# SLOW TOURISM IN JAPAN:

# AN EXPLORATION OF DEFINITIONS

By

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# ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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# LIST OF ABBREVIATION

CAQDAS        Computer-Aided Qualitative Analysis Software

CDTB          Chugoku District Tourism Bureau

CRRC          Chugoku Regional Research Center

JES           Japan Ecotourism Society

JLPT          Japanese Language Proficiency Test

JTA           Japan Tourism Agency

JTB           Japan Travel Bureau

MAFF          Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries

MHLW          Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare

MLIT          Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism

NPO           Non-profit Organization

# ABSTRACT

This thesis explores and clarifies the definitions of slow tourism in the Japanese cultural context. This socio-cultural phenomenon is still to develop in Japan because there are no clear or agreed definitions for its further implementation, and there is still very little research addressing slow tourism in Japan in general. A grounded theory approach is employed in this research to derive the core concepts from secondary literature in order to construct a conceptual framework for slow tourism in Japan. The findings reveal three integrating attributes comprising slow tourism: slowness, locality and travel experience. Both tourists and locals are the main actors; their interaction and engagement is the essence of the slow travel experience. The conclusion shows that slow tourism is in contradiction to mass tourism, and the fast-paced living found in modern Japanese society. More than a watertight concept, slow tourism is a mind-set that should be thoroughly understood by consumer, provider and promoter alike, in order to change the attitude of the Japanese towards holiday making, and to enable them to slow down and value quality rather than speed and efficiency in traveling. The significance of this thesis lies upon the contribution to the slow tourism literature, both in Japan and in general. Most importantly, this thesis should shed some lights on the potentials of slow tourism in Japan, and bring more attention to both the policy makers and tourists, for further implementation and promotion in the future.

# CHAPTER 1

# INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Background and Study Objectives

'Slow tourism' is a new concept that has been emerging as a reaction to the 'fast' pace of traveling in Japan (Knight, 2010). Many Japanese academia and writers recognize slow tourism as a positive future model towards more 'sustainable' form of travel against the mainstream 'mass' tourism in modern Japanese society (Naito, 2006; Sugiyama & Nobuoka, 2007; Uchida, 2006). However, this socio-cultural phenomenon is still to ground in Japan and there is still very little research addressing slow tourism in Japan in general (Murayama & Parker, 2012). Despite the attempts of some regional and local authorities to implement slow tourism into their tourism policy, thus far there is still no national governmental ministry who officially uses or promotes the term 'slow tourism'. It appears to many sectors that the concept 'slow' is wide and loose, encompassing the practice of many existing terms such as ecotourism, green tourism or agricultural tourism (CRRC, 2006; Hosoda, 2011, Mishima, 2011). Murayama and Parker (2012) conclude that 'slow tourism' has only been an 'umbrella' term for those alternative tourisms and is being implemented with a loose understanding of the concept. Therefore, there is a need to step back to clarify the definition of slow tourism, focusing on what 'slow' could mean to Japanese tourism culture in order to understand more about this new genre of tourism.

This study has two main objectives. The first aim is to explore the core concepts and characteristics of slow tourism in Japan. There are a number of researchers who have defined slow tourism (see for example Honoré, 2005; Lumsdon and McGrath, 2011; Dickinson and Lumsdon, 2010) but there is still little consensus on what 'slow' actually means to different tourism contexts and cultures (Fullagar, Wilson & Markwell, 2012). Therefore, this research will focus only on the interpretation of 'slow' in the Japanese cultural context. The second objective is to develop a conceptual framework for slow tourism in Japan. Thus far, there have only been descriptive interpretations of 'slow tourism' (see for example Naito, 2006; Sugiyama & Nobuoka, 2007; Uchida, 2006). Hence, a conceptual level of analysis would provide a more detailed working definition and would also reveal the relationships that might exist within each core concept of 'slow tourism' (Miles & Huberman, 1994)

## 1.2 Research Questions

### *Main question*

What are the core concepts of slow tourism in Japan?

### *Sub questions*

1. What are the elements of the definitions or interpretations concerning 'slow tourism" in Japanese tourism context?

2. How are those elements related to each other?

**1.3 Outline of The Study**

First, in the literature review section a brief history of slow tourism movement is outlined, in order to understand how 'slow tourism' has been interpreted or implemented in a general context. Next, the study narrows down to the literature of domestic tourism in Japan, focusing on the characteristics of mainstream travel culture and how 'slow tourism' has been emerging as one of the alternatives. The literature review concludes that the 'slow tourism' concept is still not widely recognized or implemented properly in Japan because of its rather vague and wide definitions. Therefore, an exploration of definition to find out what 'slow' could mean for Japanese domestic tourism in a conceptual level is considered necessary. Next, the methodology chapter explains the use of secondary qualitative data, namely the literature on the 'slow tourism' phenomenon in Japan as a resource for data analysis. A grounded theory method is applied to generate the core concepts from the literature. In the findings chapter, the concepts and characteristics is explained in detail and the relationship between each concept is specified. Lastly, the core concepts of slow tourism are developed into an initial conceptual framework, and the discussions focus on how the concepts are consistent with previous studies or how they are different. Moreover, the problems of how to position slow tourism in Japan and the negative misconception of 'slow' in the Japanese cultural context are also noted. The study concludes its contribution to both academic and practical perspectives with recommendation for further studies about slow tourism in the future.

**1.4 Significance of the Study**

From an academic perspective, the findings from this research should shed some light on the deeper understanding of slow tourism. By focusing on the Japanese cultural context, it is possible to see how the word 'slow' is perceived in Japanese society and whether there are specific cultural factors behind such interpretations. Thus far, the conceptual level of definition for 'slow tourism' has not presented in any other prior studies. Therefore, this study is a contribution to the scarcity of slow tourism literature in Japan and provides a platform for more researchers to further address this field in the future.

From the practical perspective, a well-developed conceptual framework should shed some light on the requirement to achieve slow tourism concepts, who are the main actors and what are their role in practicing and promoting slow tourism. The findings of this research could encourage both providers, promoters and consumers in Japan to have more thoughts and understanding about the subject, which might lead to a new approach, interpretation and implementation of this type of tourism in Japan.

# CHAPTER 2

# REVIEW OF LITERATURE

## 2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the literature review of this study. The second section is a brief history of the slow movement to explain how slow tourism is an extension of the 'slow food' and 'slow city' philosophies. Then, the third section elaborates the definitions of slow tourism and its core concepts that have been defined so far. The fourth section is an overview of domestic tourism in Japan, in order to understand how the specific characteristic of domestic travel culture have influenced the emergence of slow tourism movement in this country, and is followed by the fifth section that reviews previous slow tourism research and identifies the missing gaps and problems which this study aims to fill.

## 2.2 The Slow Movement: A Brief History

### 2.2.1 Slow Food

In recent decades, the 'slow' movement has been gaining recognition widely as a social phenomenon against the fast paced living in the modern world. The origin of this movement began with 'Slow Food', a non-profit organization formed in Italy in 1989, influenced by an anti-McDonald's protest in Rome during the late 1990s. Slow food philosophy is an opposition to the standardization of taste and culture, and the unsustainable production of the fast food industry (Slow

Food, 2014). The heart of the slow food principle lies upon the 'rights' of all citizens to have 'good' quality food that is a part of a local culture, 'clean' food production that is friendly to the environment, and 'fair' prices for both consumers and producers/traders (Slow Food, 2012). It aims to preserve local food traditions, encourage people's interest in the food they eat, where it comes from and how it tastes, not just in simply consuming (Petrini, 2006). Slow food has become a successful international movement over the years, with more than 10,000 members of both the food supply and demand sectors from over 150 countries worldwide (Slow Food, 2014).

## 2.2.2 Slow City

'Slow City' is an extension of the 'Slow Food' philosophy to all aspects of urban living. Since its foundation by the mayors of three Italian towns under the name 'Cittàslow' (slow city) in 1999, 'slow city' philosophy has been gaining recognition globally as an urban social movement and a model for local governance (Pink, 2008). To become a certified 'slow city', a city must have fewer than 50,000 residents and must comply with criteria covering six pillars [1] that initiate sustainable development of the city. These criteria include environmental legislation and management, reduction of traffic and private transportation, preservation and promotion of local food, culture and other cultural heritage, for instance (Cittàslow, 2011b). This charter and guideline shows how slow cities focus on social sustainability, health and wellbeing of

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[1] Environmental policies, infrastructural policies, technologies and facilities for urban quality, safeguarding autochthonous production, hospitality and awareness (Cittàslow, 2011b)

citizens and ensure sustainable local economic growth at the same time (Mayer & Knox, 2006). Local community, governance, private sectors and also visitors are involved in making slow city a place where both this movement where both residents and visitors can slow down for a better quality of life (Cittàslow, 2011a).

As of April 2014, there were 187 slow cities over 128 countries in the world, mainly in Europe (e.g. Italy, Poland, England, Germany) and several countries in the Asian Pacific region (e.g. Australia, New Zealand, China, South Korea). Interestingly, the latest slow city that has been designated is Kesennuma city in Miyagi prefecture, the first and only slow city in Japan. This city has been an active user of the 'slow food' slogan to promote their local seafood since 2006. In 2013, it has enhanced the slow philosophy into 'slow city' movement as a tool for revitalization after the devastation caused by the March 2011 Tsunami (Kesennuma City, 2014). This is a good example that illustrates the consistency of the 'slow movement' in Japan, examined later in this chapter.

### 2.2.3 Slow Tourism

Along with the growing interest in 'Slow Food' and 'Slow City', the slow principle and philosophy has been applied to traveling manners and activities, consequently grounding the term 'Slow Tourism' into a new alternative form of travel.

From academic perspective, slow tourism is seen as an approach to holidaymaking that is different from main stream tourism (Fullagar, Markwell & Kevin, 2012). Lumsdon & McGrath (2011) theorize that slow tourism is a holistic

approach to holidaymaking where the outward journey, destination and return make an impact on the travel experience. The central idea of slow tourism, as the prefix 'slow' suggests, is to think about 'slowness' or 'slowing down' and what this could mean to holidaymaking. Various perspectives such as the quality of travel experience, value of time, engagement with the local destination and environmental consciousness (Dickinson & Lumsdon, 2010; Matos, 2004; Woehler, 2004) are included. In a sense, it is an opposition to and a reflection on the 'fast' model of travel in contemporary tourism, where speed and quantity of travel experience are highly regarded (Honoré, 2004; Lumsdon & McGrath, 2011).

From the supply sector or tourism industry perspective, slow tourism exists as an emergent market segment. Heitmann, Peter and Povey (2011) suggest that the label 'slow' could bring quality to the appearance of a destination, and become a marketing tool to attract tourists with cultural and environmental consciousness. Due to the growing interest in the slow tourism concept, public tourism authorities in some counties such as Slovenia and South Korea have started to implement the principles underpinning slow tourism in promoting their local destinations (see Korea Tourism Organization, n.d.; Slovenian Tourist Board, n.d.). Several private tourism operators have also started to market their products ranging from slow travel guidebooks, websites, tours and accommodation with local people (see for example Lonely Planet, 2012; Slow Guide, n.d.; Slow Travel Berlin, n.d.; Slow Travel Tours, 2013). The emerging literature and the implementation of slow tourism by many sectors clearly indicates the consolidation of this concept in the modern tourism world.

**2.3 The Interpretation of Slow Tourism**

New in its ideas and concepts, there has been wide coverage of aspects when discussing the definition of 'slow tourism' and how to conceptualize 'slow' in relation to tourism practices. Following Lumsdon and McGrath (2011)'s conceptual framework[2], three core concepts will be discussed in order to clarify the definitions of 'slow' in relation to 'slow tourism'.

**2.3.1 Slowness**

Many academics have been addressing 'slowness' in relation to the 'value of time' toward leisure travel (Peeters, 2007; Woehler, 2004). This is a perception of time and a way of doing things while traveling (Lumsdon & McGrath, 2011). At first glance, the prefix 'slow' might suggest a literal slowness of travel manner and mobility. However, Honoré (2004) argues that 'slowing down' means to change the pace of action to the 'right' speed to improve the quality of traveling. More than simply a fast versus slow discussion, to 'slow down' is to focus on the 'quality' of rhythm and pace that are produced between the traveler and the world (Creswell, 2010).

Slowing down includes the sense of 'wellbeing' of the tourists. The pace of traveling should offer a state of relaxation, de-stressing and away from everyday life. Therefore, traveling in shorter distance with less busy schedule is a part of slowness (Lumsdon & McGrath, 2011). Matos (2004, p100) claims that 'taking

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[2] The conceptual framework was grounded from qualitative literature and intensive interview of slow tourism experts/academia (Lumsdon &McGrath, 2011)

time' is related to 'attachment to a place', which means locality and activities at the destination is important. Tourists spend time to discover, interact, and engage with the local destination not only by sight but using all five senses and live in 'harmony' with the locality and its inhabitants. Lumsdon and McGrath (2011) provide a good summary that slowness in traveling means:

> …the speed of travel is less important than a relaxing and enriching experience to be gained from a different approach to holiday making (p272)

**2.3.2 Travel Experience**

Travel experience in slow tourism is in close relation with 'slowness'. 'Slowing down' brings a better quality of travel experience (Kieran, 2012; Woehler, 2004). To 'slow down' is a shift in focus from 'quantity' towards 'quality', meaning fewer but real, meaningful and memorable travel experiences are more important than the volume of the travel experience (Heitmann, Peter & Povey, 2012). Slow tourists travel with purpose, they desire to learn, know, discover and gain something from the travel experience, not just traveling because they have to (Fullagar, Wilson & Markwell, 2012; Lumsdon & McGrath, 2011).

There is also emphasis on travel and mobility as a part of the experience. Slower modes of transportation (e.g. local train, walking, cycling), chosen both to and within the destination, provide more time and opportunity for tourists to thoroughly enjoy the landscape. Hence, the journey becomes more than just the act of travel but an integral part of travel experience (Lumsdon & McGrath, 2011).

### 2.3.3 Environmental Awareness

There are several major studies that emphasize the association of slow tourism and environmental awareness, in relation to ecology, sustainability and minimal environmental impact. When discussing environmental consciousness, most authors refer to the term 'slow travel' instead of 'slow tourism', due to the focus on mode of transportation rather than the whole tourism experience (Dickinson & Lumsdon, 2010; Hall & Page, 2006). Slow travel is seen as an alternative to the 'fast' mode of transportation that leaves carbon footprints to the environment, such as airplane and car. Dickinson and Lumsdon (2010) point out that the need of quality and engagement in travel experience influences travellers to choose to travel overland by slower mode of transportation, which is mainly low-carbon and does not cause as much environmental impact. The concept of 'slowness' encourages people to travel more slowly, stay longer, and travel less (Dickinson, Robbins & Lumsdon, 2010), and consequently, they become sensitive and aware of the impact to the environment their travel action might cause.

As Lumsdon and McGrath (2011) conclude, slow tourism or slow travel is an emerging term. There are still ongoing efforts in tourism research to understand the essence of 'slow' in slow tourism in various cultural context and mobility (Fullagar, Markwell & Wilson, 2012). Since the main objective of this study is to explore the core concepts of slow tourism in Japan, the cultural context of Japanese domestic tourism should be reviewed in order to explain how some travel cultures have influenced the emergence of a 'slow tourism' movement in Japan.

**2.4 The Culture of Japanese Domestic Tourism**

**2.4.1 Modern Japanese Domestic Tourism: A Brief Review**

The culture of modern Japanese domestic travel has been fragmenting since the post WWII era in the late 1950s. The attitudes toward leisure travel of the Japanese changed during the post-war period, when Japanese people were working hard for regeneration and recovery of the country (Asamizu, 2005). Both governmental institutions and Japanese citizens started to pay more attention to 'leisure' and 'recreation', resulting in a 'leisure boom' in Japan between the 1960s to early 1990s (Leheny, 2003; Linhart, 1998). The national railway of Japan enhanced its transportation system and began the first operation of *shinkansen* (bullet trains) for the Olympics in 1964, which successfully increased the number of domestic travelers (Asamizu, 2005). This increase also influenced the construction of highways, large-scale hotels, resorts, theme parks and other domestic facilities, with support from the Japanese government during the 1970s. By the late 1980s, Japan had become "a country of mass consumers of recreation items and services" (Leheny, 2003, p109).  Although the collapse of the bubble economy in the early 1990s had affected the growth of domestic tourism, the consumption of domestic travel has been contributing to the tourism industry and the economy continuously until the present.

According to the Japan Tourism Agency (JTA, 2013) statistics on the tourism market, domestic overnight travels and single-day travel altogether shared 89.5% of the whole market in 2011, while Japanese travels abroad and foreigners'

travels in Japan shared only 5.8% and 4.6% respectively (see figure 2.1 on the next page). The consumption of domestic tourism contributed to 5.8% of nominal GDP and an employment of 4.62 million people in tourism industry (JTA, 2013, p21). The number of domestic travels is expected to continue rising as the desire for leisure and travel still remains firm (JTB, 2012), especially after 2012 when three low cost airlines[3] started launching domestic routes in Japan (MLIT, 2013). Moreover, the tourism sector is seen as one of the powerful regeneration tools after the Tsunami incident in 2011 (MLIT, 2013). This shows how domestic tourism in Japan plays an important role in both the economics and culture of Japanese society.

