

"Travel opportunity for all"
Accessible tourism travel agency research in Japan

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This survey was conducted in February 2012 to understand what options and services are available for the people with disability to travel around in Japan. We send the paper questionnaire to 55 companies and organizations. We received 21 answered. The response rate was 38%. The respondents don't include any of major travel agencies in Japan.

To the question about their core business, 57% explained their core business as outbound, 33% of respondents said inbound, and 10% answered both equally. In general, core business is outbound trip in ordinal Japanese travel agency. Accessible Tourism Travel Agency require both outbound and inbound to meet the various needs of customers.

In terms of travel cost, 35% expensive travel with super care, 45% slight higher price with additional service than ordinal tours, and 20% low-cost with less service.

Comparing the travel duration and destination in three categories, domestic day tour, domestic tour; and overseas tour; most popular one is domestic trip. Quite few number of overseas tour might cause from the lack of major travel agencies' response. Only three travel agencies don't have day domestic tour option in their services.

Looking into the composition of the travel customers of the domestic day tour, individual and group are popular whereas package tour option is very limited. Some rent taxis for day tour for their convenience. Most of domestic tours are made by individuals, which include personal business trip such as wedding, and visiting graves. Among diverse disabilities of travelers, respondents found higher ratio in wheelchair users including partial use for difficulty in walking for long time and person in need of nursing care (most likely elderly person), followed by other physical disabilities, intellectual disability, and mental disorders.

Most of the respondents of this survey belong to small travel agency or NPO, which has flexibility in travelers' requests. Their work belong to individual personality and passion. It seems not suitable for big business. Many agency focus elderly person to keep their profit. Some customers complain the tour price, but the answer was not different. Today we have many inbound tourism NPO help tourist with disabilities, but many people do not know the multiple choice. Free answers say that communication each other is very important. Travelers should say their own needs and agree reasonable accommodation with the destination. If we open the mind, the tour must come true.