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**Volunteer Tourism in Japan: Its Potential in Transforming "Non-volunteers" to Volunteers**

Mami Yoda
Graduate School of Hokkaido University

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1. Purpose

The purpose of this study is to explore the potential of voluntourism to transform "non-volunteers" to volunteers in Japan by discussing a specific case. Voluntourism is defined as travel to a location outside the immediate vicinity of daily life in order to engage in organized volunteer activities, which, in turn, are defined as uncoerced help offered with no or, at most, token pay and done for the benefit of other people as well as for the volunteer[1]. While the volunteer rate in Japan is significantly lower compared to countries such as the U.K. and the U.S.A.[2], the rate of those who are interested in volunteering is about the double the rate of those who actually do[3,4]. This indicates that if appropriate measures are taken, the volunteer rate might actually increase[5].

In order to explore the possibility of voluntourism as a way to promote volunteering and help NPOs to enhance their roles in recruiting new volunteers, this study discusses the case of a volunteer tour by the employees of Häagen-Dazs Japan, Inc. (HDJ, hereafter) to the Kiritappu Wetland Trust (the Trust, hereafter) in Hokkaido. In the case study, the motivations of the participants, and the impact of the tour on the participants' overall perception of volunteering, and post-tour participation in volunteer activities are closely examined through qualitative information collected by interviews and surveys.

### 1.2. Background

Although volunteering has become more widely accepted by Japanese society since the Great Hanshin Awaji Earthquake in 1995[6], the actual volunteer rate has been hovering in the upper 20 percent range[7], despite the much higher rates of those who wish to volunteer, as mentioned earlier. A number of surveys point out that the primary barriers for participation in volunteering are time constraints and lack of information[8,9] In addition, previous research indicates that Japanese may have certain negative perceptions of volunteering, which include that is only for those with lots of free time, people only do it for their own satisfaction, and the actual act of volunteering is hypocritical. All of which makes them hesitant to participate[10]. However, Ito discovered that those who participated in volunteering tend to have a more favorable image, although the study also shows that the volunteer experience arranged by schools has virtually no impact on the image of volunteering[11], which may be due to the coercive element of such programs[12]. If participation is the result of free choice, opportunities to allow more people to actually participate in volunteering could change their image over time, contributing to a higher rate of participation.

While the overall volunteering rate remains low in Japan, volunteering outside the place of residence and work appears to be gradually increasing, although there is no data to substantiate this. Yoda introduces some examples in her research on Japan in 2009[13]. Similar trends have been gaining strong momentum since the 1990s in North America, Europe, and Oceania, including international volunteer tours on a much larger scale[14]. In these countries, the major driving force is a rise in "gap year" travelers, mainly in their early 20s[15]. However, this is not the case for Japan, where taking a year off is not widely accepted by society. Participants in volunteer tours in Japan tend to be drawn from a more diversified audience, including full time students, employees, professionals, or seniors/retirees, who spend their limited holidays volunteering except for retirees. Accordingly, many volunteer tours are of a more short-term, weekend nature, except for volunteer tours targeting

students during long school holidays. This makes the Japanese voluntourism unique and worth researching.

In line with its growth, academics began researching voluntourism in the early 2000s, initially looking at participant growth and motives, focusing on the personal growth of the participants, achieved goals of the activity, and economic benefits to the host community[16]. However, recent research has taken a more critical approach, pointing to such issues as development with little attention to the needs of local communities and mismatch in the skills of volunteers versus required work, with the intention of increasing the benefits to both participants and host communities[17]. Another area of debate has been whether voluntourism can provide a new perspective on tourism and tourism research, shifting away from the traditional view of the commercialized guest and host relationship as consumer and producer. Some argue that a shallower form of voluntourism, with its emphasis on tourism and work requiring limited knowledge and skills, is not providing such a "decommodified" experience[18], with resultant minimal effects on society. However, Yoda points out that given Japan's unique situation, where the concept of volunteering is still in its infancy, such "shallow" voluntourism might still have a role to play in lowering the entry barriers to volunteering, due to its emphasis on tourism or leisure content[19]. Given that there has been very little research on voluntourism in Japan up to now, this paper is positioning itself as one of the few initial attempts to explore voluntourism and its potential role in Japanese society.

### 1.3. Hypothesis

As discussed in the first paragraph of 1.2. Background, one of the reasons for the low volunteer participation rate in Japan is the negative image people generally have about it. At the same time, some other research has indicated that those with voluntee experience have a more favorable image of volunteering. Therefore, it stands to reason that, if there were more accessible volunteer opportunities for first-time participants and if they actually engage in volunteer, they would more likely leave with a more positive perception of volunteering, thereby increasing their chances of becoming a repeat volunteer. Because voluntourism by definition is a combination of volunteering and tourism, the image of volunteering might constitute a smaller proportion of the activity than that of usual volunteering within the immediate vicinity of residence or daily work, rendering volunteer tours as an easier way to start volunteering. In order to discuss such potential of voluntourism, two hypotheses will be examined in the rest of the paper.