### 25.5 trillion yen

- 68%
- 21%
- 6%
- 5%

Legend:
- Japnese people's domestic overnight travels: 17.4 trillion
- Japnese people's domestic single-day travels: 5.5 trillion
- Japanese's people travels abroad: 1.5 trillion
- Foriengners' travels in Japan:1.2 trillion
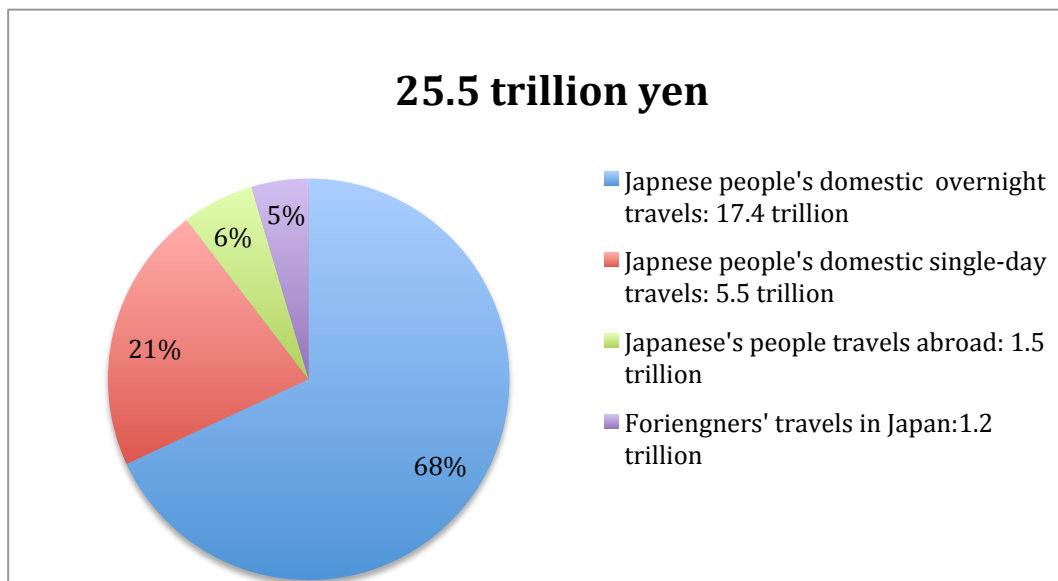
Figure 2.1 Tourism Market Size in 2009 (JTA, 2013, p21)

[3] Peach Aviation, Jet Star Japan and AirAsia Japan (MLIT, 2013)

**2.4.2 Characteristics and Trends of Japanese Domestic Tourism**

There are many specific trends and characteristic of domestic tourism to be discussed. First, one should take a look at the culture of 'mass' tourism. Along with 'leisure' and 'resort' boom during 1960s and 1990s, Japanese domestic tourism has been developed into a 'large scale' (*daikibo*) or 'mass' tourism. Domestic facilities such as hotels and resorts were designed to accommodate large scale of tourists (MLIT, 2005b). According to national statistics, 'group tourism' (*dantai ryokō*) had been the dominant form of tourism in Japan with 47.5% market share since 1964 (Nihon Kankō Kyokai, 2005). Until recently, the main purpose of domestic traveling was to join a company trip (*ian ryokō*) or school trip (*shugaku ryokō*), which are also parts of 'group tourism' (MLIT, 2005b, p2). A core characteristic of group tourism is the 'package tour', in which all activities are organized and time is fixed in a tight schedule. It often includes a visit to many famous places/sites or *meisho* and buying souvenirs or *omiyage* (Formanek, 1998; Noguchi, 2006; Oedewald, 2009). For many, this type of tourism is seen as a 'seeing' tourism (miru kankō), which sightseeing is the main purpose of traveling (see CDTB, 2008; Knight, 1996; MILT 2005b).

Another dominant trend in domestic tourism in recent years is 'single-day trip' (*higaeri*). The enhancement of transportation system in Japan (e.g. *shinkansen*, railway and highway) has made traveling more convenient and time saving; hence round-trips could be made in a short period of time. Accordingly, domestic tourists are taking less and less overnight trip in general (MLIT, 2005b). Japan Tourism Agency (JTA)'s statistics from 2005 to 2010 shows that Japanese

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people travel overnight approximately 1.5 trips per year per person, and only stay around 2.3 nights on average. As shown in figure 2.2, both numbers of trips and nights have been gradually declining (JTA, 2013a, p18).

**Domestic Overnight Travels 2005-2010**

| | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Nights | 2.92 | 2.74 | 2.48 | 2.37 | 2.38 | 2.12 |
| Overnight travels | 1.78 | 1.71 | 1.52 | 1.52 | 1.46 | 1.43 |
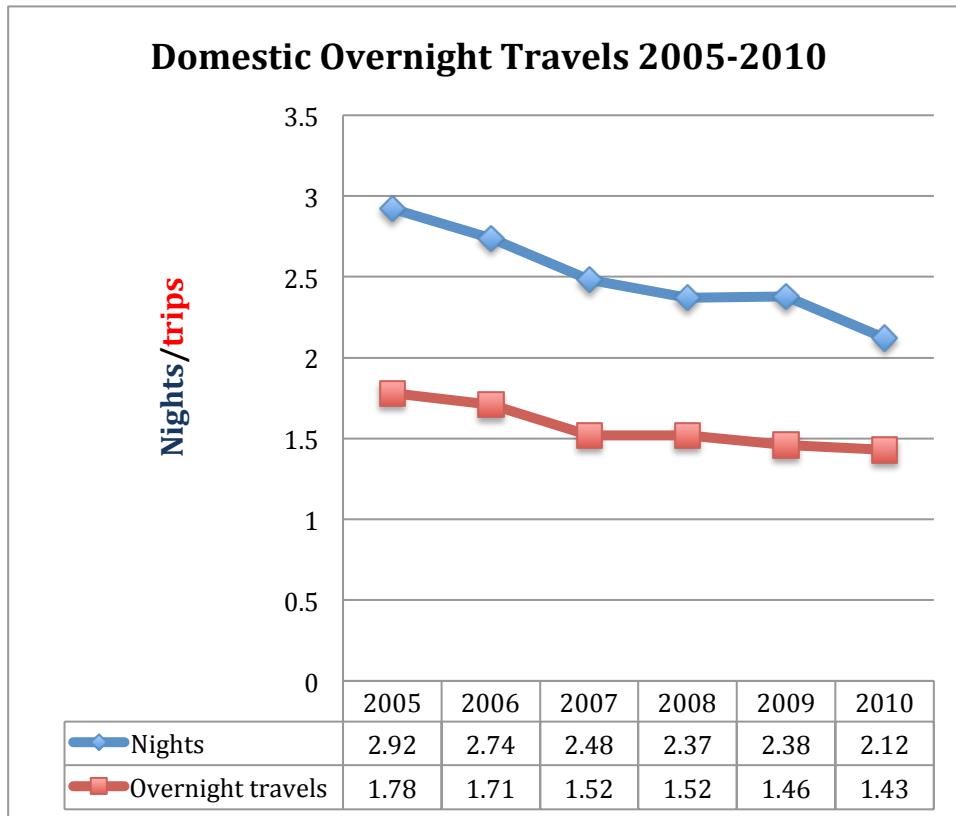
Figure 2.2 Changes in the numbers of domestic sightseeing overnight travels and the number of nights spent during travels per person
(JTA, 2003a, p18)

Recently, there have been emerging discussions over these mainstream trends of domestic tourism as a 'fast' model of travel in Japan (Knight, 2006; Sugiyama & Nobuoka, 2007; Uchida, 2006). Many authors and sociologists state that these specific characteristics of travel are closely related to the values of Japanese people with respect to leisure time and behavior. For Japanese people,

'free time' or *yoka* appears to have a negative meaning as the word literally translates as 'time left' [from work] and therefore is not regarded as important as work (Leheny, 2003). The term 'workaholic' has been a well-known label for Japanese people across the world, judging from long working hours and the statists of Japanese taking less than half of their entitled paid leave (Levine, 1997; Linhart, 1988; Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, 2013). This work ethic has been a virtue of Japanese society since the WWII regeneration period, when everybody had to work hard and taking a holiday was almost a 'sinful' commitment (Levine, 1997, p171). The value of 'speed' and 'efficiency' in work has been extended to leisure behavior and travel culture and has shaped the 'fast' model of tourism in modern Japan. The package tour is designed to ensure the leisure time will not be 'wasted' and that tourists get full 'value 'of the money spent on this holiday (Linhart, 1988). High-speed modes of transportation such as *shinkansen* become a priority due to their ability to shorten long-haul travel time (Knight, 2010). Such 'fast' tourism has been criticized as 'consumption focused' or 'materialistic' because the focus is often on the quantity over the quality of experience (Murayama & Parker, 2012). Leisure time becomes another 'busy' activity where Japanese tourists try to 'make use' of their time to travel as fast as possible or to see as much as possible (Linhart, 1988; Noguchi, 2006).

Nevertheless, the change of attitude amongst some segment of Japanese population has been having an impact to domestic tourism trend in recent years. According to "Public Opinion Poll on National Lifestyle" report by the Cabinet Office, there has been a shift of value toward 'work, life, and leisure' since 1979.

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By 2003, only 30% of Japanese citizen valued material prosperity and the rest 60% valued mental prosperity. On the other hand, when asked what is the goal for their future, 'leisure/free time' ranked the top at

%, exceeding 'work and income' (29.5%), 'food' (25%) or 'assets and savings' (24%) (Naikakufu, 2003). This means that Japanese people have started to rethink the balance of their work and leisure life, with more focus on the recreation and lifestyle (JTB, 2013).

Accordingly, new tourism trends have been emerging as 'alternative' to the traditional group tour or package tour since 1990s (Murayama & Parker, 2012). With the change of perspective toward leisure and travel of the Japanese population, higher demand on a deeper level of travel experience than 'sightseeing tourism', and 'personal recreation' rather than 'group travel' has changed the trend of domestic travel into a more variety and has also influenced the change of focus in national tourism policy in recent years (MLIT, 2005b; MLIT, 2013).

**2.5 The Emergence of Slow Tourism in Japan**

Since the 1990s, many 'new' forms of tourism have been emerging in Japanese domestic tourism. In 1992, Ministry of Agricultural, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF) started to promote 'Green Tourism' as a label to encourage urban tourists to visit the countryside (MAFF, 2007), followed by the Japan Ecotourism Society (JES) NPO who started to spread the term 'ecotourism' in relation to sustainability and environmental awareness in traveling (NPO Japan

Ecotourism Society, 2014). Since 2007, the Japan Tourism Agency (JTA) has been promoting 'New Tourism' as an umbrella term for ecotourism, green tourism, health tourism, cultural tourism, industrial tourism and other related terms that are considered as 'niche' or 'special interest' forms of tourism (Murayama & Parker, 2012; MLIT, 2008).

Along with the shift of domestic tourism trend, the concept of 'slow tourism' has been filtering into Japanese travel culture as one of the alternatives to the traditional 'mass' tourism (Murayama & Parker, 2012). The term emerged as a part of the wider 'slow movement' of many non-governmental organizations such as 'Sloth Club Japan', 'Slow Life Japan', 'Slow Food Japan', which aim to promote 'slowness' and 'slower pace of life' against the speed and unsustainable lifestyle of the modern Japanese society (Slow Food, 2010; Slow Life Japan, 2005; NPO Sloth Club Japan, 2010). Several authors have started to discuss 'slow tourism' as a positive future model against the mainstream 'fast' model of traveling in Japan (Naito, 2006; Noguchi, 2006; Sugiyama and Nobuoka, 2007, Uchida, 2006).

Nevertheless, the term 'slow tourism' is still a rather new term and has not gained wide recognition in Japan yet, and thus far, there have only been several studies concerning slow tourism in Japan (Murayama & Parker, 2006). In 2006, Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism (MLIT) recognized the possibility of 'slow tourism' as a regeneration tool for rural areas, and decided to

fund an evaluative research of 'slow tourism' in Chugoku Region[4] from 2007 to 2009. Most of the landscapes in this region are hilly and mountainous rural areas (chūsankan chiiki), which are suffering from various socio-economic problems (Sato, 2011). Chugoku District Transport Bureau (CDTB) carried the first study in 2007 to evaluate 'how' and 'whether' slow tourism could be an effective tool to revitalize the economy and to propose practical suggestions for the implementation of slow tourism in Chugoku Region. In this research, 12 cities[5] in the region were picked, ad each city was given the task to find out local resources, products or activities that would enable longer and 'slower' stays for visitors. However, none of the 12 cities had any real actions on promoting or using the term 'slow tourism' in their policy (CDTB, 2008). Further research continued from 2008 and 2009, still aiming to encourage rural areas to reevaluate their local products or assets that might fit the concept of 'slow'. By the end of 2009, Yamaguchi prefecture was the only destination that was actively promoting 'slow tourism' (CDTB, 2010). Murayama and Parker (2012) comment that due to the lack of understanding of the meaning of the slow tourism concept, other tourism authorities apart from Yamaguchi Prefecture did not know how to implement the concept into actions.

The latest study concerning slow tourism was conducted by Murayama and Parker in 2012. Their research focuses on the movement of slow tourism in Japan in general to find out how the idea is grounding in Japan. According to their

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[4] Chugoku Region is located in the westernmost of Honshū island, consists of 5 following prefectures: Hiroshima, Tottori, Okayama, Shimane and Yamaguchi
[5] 12 cities are; Okayama, Kurashiki, Kure, Takehara, Iwakuni, Yanai, Tokushima, Naruto, Takamatsu, Shōdoshima, Matsuyama and Niihama

findings, thus far there have been no governmental authorities that use or promote the term 'slow tourism' officially, except Yamaguchi Prefecture. The Japan Tourism Agency (JTA) has been promoting the term 'New Tourism', as mentioned earlier, but 'slow tourism' has never been recognized or promoted under this 'New Tourism' slogan. Murayama and Parker (2012) note that the label 'slow' is not considered strong enough to be marketed, compared to 'ecotourism', 'green tourism', 'food tourism', which are more familiar to the market. Some local and regional authorities such as Gifu Prefecture, Myōkō city in Nigata, Kakegawa city have made attempts to adopt the philosophy of 'slow tourism' into their tourism policy but failed to continue. In Kyoto, the campaign 'Slow City Kyoto' was actively promoted in 2010 to encourage residents and tourists walk more instead of using private car (Kyoto City Council, 2011). For the private and third sectors, the term 'slow life' is used more frequently to attract consumers with interest in a slower way of life and environmental considerations. The term 'slow' was used as a rather temporary promotional tool or slogan to promote the slow pace of life in the city, but was never an official policy or implemented into tourism practice. Murayama and Parker (2012) conclude that the term 'slow' has been mostly used without real understanding or real implementation, because there are no agreed or clear definitions for slow tourism in Japan and the term is too wide and loose, encompassing many other forms of tourism that the supply sector did not know how to use the term against the existing strong labels.

**2.6 Summary**

The literature review strongly suggests that slow tourism in Japan needs more recognition and more understanding of the meaning of slow. The previous studies have been focusing on the question of 'how' and 'whether' slow tourism could be implemented or into the ground of tourism practice in Japan without asking the most important question of 'what' is slow tourism or 'what' does 'slow' mean to tourism practice. Thus, this research aims to fill this gap by stepping back to see the interpretation of 'slow' in Japanese cultural context, in order to understand more about the term. Furthermore, there are still very few research studies concerning the subject in Japan in general, and there has never been an in-depth study that aims to clarify the definition issues. This, this research is a contribution to the scarcity of literature and a platform for further research about slow tourism in the future.

# CHAPTER 3

# METHODOLOGY

## 3.1 Introduction

This chapter addresses methodology used in this research. The second section explains the study design and shows how an exploratory approach in qualitative research fits the study objectives. Then, the third section presents the adoption of grounded theory and conceptual framework building with clear explanation on how it helps answering the two research questions of this study. The forth section clarifies the theoretical framework, the scope of the study and the construction of theory in this research. The fifth section covers the clarification of secondary data source used in this study, the selection criteria and data collection process. The sixth section presents three steps of data analysis; open coding, axial coding and selective coding. Lastly, the seventh section discusses limitations concerning data collection and analysis.

## 3.2 Study Design

A brief literature review in the previous chapter showed that Slow Tourism is regarded as a new concept in general, and has just started gaining recognition in Japan recently. Consequently, there is little in-depth research about this phenomenon, and a lack of clear definitions (Murayama & Parker, 2012). Thus, there is a need to step back and take a closer look at what 'slow' could mean to Japanese tourism culture. In order to do so, an exploratory research approach was

considered appropriate. There are two reasons for choosing this approach. First, exploratory is a qualitative research approach that is suitable for examining new areas where little is known or few earlier studies has been conducted about a phenomenon (Babbie, 2008). Second, it helps a researcher to gain insights and better understanding of a social world under study, including the purpose of trying to "identify or discover important categories of meaning" (Marshall & Rossman, 1995, p34). This approach provides flexibility for researcher to define new terms and clarify the existing concepts at the same time (Stebbins, 2001). This directly serves the two study objectives of this research, which are to 'explore' the core elements of slow tourism in Japan and to 'examine' the possible relationship between those elements.

### 3.3 Grounded Theory

This research adopts the grounded theory method to generate the concepts of Slow Tourism in Japan. Grounded theory is one of the methods widely used for social science research, including tourism (Phillimore & Goodson, 2004). It is an inductive approach where researchers keep observing the systematically obtained data and use a wide range of qualitative analysis processes to develop a theory about a phenomenon (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Grounding theorists believe in gathering rich and dense data, which they examine, compare and reexamine closely. From there, the process of 'coding' takes place. Coding is a form of analysis where the analysts interpret, define and make sense out of the data by creating 'codes' to explain certain segments of data. The emerging codes or

concepts could lead to a further data collection during the analysis, until a specific theory or concept is developed (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). What distinguishes grounded theory from other traditional methods is that there is no sharp line between data collection and the analytic process; they can be conducted at the same time (Charmaz, 2006, p187).

To explain why grounded theory is ideal for this research, it is important to have a look at the two research questions again:

- What are the elements of the definitions or interpretations concerning 'Slow Tourism" in Japanese tourism context?

- How are those elements related to each other?

Firstly, grounded theory is adequate for this research because its nature of repeated data observation could serve as a practice to generate the core concepts of slow tourism in Japan out of the data gathered, which directly helps in finding the answer for the first research question. Secondly, coding analysis helps building and defining the relationship between the core elements extracted. It is a theoretical sorting tool to help researcher group codes into a sub-category and category. Through this process, the relationship between each code and category are identified (Jabareen 2009), which ensures the conceptual development for the second research question. Lastly, grounded theory has the flexibility for researchers to apply various sources of data collection (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Charmaz, 2006) including secondary data. The data collection in grounded theory is led and controlled by the emerging themes or concepts from the current data (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). The use of secondary data therefore gives the

flexibility for researcher to search for relevant documents and other form of secondary data for a further analysis and coding process (Heaton, 2004).

