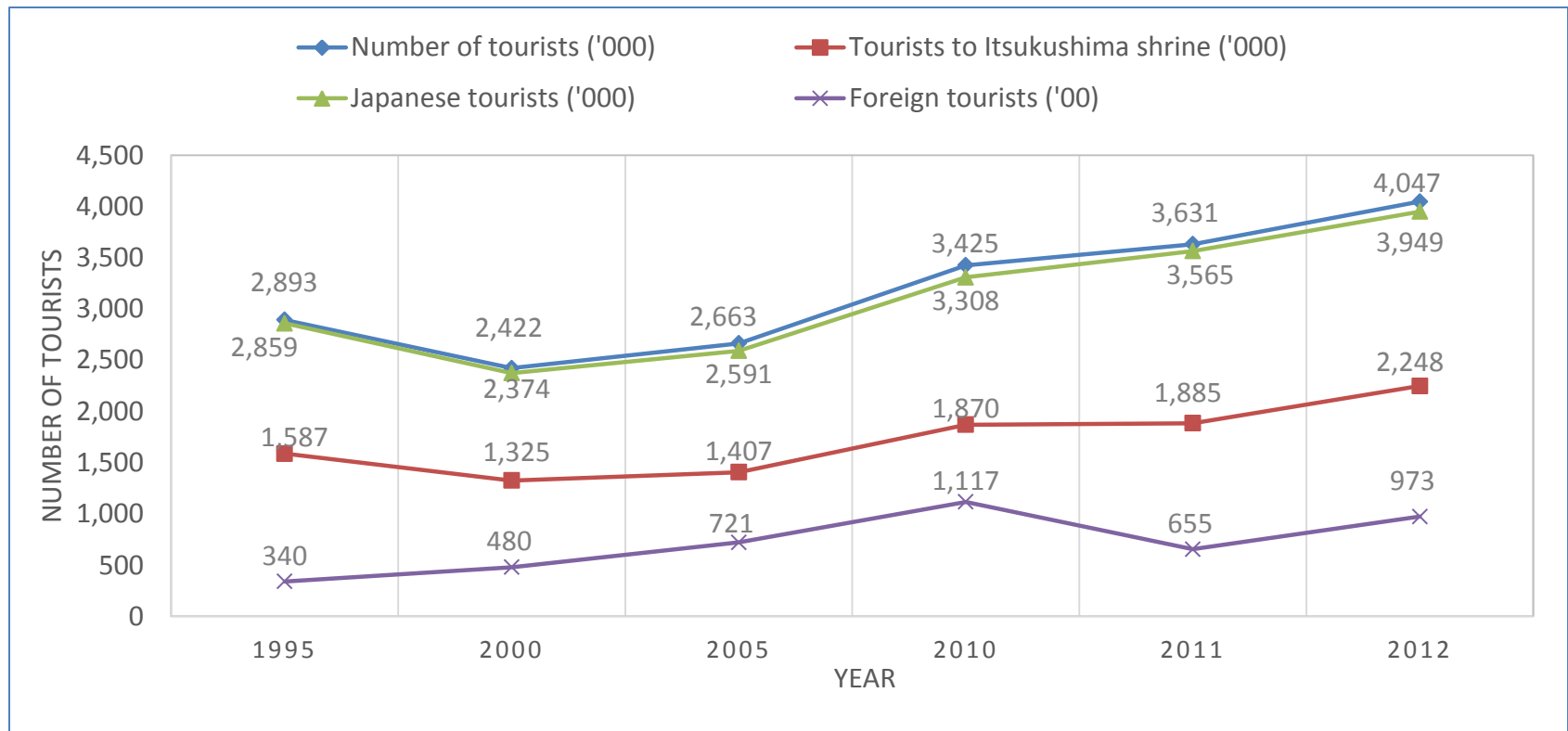


Figure 1: Tourists influx to Miyajima

Source: Adapted from Miyajima Tourist Association (2013)

- progressive increase in visitation
- average of over **337,000 visitors** per month in 2012