The first hypothesis is that voluntourism is an effective tool to lower the psychological barrier to volunteering due to its leisure travel characteristic. The second hypothesis is that once a participant experiences volunteering through voluntourism, their image of volunteering will become more positive, thus increasing the likelihood of becoming a repeat volunteer. Proof of these two hypotheses should support voluntourism's effectiveness in bringing in new types of volunteers.

### 1.4. Research Methodology

This paper discusses the case of a conservation volunteer tour by the employees of HDJ to the Kiritappu Wetland in Hamanaka, Hokkaido. In order to examine the hypotheses introduced in 1.3., qualitative information was collected through a questionnaire and face-to-face interviews. The questionnaire was distributed in December 2009 to all 16 target volunteer tourists, who participated in at least one of the three HDJ Kiritappu volunteer tours. Fourteen of them responded. In addition, face-to-face interviews were conducted from January to February 2010 with eight participants. Two of the eight interviewees are members of the CSR team of HDJ. Although they planned the tour, they were also volunteers, engaging in the same volunteer activities and paying the same tour fee as other volunteers. Their positions are taken into consideration when examining their statements/opinions.

## 2. Case: Häagen-Dazs Japan Volunteers in Kiritappu, Hokkaido

### 2.1. Profile of Kirittapu Wetland Trust and Häagen-Dazs Japan

#### 2.1.1. Kiritappu Wetland Trust

The Kiritappu Wetland Trust located in Hamanaka, Hokkaido (Figure 1), is a non-profit organization (NPO) established in 2000 in order to conserve the Kiritappu Wetland (Photo 1) and offer environmental education. Although its history as an NPO is relatively short, it can trace its organizational roots back to 1984. The Kiritappu Wetland, which covers about 3,168 ha with rich flora and fauna, is the third largest wetlands in Japan, after Kushiro and Sarobetsu. It was registered in the Ramsar List of Wetlands of International Importance in 1993.

Hamanaka, home of the Trust, is a small township with about 6,800 people. Its main industries are fishing (24.3% of households), dairy farming (9.4% of households) and forestry (4.4% of households). The fishing industry, carried out in the coastal waters close to the Kiritappu Wetlands, employed 1,179 residents and generated annual revenue of ¥4.3 billion in 2006. Of that, approximately ¥1.4 billion was generated from *konbu* seaweed. In dairy farming there were more than 22,000 milk cows, which generated more than ¥8.4 billion in revenue in 2004. Milk produced in Hamanaka is renowned for its high quality, and HDJ is listed among the town's key customers. Further details on the Kiritappu Wetland Trust and Hamanaka are summarized by Shikida, et. al.[20]

**Figure 1. Location of Hamanaka**

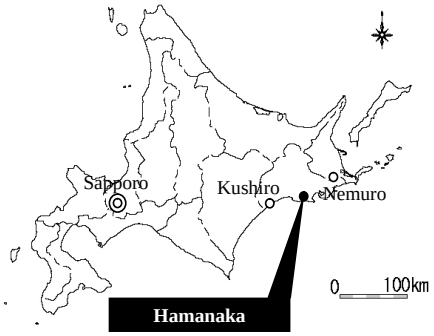


**Photo 1. Kiritappu Wetland**

#### 2.1.2. Häagen-Dazs Japan

HDJ is a Tokyo-based corporation that manufactures, imports, and sells ice cream and other cold desserts, as well as manages franchised and company-owned ice cream parlors. Häagen-Dazs, which was originally established in the US in 1961 and is currently is a part of The Pillsbury Company, is a global supplier of premium ice cream.

The corporation was established in 1984 as joint venture between Häagen-Dazs Nederland N.V. (50%), Suntory Holdings Limited (40%), and Takanashi Milk Products Co., Ltd. (10%). Despite the existence of two large shareholders (Häagen-Dazs Nederland and Suntory Holdings), HDJ's management and operation is highly autonomous, the only exceptions being marketing and manufacturing. In addition to its headquarters in Tokyo, HDJ has offices in Sapporo, Sendai, Nagoya, Osaka, Hiroshima, and Fukuoka, a research & development center in Kawasaki, a factory in Takasaki, and 50 stores located mainly in the Tokyo and Osaka metropolitan areas. Häagen-Dazs ice cream is produced only in the US, France, and Japan, but not in other countries. As of December 1, 2009, HDJ had 231 employees (144 male and 87 female) with an average age of 38.4.