## 3.4 Theoretical Framework

### 3.4.1 Construction of Conceptual Framework

The main objective of this research is to develop a conceptual framework for slow tourism in Japan. There have been attempts to provide a working definition of Japanese slow tourism (See for example CDTB, 2008; MILT, 2005a; Sugiyama & Nobuoka 2007; Uchida, 2006), but in-depth interpretation and conceptualization are not present yet in any previous research. Therefore, this research aims to fill the missing gap by constructing a conceptual framework to present the core characteristics of Slow Tourism in Japan and the possible relationships that might exist among each concept. According to Miles & Huberman (1994), a conceptual framework is a collection of concepts that are integrating or interrelating with one another (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Conceptual frameworks are considered useful for presenting the findings of this research because they give a clear picture of the connection between each concept generated from analysis. Nevertheless, it is crucial to elaborate the approach of theory generating and conceptual framework building, in order to clarify and shape the scope of this research.

In the grounded theory method, there are several approaches in constructing concepts or theories, depending on the purpose of the study.

Charmaz (2006) explains in her book "constructing grounded theory" two different approaches: positivism and interpretivism[6]. The former is for researchers who seek to 'specify causal relationships between concepts, to verify theoretical relationships through hypothesis-testing, or to generate hypotheses for research' (p126). Interpretive theory construction, on the other hand, is for researcher who wants to understand and interpret the theory rather than explaining it (Decrop, 2004). The theory is generated from "the theorist's interpretation and imaginative understanding of the studied phenomenon" (Charmaz, 2006, p126). Therefore, there is no emphasis on explaining any causal relationships in the concepts, or why they are related to each other. Rather, the priority is to show the abstract patterns of connections between the concepts.

This study aims to clarify the definitions of Slow Tourism in Japan, for a *better understanding* of the phenomenon (Marshall & Rossman, 1995). Therefore, the interpretive theory proposed by Charmaz (2006) is a suitable approach. The construction of a conceptual framework in this research conceptualizes the core components underpinning slow tourism in abstract terms and identifies the possible connections between the concepts. It does not try to explain *why* each concept is related to one another but *how* they are related.

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[6] Strauss and Corbin (1998) recognize interpretivism as a part of constructivism stance in grounded theory method

**3.4.2 Reliability of the Study**

Another issue to be clarified is the trustworthiness of the theory conceptualization. The analysis of the concepts bases on how the researcher look, interpret and interact with the data, or as Glaser and Strauss (1967) said, the '*theoretical sensitivity*' of the analyst. Therefore, questions or critiques about the trustworthiness and subjectivity of the conceptual framework might be raised. Strauss and Corbin (1998) view this issue as an unavoidable limitation of interpretive approach. The construction of concepts is based on how the researcher reads the data and therefore researchers are "part of what they study" (Charmaz, 2006, p178) that cannot be left out of the interpretative process. Hence, the concepts or theory generated are not absolute (Marshall & Rossman, 1995), but might as well be the assumptions about how we know or understand the world (O'brien, 1993).

Thus, the researcher would like to emphasize that the conceptual framework constructed in this study does not consist of absolute definitions of slow tourism in Japan. The conceptual framework is also not built to test, compare or contrast the interpretations of slow tourism in Japan or in general, for example, the conceptual framework for slow travel proposed by Lumsdom and McGrath (2011). Rather, it is an attempt to gain insights about slow tourism in a specific social-cultural setting—Japan—where the concept of this phenomenon is still to ground (Murayama & Parker, 2012) and no conceptual level of definitions has been made in any prior studies. Therefore, literature and pervious research concerning slow tourism are treated as a source of data and as references for

analysis, while this study tries to conceptualize the original conceptual framework that illustrates the core characteristics of slow tourism in Japan.

## 3.5 Data Collection

### 3.5.1 Secondary Data Sources

This study is about how 'slow' has been interpreted or defined in the context of Japanese tourism. Therefore, rich qualitative data referring to the definitions, characteristics, movements and practices of slow tourism in Japan were considered necessary to generate core concepts. However, the important point is the decision about what sources of data to use for the study, which should be made with "utmost care" because it is crucial to the outcome of the study (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p176). After intensive research about data analysis of grounded theory and consultation with supervisor, the researcher decided that 'secondary data', namely the 'literature of slow tourism in Japan' is the most suitable data source for the study. The reasons to support this decision are emphasized below.

First, there is a factor of accessibility to the data to be considered. As Murayama and Parker (2012) state, the slow tourism phenomenon is not yet commonly known or practiced in Japan. Nevertheless, some governmental administrative bodies such as the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism (MLIT, 2005), Chugoku District Transport Bureau (CDTB, 2008, 2009, 2010), Gifu City Council (2010) Myōkō City Council (2004), for instance, have

considered the possibility of applying 'slow tourism' within their administrative policies on tourism. Their attempts have been officially recorded in governmental documents, reports, research publications and official webpages. Moreover, several research centers, both public and private, have published journals, articles and books about slow tourism in Japan, written by academics (see for example, CRRC, 2006; CDTB, 2008, 2009,2010; Murayama & Parker, 2012; Uchida, 2006; Yoshihara, 2007), which could be another useful data resources for this research. Furthermore, some Non Profit Organizations (NPO) whose interests underpin the slow movement philosophy have also produced research, articles, books or websites with data or information encompassing the slow tourism concept (see Kesennuma Resilience Group, 2013; NPO Kōryū Kurashi/Net, 2007, for example). These data consist of rich and dense qualitative information about slow tourism in Japan, including definitions, which is what this study aims to clarify. The most crucial point is that, these texts are 'accessible' to the researcher as they are available for purchase and public access (both at the library and online). The researcher was not able to visit all governmental/private organizations, research centers or academia to collect primary data by conducting intensive interviews, due to lack of authority, funding and time. Therefore, the utilization of secondary source enhances the access of the researcher to the data, in terms of "*effort, cost and speed*"(Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p178).

Second, there is a consideration regarding the variety of data for theory construction. Charmaz (2006) emphasizes about the construction of grounded theory from the constructivist stance that "the research problem informs initial

methodological choices for data collection" (p178). The objective of this study is to find out "How has slow tourism been defined or interpreted in Japanese tourism context", which clearly requires a variety of data about slow tourism in Japan, both in general and in specific cases on particular areas. At the time of writing, there have been no national or regional sectors that officially use the term 'slow tourism' as a key policy apart from the Yamaguchi prefecture (2007, 2013). If the researcher were to conduct intensive case study or field research about slow tourism in Yamaguchi prefecture only, the data collection for analysis would be limited to only the terms and definitions of slow tourism in one administrative policy, and the concepts or theory grounded would not offer the general interpretation of slow tourism in Japan. In grounded theory, 'comparative analysis', where researchers compare codes and concepts extracted from different data, is regarded as a core process in theorizing (Charmaz, 2006; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Therefore, diversified data or documents are undeniably crucial. As mentioned above, there is a variety of secondary data from public and private sectors concerning slow tourism, which could offer wide range of comparison groups in a comparative analysis (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p179).

Third, the objectivity of reality in secondary data has to be weighed. The secondary data obtained in this research is in the form of extant texts. Charmaz (2006, p37) explains that extant texts refer to any form of data that the person who gathers is not involved in the construction of the data. The representative of this type of texts are public records, government reports, organizational documents, literature, Internet discussions and earlier qualitative materials. Extant texts are

valued because they provide researchers the opportunity to access and observe an *insightful reality*, which might not be available from interviews or research fields. Glaser and Strauss (1967) explain that the organizations or the interviewees may not always have the willingness to reveal or expose themselves and their information to researchers. As a result, they may protect themselves against the inquiries and thus there is possibility of inaccessibility to the reality (p117). However, the information or materials produced by the informants could maximize the access to the reality that researcher wish to study or obtain. In some respect, extant texts "mirror reality" and are seemingly objective (Charmaz, 2006, p37). In summary, the advantage of using secondary documents, namely extant texts produced by various institutions and academia concerning slow tourism in Japan is the rich and insightful knowledge about the definitions, policies and practice of slow tourism wish might not be accessible via interview or field research.

Apart from the advantages above, it is also important to recognize the reality of secondary source of data for grounded theory methods in social studies. Strauss and Corbin (1998) acknowledge that theory construction could also be accomplished by secondary analysis. By selecting the data from the available secondary sample, researcher could code the selected materials with the usual coding procedures for primary data. Heaton (2004) also emphasizes the possibility of adopting secondary data use to grounded theory method in her book "Reworking Qualitative Data". Thus far, the re-use of data in the grounded theory method is present in social science research (Szabo & Strang, 1997, for example).

Although most sociologists often rely on primary data such as interview and field notes when applying grounded theory methods (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), there are potential advantages of secondary data in helping researchers to understand the complex social process (Whiteside, Mills & McCalman, 2012), when used with great care (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). For reasons given and the supporting evident of prior grounded theory studies with secondary data usage, the researcher was confident to utilize secondary data as a source of analysis for this study.

### 3.5.2 Initial and Theoretical Sampling Process

According to Charmaz (2006), there are two broad phases of data collection in grounded theory; before and between the analyses. Data collection before analysis follows initial sampling concept. Initial sampling is a process where researcher gets started by setting criteria to seek data that directly address his or her research questions. When a researcher starts the comparative analysis by comparing or contrasting the data, some concepts emerge (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). These concepts may lead the researcher to further data collection for further analysis. This iterative process is called 'theoretical sampling'. These criteria for further data collection are based on the relevance of the data to what researchers are looking for in order to develop his or her theory (Charmaz, 2006). Data collection and analysis are parallel. It is an ongoing process where the emergence of new concepts or theories from the current data leads to more data collection. Through this process, the researcher develop his or her 'theoretical sensitivity' to specify the direction of further data collection which will enable more concepts generation or more supportive evidence for the existing concepts,

until the analysis reaches 'theoretical saturation', no additional new categories or concepts could be developed from the stance of the researcher (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Figure 3.1 shows the adoption of these two sampling methods to this study.

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┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│  Initial Sampling : Select data that answers the research questions │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                              ⇩
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│                     First data collection                          │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                              ⇩
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│        Comparative Analysis (coding by comparing/contrasting)      │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                              ⇩
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│                    Theoretical Sampling:                           │
│          Select data to support the emerging concepts              │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                              ⇩
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│   Further Comparative Analysis (coding by comparing/ contrasting)  │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                              ⇩
              ┌──────────────────────────────────┐
              │      Theoretical Saturation        │
              └──────────────────────────────────┘
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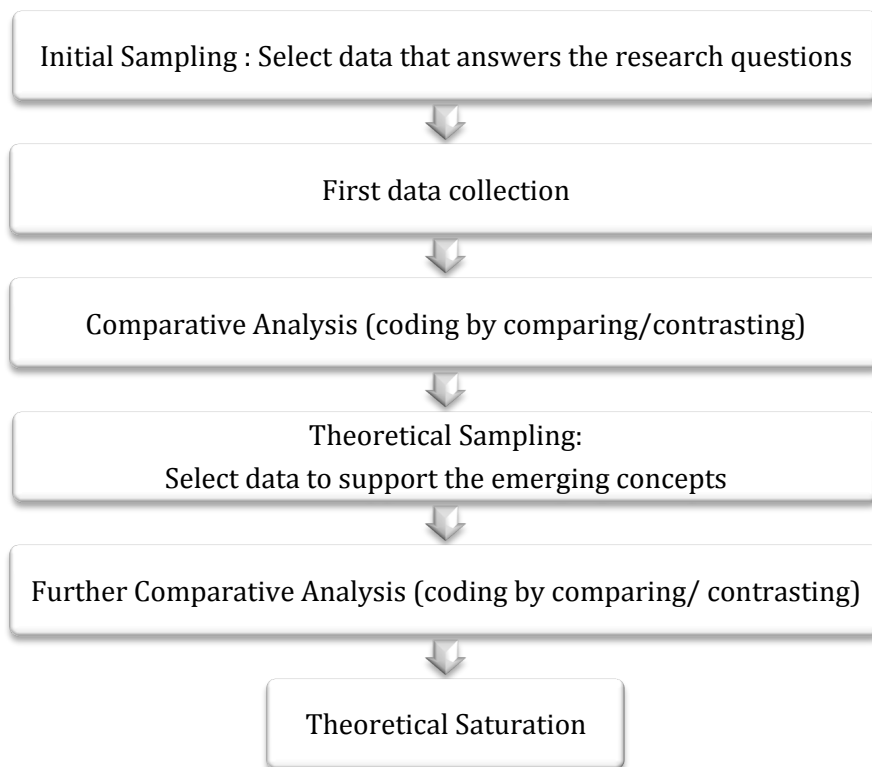
Figure 3.1 Data collection and analysis framework of this study

### 3.5.3 Data Collection Process

Following the proposed framework, the researcher started to set criteria for both initial and theoretical framework. Nevertheless, before setting detailed criteria, it is crucial to understand the nature and limitation of secondary data. All extant texts such as governmental reports, previous research and publications were often produced for specific purposes (Heaton, 2004) within certain social,

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historical, cultural or situational context (Charmaz, 2006, p35). In other words, they were not originally produced for the use of researches solely. With this limitation, Heaton (2004) suggests that researchers using secondary text data should ask themselves how 'fit' the data is to their research purpose, for the proper data selection. The variety of the sources is another critical point. Charmaz (2006) claims that the same topic could be portrayed differently in the different source of data. For example, a historical event is likely to be recorded differently in the newspaper rather than in a history textbook. It all depends on the purpose of the writer, how he or she wants the text to be perceived. Therefore, various sources of data would help researcher to see the reality of the studied phenomenon from diverse dimensions and context, which could enable more concrete construction of theory and concepts.

With that in mind, the researcher specified criteria for initial sampling as shown in table 3.1 on the next page. These criteria were adopted from Charmaz (2006, p39)'s guidelines concerning text data selection. The main criteria of this study is to seek for rich qualitative secondary data that offers insights about slow tourism in Japan, the definitions, policies, practices or related topics concerning the phenomenon.  Therefore, extant texts that answer these requirements were considered useful for the first data collection.

| Criteria | Questions to be raised | Example |
|---|---|---|
| **Variety of sources** | What genre or context does the text belong to? | Governmental report, administrative policy, Academic publication, interview article, Webpage, private publication |
| **Producer** | Who produced this text? | Governmental institution, research center, Academia/scholars, private organization |
| **Purpose** | Why was the text produced? | To research the possibility of Slow Tourism<br>To promote slow tourism<br>To elaborate or illustrate the practice of Slow Tourism<br>To implement slow tourism into policy |
| **Suitability** | What does the content offer to answer of the research questions? | Offers definitions of slow tourism<br>Offers case studies about Slow Tourism<br>Offers general information about Slow Tourism<br>Offers insights about slow movement in Japan |

Table 3.1 Criteria for initial sampling

Using the criteria in Table 3.1, the first batch of data was collected as shown in Table 3.2. Various sources of data such as scholarly articles, governmental documents, books and official webpages and interview article were selected, 26 data sources in total, two in English and the rest in Japanese.

Apart from the criteria above, the researcher also focused on the validity and the access to the text. For example, governmental reports and documents were accessed from online database of the official website, since it was impossible to acquire the original text. Some research publications that were private to the research center was directly requested or purchased by the researcher.

| Title[7] | Author(s) | Genre/Language[8] | Year |
|---|---|---|---|
| Savor Slowly: The Fast Food of High Speed Japan | Noguchi P. | Journal article/ E | 1994 |
| Slow Tourism: Bringing Back The Heart of Traveling | JTB | Seminar paper/ J | 2003 |
| Slow Tourism for Regional Revitalization in Myōkō City, Nīgata | Myōkō City Council | Official webpage/ J | 2004 |
| The Revolution of Slow Movement in Japan | Kawashima M. | Interview article/J | 2005 |
| Slow Tour: Building the Connection Between Human and Nature | NPO Sloth Club Japan | Official webpage/J | 2005 |
| National Land Planning: Slow Tourism Research | MLIT | Governmental report/J | 2006 |
| To Enjoy Setouchi: The Possibility of Slow Tourism | Funck C. | Research paper/J | 2006 |
| The Direction of Slow Tourism | Uchida S. | Article by academia/J | 2006 |
| The Current Situation and The Future of Slow Tourism | Naito W. | Article by academia/J | 2006 |
| Hot Spring: The Origin of Slow Tourism | Noguchi F. | Article by academia/J | 2006 |
| The Future Steps of Slow Tourism | CRRC | Research publication/J | 2006 |
| From Slow Food to Slow Tourism | Sugiyama M. & Nobuoka T. | Journal article/J | 2007 |
| Slow Tourism as a Regional Promotion Tool | Yoshihara T. | Research paper/J | 2007 |
| Slow Stay Club | NPO Kōryu/Kurashi Net | Official webpage/J | 2007 |
| Yamaguchi Slow Tourism: The Policy | Yamaguchi Prefecture | Policy planning/J | 2007 |
| Slow Tourism Promotion in Chugoku Region: 2008 | CDTB | Governmental report/J | 2008 |
| Slow Tourism Promotion in Chugoku Region: 2009 | CDTB | Governmental report/J | 2009 |
| Slow Tourism and Local Assets Branding in Chukoku Region | CDTB | Governmental report/J | 2010 |
| Slow Life City Gifu | Gifu City Council | Official webpage/ J | 2004 |
| The Challenge of Slow Tourism: Case Study of Kaike Onsen | Hosoda Y. | Journal article/J | 2011 |
| Forest Therapy: The Promotion of Tourism in Inanmachi | Mishima H. | Journal article/J | 2011 |
| Rural Area Will Save Japan: The Possibility of Slow Tourism | Hotta T. | Journal article/J | 2011 |
| Toward the Regional Branding for Slow Tourism Promotion | Kayano Y. | Journal article/J | 2011 |
| The Reality and Promotion Policy of Slow Tourism in Chugoku Region | Sato T. | Journal article/J | 2011 |
| Fast Japan, Slow Japan | Murayama M. & Parker G. | A chapter in a book/E | 2012 |
| Slow City Kesennuma | Kesennuma Resilience Group | Research paper/J | 2013 |

Table 3.2: Details of the first data collection

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[7] For Japanese document, the title presented here is the English translation by the researcher

[8] E stands for English and J stands for Japanese

After the completion of initial sampling for the first data collection, theoretical sampling took place. Theoretical sampling is an emerging process where data collection and data analysis are simultaneous (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). When a new concept emerged from data, the researcher would examine the similarities and differences among the concepts and decided to collect more data to support that specific concept. For example, codes defining fast or mass tourism or cultural aspects of Japanese domestic tourism beg for more supporting information. Moreover, some previous data in the initial sampling contains references for further valuable data that the researcher did not know of. Those references were also used as a criterion for more data collection.