Perceptions towards conservation and tourism

Table 2: Perceptions towards the conservation of Miyajima

Questions	Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
What is your impression about the management of forests in Miyajima?	Good management of forests	45	60.81
	Forest not properly managed by government	1	1.35
	Virgin forests are destroyed	7	9.46
	Needs more preservation	6	8.11
	Mountain lies waste due to many domestic woods	1	1.35
	Others	5	6.76
	No answer	9	12.16
	Total	74	100
What is your impression about the management of animals in Miyajima?	Dragon flies are well conserved	2	2.70
	Poor health condition of deer	2	2.70
	Deer are too domesticated	8	10.81
	Too many deer due to feeding by tourists	33	44.59
	Others	15	20.27
	No answer	14	18.92
	Total	74	100
What is your impression about the management of the coasts?	Beautiful, clean and calm	33	44.59
	Too many garbage and seaweeds	19	25.68
	Left without maintenance	1	1.35
	Sand is disappearing from the shore	6	8.11
	Too many oyster raft	2	2.70
	No answer	13	17.57
		Total	74

- impressions about the **forests** are not dependent on:
 - age ($p=0.1284$) or
 - how long they have lived on the island ($p=0.3176$).
- impressions about the **animals** are:
 - **significantly dependent** on their age ($p=0.0041$).
 - **but not dependent on how long they have lived** in Miyajima ($p=0.1522$)
- impressions about the **coasts** are not dependent on:
 - age ($p=0.6631$) or
 - how long they have lived on the island ($p=0.7425$)

Table 3: Community members' perceptions toward tourism

Questions	Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Do you visit tourists' sites on this island?	Yes	49	66.22
	No	9	12.16
	No answer	16	21.62
	Total	74	100
Do you think the tourists' sites are well managed?	Yes	46	62.16
	No	9	12.16
	No answer	19	25.68
	Total	74	100

- Perceptions on the management of sites are not significantly dependent on:
 - age ($p=0.7801$) or
 - whether they have visited the sites before or not ($p=0.1975$)

Table 4: Perceptions of the people working in Miyajima about the island

Questions	Responses	Native	Non-native	Not stated	Total	%
What is your opinion about this Island?	A mixture of tradition, culture and nature	0	2	0	2	8.33
	Love it because it's a good place	3	5	0	8	33.33
	Lots of historical assets and a good sightseeing place	0	5	0	5	20.83
	I love the nature but the Island is inconvenient	0	0	1	1	4.17
	It's inconvenient	1	0	0	1	4.17
	No answer	2	5	0	7	29.17
	Total		6	17	1	24

- The opinions of the respondents are:
 - significantly dependent on their nativity ($p=0.0029$)
 - not dependent on duration of living on the island ($p=0.0851$)

Attitudes towards the management, tourism and conservation

Table 5: Opinions of people working in Miyajima about consultation of community members

Questions	Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Do the management consult the residents of this island before implementing new policies?	Yes	8	33.33
	No	5	20.83
	No answer	11	45.83
	Total	24	100

- answers were not dependent on:
 - how long they have been involve in their work ($p=0.8500$).

Table 6: Opinions of people working in Miyajima about the attitudes of community members towards management

Question	Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
What is the attitude of the community members towards the management of this island?	Cordial	16	66.67
	Hostile	1	4.17
	Indifferent	1	4.17
	Others	3	12.50
	No answer	3	12.50
	Total	24	100

- Responses are not dependent on how long the respondents have:
 - lived in Miyajima ($p=0.8326$) or
 - have been involved in their job ($p=0.0725$).

Table 7: Opinions of people working in Miyajima about community's attitudes towards tourism and conservation

Questions	Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Do the residents think about the importance of tourism and conservation?	Yes	11	45.83
	No	4	16.67
	No answer	9	37.50
	Total	24	100

- Answers are not dependent on:
 - occupation ($p=0.8863$) or
 - how long they have been involved in their job ($p=0.0932$).

Perceived impacts of tourism in Miyajima

Table 8: Perceptions towards benefits derived from tourism

Questions	Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Do you think that tourism development in Miyajima has benefited you?	Yes	23	31.08
	No	7	9.46
	Not really	2	2.70
	Yes and No	10	13.51
	No answer	32	43.24
	Total	74	100

- Perceptions are not significantly dependent on:
 - the respondents' occupation ($p=0.5022$).