The case volunteer tour was arranged by the CSR Group of HDJ, which is a part of the General Affairs and Human Resources Department, with direct reporting lines to the Board of Directors, the top decision-making body of HDJ. CSR activities of HDJ are conducted independent of other Häagen-Dazs initiatives outside Japan. There is no network or coordination of CSR activities among Häagen-Dazs companies globally. The CSR Group was established in April 2007 and is currently responsible for the following five areas: compliance, mental health, environment, social contribution, and food education. It is comprised of four members, including a manager. Support for the Kiritappu Wetland Trust is conducted under the auspices of social contribution.

HDJ's social contribution activities are guided by two principles. The first is that any social contribution activity should be related to HDJ's main business of cold desert production, marketing, and sales. The second is that the activities should be sustainable. Based on these criteria, two projects were selected, support for the Kiritappu Wetland Trust and Second Harvest Japan. The Kiritappu Wetland Trust was chosen because HDJ procures a majority of its milk for production from Hamanaka, Hokkaido, where the Trust is located. Second Harvest Japan is a food bank, and is thus connected to the company's foodstuff business. Both activities started in 2007 when the CSR Group was established.

### 2.1.3. Häagen-Dazs Japan Volunteer Tour to Kiritappu

The HDJ's support for the Trust started in 2007 with the initial intent to provide financial contributions. However, when the CSR team visited the Trust in the summer of 2007 to make the necessary preparations, they also learned about the volunteer activities and decided to participate as a group.

Their first volunteer tour took place in November 2007. The main task was to expand the wood terrace in the Okubiwase area. In 2008, the HDJ team was in charge of rebuilding a wooden fence, and in 2009, constructing wooden paths (Photos 2-4).

The tour takes three days. The basic itinerary is the same every year and is as follows:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Day 1: | Morning | Meet at Kushiro Airport, and transport to Kiritappu |
| | Afternoon | Learn about the Trust and meet to prepare for volunteer work |
| Day 2: | All day | Volunteer work |
| Day 3: | Morning | Participants choose their own activity (e.g., factory or farm visit, canoeing) |

**Photos 2-4. Volunteer Day at Kiritappu**

Source: Home page of The Kiritappu Wetland Trust

All the employees receive invitations through their company's intranet and any interested person can apply directly to the CSR Group. The trip is designed to start on Saturday, which means a participant needs to take a paid holiday on Monday.

HDJ pays all transportation and lodging expenses after the participants arrive in Kushiro. But the participants need to pay for their own transportation to and from Kushiro. However, partial transportation support is provided for participants from western Japan. The tour is limited to 18 people. New applicants have priority over repeaters if the number exceeds 18. That has not been an issue to date as the number of applicants has been below 18 for each tour.

The basic schedule of the trip is the same every year and coincides with the "Volunteer Day" established by the Trust. All the volunteer participants and staff of the Trust have dinner together at the end of the "Volunteer Day".

### 2.2. Findings from Survey

This section is divided into three parts. The first part discusses the profile of the respondents, including their demographics and past volunteer experience. The second part addresses the motivations and purpose for participating in the HDJ volunteer tour. The last part looks at the volunteer experience after completing the HDJ volunteer tour. Throughout this section, the words "tour" and "travel" are used interchangeably. Also, the word "leisure" is used to qualify "tour" or "travel" so as to differentiate it from business purpose tours/travels.

#### 2.2.1. Profile of the Respondents

As described in 1.4 Research Methodology, there are 16 target employees who have participated in the HDJ volunteer tour. Of these, 14 responded to the survey.

Most were in the 30s and 40s, which reflects the age distribution of HDJ. Six are male and eight, female, which represents a higher proportion of females than the HDJ distribution. All participants reside in urban areas, with 11 based in the Tokyo Metropolitan area and the rest in either Osaka or Hyogo Prefecture. Most of the respondents have previously been to Hokkaido, either once or several times. Details on the profile of the group are available in the Appendix.

Six attended all three HDJ tours, while six participated only once (Table 1). Although respondents were generally spread equally over the three years, slightly more participated in the most recent trip in 2009.

**Table 1. Participation in the HDJ Tour**

| Frequency | N | % |
|---|---|---|
| Once | 6 | 42.9 |
| Twice | 2 | 14.3 |
| Three Times | 6 | 42.9 |
| Total | 14 | 100.0 |

| Distribution of Participants | N | % |
|---|---|---|
| Participated to 2007 trip | 9 | 32.1 |
| 2008 trip | 7 | 25.0 |
| 2009 trip | 12 | 42.9 |
| Total | 28 | 100.0 |

**Table 2. Participation in volunteer activities at the time of the HDJ Voluntour**

| Involvement | N | % |
|---|---|---|
| Often (once or more/1-2 months) | 2 | 14.3 |
| Sometimes (once or a few times/year) | 1 | 7.1 |
| Not involved | 11 | 78.6 |
| Total | 14 | 100.0 |

In this paper, "non-volunteer" is defined as a person who has not engaged in volunteering activities within the last year of more. Of the 14 respondents, three were involved in volunteering during the year prior to their initial participation in the HDJ Tour (Table 2). In order to further examine the relationship

between voluntourism and non-volunteers, the rest of the study will focus on these 11 non-volunteer participants, who had not volunteered within the year prior to their initial HDJ tour participation.