Hence, further data collection was undertaken several times, when researcher searched for books, journals and other sources for more details about specific codes. This process was continuous until no more new concepts were generated, which means the data has reached 'theoretical saturation' (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Table 3.3 shows the additional six data sources, which were selected after initial sampling of the first data collection.

| Title[9] | Author(s) | Genre/ Language[10] | Year |
|---|---|---|---|
| From Industrial to Postindustrial Society: Changes in Japanese Leisure-Related Values and Behavior | Linhart,S. | Journal article/E | 1988 |
| Fast, Slow and the Quality of Life: Japan's contradiction | Levine,R. | Book/ E | 1997 |
| The Culture of Japan as Seen Through Its Leisure | Linhart,S & Frühstück,S. | Book/E | 1998 |
| To Rediscover the Charm of Regional Touristic Destination | MLIT | National Research Report/ J | 2010 |
| Relationships Between Railway and Tourism | Saimyo,H. | Journal article/J | 2010 |
| The Ready-to-View Wild Monkey: The Convenience Principle in Japanese Wildlife Tourism | Knight,J. | Journal article/E | 2010 |

Table 3.3 Details of further data collection

From both the initial and the theoretical sampling process for data collection, 32 secondary documents were gathered for analysis. As stated earlier, slow tourism is a rather new concept in Japan, with a relative lack of studies addressing the topic. There were difficulties in data gathering. Nevertheless, Charmaz (2006) suggests that many grounded theorists (Glaser, 1998; Dey, 1999 cited from Charmaz, 2006, p18) argue that small amount of samples and limited data do not pose problems because "grounded theory methods aim to develop conceptual categories and thus data collection is directed to illuminate properties of a category and relations between categories" (Charmaz, 2006, p18). Instead, the focus should be given to rich, substantial and relevant data, more than quantity.

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[9] For Japanese document, the title presented here is the English translation by researcher
[10] E stands for English and J stands for Japanese

Therefore, researcher tried to follow the criteria specified in Table 3.1 as much as possible. The researcher believes that by following the sampling criteria, all 32 secondary data from the selection could offer rich and sufficient insights towards slow tourism in Japan and serves as a quality data for theory construction of this study.

## 3.6 Data Analysis: Coding

This research follows the process of coding in grounded theory by Charmaz (2006), originally adopted from Glaser and Strauss (1967) and Strauss and Corbin (1998). Coding in grounded theory serves as an inductive analysis to generate concepts or theory. According to Charmaz (2006), coding is the process where researcher interprets what is happening in data and labels them in a short name (code) that summarizes the meaning of that segment of data. In other word, it is how analyst 'make sense' of his or her data.

For this research, coding serves an analytic practice to explore the core concepts of slow tourism in Japan. Through the coding process, researchers interact with the secondary documents data repeatedly by observing, scrutinizing, comparing or contrasting the data, and define the meaning within it as a form of 'code'. Each code represents the attribute or elements that were described about slow tourism in the literature. Further categorization of the similar or relevant codes into groups also make the relationship that exists among the codes visible, which completes a grounded theory analysis (Charmaz, 2006).

It is important to clarify the language use in the coding process. As shown in table 2 and table 3, most of the secondary data used in this study are in Japanese. However, since it is mandatory to write thesis in English, the researcher decided to code the raw Japanese text with code names in English, using the exact or the closest meaning of words or sentences, as shown in table 3.4. It should be noted that the researcher obtained a Bachelor of Arts, majoring in Japanese language and literature from Chulalongkorn University in Thailand, with the highest level of Japanese language proficiency test certification (JPLT Level 1). The researcher also has two years working experience as a Japanese-Thai interpreter at a Japanese company in Thailand. Therefore, her ability in reading comprehension and writing skills are sufficient to code the data from Japanese to English and vice versa. Moreover, the researcher also confirmed some difficult words or terms with her native Japanese friends from time to time, in order to be as precise and accurate with the meaning as possible. For Bachelor Degree and JPLT certification, please refer to annex.

### 3.6.1 Open Coding

The first step is open coding[11]. This process aims to discrete concepts by focusing specifically on the nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs that were used to describe a specific concept.  From there, the researcher creates codes that fit the data. For example, when the researcher reads data from document A and finds a sentence that says, "slow tourism is a form of travel that tourists travel slowly to and within a place" the word that the researcher would detect from this sentence is

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[11] Some scholars use the name "initial coding" for this type of coding

the adverb "slowly" as a description of less speed in an action. Hence, the researcher would try to come up with a code to explain this sentence, such as "travel slowly", and label the whole sentence with this code.

While conducting open coding, comparative analysis took place. Comparative analysis is a process where analyst constantly specifies the similarities or the differences between codes, either within the same data or amongst other data (Charmaz, 2006; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). For example, later in document A, the researcher finds a sentence that states, "Slow tourism should involve enjoying food slowly" and codes it as "eating slowly". After finishing coding document A, the researcher goes through all the codes again and finds out the similarities between "travel slowly" and "eating slowly", as they both describe an action being done in a slow manner.  Here, the researcher decides to combine two codes into "doing something slowly". If he or she thinks they are two different concepts, the researcher could also leave the codes as they are to compare or contrast them again with codes from then next document. All through the open coding process, the researcher keeps using a constant comparative method to observe the similarities and differences between the codes and to ensure the clear understanding of definitions researcher gives to her codes.

The principle of open coding is to remain open, as the name suggests, for new codes to emerge. With the first 26 secondary documents used in this study, the researcher conducted data coding and constant comparative analysis repeatedly to shape and reshape the codes until they made sense. When a new concept that begs more data to support came up, theoretical sampling was applied

for more data collection, until no more new concepts emerged. At the end of the open coding stage, 21 codes/concepts regarding the definitions of 'Slow Tourism' emerged, as shown in the first column of table 3.4.

**3.6.2 Axial Coding**

The second step is axial coding. This process aims to sort and organize codes from open coding process into categories. In other words, researchers try to link the codes that have connection or relationship and bring them back together in cohesion (Charmaz, 2006; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). For example, 'travel slowly', 'staying longer' and 'doing things with conscious and awareness' can be grouped into 'physical slowness', as the researcher thinks that all these codes concern the act of being physically slow. On the other hand, 'relaxation' and 'freedom of time use' were grouped into 'spiritual slowness', because they are both abstract and exist as a state of mind. These are some examples to illustrate the logic of axial coding that the researcher applied during this stage of analysis. At the end of axial coding step, the 21 codes from open coding stage were grouped into seven sub-categories; 'physical slowness', 'spiritual slowness', 'cultural exchange', 'cultural and environmental awareness', 'involvement of local community', 'quality of travel experience' and 'individuality', as shown in the second column of Table 3.4.

### 3.6.3 Selective Coding

The last process of coding is 'selective coding'[12]. In this stage researchers integrate the sub-categories from axial coding into a larger concept or category by specifying possible relationships between those sub-categories. Glaser and Strauss (1967), Strauss and Corbin (1998) and Charmaz (2006) all agree that this is a sophisticated level of coding because the substantive codes are conceptualized into a theoretical direction, which serves as a process of theory construction. There are many analytic criteria in selective coding for researchers to apply. Glaser (1998) proposes causes, contexts, degree, dimensions, interactive, cultural and consensus, for instance, as some theoretical coding families. Charmaz (2006) suggests that the researchers should choose their own selective coding criteria according to what they want to learn from the data, and how this theoretical direction would lead to the answer.

The objective of this study is to find out the core characteristics of slow tourism in Japan. Therefore, the 'integration' amongst the concept is a crucial indicator. Hence the researcher tried to specify the relationship between all seven sub-categories from axial coding and integrate them into categories that explain the sub-categories in a wider dimension. After several attempts of reasoning, all seven sub-categories grouped in axial coding were integrated into three main categories; 'slowness and time', 'locality' and 'travel experience', as shown in the third column of Table 3.4.

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[12] Some scholars refer this type of coding as "theoretical coding"

| Open Coding<br>Concepts derived from<br>secondary data | Axial Coding<br>Sub-categories | Selective Coding<br>Core-categories |
|---|---|---|
| Taking time/unhurried<br>Consciousness and awareness of action<br>Less mobility and short distance travel<br>Overnight stay/ longer stay<br>Slow mode of transportation | Physical slowness | **Slowness** |
| Relaxation/healthy/healing<br>Away from everyday life<br>Freedom of time use | Spiritual slowness | |
| Interaction with the local destination<br>Local food/slow food<br>Local accommodation and transportation | Cultural exchange | **Locality** |
| Respect towards local destination<br>Environmental-friendly mode of<br>transportation | Cultural and<br>environmental<br>awareness | |
| Authenticity of local culture/<br>product/service<br>Local-level information | Involvement of local<br>community | |
| Deep and meaningful travel experience<br>Be active not passive<br>Sense of learning/knowing/enriching | Quality of travel<br>experience | **Travel<br>Experience** |
| Small scale of tourists<br>Independency in planning and traveling<br>New discovery/ Rediscovery | Individuality | |

Table 3.4 Summary of open coding, axial coding and selective coding

## 3.7 Using Atlas.ti Software

Generally, there are two ways a researcher could code his or her data; by manual coding or by using computer software. In this study, the researcher used computer-aided qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS) called Atlas.ti to assist in data management and analysis (Richards & Richards, 1994). Numerous qualitative researchers have used CAQDAS over the past decade because of many aspects of advantage it facilitates (Friese, 2012; Marshall & Rossman, 2006; Weizman, 2000).

For the present analysis Atlas.ti provided researcher the convenience in storing the documents, coding and editing codes, writing memos about each code, for instance (Weizman, 2000). The researcher used this software to organize all secondary data into word or PDF files. Each document was carefully read and coded, following three steps of coding mentioned earlier. Especially in the open coding process where the researcher needs to go back and forth between codes and documents for comparative analysis, Atlas.ti makes it convenient to retrieve and display a specific code from all documents without having to go through all documents one by one.

It is important to note that unlike the SPSS or SAS statistical packages, Atlas.ti *does not* and *could not* do the analysis (Freise, 2012; Weizman, 2000); it only serves as a tool to systematically organize, structure and integrate the codes derived from the documents (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). All the coding and linking codes into sub-categories and categories process were done by the researcher, with the mechanical and management aspects of assistance from the Atlas.ti software. According to Friese (2012), a carefully conducted computer-assisted qualitative data analysis also increases the validity of research results, especially at the conceptual stage of an analysis. Therefore, the researcher made use of the advantage of this technology to help with the analysis of this study.

## 3.8 Limitations

There are some limitations concerning methodology and analysis to be addressed before moving on to findings. Since the term "slow tourism" is still not widely discussed or implemented into practice in Japan, there were limited sources available for data collection. The secondary documents related to slow tourism in Japan that researcher was able to access and collect (Table 3.2 and Table 3.3), were mostly produced by governmental authorities, academia and the private sectors in tourism industry. It was considered difficult to gain insights into "slow tourism" definitions from the demand sector, namely the tourists, since the term is also unfamiliar to Japanese tourists in general (Naito, 2006). Therefore, to conduct intensive interviews with tourists and ask them, for example, what is the meaning of 'slow' to their travel practice would be too challenging and the researcher might not get sufficient data for conceptual framework construction. In summary, the limitation of this study is that the conceptual framework was grounded from the supply sector perspective, with no consumer behavior involved.

## 3.9 Summary

This chapter has clarified the use of grounded theory methods, theoretical framework, secondary data source, data collection, coding process, and discussion concerning limitations of the methodology. In the next chapter, the researcher would like to present the findings from grounded theory analysis to elaborate the codes and concepts shown in Table 3.4 in full detail.

# CHAPTER 4

# FINDINGS

## 4.1 Introduction

This chapter elaborates the details of findings from the analysis. The first half of this chapter covers the answer to the first research question; what are the elements of definitions or interpretation of 'slow tourism' in Japanese cultural context? The core concepts generated from the coding analysis outlined in the previous chapter is presented narratively with examples and quotations from the secondary document. The second half of the chapter answers the second research question; how are the core concepts defined related to each other? Lastly, a summary of relationship between these core categories is presented into conceptual level.

It should be noted that the explanation of core concepts in this chapter includes Japanese terms in italic characters for clarification and reference to the original words and meaning.

## 4.2 Research Question 1: What are the elements of the definitions or interpretation of 'Slow Tourism' in the Japanese cultural context?

There are three main core components of slow tourism grounded from the literature; 'Slowness', 'Locality' and 'Travel experience', as presented in table 4.1 on the next page. Each concept is elaborated one by one as follows.

| Open Coding<br>Concepts derived from<br>secondary data | Axial Coding<br>Sub-categories | Selective Coding<br>Core-categories |
|---|---|---|
| Taking time/unhurried<br>Consciousness and awareness of action<br>Less mobility and short distance travel<br>Overnight stay/ longer stay<br>Slow mode of transportation | Physical slowness | **Slowness** |
| Relaxation/healthy/healing<br>Away from everyday life<br>Freedom of time use | Spiritual slowness | |
| Interaction with the local destination<br>Local food/slow food<br>Local accommodation and transportation | Cultural exchange | **Locality** |
| Respect towards local destination<br>Environmental-friendly mode of<br>transportation | Cultural and<br>environmental<br>awareness | |
| Authenticity of local culture/<br>product/service<br>Local-level information | Involvement of local<br>community | |
| Deep and meaningful travel experience<br>Be active not passive<br>Sense of learning/knowing/enriching | Quality of travel<br>experience | **Travel<br>Experience** |
| Small scale of tourists<br>Independency in planning and traveling<br>New discovery/ Rediscovery | Individuality | |

Table 4.1 Summary of open coding, axial coding and selective coding

### 4.2.1 Slowness

The main component defining slow tourism in Japanese cultural context is slowness; a process of slowing down in traveling which time use and value of time during holiday is an integrating essence. There are two dimensions of slowness to be considered: physical slowness and spiritual slowness.

### 4.2.1.1 Physical Slowness

Physical slowness in slow tourism refers to the relation between time and physical action. It is the matter of *how* time is spent by the act of traveling or things you do during leisure travel. The Japanese word *yukkuri—slowly* is the

adverb used to emphasize the concept of doing or being physically slow during holidaymaking. Physical slowness stands against the words '*hayai*—fast' and '*jikan wo kakenai*—not taking time'. In the slow tourism philosophy, a traveler takes time to slowly see, experience, taste and feel the place visited (CDTB, 2008; Naito, 2006, Yoshihara, 2007). Some interpretation defines slow travellers as "people who want to do anything in a slow manner—*nanigoto mo slō de ikitai*" and therefore they want to slowly appreciate the beauty of their surroundings while traveling (CRRC, 2006, p8). Physical slowness could be applied to any form of action, including the simplest activity like eating. Many writers link physical slowness in traveling to the slow food philosophy. Sugiyama and Nobuoka (2007) point out in their journal "from slow food to slow tourism" that slow tourism originates from the need to enjoy healthy, delicious local food slowly and leisurely (*yukuri, yuttari*) during traveling. Uchida (2006) also underlines that slow tourism should involve taking time to have meals, slowly tasting food (*yukkuri ajiwau*) while enjoying conversation with your travel companions for an hour or two, which he notes that it contrasts how Japanese salary men normally swallow soba or curry rice in a couple of minutes.

In a way, the connection between slow tourism and slow food philosophy indicates the consensus on quality of action. *Jikkuri—thoroughly/carefully* is another adverb to describe the essence of physical slowness. More than just acting or being slow, traveller should give full attention, consciousness and awareness to what they do in order to do it 'well'. The act of slow is an action done with consideration (Kesennuma Resilience Group, 2013). Furthermore, travellers are

encouraged to use all five senses while traveling (Gifu City Council, 2010). Various actions that require more than one sense of human were presented in the literature, such as to feel *(kanjiru)*, to taste/savor *(ajiwau)* and to sense with your body—*taikan suru*, to experience *(taiken suru)* each and every thing during the trip (CDTB, 2010; MLIT, 2005a). NPO Sloth Club Japan (2005) also states that slow travel is about how one feels the slowness by the skin (*hada de slō wo kanjiru*). These interpretations of physical slowness suggest 'less speed' and more value towards the 'quality' of action by doing things as 'thoroughly and carefully' as possible while traveling.

Physical slowness also concerns frequency of mobility (*idō kaisū*) and distance (idō kyori) in traveling. The nature of holiday in Japan, which is considered short compare to many Western countries (Linhart, 1988), and the fact that more than half of Japanese people are not willing to take paid leaves (Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, 2013) have helped shaping the main stream package tour, or what Knight (2010) calls "high tempo package" in Japan (p760). These tour packages offer many things to see and do that tourists need to rush here and there in a limited time (Naito, 2006). Tourists do not stay long in a place because they need to speed up and complete the entire list in the schedule 'in time' (Uchida, 2006).