Table 9: Impact of tourism on custom of Miyajima

Questions	Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Do you think presence of tourists has impact on the custom of Miyajima negatively?	Yes	20	27.03
	No	31	41.89
	No answer	23	31.08
	Total	74	100

- Responses are not dependent on:
 - the respondents age ($p=0.8180$) or
 - how long they have lived on the island ($p=0.1462$).

Table 10: Community's opinions on conflicts caused by tourism in Miyajima

Questions	Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
What are some of the conflicts caused by tourists' activities on the island?	Garbage problem	12	16.22
	Garbage and traffic	3	4.05
	Feeding of deer by tourist	8	10.81
	Damage to tourist by deer	1	1.35
	Hikers don't use the normal path	2	2.70
	Bad manner of the tourists	1	1.35
	Tourists don't respect the shrine	1	1.35
	No conflict	5	6.76
	No answer	41	55.41
	Total	74	100

- Perceptions on types of conflicts are not significantly dependent on:
 - respondents' age ($p=0.3633$),
 - nativity ($p=0.0702$) or
 - how long the respondent has lived on the island ($p=0.1473$)

Challenges faced in the management of Miyajima

Table 11: Opinions of the people working in Miyajima about the challenges faced in the management of the island

Questions	Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
What are the major challenges faced in the management of this island?	Lack of fund	7	29.17
	Insufficient staff	1	4.17
	Lack of cooperation from community members	1	4.17
	Insufficient staff and lack of cooperation	2	8.33
	Transportation and parking	1	4.17
	No answer	12	50.00
	Total	24	100

Respondents' recommendations for conservation and tourism in Miyajima

Table 12: Suggestions on how to improve conservation and tourism by people working in Miyajima

Questions	Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
What are your suggestions on how to improve conservation and tourism in this area?	Increase hospitality	1	4.17
	Reduce garbage	1	4.17
	Keep as it is now	1	4.17
	Prohibit going out of hiking tracks	1	4.17
	Protection of historical assets and nature	3	12.50
	Collection of fee for entering into the island	2	8.33
	Protect the island's tradition	1	4.17
	Collect fee and tourists should stop feeding deer	2	8.33
	Cooperation between government, residents and tour operators	1	4.17
	Reduce the number of cars coming to the island	1	4.17
	Hold conference and share the information	2	8.33
	No answer	8	33.33
	Total		24

Table 13: Suggestion on how to improve conservation and tourism by people working in Miyajima

Question	Responses	Frequency	Percentage(%)
What do you think this community needs to enhance tourism?	Reduce the number of tourists	2	2.70
	Keep the present condition of the island	6	8.11
	Maintain tradition and nature	2	2.70
	More staff	1	1.35
	Make it more convenient for tourists to stay longer	6	8.12
	Residents should reflect traditions of Miyajima to tourist	4	5.415
	Improve the administration	5	6.76
	Advertise Miyajima more	4	5.41
	Keep and teach traditional culture to younger generation	3	4.05
	Others	5	6.76
	No answer	36	48.65
Total	74	100	

Conclusions

- positive perceptions towards the management of tourism sites
- positive perceptions towards the management and conservation of the forests
- It was noted that most respondents have no clear perceptions of:
 - challenges faced in the management of Miyajima
 - consultation of residents before implementation of new policies
 - conflicts caused by tourists' activities on the island
- The study could not demonstrate that benefits from tourism affected their perceptions and attitudes towards tourism and conservation

- This study however identified that perceptions and attitudes were not significantly dependent on demographic factors
- Further detailed studies about the relationships between **people** and **conservation** and tourism should be **carried out** over a **long period of time** in order to provide more insights into the **factors that shape** community's attitudes towards conservation and tourism in protected areas
- since volunteer members involved in conservation often come from outside the island, it might be necessary to include community members with an "active interest" in the conservation of Miyajima
- tourism managers and other stakeholders are to recognize perceptions and attitudes of community members
 - in order to incorporate these into their plans and management policies
 - for a long-term survival of tourism and conservation in Miyajima.

Thank you for listening