### 2.2.2. Tourism as a Motivating Factor

Next, in order to examine the first hypothesis, the motivations of the non-volunteer participants were examined to identify how the element of leisure travel influenced their decisions. All the participants were asked to provide their reasons for participating, using an open-ended format. In order to identify the elements of leisure travel, certain words were selected, which focused on the tourism's feature to be "outside their usual environment"[21]. Interaction with others could be another element of leisure travel, but that could also be an element of volunteer activities; therefore, it was not taken into consideration in the analysis below. The number of participants referring to "unusualness" and things outside their usual environment, such as the names of places (Hokkaido and Kiritappu) are counted. Also, for purposes of comparison, the number of participants who refer to "volunteer" and "help others" is counted.

**Table 3. Motivations for participation**

| Motivations referred | N(n=11) | % |
|---|---|---|
| Leisure Travel-related only | 1 | 9.1 |
| Volunteer-related | 2 | 18.2 |
| Both | 5 | 45.5 |
| Others | 3 | 27.3 |
| Total | 11 | 100.0 |

Participants referring to both travel and volunteer-related words are the largest group (Table 3). In fact, except for one participant, all the participants referred to more than one factor in their answer. Of the 11 non-volunteer participants, six referred to the words related to "being in an unusual environment" as their motivation. Some already had known about Kiritappu and were attracted to its natural beauty at the time of application, but some had not. Even "going to a place they did not know" was part of the attraction of the tour.

> ***Respondent 2:*** *If given the chance, I wanted to do volunteering. The location is also attractive.*
> ***Respondent 3:*** *I was simply interested in the volunteer work itself. But I also thought I'd like to do something for Hokkaido where my parents are from, although I'd never been there.*
> ***Respondent 5:*** *I was interested in the Kiritappu Wetland as well as the Trust. I also wanted to offer them some help.*
> ***Respondent 7:*** *I wanted to go to Hokkaido. I felt like being in a place where I could be close to nature. I also wanted to volunteer, as I hadn't done it for a long time. In addition, I wanted to meet people who live in different environments from my own.*
> ***Respondent 8:*** *I was not sure about what we were going to do. But I wanted to participate because I'd never heard of Kiritappu. I also wanted to experience something unusual and different from my busy daily life.*
> ***Respondent 10:*** *I was always thinking about volunteering, but there was never an opportunity. But the company provided one. I also thought it would be a good change for me because the volunteer work would be taking place in an unusual place. I was also familiar with the kind of conservation activity done by the Trust because there was a similar activity going on in my hometown.*

In order to understand the specific reasons for "being in an unusual environment" as a motivating factor, follow up face-to-face interviews were conducted with eight participants[22]. In order to identify the meaning of not being in the "usual" environment, questions were centered at whether the respondent would participate in the same kind of volunteer activities in their "usual" environment, that is, near their place of residence and work. Many answered they would, but only if they had the time and information on the program. They also pointed to the following benefits and limitations of being in an unusual environment.

**1) "Being away" is not good enough**

Interviewees emphasized that it is not the distance from their usual environment that drives their decision for participation, but the meaning of the location and/or the content of the activities. For example, some participants mentioned that Hamanaka (where Kiritappu is located) is special to them because it is where their company (HDJ) procures ingredients for the products they are proud of. As for "being in an unusual environment", some said it is very important, but others did not agree.

Related to this, interviewees also mentioned that "going to Hokkaido/Kiritappu" is not a strong enough motivation. They once again mentioned that the purpose of the activity and the meaning of the location are also important. Without such factors, it would just become the usual leisure-type travel, which does not necessarily interest them.

> ***Interviewee B:*** *I wanted to do the work. I also wanted to do something for the town of Häagen-Dazs ice cream.*
> ***Interviewee D:*** *It is different from just wanting to go somewhere far away or enjoying something unusual. The most important thing for me is if the place ties in with my interests or not. Whether I would like to go to "that place" or would like to help others is also important. If the place is just far away, I do not think I would be interested. I also didn't join the tour just because I wanted to engage in do-it-yourself work.*
> ***Interviewee E:*** *Kiritappu is attractive. I especially enjoyed the scenic beauty while traveling there. But if the work is something I care for, for example, something related to my work, I might go even if the location is not Hokkaido.*
> *Interviewee F: When I think about volunteering, I want to do something that interests me.*

**2) "Volunteer program designed for a limited period" lowers the entry barrier**

Some interviewees answered that the merit of volunteering away from home is that they are expected to work on a project on a clearly defined date and schedule when they know they will be available. This increases their sense of achievement, completeness, and comfort. One interviewee contrasted how it is different from many volunteer programs at home by sharing the fact that she stopped volunteering a few years ago because she felt guilty about not being able to participate on a regular basis, due to the demands of her job.