Slow tourism, on the other hand, encourage people to move less, spend longer time, and travel in a shorter distance. Gifu prefecture, one of the first destinations in Japan to consider using the concept 'slow' in its development policy argues that slow tourism is a style of travel that does not cram many

contents into a short period of time (Gifu City Council, 2010). Slow tourists refuse to move and follow a tight schedule of traveling (CRRC, 2006). Instead of moving to many places or doing a long haul travel in a short period of time, tourists choose to stay and spend more time at a specific destination (Noguchi, 2006). The concept of shorter distance and less mobility in slow tourism could also be seen from the perspective of the supply sector. In the Chugoku Region of Japan where slow tourism research was conducted, many rural destinations suggested the idea of changing their target of tourists from people outside the region to tourists from nearby urban areas, in order to shorten the distance and travel time and enable more time for tourists to enjoy the destination visited (CDTB, 2008; Hotta, 2011; Mishima, 2011).

The concept of less mobility extends to the emphasis on 'overnight stay—*taizai suru*' as an essential element in slow tourism. As Japanese Tourism Agency (JTA) has been keeping statistical numbers of domestic sight seeing overnight travels (*shukuhaku kankō ryokō*) made by domestic Japanese tourists since the 1960s, and there has been a steady decrease. In the 2010 national tourism survey, for example, one tourist only made 1.43 overnight travels per and only stayed around 2 nights on average (JTA, 2013, p18). The advancement of transportation, such as highway or high-speed bullet train (*shinkansen*) has influenced people to take more single-day trips (*higaeri*) (MLIT, 2005b). In a sense, domestic tourism in Japan has become 'faster', because they can make a round trip without having to stay over at the destination.

Slow tourism, hence, exists as an opposition to the mainstream single-day trips. Governmental sectors such as Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism (MLIT, 2005a) and Chugoku District Transport Bureau (CDTB, 2008,2009,2010) use the term '*taizaikei*', which is literally translated as 'overnight type', to describe the characteristic of slow tourism. Sugiyama and Nobuoka (2007) sets "at least one overnight stay" as one of the five conditions for slow travel. It is important to stay overnight at a place because it allows traveler more time to develop a deeper understanding towards a destination (CRRC, 2006). "Slow Stay Club", an activity of a NPO supporting local tourism development in Japan suggests that tourists should "stay at the destination as if you are the resident living in that area" (NPO Kōryu/Kurashi Net, 2007, p2). During slow tourism research in Chugoku region, local tourism authorities were asked to gather the ideas towards tourism products or services that would enable longer stay or overnight stay at their destinations (CDTB, 2008). Kaike Onsen, a hot spring town in Tottori prefecture came up with a package tour called "slimming stay" where they combine three concepts of 'gastronomy' (*bishoku*) 'spa' (*biyu*) and 'experiences' (*taiken*) with many local activities such as meditation (*zazen*) at the temple or national park walking tour with local guides (Kaike Onsen Ryokan Association, 2010). Tourists could choose to stay at any listed local *ryokan* (Japanese traditional hotel) and register for the activities of their preference. It makes use of eco-tourism activities that 'takes time' to experience and the concept of healthy and beauty travel (*bitabi*) to motivate tourists to stay longer (Hosoda,

2011). This is one of the examples to illustrate the emphasis of overnight stay in slow tourism.

The last sub-category regarding physical slowness is mode of transportation both to and within the destination. As mentioned earlier, the era of high-speed transportation like *shinkansen*, airplane and highway makes it easy for Japanese people to travel further in a shorter length of time (MLIT, 2005b). Noguchi (2006) notes that the convenience, speed and time saving are highly valued by Japanese tourists, seeing from how they would prioritize the faster *shinkansen* like '*nozomi*' over the ones that make more stops on the way like '*hikari*' or '*kodama*'. The Japanese themselves have become a part of speed that "they feel restless if they don't reach the destination as early as they could" (p33). Nevertheless, fast mode of transportation also results in a limitation of the travel experience. Uchida (2006) points out that fast mode of transportation such as airplane offers only sky-view, but not the real landscape between the destinations travelled. Also, highways in Japan are often sided with silent wall, which blocks the view along the way from the car window. In spite of the convenience, these fast modes of transportation are being viewed merely as a means of transport (Saimyo, 2010), which limits the enjoyment of the journey, and traveling becomes just an act of moving, not a part of the trip.

Slow Tourism is, on the contrary, more concerned about slower mode of transportation. It encourages tourists to travel 'through', not just 'to' the destination (CRRC, 2006; CDTB, 2008; Uchida, 2006). Japan Railway (JR) East, for example, has been putting effort into runing special sightseeing trains with

attractive side views on many local lines for passenger to enjoy the scenery along the way (Saimyo, 2010). This concept matches Noguchi (2006)'s suggestion that slow tourists should take a local train that stops at every station (*kakueki teisha*), slowly enjoy the trackside scenery and drop by to taste station specialty lunch boxes (*ekiben*). Some cities like Takehara in Hiroshima prefecture and Takamatsu in Kagawa prefecture have bicycle rental stations all over the town to motivate tourists to enjoy the city by cycling (CRRC, 2006). Walking is also one of the most often mentioned ways of travel in Japanese slow tourism literature. Gifu prefecture uses the slogan "*Gifu wo aruku*" (to walk Gifu) to persuade visitors to travel around by walking, in order to slowly see and feel the landscape and the essence of the city (Gifu City Council, 2010). In his book "How walking can change tourism", Chatani (2008) explains that to walk aimlessly (*bura-bura suru*) is the best way to enjoy a city because we can slowly observe what is in front our eyes and together we discover what we have never noticed before without being on foot. Slower pace of movement may take longer time to reach somewhere, but tourists are rewarded with a richer travel experience and scenery that high-speed transportation cannot offer (Uchida, 2006).

To conclude the point, physical slowness is about taking time to be and to do everything in a slow manner while traveling. To slowly and thoroughly see, taste, experience and move enables a traveler to conduct each and everything in a better manner, with full attention and consciousness. Slow tourists do not utilize just one but all five senses they have to fully experience the leisure travel. Travellers put an effort to make a deep level of physical engagement throughout

the holiday. Overnight stay and slower mode of transpiration enable travellers to fully 'absorb' and 'appreciate' the destination and also the journey to and within it. With all the supporting evidence above, physical slowness is, therefore, one of the core concepts in slow tourism.

### 4.2.1.2 Spiritual Slowness

For slow tourism, there is a deeper meaning to the word 'slow' than physical slowness (JTB, 2003). More than just acting or being physically slow, slowness also applies to the travellers' spiritual wellness or *seishin tekina yoyū*, literally translated as 'having a room or time to spare spiritually' (Kesennuma Resilience Group). The adjectives '*nonbiri*—relaxed/leisurely','*yuttari*—at east/calm/comfortable', '*iyashi*—healing/de-stressing' are used to describe this characteristic. The main purpose of traveling is to truly feel relaxed and away from both professional and personal life (Sugiyama & Nobuoka, 2007, p3). Kawashima Masahide, the president of Slow Life Japan Organization defines that slow tourism is "an individual's perception on how to de-stress or relax from their own daily routine" (Kato, 2005). Naito (2006) also supports the idea that slow tourism is for people who want to be released from strictly controlled everyday life at work, those who seek for 'healing' and stress relief.

Accordingly, there are connections between the slow tourism concept and tourism resources that hold the characteristics of relaxation, healing and good for health, such as nature (*shizen*) in rural areas (*inaka*) and hot spring (*onsen*), for instance. Noguchi (2006) claims that the culture of hot spring in Japan strongly

supports slow tourism ideology. In the past, Japanese people often went to hot spring during cultivation, stay for several days to heal their mind and body, then went back to work (p34). Nowadays the tradition still continues, as 'hot spring cure' (*yuchi*) is one of the main travel purposes of Japanese domestic tourists (MLIT, 2005b, p2). *Onsen* has been, and still is, a place for relaxation and health management (*kenkō kanri*) for the Japanese (Noguchi, 2006; Uchida, 2006).

Another example of tourism product associated with spiritual slowness is 'forest therapy' (*shinrin serapī*) in Inanmachi, Tottori prefecture. Using the slogan "refreshing your mind and body by spending relaxing time", the program focuses on *shinrin-yoku*, (forest bathing), where tour guide leads tourists to an approximate 2- kilometer 'slow therapy road' (*yukkuri yukkuri serapī rōdo*) therapeutic walk in the forest (NPO Forest Therapy Society, 2014). The forest therapy claims medical and scientific effectiveness in stress relief, especially aiming for those from metropolis and urban areas (Mishima, 2011). Forest therapy in Inanmachi is an example that illustrates the connection between slowness and spiritual wellbeing in slow tourism. Looking from these insights, we can see how spiritual slowness is presented in a sense of being good to oneself and being in a good mental health, away from stress in daily life.

Many writers argue that slow tourism exists as a reflection of fast paced of living in Japanese modern society (Noguchi, 2006; NPO Sloth Club Japan, 2005; Uchida, 2006). Japanese people value speed, efficiency and continuous improvement and therefore the word 'slow' is regarded as a negative term for most of the Japanese (Levine, 1997; Noguchi, 1994). Some claim it as a

'forbidden word' (*kinku*) after Tōhoku earthquake because the perception towards 'slow' directs to *supīdo ga osoi* (slow speed), which brings the nuance of inconvenience and inefficiency to the reconstruction (Kesennuma Resilience Group, 2013). Hence, the speed of time has become important in daily life. Japanese people are willing to be busy and work as quickly as possible in a time given (Levine, 1997). This attitude has extended to their travel behavior, as they tend to make the most out of their vacation by filling in their itineraries with tight schedules in a short period of time (Linhart, 1988; Murayama & Parker, 2012). They travel to the 'must-see' spots as much as possible, and get busy buying many *omiyage* (souvenirs) along the way. At the end of the trip, tourists come home exhausted, stressed and unfulfilled because they focus on achieving all the travel experience in a limited time (Noguchi, 2006). In conclusion, a vacation becomes another 'busy' activity and the time spent during holiday does not differ from their fast-paced daily life (Knight, 2010; Linhart, 1988).

The Slow Tourism concept is an opposition to such 'fast tourism'. It encourages tourists to change their attitudes and value of time towards leisure travel. While normally Japanese people work and live *against* the clock, on vacation they should keep in mind that this is their 'free time' and thus they have all the 'freedom' and 'authority' to it. Travellers should design their own traveling time, or as described in the literature as 'the time of one's own' (*jibun nari no jikan*) (CRRC, 2006). Slow travellers should allow themselves to be flexible and go with 'the flow of time' (*jikan no nagare*) (Myōkō City Council, 2004), 'forget' time and focus on 'the very moment, the very place' that they are in (NPO Sloth

Club Japan, 2005). Travellers should abandon the unnecessary obligation to follow the tight schedule or checklist of all the 'must' do and see at the destination, but rather they should use time according to how their hearts desire (*kokoro no muku mama ni*) (CDTB, 2006). In a sense, the freedom in time use while traveling is an individual state of mind of each traveller to construct their travel time just as they like.

There are often questions about slow tourism in general, such as 'how slow' should one be in order to fit the concept of slow travel. Spiritual slowness might as well be the answer. There is no exact measurement for slowness in traveling; the importance is that the pace of traveling allows travellers to achieve the state of relaxation during their holiday, in their own way. Uchida (2006, p6) concludes that it is how one travels in 'a little bit slower pace', the pace that is exactly right for one's own life (*jibun no konomi ni atta pēsu*). This distinguishes spiritual slowness from physical slowness. It is not only about being literally slow, but also about trying to find the best rhythm/tempo of traveling that brings satisfaction and value to one's travel experience (Naito, 2006). It is 'slowing down' to the pace that is good and right for one self (Kesennuma Resilience Group, 2013).

Interestingly, some writer argues that even package tour or single-day trip (*higaeri*) without overnight stay could be included in slow tourism too, as long as tourist could achieve the statement of relaxation and healing (*iyashi*) after the trip (Hotta, 2011). Many slow tourism products that local tourism authorities in Chugoku Region came up with were in a form of package tour that includes free

time for tourist to use freely according to their preference (CDTB, 2010; Kayano, 2011; Sato, 2011), such as one or half day free time for tourists to spend on their own. As long as travellers have the 'luxury' (*yoyū*) in time use, it is in the territory of slow tourism (CRRC, 2006).

To conclude the point, spiritual slowness in slow tourism focuses on the value of time use during holiday in two different dimensions. First, to be slow is to use time 'differently' from how they normally do in their 'fast' and 'busy' daily life. The pace of traveling and time used during vacation should bring healthiness and mental wellness to the tourist. Second, spiritual slowness is about adding more value towards leisure time. While Japanese people tend to transfer their attitude of speed and efficiency in work life to leisure travel (Knight, 2010; Linhart, 1988), the slow tourism concept is a reminder that they are on holiday and that they own the 'freedom of time use'. Slow travellers travel to get away from the fast paced living to achieve 'relaxation' and 'satisfaction', which is arguably the heart of slow tourism.

### 4.2.2 Locality

The second core category that defines slow tourism is locality. There are three dimensions to the interpretation of locality. First, the cultural exchange between tourists and local destination visited. Second, the cultural and environmental consciousness that tourists gain through deep engagement they make with the local community. Third, the involvement of local people and community in presenting and providing authentic local experience to the tourists.

**4.2.2.1 Cultural Exchange**

For slow tourism, locality and activities at the destination is seen as 'cultural exchange'. Hosoda (2011) defines slow tourism as "a form of travel that involves recognition of local culture and the experience at the local destination" (p15). Myokō city uses 'interaction—*fureai* ' 'exchange—*kōryu'* as slow tourism catch phrase (Myokō City Council, 2004). Similarly, Gifu prefecture also states the importance of tourists' appreciation towards 'regionality—*chiikisei*' and 'local tradition—*dentō*' while visiting (MLIT, 2005a). There is an obvious emphasis on interaction and cultural exchange between tourists and the local destination visited (Yoshihara, 2007). Tourists hold strong interest in local culture that they want to become a part of it if possible (CRRC, 2006, p7). Slow tourists are eager to participate in various activities that allow direct interaction with the locals such as cooking class, art lesson, farming, fishing, kimono wearing, tea ceremony, for example (CDTB, 2008). Through these hands-on experiences, tourists gain deeper understanding towards local people, lifestyle, culture, history, nature and food (CDTB, 2008, 2009; Yamaguchi Prefecture, 2007). In short, slow tourism allows intimate and harmonious relationship between visitor and the place visited (Murayama & Parker, 2012).

One effective way to get acquainted with a locality is to stay with the locals. Tourists are encouraged to stay at an accommodation run by local people, such as bed and breakfast style guesthouse (*minshuku*) or homestay at local people's house instead of hotel (MLIT, 2005a). Yamaguchi slow tourism website www.yamaguchi-slow.jp has one section called 'sleepover experience' (*otomari*

*taiken*) where they introduce local farmer and fisherman host families. Visitors who choose to stay with fisherman family, for example, will get a chance to go fishing or learn how to cook freshly caught fish and other seafood (Yamaguchi Prefecture, 2013). By staying with the locals, tourists get to experience the lifestyle of local people, how they work or what they eat in their daily life, which deepens cultural exchange and understanding between visitors and the host.

Transportation is another alternative to mingle in with the locals. For traditional package tour in Japan, visitors mostly travel in a tour bus, which limited the connection to be only between tourists themselves. Public transportation, on the other hand, allows direct contact with the locals (CDTB, 2010). The ideal transportation in slow tourism is the one that local people normally use and tourists could also enjoy (MLIT, 2005a). A survey about tourist's satisfaction towards transportation in Takayama city, Ehime prefecture reveals that local trams (*romendensha*) and ferryboat (*watarifune*) are highly rated because these modes of transportation give tourists extraordinary and memorable experiences, since they don't normally travel like this back home (CRRC, 2006, p40). Likewise, the slow mode of traveling like cycling and walking is also one of the most effective ways tourists get to interact with local people, to stop by and have a talk or ask for their recommendation of the local place or restaurant to visit (CDTB, 2008).

Food is another essential element of locality. Traveling and good eating has always been in close connection for Japanese people and they tend to be very interested in the diversity of local food culture (Murayama & Parker, 2012). Slow

tourism therefore encourages tourists to taste, learn and appreciate the local cuisine at the destination visited. Noguchi (1994) notes that local food offers tourists a strong sense of place because "by eating something that is locally grown and harvested while traveling, one can experience a unique appreciation of communion with the area" (p323). This concept is closely related to the slow food philosophy, which is said to be the origin of slow movement in Japan (Sugiyama & Nobuoka, 2007; Uchida, 2006). Though not officially using the 'slow tourism' concept in their tourism promotion, many prefectures and cities all over Japan have been widely using the term 'slow food' (See for example Chikugo City Council, 2011; Gifu City Council, 2010, Kesennuma City, 2006). Through this 'slow food' concept, the local administration often holds events, workshops or classes for both tourists and the locals themselves to learn about local food tradition and history (Slow Food Japan, 2010). In conclusion, local food is seen as one of the most crucial elements for locality in slow tourism, as it naturally and easily connects tourists and local people together.

### 4.2.2.2 Cultural and Environmental Awareness

The emphasis on cultural exchange between tourists and locals leads to the sense of cultural and environmental consciousness of tourists towards the destination visited. Funck (2006) elaborates the difference between 'fast' and 'slow' tourists that that, 'fast' tourists make little effort to engage with the locals, instead of understanding and adapting to the destination, fast tourists 'bring their own lifestyle' (*jibun no seikatsu yōshiki wo mochikomu*) into the place without consideration towards local community. But for slow tourists, they respect the

local residents and try to adjust their lifestyle to the travel destination (*seikatsu yōshiki wo tabisaki ni awaseru*). More than just a visitor, slow tourists want to "become a part of the local community" (CRRC, 2006, p7). They enjoy the town like locals do, stay where locals live, dine like locals and bond strong connection with the local culture. Visitors inhabit rather than just simply visit (NPO Kōryu/ Kurashi net, 2007) In a sense, tourists tend to regard the local destination as if their own hometown and treat the community with respect or *omoiyari* (Funck, 2006). They recognize local culture as human intellect (*jinchi*) fragmented over years of history. By learning and understanding local culture, they've become a part to help protect (*mamoru*) the culture and the destination as well (CRRC, 2006).