> ***Interviewee A:*** *I stopped volunteering a few years ago, because I could not make a commitment to participate on a regular basis. If the work is one time, I'd like to participate. But many volunteer activities are rather strictly organized in terms of schedule. So, it is difficult for me to participate.*
> ***Interviewee B:*** *A good thing about being in Hokkaido is that I could not go back to the office easily. Once there, I knew I would be there for the entire volunteer period; otherwise, it is difficult to take on volunteer work on a regular basis. I prefer something one time, something like this.*

**3) "Travel a distance" requires commitment**

Some interviewees mentioned the difference between volunteering near and away from home is the level of advance commitment required. In order to volunteer at a location away from home, they need to arrange transportation and lodging. In the case of the HDJ volunteer tour, they also had to take a paid holiday, requiring an advance notice to their superiors and colleagues. All these advance preparations made their commitment stronger. On the other hand, if a volunteer activity takes place nearby, they may not register immediately because they are not sure about their schedule until just before the event and/or because they feel they will have such opportunities again in the near future.

*Interviewee A: Because it is a few months away, I could arrange my schedule well in advance. I also could notify my colleagues about my participation.*

**4) Benefits must exceed Costs**

A number of interviewees also emphasized the need to consider all the related costs and benefits. Benefits here mean all the satisfactions obtained through volunteering and travel, if travel is involved. In case of the HDJ volunteer tour, people spend time enjoying nature and fresh food, meeting new people, as well as feeling good about contributing to wetland conservation. That is weighed against the costs of invested time and money.

*Interviewee D: If the cost of participation is low, I might volunteer in my neighborhood. If the place is far away, I also might join, because I can enjoy sightseeing. For example, Hokkaido is not a place where we often go. The in-between is the most unattractive.*

*Interviewee E: The cost for travel is rather expensive to join this volunteer tour. But I like to travel to Kiritappu. I also can do volunteer work, something different from just watching flowers, which most visitors do at Kiritappu.*

Based on the surveys and comments obtained from interviews of the HDJ participants, it can be said that the first hypothesis is not true for all the HDJ volunteer tourists. Being in an unusual environment is not a strong enough motivator by itself. The needs of the volunteer activity must meet the interests of the participants, and the total benefits from the volunteer tour must exceed the costs. However, the case also indicated that "being in an unusual environment" offers features that promote volunteering away from home, such as the comfort of completing their role as a volunteer in an agreed upon timeframe and strong advance commitment, in addition to the sheer joy of visiting beautiful places and meeting interesting people.

### 2.2.3. Voluntourism's Contribution to the Perception of Volunteering

In order to examine the second hypothesis, a survey was conducted to identify changes in the perception of volunteering after participating in the volunteer tour, as well as to monitor the impact on actual behavior.

The 11 non-volunteer participants in the HDJ volunteer tour answered the following questions (Table 4). Eight said that their perception of volunteering changed for the better after participating in the HDJ volunteer tour. Three participants answered that their perception of volunteering did not change. However, it is estimated that these three already had a positive perception of volunteering before the volunteer tour because all three were active volunteers in college, visiting nursing homes and teaching children at hospitals.

**Table 4 Changes of non-volunteer perception of volunteering after participating in the voluntour**

| Did your perception on volunteering changed after the HDJ tour? | N | % |
|---|---|---|
| No | 3 | 27.3 |
| Yes | 8 | 72.7 |
| Total | 11 | 100.0 |

| <What has changed? - multiple answers> | N | Ranking |
|---|---|---|
| Stronger interests in volunteering in general | 5 | 1 |
| Feels more closely about volunteering | 4 | 2 |
| Would like to participate to other volunteering activities | 4 | 2 |
| Come to think that volunteering is necesssary for the society | 1 | 4 |
| Others | 0 | -- |

In contrast, the volunteer experience of those who answered "yes" was virtually non-existent. Seven respondents had no volunteer experience at college/university or even thereafter. One respondent was involved in their child's school activities, which are often seen as compulsory by many parents.

Accordingly, the first part of the second hypothesis appears to be valid for the case of HDJ tour. Once an individual experiences volunteering through voluntourism, his/her perception of volunteering becomes more positive.

### 2.2.4. Volunteer Tour as a Promoter of Post-Tour Volunteer Activities

In this section, the latter half of the second hypothesis will be examined. The question is, whether participation in the volunteer tour and the resulting positive perception leads to future participation in volunteer activities. In order to identify their status, the survey asked if the respondents participated in any volunteer activities after their initial involvement in the HDJ volunteer tour.