In terms of protection, there is a consensus on environmental awareness towards the destination visited. Slow tourists are sensitive about environmental impact or burden (*fuka*) they could cause by their traveling activities (CRRC, 2006; Funck, 2006; MILT, 2005a). Chugoku Regional Research Center (2006) discuss in their report about private car use as one of the concerns for slow tourism. Too much use of private cars could cause risks of accident, noises, and exhaust gas. Moreover, would also destroy the traditional atmosphere of the town. Hence, public transportation comes in the consideration of slow tourists as a more environmental friendly mode of traveling. The further suggestion was made that the choice of transportation should be walking, bicycle, public transportation and private car as the last choice, if possible (p47). Kyoto, one of the most visited destinations in Japan promoted 'Slow Life Kyoto' campaign in 2010 to encourage

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both local residents and tourist to walk around the city and refrain from using private car, for better environment and image of the city (Kyoto City Council, 2010).  This concept is associated with 'slow city' philosophy adopted by several destinations such as Gifu and Kesennuma city, where they aim to develop cultural and environmental consciousness of the inhabitants and tourists to make their town a better place for both the residents and visitors (Gifu City Council, 2004; Kesennuma City, 2014).

In summary, slow tourism ideology is about visitors being good to the destination visited. Tourists learn and respect local culture; together they try to make the least environmental impact on the local residents and community as possible.

### 4.2.2.3 Local Community Involvement

Many insights from the literature discuss the 'authenticity' of the local destination an important element for slow tourism. As mentioned earlier, slow tourists hold great interest towards local culture at the destination. Consequently, they prioritize the 'real' and 'authentic' (*honmono*) tourism products, services and overall experience. Authenticity refers to something that stays the way it really is (*sono mama, ari no mama*) that has not been commercialized, modified, built or made especially for tourists. (CRRC, 2006; Gifu City Council, 2010). This is why slow tourists try to become a part of the local community as much as possible, to get the real and authentic travel experience (CRRC, 2006) However, the concept

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of authenticity is not yet fully understood and practiced in modern Japanese tourism. Knight (2010) intensively discusses tourist attractions in Japan as being "readily viewable" (p744). He argues that mainstream tourism in Japan values convenience of tourists more than authenticity and that they sometimes turn their local or traditional culture into 'instant' products to minimize time-wasting and provide easy access for visitors.

Hence, in order for slow tourists to achieve authenticity at the local destination, it is crucial for local community and tourism authorities to understand and value 'authenticity' over the 'convenience' when branding or promoting slow tourism (Kayano, 2011; Sato, 2011). Slow tourism encourages the locals to be proud of their own culture and region (CDTB, 2008). Instead of looking for new resources to create tourism products especially aimed for tourists, they should provide "something local people usually enjoy on their daily basis because it represents the real and genuine culture, not artificial or fake products (*tsukurimono*)" (CRRC, 2006, p19).

Following this philosophy, Kesennuma, the first official slow city in Japan promotes their city with the slogan "The culture of Kesennuma itself is the charm of the city" (Kesennuma City, 2014). Similarly, Gifu prefecture also emphasizes "The genuineness of Gifu" (*gifu nara dewa no honmono*) as their philosophy towards slow tourism (Gifu City Council, 2010). Yamaguchi prefecture, the most proactive 'slow tourism' slogan user, has been trying to encourage rural destinations all over prefecture to reevaluate their local assets and rethink if these 'normal and local' resources could be used or sell as a valuable and distinctive

tourism assets (CDTB, 2008, 2009; Yamaguchi Prefecture, 2007). Their official slow tourism website www.yamaguchi-slow.jp is where each rural community shares their local tourism information and events, appealing the locality and uniqueness of each area. Tourists can search by activities, nature, hands-on experience or homestay that they are interested in. The electronic guidebook called "*Yamaguchi inaka taiken guide*" (Yamaguchi rural experience guide) is also available and updated every season for news of special local events and homestay experiences (Yamaguchi Prefecture, 2013).

The emphasis of authenticity consequently influences more involvement of local people and community in presenting their authenticity of their culture. There were many discussions about 'local tour guide' or 'volunteer guide'. Sato (2011) points out that local tour guides play a significant role as the presenter of local history and culture. The importance is that they should add 'local-level information' into their explanation, meaning personal experiences, folklore (*mukashi banashi*) or tradition (*dentō*) only known to the locals. When presenting local dishes, rather than simply explain what this food is (*kono shokuhin*) one should add 'the way we eat this food in our region' (*kono shokuhin wo kō taberu*) or not just 'this famous place' (*kono meisho*) but also 'how we look at this famous place' (*kono meisho wa koko kara miru*) (CRRC, 2006, p23). These tips add value and authenticity to tourist' perspective towards local culture and locality at the destination. In Kita-Hiroshima city, trekking and hiking tour guides are chosen not based on their professional knowledge but on how long they have been living in this area and how much they are interested in local mountains. Tourists get to

hear folklores and local stories with 'unique dialect' (*dokutokuna hōgen*), which is highly rated by tourist (Hotta, 2011). By adding the touch of locality, the explanation becomes more than just 'talking' (*katari*) but a story (*monogatari*) full of uniqueness and authenticity (CDTB, 2009).

As a conclusion, slow tourism concept strongly initiates the involvement of local people and community. Instead of being marginalized, local people become main actors (Murayama & Parker, 2012). Both visitors and local community should put less emphasis on 'convenience' and value 'authenticity' of the local culture, products and destination, which is the essence of locality in slow tourism.

### 4.2.3 Travel Experience

The last core category of slow tourism is travel experience. First, there is emphasis on the deep and meaningful travel experience. Second, the individuality as the need to have unique and different travel experience from mainstream and from other people is addressed.

### 4.2.3.1 Quality of Travel Experience

There are many statements from the literature stressing the importance towards high quality of travel experience for slow tourism. Sugiyama and Nobuoka (2007) explain that the change of attitudes towards more quality of travel experience is "the shift from 'material wealth' ideology to a more diverse

society in Japan, as time changes" (p8). In terms of traveling, mass or fast tourism is considered a representative form of consumerist or materialistic (Murayama & Parker, 2012). A package tour that crams many travel experiences into a short period of time is a product for tourists who want to achieve 'as much as possible', more than to 'enjoy the holiday as much as possible'. In other words, the focus in traveling is on quantity not quality. This style of traveling brings a shallow and poor travel experience, low satisfaction and impressions during and after the holiday (Naito, 2006). Uchida (2006) adds that too many travel experiences crammed together in a package causes 'indigestion' (*shōkafuryo*) (p7). Tourists could not savor the travel experience thoroughly because they mostly just 'pass through' (*tsuka-suru*) it. At the end of the day, holidaymakers may feel 'somewhat' (*omoikomasareru*) satisfied with the efficiency they have made, but could only vaguely remember or recall about the trip because they have made so little engagement to each experience (Noguchi, 2006, p31)

Slow tourism, on the other hand, is a form of travel that values 'quality' over 'quantity' (Murayama & Parker, 2012). It makes us rethink the current trend of tourism, where we put value on how many touristic spots can one travel to or how fast can one get to the destination (Yamaguchi Prefecture, 2007). Rather than having many superficial travel experiences, slow tourists seek for less numbers but higher quality in holidaymaking (Naito, 2006). High quality does not refer to efficiency (*kōritsu*) but the deepness of satisfaction (*manzokudo*) in travel experience (CDTB, 2008; CRRC, 2006; MLIT, 2005a). In order to achieve deep and meaningful travel experiences, travellers need to shift from traditional

'sightseeing' (*monomiyūsan*) to an 'experience-based' (*taikenkei*) level of traveling (Kayano, 2011). In other words, it initiates tourists to become active, not passive (Knight, 2010; Sugiyama & Nobuoka, 2007). The verbs 'to see' (*miru*) and 'to visit' (*kengaku-suru)* are often replaced by the verbs 'to learn *(manabu)* and 'to experience' (*taiken-suru)* in the slow tourism context. To sightsee is not the only purpose of traveling; there is also a sense of learning and knowing (CRRC, 2006). By becoming active during holidaymaking, the question tourists would ask themselves after the trip would be "what did I experience" or "how did I spend my time" instead of "what did I see" (MLIT, 2005b, p6)

The importance of knowledge and learning has led to the less value towards materialistic, intangible products like souvenirs (*omiyage*) (Funck, 2006). Japanese tourists regard souvenirs as evidence of traveling to a place and a form of social manner to share their joy of traveling with other people (work colleagues, family and friends, for example) and often feel obligated to buy a lot of souvenirs back home (Oedewald, 2009; Park, 2000). Consequently, many package tours include souvenir shopping into the schedule, which tourists often get busy buying immense amount of *omiyage* instead of focusing on engaging and making more connection with the people and the place visited (Noguchi, 2006). On the contrary, slow tourist focuses more on bringing home new experiences (*atarashī taiken*) and memories (*omoide*) as intangible souvenirs (Funck, 2006). They believe the knowledge and experiences gained through traveling could enrich and make their life meaningful (*jinsei wo yutaka ni suru*) (Gifu City Council, 2010). Tourists

who value quality experiences would therefore try to create memorable memories (*omoide dukuri*) as much as possible (MLIT, 2005b).

In conclusion, slow travel is a shift from achieving quantity over quality in travel experience. The quality comes from being active, eager to know, learn and experience something new while holiday making, which brings fulfillment, satisfaction and meaning to the travel experience as a whole.

### 4.2.3.2 Individuality

Individuality or *'kosei'* in Japanese is one of the most important elements concerning slow travel experience. Individuality in slow tourism means the need to archive a personal level of travel experience, which is different from others and unique to the traveller himself or herself (CDTB, 2009; CRRC, 2006; MLIT, 2005a). It means the freedom and ability to design one's travel. Knight (2010) suggests that slow tourism is a response to the 'pre-arranged' character of package tourism in Japan because these tours are already designed and packaged as a final product, without the tourist's involvement. Another example of the 'pre-arranged' form of product is a travel guidebook. Apart from providing frameworks and guidelines for the trip, guidebooks also include what is considered 'worth' seeing and doing, which, in a sense, influences preconceptions of a destination (Nishimura, Waryszak & King, 2006). Hence, many tourists depend on recommendations from guidebooks that they do not research more about other 'minor' or 'unknown' places and activities that might be interesting to them (CRRC, 2006; Funck, 2006). The similarity of package tour and guidebook is that,

they both offer 'patterns' and 'structure' of traveling, which Knight (2006) criticizes as 'predictable' travel experience (p745). In a way, these packages and guidebooks are made to supply holidaymakers whose demand is to experience all the 'must' at a specific destination. By following these itineraries, the travel experience is likely to be similar to other tourists and, consequently, shows lack of individuality (MLIT, 2005b).

Slow tourism, on the contrary, encourages tourists be flexible and independent in traveling. The word 'spontaneous' or '*jihatsu*' was underlined as a core characteristic of slow tourists in the literature (see for example CDTB, 2009; MLIT, 2005a, Sugiyama & Nobuoka, 2007; Yoshihara 2007). Slow tourists do not want to be bonded by pre-structured schedules because they have the freedom to design their own travel (CRRC, 2006). One interpretation states that slow tourists are "individual, follow their spontaneity, travel slowly and unplanned" (*kojin de kinomuku mamani mukeikaku yuttari tabi wo suru*) (MLIT, 2005a, p204). Uchida (2006) also stresses that the core of slow tourism ideology is for tourists to "deeply experience something they truly prefer and create an experience that does not duplicate anyone else's" (p7). Slow tourism is not simply about following what is recommended in guidebook; tourists become their own tour guide, create their own itineraries to enjoy their personal way of traveling (*jibun nari no ryoko*) (MLIT, 2005a). This does not necessary mean tourists should not follow the recommended route from guidebooks or other sources *at all*, it simply means that the slow tourist does not only want to be the follower, they also want to be the leader of their own trip if possible (CRRC, 2006, p7). Tourist may get information

and recommendation from various sources, but they should be the one who decide the program and activities according to their own liking (CDTB, 2008). It is a problem of 'flexibility' over 'standardization' in fast tourism (Murayama & Parker, p175). At the end of the trip, slow tourists want to feel that "I have chosen to come here because of my own value and interests (*mizukara no kachikan to kyōmi*) towards the place" (CRRC, 2006, p6).

In the literature, an example of personal travel experience was presented in a form of 'theme'. Theme refers to particular interest of travellers in history, food, culture, nature and other certain things (CRRC, 2006; Yoshihara, 2007, Kayano, 2011). This type of traveller tends to set 'theme' and create their own routes according to their interests. Uchida (2006) illustrates an example of themed travel experience; the historical travel routes of the poet Matsuo Bashō[13]. His travelogue "The Narrow Road to the Deep North" (*oku no hosomichi*) has become a niche travel guidebook for Japanese who are fans his literature. People follow the path he walked throughout Tōhoku region and visit places he wrote about. The interpretation of each reader becomes his or her travel guideline that adds individuality to the travel experience.

Consequently, the need for individuality leads to the concept of private (*kojin*) and small-scale (*shō-ninsu*) tourists in slow travel. Travelling in a large-scale group (*dantai ryokō*) does not allow flexibility or spontaneity of individual travellers (CRRC, 2006; CDTB, 2008). In order to avoid that, slow travellers travel either individually, with family or small group of friends who share similar

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[13] Matsuo Basho (1644-1649), one of the most famous poets of the Edo era in Japan.

interest and the need for individuality (CDTB, 2009; Funck, 2006; Murayama & Parker, 2012). This small-scale of traveling is labeled as '*kojinryokō*' (personal travel), which the purpose of traveling is for personal recreation (*kojin no kankō rekuriēshon*) (MLIT, 2005b, p3). Moreover, supply sector companies are encouraged to change their attitudes towards 'mass' to a more personal products and services. Instead of selling pre-packaged tours, they could provide personal consultation in planning the trips that matches tourists' preferences, case by case (CDTB, 2009). Recommendations of special-interest places and activities for self-guided tourists are also highly rated for slow tourism because it makes tourists feel like this is their own and personal travel routes (MLIT, 2005a).

### 4.2.3.3 Discovery and Rediscovery

The word *hakken*—discovery is another noun frequently highlighted in slow tourism experience. It is the consequence of the individual travel experience concept discussed above. The need of unique travel experience initiates travellers to look for something new and different (Yoshihara, 2007). New in this interpretation may not always mean something that has never been discovered by anyone before. An explanation of the discovery in slow tourism is stated as below;

> …To notice the landscape of a street corner no one tells you about, to observe the life of people you meet along the way, these small details are your discovery and your impression of the travel, which resembles to no one else's (CRRC, 2006, p7).

This interpretation underlines 'discovery' as a different way of looking at things, to 'rediscover' what travellers has never paid much attention to before. Slow tourists has the ability to notice nature, history, tradition and culture, in other words, the 'treasure' of a destination, which high-speed traveling has never allowed them to (CDTB, 2009; CRRC, 2006). It is about how tourists 'revalue' everything they encounter during holidaymaking and appreciate it in their own way (MLIT, 2005a). Even at the place tourists already know or are familiar with, the intention of discovery brings new perception towards their travel experience (CRRC, 2006). Moreover, it also results an attitude change of tourists towards mainstream routes and popular touristic spots. Any destination could become attractive for travellers once they realize the value of it (Funck, 2006).

Accordingly, this ideology of discovery and rediscovery is also highly regarded by slow tourism supply sector, especially in rural destinations. In Chugoku region where slow tourism research was conducted, this notion of discovery was applied into practice for the locals to 'rediscover' (*saihakken-suru*) their hometown and local assets that might have been neglected. For example, in 2010 Chugoku District Transportation Bureau (CDTB) set 'scenery' (*keshiki*) and 'food' (*shoku*) as a slow tourism product theme to attract tourists to the region. Various local tourism authorities reevaluated their 'neglected' local special food (*totte oki no shoku*) and scenic views (*zekkei)* from four seasons, compiled them into a list and distributed for free to many travel agencies as a guideline to create 'gastronomic' and 'scenery' travel routes for tourists. There were positive feedback from tourists that they were very impressed by the useful information

because "it includes many minor places and food" which they have never known before (Kayano, 2011, p51). This example clearly shows that tourists are optimistic to come find something new and different in the rural area, even though it is mostly minor and/or unknown (CRRC, 2006; Yamaguchi Prefecture, 2007; Yoshihara, 2007). In conclusion, the discovery and rediscovery of regional assets mutually benefits tourists and the destination visited at the same time.

To summarize the point, slow tourism involves the individuality of travel experience, the freedom to design and decide your own itineraries avoid following the mass-scale of travel routes, services or products. Slow tourism suggests tourists to add the touch of individuality and personal preference in planning their trips to experience something that is different from mainstream and unique to them. The essence of individual travel experience lies upon the change of attitudes towards the value of their surrounding. Tourists open their mind to the new discovery and rediscovery, which helps making their travel experience extraordinary and unique to them.

## 4.3 Research Question 2: How are the core elements describing slow tourism in Japan related to each other?

As the answer of previous research question, three key concepts of slow tourism in Japanese cultural context were derived from the literature; slowness and time, locality and travel experience. In this research question, the abstract relationship between each concept is identified one by one, to clarify how these three concepts are interrelated.

**4.3.1 Slowness and Locality**

Slowness and locality are interconnected by time. The concept of slowness in slow tourism encourages travellers to slow down, take time in all actions and do it well with full consciousness. When physical slowness is applied at a local destination, tourists spend more time to the act of traveling, experiencing and are likely to move less and stay longer or stay overnight. Accordingly, the slower pace of traveling is, the more tourists are likely to get attached and make more connection with the locals and local community (Lumsdon & McGrath, 2011). Moreover, the emphasis of longer or overnight stay from the literature suggests that tourists should stay at the local destination as if they are one of the residents (NPO Kōryu/Kurashi net, 2007; Sugiyama & Nobuoka, 2007). Consequently, tourists become more than just visitor but part of the local community and treat the local community as if their own hometown (Funck, 2006), aware of the environmental impact or burden they could cause while traveling (CRRC, 2006). In conclusion, slowness and time allows engagement between tourist and local destination. More engagement helps deepen their understanding and awareness towards locality of the destination visited (NPO Kōryu/ Kurashi net, 2007; Sugiyama & Nobuoka, 2007)

Contrariwise, the attempt or the need to interact with local destination also influences the act of physical slowness. The activities that provide local experiences, such as cooking class, crafting or homestay, for example, all requires time. Public transportation like local tram, bus or ferry, which allow encounter and engagement with the locals naturally slow down the pace of traveling into

physical slowness level. Furthermore, in order to offer 'real' and 'authentic' local experience to visitors, the local tourism sector needs to abandon the philosophy of 'speed' and 'efficiency' and remain the originality of the culture as much as possible, even though it might take time and cause in inconvenience (MLIT, 2005a). Yamaguchi Prefecture (2007) states clearly in their slow tourism policy that their objective is to provide activities that "allow tourists to slowly enjoy the charm of Yamaguchi" (p17). This suggests the importance of time given to local activities, which help them not to become 'instant' or 'ready to view/experience' type of products like what Knight (2010) criticizes.

In short, the slower pace of travelling allows engagement with the local destination, while the activities that would provide real and authentic local experiences also require time. This proves that slowness and locality are intimately related because they support each other.

**4.3.2 Slowness and Travel Experience**

Slowness and time has both direct and inverse relationship with the quality and satisfaction of travel experience. The faster pace of traveling, the poorer travel experience. One clear example is the slow food philosophy, which has deep connection with slow tourism. Knight (2010) claims that fast tourism in Japan is similar to fast food like McDonalds. People focus on consuming food instantly that they barely pay much attention to the quality or the taste (p745). Many Japanese writers also refer fast food to Japanese 'fast tourism'. Uchida (2006) strongly suggests that quick consumption in tourism causes indigestion (*shōkafuryo*) to tourists, as they are experiencing too much too quickly without

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consciousness. Nuguchi (2006) adds that tourist tend to 'be convinced' (*omoikomasareru*) they are satisfied with the achievement of fast tourism, when in reality they are exhausted (p31).

When tourists travel in a fast manner, they are more likely to be 'taking in' the travel experience as a whole (Sugiyama & Nobuoka, 2007), but slow tourism focuses more on 'taking time' in all actions made, in order to deeply absorb each travel experience one at a time. Slowing down, taking time, paying all attention and using all five senses bring deep, meaningful experience to the traveller. The consciousness in action brings the meaning to the travel experience, to be more than just 'quick consumption' but memorable travel. Put differently, value towards speed and efficiency equals the value towards quantity over quality in travel experience, as discussed by Levine (1997), Murayama and Parker (2012) and Linhart (1988). In slow tourism concept, tourists who feel the need to achieve as many travel experiences as possible in a limited time, rather than to fully enjoy it one by one, are likely to travel in a fast manner. Consequently, the travel experience becomes shallow or superficial. The higher value towards travel quality is, the more time tourists would spend at the destination, and vice versa.

The change in perception of time use could also enable new aspects and different points of view towards travel experience. By being slow, tourists give themselves time to examine things in a different and refreshing way. They could recognize many things that speed has never allowed them to notice before (Kesennuma Resilience Group, 2013) such as the landscape while traveling with slower mode of transportation (Uchida, 2006) or the small details like street

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corners they have never had enough time to notice because they were moving fast (CRRC, 2006). Slowness and time bring new discovery and also allow rediscovery. And accordingly, their travel experience becomes unique and personal to each tourist.

Another connection exists between individuality and spiritual slowness. The freedom to design and decide your own travel and try not to follow the 'structured' or 'pre-arranged' package tour or guidebook routes directly influence freedom of time use concept in spiritual slowness. Slow tourists who follow their own preference of itineraries tend to be flexible with time use and spend as much time as they like in doing what they are interested in (CDTB, 2009; CRRC, 2006). Both individuality and spiritual slowness represent 'freedom' and 'flexibility' in traveling, that tourists should follow 'one own's pace' (*jibun no konomi ni au pēsu*) (Uchida, 2006, p6) and 'one own's time' (*jibun nari no jikan*) (MLIT, 2005a, p204). For this reason, it could be concluded that individuality and spiritual slowness are closely associated to one another.

### 4.3.3 Travel Experience and Locality

The concept of 'being active not passive' in travel experience as emphasized by Knight (2010), Murayama and Parker (2012) and Sugiyama and Nobuoka (2007) directly influences more interaction at the local destination. Slow tourists hold the need to learn, to know and to be educated while holidaymaking. Thus, they are eager to actively participate in various activities at the local destination, which allow them to truly understand the local culture. The sense of

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engagement, learning and knowing helps encouraging tourists to become active and experience locality as much as possible. Moreover, the need for individual experience drives tourist to seek not for mainstream or standardized tourism products, but for the ones that fit their personal preference. This indirectly benefits the local destination, especially 'rural' (*inaka*) or 'minor' places because the concept initiates the shift away from mainstream touristic place to more minor but unique destination. Slow tourism is seen as a rural revitalization tool in Japan (CRRC, 2006; CDTB, 2008, 2009, 2010; MLIT, 2005a) because the policy-makers like Chugoku District Transportation Bureau, for example, believe that slow tourism concept could attract urban residents to visit the countryside (Murayama & Parker, 2012, p177). The insights from literature strongly support that the need of individuality increase more interest towards unique and distinctive destination, including rural areas.

On the other way around, the engagement and unique local experiences of tourists become an essential part of travel experience. The cultural exchange at the local destination completes the concept of 'high quality' in slow tourism, meaning that it upgrades the activity of traveling from the traditional 'sightseeing' (*monomiyusan*) to 'experience-based' (*taikenkei*) level of traveling (CDTB, 2008, 2009, 2010; Kayano, 2011, MLIT, 2005b). The involvement of local people and community also contributes to the quality and value of the travel experience. From the literature we can see that the core concept in branding slow tourism product is for the locals to remain authenticity of their local culture while valuing the distinctiveness of the local culture (CRRC, 2006; CDTB, 2009, MILT 2005a;

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Yoshihara, 2007). These concerns are directed to the quality of travel experience for visitors. Kayano (2011) explains that the locals need to think from the position of tourists about what kind of slow tourism products or services that would enable longer stay and to enjoy deep and meaningful experience as much as possible (p46). This clearly emphasizes the importance of local community in building slow travel experience, and therefore, supports that these two categories are strongly related.

Seeing from the relationships between three key categories of the findings, it is possible to conclude that slowness, locality and travel experience are interrelated. The summary of the relationship is portrayed in Figure 4.1.

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┌─────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│                  SLOWNESS                    │
│                                              │
│   • Physical slowness (consciousness in      │
│     actions/ slow mobility)                  │
│   • Spiritual Slowness (relaxation/away from │
│     everyday life)                           │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────┘

┌──────────────────────────┐   ┌──────────────────────────┐
│   TRAVEL EXPERIECE        │   │        LOCALITY          │
│                           │   │                          │
│   • Quality (deep and     │   │   • Cultural exchange    │
│     meaningful)           │   │   • Authenticity         │
│   • Individuality         │   │   • Cultural and         │
│   • New discovery &       │   │     environmental        │
│     rediscovery           │   │     consciousness        │
└──────────────────────────┘   └──────────────────────────┘
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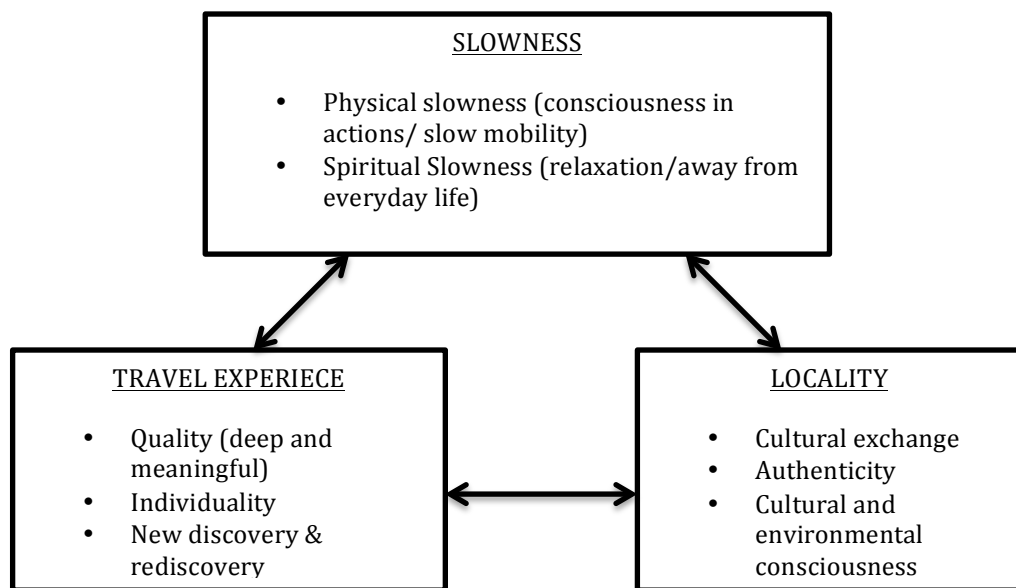
Figure 4.1: Relationships between core categories

The researcher would like to conclude the findings with a good summary of slow tourism definition that includes slowness, locality and travel experience concepts from the findings to support the interrelationship between all core attributes. It summarizes that slow tourism is:

1) To interact with the 'authentic' local culture, history and nature

2) To discover something 'slow' and 'good', using all five senses, relax and refresh yourself from daily stress

3) To move away from traditional sightseeing and eager to become active and engage with the locals

4) To respect and protect the local culture. Make the least environmental impact to the destination visited (CRRC, 2006, p82-83)

This chapter has clarified the details of findings from both research questions of the study. The three core attributes of slowness, locality and travel experience were explained and elaborated. The relationship between each category was specified. The findings show that all categories are closely interconnected and together the co-produce the core concept of slow tourism in Japan. In the next chapter, the conceptual framework of slow tourism drawn from the findings of this study will be proposed. The discussion of how to position slow tourism in Japan will continue, and conclusion of the study will be made.

# CHAPTER 5

# DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

## 5.1 Introduction

This chapter continues the discussion from the findings and summarizes the content of this study. The second section is dedicated to three topics of discussion. The first topic is a summary of three core concepts; slowness, locality and travel experience and discuss the consistency and differences of this study's findings and prior slow tourism literature, in order to distinguish the specific characteristic of slow tourism in Japanese cultural context. The second topic focuses on how to position the concept of slow tourism in Japan. The third topic is the discussion about misconception and negative interpretation of the word 'slow' in Japanese context, with recommendation of further studies to address this problem. The conclusion summarizes the novelty of this study both from academic and practical perspective, with the hope that this study would be a contribution or a platform for slow tourism to ground stronger in Japan in the future.

## 5.2 Discussion

### 5.2.1 Conceptualizing 'Slow Tourism'

First, the concept of slowness concentrates on the perception of time and the way of doing things during holiday. It is a mind-set of slowing down in relation to the act of traveling. This concept is consistent with many other studies

about slow tourism, for example, the work of Lumsdon and McGrath (2011), as they recognize slowness as the main element of slow tourism. However, distinct from other studies, this study examined the concept further by focusing on the interpretation of the word 'slow' in Japanese cultural context, and came up with two different dimensions of slowness; physical and spiritual. The former focuses on the slowness of all physical actions pursued both en route and at the destination. Physical slowness is directly associated with the tern *yukkuri* or 'slowly' in Japanese. It suggests tourists should take time, use all five senses and conduct each action with full attention and awareness, in order to do it in a better manner. It also proposes longer time to be spent during the journey and at the destination, which initiates longer or overnight stay instead of day-trip (*higaeri*) and a slower mode of transportation (e.g. local trains, walking, cycling) that allows tourists to enjoy the landscape and scenery, not just saving time in traveling. In short, physical slowness suggests the change of perception in time use, to value the quality of action more than speed and timesaving in traveling.

The spiritual slowness is, on the other hand, portrayed as a state of mind. The meaning of 'slow' shifts from 'less speed' (*yukkuri*) into the nuance of 'relaxed/leisurely' (*nonbiri*), 'calm/at east' (*yuttari*) and 'de-stressing/healing' (*iyashi*). It is not simply about being slow or doing things 'slowly' but about finding one's 'right speed/pace' (*jibun no konomi ni atta pace*) of doing things that bring relaxation and satisfaction during travelling (Uchida, 2006). This matches with Honoré's (2004) explanation about 'slowing down' to the 'right speed'. In Japanese cultural context, the concept of spiritual slowness stands

against the value towards 'speed' and 'efficiency' in the modern Japan (Levine, 1997), which is often extended to leisure travel in a form of tightly scheduled itineraries in a limited time (Noguchi, 2006). Slow tourism concept encourages Japanese tourists to spend time 'differently' from their fast-paced daily or work life, because they have all the freedom in time use during holiday. This also matches national survey of domestic travel trend in 2004, which reveals the number one purpose people travel is to "get away from everyday life" (*nijijō seikatsu kara kaihō sareru*) (MLIT, 2005b, p4).

The second core category is locality. This concept emphasizes that the locals and local destination itself are the main actors as well as the tourists (Murayama & Parker, 2012). Interaction (*fureai*) between tourists and the local destination is vital to slow tourism experience. Tourists are encouraged to participate in hands-on experience, taste local/slow food or stay with the locals, in order to have 'cultural exchange' (*kōryu*) during holiday. While the concept of locality and activities at the destination is also mentioned in other works (e.g. Matos, 2004; Woehler, 2004), slow tourism in Japanese cultural context underlines one specific characteristic of the local destination, 'authenticity' (*honmono*). The heart of local experience lies upon real and genuine local culture, products or services that have not been modified or commercialized especially for tourist (CDTB, 2009; Kayano, 2011). This indicates the role of the supply sector, namely the local tourism authorities or service provider, to remain the authenticity of their locality and provide it to the tourists as they are (*ari no mama)* (CRRC, 2006). This has been one of the priorities for many local destinations that had an

attempt or actually implemented slow tourism concept into their policy (see CDTB, 2008; Gifu City Council, 2010; Yamaguchi Prefecture, 2007).

For most of the previous researchers, environmental consciousness is one of the core defining categories of slow tourism. It refers to the choice of accommodation or mode of transportation that helps reduce carbon footprints and environmental impacts in tourism (Lumsdon & McGrath, 2011; Dickinson & Lumsdon, 2010). In this study, however, environmental awareness is specified as a sub-category of locality. As a consequence of cultural exchange with the locals, tourists become more than just visitors, they regard themselves as a part of community (CRRC, 2006). Hence, tourists try to make the least 'cultural' and 'environmental' impact as possible and treat local community with respect (*omoiyari*) (Funck, 2006). In conclusion, slow tourism in Japan does not focus solely on low-carbon awareness but also the preservation of cultural heritage and minimizing environmental impacts for the destination visited. This concept is associated with 'slow city' philosophy, where both visitors and residents are mutually encouraged to preserve and protect local culture and environment, as discussed in many other papers (see Heitmann, Robinson & Povey, 2011; Mayer & Knox, 2006; Pink, 2008).

The last main category is travel experience. Slow tourists have great demand for high quality, namely deep and meaningful travel experience rather than quantity. The purpose of traveling is not only for sightseeing but also involves the sense of learning and knowing. Travellers do not let themselves be treated passively as a tourist; they actively achieve travel experience by 'doing'

(Knight, 2010; Sugiyama & Nobuoka, 2007). Individuality is an essential element in travel experience. Travellers focus on flexibility and freedom in travel planning and also travel in a small scale or individually. They abandon 'mainstream' travel experience that comes as a 'check list' of all the 'must do' and 'must see', and enjoy new discovery that is unique and different from others. Individuality is summarized as '*jibun nari no ryokō*' (one own's style of travel) (MLIT, 2005a). This concept is strongly supported by Kieran (2012)'s work "Idle Traveller", where he suggests to holidaymakers to "be your own guide" and "follow your instinct" because "without a role in your own journey you are left with nothing to discover" (p86).

Drawing from these findings, it is possible to define the core characteristics of slow tourism in Japan. Slow tourism is a form of travel that initiates the process of slowing down to the 'right pace', in relation to travel, distance and activities both on the way and at a destination. Tourists are not restricted by time or tight schedule, they hold the freedom to structure their own travel and use time as they like. The interaction between tourists and the locals coproduces deep and meaningful travel experience; together it helps increasing cultural and environmental awareness of tourists toward local destination. The local destination is a fundamental actor in slow tourism. They are a part of tourists' travel experience, as well as the provider of authentic local experience, which is a crucial element of slow tourism. Overall, the slow tourism concept is an encouragement for the Japanese to spend their leisure holiday time *differently* from their everyday life. Traveling should not be just another 'busy' activity but

should bring relaxation and satisfaction to the tourists, in their own individual and unique way. For slow tourism, the speed of the travel is less important than the enriching experience gained from holidaymaking. This concept of value towards time and quality is what distinguishes slow tourism from other form of tourism (Lumsdon & McGrath, 2011).

Figure 5.1 on the next page shows the conceptual framework for slow tourism proposed by the researcher. We can see 'value toward time and quality' as an integrating element for both tourist and local destination. As Linhart (1988) and Levine (1997) note, Japanese tourists tend to extend their value of 'speed' and 'efficiency' from their work ethic or daily life to leisure travel. While Knight (2010), Sato (2011) and Yoshihara (2007) point out that supply sector in Japan also tend to value 'convenience' and 'timesaving' of tourists that they cram many activities into a package tour or commercialize authenticity into an 'instant' product/service. These attitudes have resulted in the 'fast' model of traveling of modern Japan.