Four respondents answered "yes" and seven responded "no" (Table 5). For the four who answered "yes", their volunteer activities were all projects arranged by the HDJ CSR Group. Therefore, none of the "non-volunteer" participants started volunteering outside of the CSR Group. These findings do not strongly support the latter part of the second hypothesis. Based on the fact that the only participation occurred through the CSR Group, a possible interpretation is that post-tour participation might occur if certain conditions are met.

**Table 5. Participation in volunteer activities after initial participation in the HDJ voluntour**

| Answer | N | % |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 4 | 36.4 |
| No | 7 | 63.6 |
| Total | 11 | 100.0 |

In order to identify the reasons for the low volunteer participation rate and limitation to projects arranged by the CSR Group, follow up interviews were conducted. The question was asked, "Why didn't your enhanced perception of volunteering result in more active participation in volunteer activities?" The feedback is summarized below.

**1) Lack of information**

Interviewees commented that, without a concerted effort, it is very difficult to find information on volunteer activities in their "urban" neighborhood, as a result of the weakened local network (*chonaikai* or neighborhood association). Furthermore, they are looking not only for information on the content of the program and the registration method, but also about the work atmosphere with the organizers and fellow volunteers, to see if it is a good way to spend their free time. Quite often, such information is available only via informal networks, usually friends and acquaintances. However, they rarely see someone who is volunteering, and therefore, lack the information they require.

> ***Interviewee A:*** *I would like to volunteer, but there is not enough information. If there was more information I would be in a better position to decide whether or not to participate.*
> ***Interviewee B:*** *I don't know where I can find the necessary information, even on the internet. I would like to know about the follow volunteers before I decide.*
> ***Interviewee D:*** *I don't have enough access to information on volunteering. If the NPO is famous, I feel safe about going by myself. But if not, I do not feel safe. I do not like to go by myself. I would like to go with my friends.*

**2) Lack of interest (Out-of-sight/Out-of-mind)**

Some interviewees also mentioned that they quickly lost interest in volunteering once they returned to their daily lives after the volunteer tour, as the topic of volunteering was rarely, if ever, discussed among them and their families, colleagues, or friends. Therefore, volunteering is rarely considered as a way to spend their free time.

> ***Interviewee G:*** *Volunteering does not come to mind when I think about how to spend my free time. When I'm with my family and friends we just don't talk about volunteering.*

**3) Mismatch in time and expectations**

Other points raised by the interviewees included inconvenient schedule of neighborhood volunteer activities. For example, cleaning the neighborhood is often organized by housewives, and the activities often take place during weekdays, which are not convenient for full time workers. In addition, volunteering related to social welfare requires more of a long-term commitment. Again, such high expectations create major hurdles for full-time workers.

> ***Interviewee A:*** *When I was volunteering at nursing homes several years ago, the elderly residents were waiting for me to visit them on a regular basis. Volunteers were assigned to a shift. So, if instead the volunteer opportunity was for only one time, I'd like to participate.*
> ***Interviewee B:*** *I cannot take on regular volunteer responsibilities because of my work. However, if it is a one time event, such as cleaning a beach, I would like to participate.*
> ***Interviewee D:*** *Having to sign up in advance is a problem for me. I prefer something where I can just show up because I am not sure about my availability. I might have to work that day.*

In terms of the volunteer activities arranged by the CSR Group of HDJ, the above three factors are all addressed. Information is available both formally via the intranet and informally through colleagues. In addition, announcements are made by the CSR Group to promote projects that may appeal to individual interests. Finally, there is an understanding of the potential participants' work situation, and therefore the timing and expectations are usually reasonable for most employees.

***Interviewee E:*** *I feel safe about participating in volunteer activities arranged by the CSR Group because they research the NPO before deciding to work with it..*

**3. Discussion and Conclusions**

Based on the fact that 11 out of 14 respondents of the HDJ tour turned out to be non-volunteers, this case suggests that volunteer tours can be an effective tool to introduce non-volunteers to volunteer activities. While the leisure tour element of being away from the usual environment contributes to the motivation to participate, that alone does not seem to be a strong enough motivating factor to decide to participate, supporting the multiple motivation approach[23]. Rather, the purpose of the volunteer activities within the volunteer tour and whether it fits with individual participants interests is equally or, for some participants, more important. The strong interest in how meaningful the activity or place is to the individual is also in line with the government survey on volunteer motivation, with "support to the activities which the person or his/her family have some relation to" being cited as the main motivation to volunteer by 72.7% of the respondents[24]. However, the result of this case demonstrates different characteristics from Sakurai's findings on the three groups of middle-aged, full-time employees, and volunteers for environmental projects, all of which pointed to 'self growth' as a key motivating factor. This was not mentioned in the feedback from the HDJ tour participants, although that might have been more related to the type of activity they were undertaking. Previous research done on the motivations of volunteer tourists in other countries primarily focuses on international volunteer tourism, and therefore a meaningful comparison is difficult to make[25]. Such studies tended to point to learning about new cultures/areas as one of the most important motivating factors.