Therefore, to achieve the concept of slow tourism, the change of value toward time and quality from both sides is considered an important factor in both conceptual and practical levels.
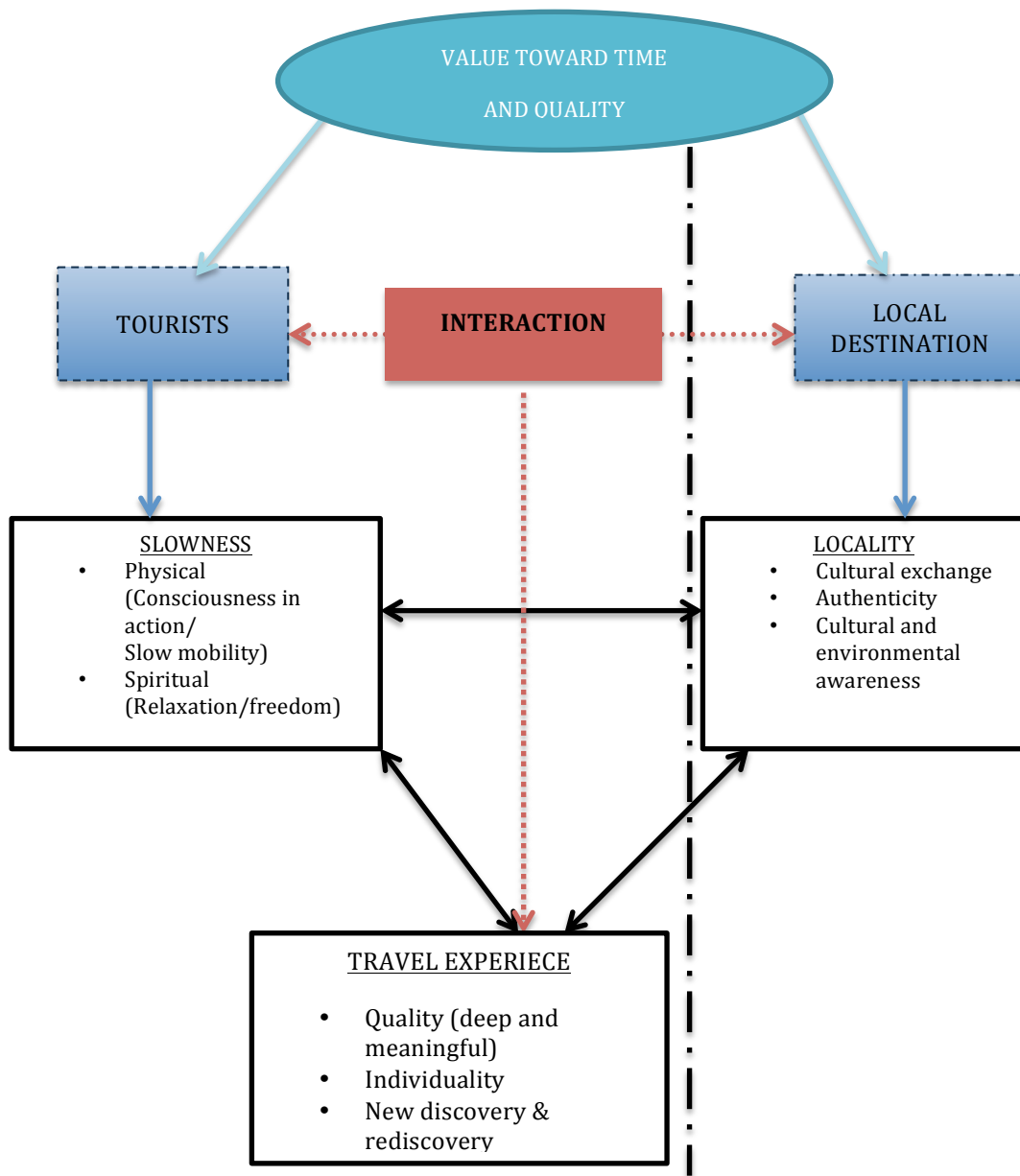
VALUE TOWARD TIME
AND QUALITY

TOURISTS

INTERACTION

LOCAL
DESTINATION

SLOWNESS
- Physical
  (Consciousness in
  action/
  Slow mobility)
- Spiritual
  (Relaxation/freedom)

LOCALITY
- Cultural exchange
- Authenticity
- Cultural and
  environmental
  awareness

TRAVEL EXPERIECE

- Quality (deep and
  meaningful)
- Individuality
- New discovery &
  rediscovery

Figure 5.1: Conceptual framework of slow tourism in Japan

**5.2.2 Positioning 'Slow Tourism' in Japan**

Previous studies of Chugoku District Transport Bureau (CDTB, 2008, 2009, 2010) show the failure of supply sector (except for Yamaguchi Prefecture) to implement 'slow tourism' because of no real understanding toward the terms. Murayama and Parker (2012) note that the label 'slow' has only been an 'umbrella term' for other alternatives, due to its wide and loose definition (p175). Hence, the researcher would like to clarify what distinguishes 'slow tourism' other forms of tourism, and discuss further about how it should be implemented by both demand and supply sector.

First, 'slow tourism' is merely a watertight concept or tangible tourism product, but rather, it is a 'mindset' or a 'way' of traveling. From the findings, we could see how 'slow tourism' is associated with various tourism resources and products, such as nature, food, culture and environmental-friendly mode of transportation. It is undeniable that the term encompasses some or all of the practices typically associated with, for example, eco-tourism, green tourism, food tourism, and cultural tourism. However, what distinguishes 'slow tourism' from these labels is the emphasis on 'slowness' in relation to time and quality of travel experience (Lumson & McGrath, 2011). The word 'slow', as the findings revealed, focuses on the act of 'slowing down' both physically and mentally for a better quality of leisure travel. Hence, no matter what type of vacation or activities

the tourists engage, they could apply this mindset of 'slowness' to think about 'how' to spend time in a pace brings good quality of travel experience to them.

From the consumer point of view, 'slow tourism' philosophy could be applied flexibly. The findings show that there is no 'fixed' measurement of 'slowness' to completely distinct 'slow tourism' from 'fast' tourism and mobility, or vice versa. For example, 'package tour' and 'daytrip' (*higaeri*), which are often regarded as a form of 'fast' tourism, were also discussed as a part of 'slow tourism', as long as the pace of traveling allow deep engagement with the destination and also bring relaxation and fulfillment to the travellers (Hotta, 2011). This flexibility could be useful for the Japanese tourists, especially for those who do not have 'time' for long holiday due to their work and daily life routine. A traveller could choose to travel by 'fast' mode of transportation, in order to arrive early and have more time to spend at the destination. In short, 'slow tourism' is a 'mindset' that encourages a slower pace of traveling, not a watertight or fixed concept.

From the supply sector point of view, 'slow tourism' concept could also serve as a 'mindset' that could be applied to any form of tourism, with a focus on 'longer' or 'slower' stay at the destination. Yamaguchi Prefecture (2007) is an example that shows how 'slow tourism' concept could be implemented in practical level. They offer various products and services such as farming, homestay with farmers or fishermen and slow food experience (see Yamaguchi Slow Tourism, 2013). All activities initiate cultural exchange with the local that would allow tourists to 'slowly' enjoy the charm of Yamaguchi (Yamaguchi

Prefecture, 2007, p17). Yamaguchi proves that 'slow tourism' can be applied to wide ranges of tourism from agricultural, marine, to food tourism, which work under the same purpose; to enable slower and longer stay (CDTB, 2009).

One critical point to be noted is, the concept of 'slow tourism' in this study seems to match with the direction of current tourism policy in Japan. Japan Travel Agency (JTA) has been working on the model for 'overnight stay program' (*taizai puroguramu*) for their 'new tourism' since 2011, focusing on community development (*machi dukuri*) to appeal local culture and its uniqueness that would make tourists want to stay longer (JTA, 2013b). While latest nation tourism policy also emphasizes on 'overnight stay and cultural exchange type of tourism' (*taizai kōryū kankō*) that aims for at least two nights three days stay from both domestic and international tourists (MLIT, 2013, p41). It is clear that these aims encompass with the conceptual framework and the interpretation of 'slow' in this study. Therefore, 'slow' might as well be a potential label for these policy in a practical level because; firstly, the word 'slow' itself directly encourages 'longer' and/or' overnight stay', which no other label does. Secondly, the conceptual framework strongly initiates cultural exchange between tourists and the locals, while high demand for authentic local experience from tourists also influences the sustainable tourism development of the local destination to revalue their local assets and preserve the distinctiveness of their local culture.

These two reasons support that 'slow tourism' and its concept could become a useful label for policy makers to promote overnight stay and cultural exchange in tourism. The findings of this research clearly shows that 'slow

tourism' needs more attention from various sectors to understand that 'slow tourism' is not a tangible product like other labels, but a 'mindset' that comes with quality and sustainability for both tourists and local community.

### 5.2.3 Misperception of 'Slow'

The findings of this study have clarified that 'slow tourism' is a label that brings quality to both tourists and local destination. However, there is a problem of 'misperception' or 'misconception' to be further discussed. In general, 'slow tourism' is often misinterpreted as "not being convenient or effective, moving backward and bringing dull and boring experience" (Lumsdon & McGrath, 2011, p274). In the case of Japan, the literature of Japanese travel culture clearly shows that 'speed' and 'efficiency' are highly regarded, while 'slow' is perceived as a negative term (Levine, 1997, p172). Japanese people often grasp the word 'slow' as '*osoi*' (low speed), which leads to the idea of 'inefficiency', 'laziness', or 'low progress' (Kesennuma Resilience Group, 2013). From the supply-side perspective, the label 'slow' could be easily misunderstood for slow progress and backwards development (Heitmann, Robinson & Povey, 2011, p123) and therefore might not be an attractive term for policy makers or supply sectors in Japan.

From consumer point of view, there is the nature of holiday period in Japan to be considered. As Linhart (1988) point out, the period of holidays in Japan is rather short (compared to some Western countries), while Japanese workers are taking less than half of their entitled paid-leave (Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare, 2013). Consequently, for travellers who have little time for

holiday, the label 'slow' might lead to the negative misconception of a vacation that is 'time-wasting' (*jikan ga mottainai*) or 'inefficient' (*hikōritsuteki*) (Noguchi, 2006) instead of the image of 'slowing down' (*yukkuri*) or 'relaxing' (*yuttari*). In summary, these cultural factors might become an obstacle for 'slow tourism' to be perceived as a positive term in Japan.

Hence, there is a need for various sectors in Japan to thoroughly understand the 'slow tourism' philosophy and what quality or benefit it could provide. First, it is important to find out how Japanese tourists interpret 'slow' in relation to their travel practice. Since the definition 'slow' in this study was grounded from the literature of academia and supply sector, further research about behavioral perspective might give another dimension to the definition in order to identify the characteristic of potential 'slow tourists' in Japan (Heitmann, Robinson & Povey, 2012; Lumsdon & McGrath, 2011) Second, more studies concerning how slow tourism is being implemented in practical level are clearly required (Murayama & Parker, 2012). As seen in the conceptual framework, local community and local supply sectors are significant parts of slow tourism. Therefore, it is very important that 'slow tourism' is being implemented or marketed with 'thorough' comprehension toward the concept. Lastly, the role of 'promoter' or 'supporter' of slow tourism should be identified. Since 'slow tourism' has not been officially used as a key policy thus far, governmental and other tourism authorities could become a vital actor in promoting and implementing 'slow tourism' for national recognition (CRRC, 2006; Sato, 2011). The terms 'slowing down', 'authentic local experience', 'relaxation' or 'quality

time' could be used to emphasize the core elements of 'slow tourism', which might bring more 'positive' interpretation to the concept and consequently attract more attention from both tourists, supply sectors and promoters in Japan.

**5.3 Conclusion**

In summary, this study is an effort to clarify the definition of 'slow tourism' in a conceptual level. The literature review shows that despite the increasing amount of attention and positive vision toward the phenomenon, 'slow tourism' still lacks clear or agreed definitions and thorough understanding from many sectors. Therefore, this study extended the literature by exploring core concepts of slow tourism with careful attention on the interpretation of 'slow' in Japanese context, to clarify the definitional issues. Grounded theory approach was employed to generate and analyze the core elements from qualitative secondary literature. The findings reveal three interrelated concepts; slowness, locality and travel experience. It is a mindset of traveling that focuses on 'slowing down' and doing things at the 'right pace'. Both tourists and locals are the main actors; their interaction coproduces slow travel experience. Deep engagement with the locals increases cultural and environmental awareness of tourists towards local culture and community, while the demand for high quality, authentic tourism products and services of tourists also influences sustainable tourism development at the local destination.

From an academic perspective, this study contributes to the lack of research addressing slow tourism in Japan, and the scarcity of slow tourism literature in general. These findings show similar interpretation of 'slow tourism' in Japan with previous studies, while it distinguishes from other works by revealing the cultural factors behind the interpretation of 'slow' in Japan. The overall perspective of slow tourism is a contradiction to 'fast' model of tourism and also a reflection of 'fast-paced' living in modern Japan. It encourages both demand and supply sector to abandon the 'speed' and 'efficiency' virtue and concentrate more on the quality of leisure time and travel experience. The conceptual framework in this study could contribute as a possible indicator for further research from consumer perspective, to explore what 'slow' could mean to tourists and their travel practices, in order to find out the potential slow tourists in Japan.

From a practical perspective, this study contributes to the implications for providers and policy makers. Instead of trying to define 'slow tourism' as a watertight or tangible product like other existing labels, slow tourism should be treated as a 'mindset' that could be applied to other forms of tourism to encourage a slower pace and more quality in traveling. As the governmental sector shows strong interesting in promoting 'overnight stay and cultural exchange' form of tourism (MLIT, 2013, p41), 'slow tourism' could become a practical label to enable longer stay and deeper connection with the locals. Nevertheless, more extensive understanding, effort and support from the policy makers in promoting slow tourism is crucial, since the term is still very new to Japan and the word

'slow' is not always perceived as a positive term (Levine, 1997; Linhart, 1988). Further investigation on how slow tourism is being interpreted or implemented in practical level is clearly needed, and the role of various actors in promoting slow tourism should also be clarified.

Slow tourism, as a segment of slow movement, is another metaphor that questions the culture of speed in Japan. As Japan is shifting away from 'fast' model of traveling, the label 'slow' shows strong potential in changing the attitude of the Japanese towards leisure travel, time and the quality of travel experience. This study clearly clarifies the positive meaning and the quality that 'slow' could bring, with the hope to beg for more attention from both demand and supply sector. More understanding of the philosophy of 'slow tourism' is clearly needed; other wise, 'slow tourism' would remain just another vague and rather negative form of tourism that works as an 'umbrella' term for other existing forms of alternative tourism in Japan, without real implementation and recognition.

**5.4 Limitations and Recommendation for Future Research**

This thesis addresses the definitional issues of slow tourism in Japanese cultural context. It sheds some lights on the core concept, what 'slow' could mean to tourism practices in Japan, which reveals how this type of tourism could bring quality to both the travel experience of tourists and the sustainable development of the local destination visited. The findings contribute to tourism literature, as well as possibility to attract more attention from both supply and demand sector in tourism industry for further implementation and practice in the future.

However, there are limitations to this thesis. Firstly, the secondary data used as the main resource for analysis was produced by the governmental authorities, research institutions, public and private sectors in tourism industry and academia. In other words, the definitions of 'slow' and the conceptual framework for Slow Tourism in this research was basically grounded from the 'supply' sector perspective, with no consumer behavior involved, due to the difficulty to gain insights to "slow tourism" definitions from the tourists, since the term is still unfamiliar to Japanese tourists in general (Naito, 2006). Secondly, the main focus of this research was to understand the concepts and interpretation of 'slow' in Japanese tourism context. Accordingly, the findings of this research addresses Slow Tourism in a conceptual and abstract level. It is possible to conclude that this research lacks of focus on slow tourism in practical level.

Thus, for further research, the examination of "slow tourism" could be addressed from different perspectives, such as the interpretation of 'slow' from tourist's point of view, to find out what 'slow' means to their tourism practices, or what Japanese tourists think of the concept and the possibility of this type of tourism. Furthermore, more studies about slow tourism in practical level should be conducted, specifically case studies of public or private sectors who are using "slow tourism" as their policy or using the label "slow" to promote their destinations or product, for example, Yamaguchi prefecture. This could be an important factor to the understanding of slow tourism concept by examining how it is being implemented at the ground level in Japan (Murayama & Parker, 2012). The qualitative analysis and the interpretation of "slow tourism" in this thesis

could be a platform for further exploration of this type of tourism in Japan and in general, for deeper understanding and the possibility for the implementation by various sectors in the future.

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# ANNEX

Bachelor of Art Degree Certification

CR26

**OFFICE OF THE REGISTRAR**

**CHULALONGKORN UNIVERSITY**

Bangkok 10330, Thailand

No. 688737/2553

**THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT**

Miss Thanya  Yongtanavanich

Student ID        484 03088 22                Identification No.        1 1014 00875 12 6

has completed all the requirement for the      Bachelor of Arts Degree

field of study      Japanese (Major : Japanese).

The University Council admitted the   Bachelor of Arts Degree (2nd Class Honours) on March  17,

2010.

Given on   March  26,   2010

(Assoc. Prof. Vallapa  Prakobphol)

Registrar

**NOT VALID WITHOUT UNIVERSITY SEAL**

2701232058289

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# N1

日本語能力認定書

## CERTIFICATE
## JAPANESE-LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY

氏 名
Name

THANYA YONGTANAVANICH

生年月日
Date of Birth

1986. 12. 27

受 験 地
Test Site

タイ          Thailand

上記の者は2010年12月に独立行政法人国際交流基金および
財団法人日本国際教育支援協会が実施した日本語能力試験
Ｎ１レベルに合格したことを証明します。

2011年1月30日

*This is to certify that the person named above has passed
Level N1 of the Japanese-Language Proficiency Test given in
December 2010, jointly administered by the Japan Foundation
and Japan Educational Exchanges and Services.*

*January 30, 2011*

独立行政法人 国際交流基金
理事長　小倉和夫

Kazuo Ogoura
President
The Japan Foundation

財団法人 日本国際教育支援協会
理事長　井上正幸

Masayuki Inoue
President
Japan Educational
Exchanges and Services

N1A040752A                    10B2040101-10519