Although "being in an unusual environment" was by itself not a strong enough motivating factor to make the respondents decide to join the volunteer tour, the survey and interview indicate that it does increase the total attractiveness of the volunteer opportunity. That is, the case suggests that the leisure tour component of the volunteer tour contributes to the overall return from the investment in time and money spent on the volunteer opportunity. It can be also said that this tour component adds to the leisureness of volunteering[26], making the opportunity more attractive to those potential volunteers that consider the leisure component important.

Another unique finding from the HDJ case is that the volunteer tour provides ideal conditions for volunteering by "being away from the usual environment". For example, many stated that the expectation of working on a one-time volunteer activity made them feel more comfortable participating. This importance is also proven by the fact that, despite their perception of volunteering becomes more positive after the volunteer tour, many were not volunteering after they returned home because they could not find appropriately designed programs in which to participate. This is in line with various surveys which indicates lack of time as one of the most critical reasons for not volunteering, as stated in the Background section.

Implications for NPOs that arrange volunteering from the above discussion is that voluntourism might become a good mechanism to bring in non-volunteers, although there are some issues to be addressed. First, in order to take advantage of a leisure tour component of volunteer tourism, the attractiveness of the location might matter. However, because participants have multiple motivations and location is not the only deciding factor, it is also possible that the purpose and contents of the activity might increase the appeal to offset such limitations. Another issue is, given the fact that volunteer tourists tend to be tourists from other regions, the type of work they can engage in might be limited. Also, the flow of such tourists might be exposed to competition from other type of leisure activities.

For the volunteer tours' contribution to lead to post-tour volunteering participation, NPOs at home need to consider about how they can communicate the information potential volunteers are looking for, make the program flexible in terms of

time and date of the activity, as well as the acceptance of one time participants. Without such efforts, volunteer tours can make limited contribution to expand the volunteering basis in Japan.

Finally, it is important to clarify the limitations of this research. The biggest limitation is that this is just one volunteer tour case in Japan, and with little previous research, it is still too early to come to any general conclusion about the features or roles of volunteer tourism in Japan. In addition, this case has its limitation as a company-arranged volunteer tour in terms of interpreting the participant's motivations and behaviors after the tour participation, because such factors as the relationship with HDJ and the town of Hamanaka, the work environments for the HDJ employees, and the inter-company network might influence the participants' thoughts and behaviors. Despite such limitations, this is one of limited research done on volunteer tourism in Japan, and should be considered as a meaningful contribution to explore further development of volunteering in Japan.

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[1] Stebbins, Robert A. (2003) *Volunteering as Leisure/Leisure as Volunteering, An International Assessment*, CABI Publishing CAB International, pp.4-5. This definition is based on the definition by Stebbins, which, in turn, is based on four dimensions of volunteering that Cnaan et. al. found about various definitions of volunteering. The four dimensions are free choice, remuneration, structure and intended beneficiaries. The definition used in this paper does not include "formally or informally", which is a part of Stebbins' definition, because volunteer tourism refers to organized volunteer activities, but not informal activities done by individuals.

[2] OSIPP Center for Nonprofit Research & Information (2007) *The Japanese Nonprofit Almanac 2007, OSIPP* Center for Nonprofit Research & Information, p.16 (in Japanese)

[3] Cabinet Office, Government of Japan (2009) *Annual Report on National Lifestyle 2009*, p.17 (in Japanese). http://www5.cao.go.jp/seikatsu/senkoudo/h20/20senkou_03.pdf downloaded on 2010/2/10
According to the survey, the ratio of those who wish to participate in volunteer activities (including those who strongly and are inclined to do so) rose in the mid-1990s and peaked in 1996 at 66.6%, then gradually tapered off to 60.9% in 2008.

[4] Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications (2006) "Survey on Time Use and Leisure Activities 2006", Table 82 http://www.e-stat.go.jp/SG1/estat/List.do?bid=000001008010&cycode=0 downloaded on 2010/2/10

[5] Sakurai, Masanari (2007) *Volunteer Management, Organizational Strategy for Voluntary Activities*, Minerva Publishing Co. Ltd., pp.135-136 (in Japanese)

[6] Economic Planning Agency (2000), *Annual Report on National Lifestyle 2000*, p.1 (in Japanese)

[7] According to a survey by the Ministry of , the volunteer rate for those 15 years or older in 1996 was 26.9%, 28.9% in 2001, and 26.2% in 2006.

[8] Economic Planning Agency (2000), p.69. The four major constraints for volunteering were lack of time (chosen by 62.5% of respondents), followed by lack of information on volunteer organizations (41.4%), lack of appropriate volunteer organizations in the local neighborhood (33.2%), and lack of understanding of family members (33.2%).

[9] OSIPP Center for Nonprofit Research & Information (2004) *Giving and Volunteering in Japan 2004*, p. 20 (in Japanese). OSIPP's survey on requirements for starting volunteering included spare time (59.1%), availability of handy information on how to participate to volunteering (40.2%), easy application process (36.5%), and close location of volunteer organizations (36.0%). This survey as well as Reference 8 indicates that the availability of time and information are the two keys.

[10] Sakurai, Masanari (2007) *Volunteer Management, Organizational Strategy for Voluntary Activities*, Minerva Publishing Co. Ltd., p.12 (in Japanese)

[11] Ito, Kazunori (2002)

[12] Ito, Kazunori (2002) Research on the images and experiences of volunteer by the youth, *Annals of Educational Research*, vol. 48, no.1, pp. 336-341 (in Japanese)

[13] Yoda, Mami (2009) Volunteer Tourism: Trends in Research and its Potential Role in the Japanese Society, *Proceedings of the 24th JITRA Annual Conference*, p.332 (in Japanese)

[14] Tourism Research and Marketing (2008) *Volunteer Tourism: A Global Analysis*, ATLAS, pp.7-8, pp.30-32

[15] Callanan, Michelle and Thomas, Sarah (2005) Volunteer Tourism, Deconstructing volunteer activities within a dynamic environment, *niche tourism, contemporary issues, trends and cases*, Butterworth-Heinemann, p.186

[16] Guttentag, Daniel A. (2009) The Possible Negative Impacts of Volunteer Tourism, *International Journal Of Tourism*

*Research*, 11(2009), pp.537-538

[17] Guttentag, Daniel A. (2009), p. 538

[18] Wearing, S. and Ponting, J (2009) Breaking Down the System: How Volunteer Tourism Contributes to New Ways of Viewing Commodified Tourism, *The SAGE Handbook of Tourism Studies*, SAGE Publications, p. 256

[19] Yoda, Mami (2009)

[20] Shikida, Asami, Kino, Akiko, and Morishige, Masayuki (2009) Tourism relationship model and intermediary in community governance: Case study of Kiritappu Wetland Trust in Hamanaka, Hokkaido, *Annals of The Japan Association of Regional Policy Scientists*, Vol.7, pp. 65-72 (in Japanese)

[21] The World Tourism Organization, a specialized agency of the United Nations, defines tourism as the "activities of persons traveling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business, and other purposes."

[22] Interviewees were selected based on their availability. Since the survey was anonymous, it is not possible to match each of the survey respondents to interviewees. However, "non-volunteers" and "volunteers" were identified through the interview process.

[23] Sakurai summarizes approaches to volunteer motivation, including the multiple motivation approach, in *Volunteer Management, Organizational Strategy for Voluntary Activities*, Minerva Publishing Co. Ltd., pp.23-31.

[24] Economic Planning Agency (2000) *Annual Report on National Lifestyle 2000*, p.55 (in Japanese)

[25] Tourism Research and Marketing (2008), p.35 and p.50

[26] Stebbins, Robert A. (2003), p.4

## Appendix: Profile of the Survey Respondents

### Table 1. Age

| Age | N | % |
|---|---|---|
| 20-29 | 2 | 14.3 |
| 30-39 | 4 | 28.6 |
| 40-41 | 7 | 50.0 |
| 50-51 | 1 | 7.1 |
| Total | 14 | 100.0 |

### Table 2. Gender

| Gender | N | % |
|---|---|---|
| Male | 6 | 42.9 |
| Female | 8 | 57.1 |
| Total | 14 | 100.0 |

### Table 3. Place of residence and birth

| Place | Residence | % | Birth | % |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Tokyo | 9 | 64.3 | 3 | 21.4 |
| Suburbs of Tokyo (Kanagawa, Saitama, and Chiba) | 2 | 14.3 | 1 | 7.1 |
| Others | 3 | 21.4 | 10 | 71.4 |
| Total | 14 | 100.0 | 14 | 100.0 |

### Table 4. Travel frequency

| Travel frequency/year | N | % |
|---|---|---|
| 1-2 | 4 | 28.6 |
| 3-5 | 6 | 42.9 |
| ≥6 | 3 | 21.4 |
| Answer not available | 1 | 7.1 |
| Total | 14 | 100.0 |

### Table 5. Past Visits to Hokkaido

| Frequency | N | % |
|---|---|---|
| Often (at least once a few years) | 4 | 28.6 |
| Once or a few times in life | 9 | 64.3 |
| No travel to Hokkaido | 1 | 7.1 |
| Total | 14 | 100.0 |