

Memory, influence and rural re-vitalization in Hyogo Prefecture: preparing to evaluate visitor memories of the Osaka World Expo 2025

JACKSON Keith Geoffrey

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Prologue

According to Ayto (2011:343): “The Indo-European base **men-*, **mon-* ‘think’ has contributed an enormously wide range of words to the English lexicon, from *comment* to *mind*. One particular semantic family denotes ‘memory’ and goes back to *memor* ‘mindful’, a Latin descendent of **men-*. From it was derived the noun *memoria* ‘memory’, which has given English *memory*, *memorize*, *memorial*, and, via modern French, *memoir*; and the verb *memorāre* ‘remember’, from which English gets *commemorate*, *memorable* and *memorandum* (not forgetting its abbreviation *memo*).”

Introduction

This paper explores the impact of memories gleaned by individual visitors to the World Exposition hosted by Osaka in 1970. Specifically, it explores how these memories might have influenced key decisions that each of the surveyed and (in 1970) young people made regarding their individual personal and professional development. It explored the extent to which the outcomes from these decisions might be evaluated to have contributed positively to rural re-vitalization in Hyogo Prefecture in the years immediately following Osaka’s World Expo 1970.

The paper builds on similar research conducted by scholars such as Anderson, Storksdieck and Spock (2007) and, specific to Osaka’s World Expo 1970, by

Anderson and Shimizu (2010). A longer-term objective of the exploratory research presented in this paper is to make suggestions to future researchers who are interested in exploring and evaluating potential in positive contributions to rural re-vitalisation in the Kansai area as the city of Osaka prepares to host the World Exposition of 2025.

In the case of Japan, studies of rural development have tended to highlight what might (for outsiders) be categorised as negative trends among rural communities: i.e. when expressed in terms such as ageing populations, outward migration of younger people as local employment opportunities decline, the consequent decline of economic activity and social dynamism.

Echoing the sentiments of rural development researchers such as Reiher (2020, 2014), this paper develops a more positive scenario: i.e. where younger people of Hyogo Prefecture continue to live in or near the birthplaces of their parents and grandparents. Rather than migrate to the more urbanised regions of Japan, and inspired by the memories and consequent life choices of their parents and grandparents, these young people of Hyogo have made decisions that appear to fulfil some of the policy ambitions expressed in recent times by Japan’s Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF). These include: to identify and utilize local resource; to add value to existing local products and services; to promote social businesses; to invite talented people from both inside and outside Japan (Yamauchi, 2015).

This paper explores the extent to which the value-adding decisions of these people in Hyogo might have been influenced by the experiences, memories and decisions of people who were young in 1970, the year of Osaka's first World Expo.

Methods

This paper very much represents a 'work in progress' and has been researched using data from a literature review and from case studies developed in the main through a longitudinal and ongoing series of face-to-face interviews.

In the spirit of triangulation, several definitions of 'case study' were brought to this research: firstly, Robson's 'real world' research definition of a 'case study' as "the development of detailed, intensive knowledge about a single 'case' or small number of comparable 'cases'" (2002: 89). To this was contraposed the definition offered by Saunders and colleagues who describe a "research strategy that involves the empirical investigation of a particular contemporary phenomenon within a real-life context, using multiple sources of evidence" (Saunders, et al, 2012:666). Through much of my career as a teacher, writer and researcher working in Asia and in Europe, I have been much influenced by the work of Robert Yin (2014) who, unlike (for example) Mark Saunders and colleagues, describes 'case study' as a research 'method' (i.e. rather than a 'strategy'), and one that can be most effectively applied when researchers address exploratory, descriptive or explanatory questions to guide research that "aims to produce a first-hand understanding of people and events" (2004:10).

Similar in purpose to the initial stages of Okano's ground-breaking 'Kobe women's project', subsequently summarised in Okano and Maree (2018), this paper applies a combined case study / ethnographic interview approach. The research objective informing the preparation of this paper is 'to explore possible sources of data and corresponding research designs in preparation for future research'.

One motivation for this research has been to examine

the extent to which major transnational events that are usually hosted by the world's major cities might bring the benefits of social, economic, technological and demographic re-vitalization to the less urban and more rural communities located around these cities. In short, the focus for discussion in this paper is on observed and – looking forward to the Osaka Expo of 2025 – potential impacts of major transnational events on regional development generally and re-vitalization specifically.

To give context: on a global scale, the Osaka World Expo of 1970 "marked a major turning point not only in Japanese art, architecture, and design, but also in the history of world expositions as a whole" (Yoshimoto, 2011:2). Across Japan, Wilson (2011) notes how the Tokyo Olympics of 1964 appeared to strengthen processes of national integration by prompting the development of new networks of transport and communications – the shinkansen railway network remaining an iconic example of this process. Wilson further highlights how hosting the Olympics generated "considerable stimulus for the globalization of television, and a dramatic demonstration of the power of television to create a national audience" in Japan: i.e. an audience from across all regions and within most households. A few years later in 1970, Osaka hosted the World Exposition ('World Expo') – a spectacle that allowed people across Japan both to witness how 'modern' Japan presented itself to the world. Furthermore, the TV cameras could invite viewers at home into all of the 'pavilions' at the World Expo with the effect that Japanese people could see how other countries and regions attempted to present the best and brightest of their industrial, technological and cultural products to the people of Japan.

As we know, the 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games were awarded to Tokyo, while Osaka will again host the World Expo in 2025. With this date in mind, this paper introduces an ongoing research project wherein people who live in Hyogo Prefecture and who attended the Osaka Expo 1970 are invited to share their memories of the event. The data ('memories') have

been elicited by means of a standard semi-structured schedule of interview questions. The responses have been communicated through the medium of words (qualitative data) and of images: i.e. vividly rich data drawn from photographs that these individuals had taken with their own camera while visiting the Expo and / or images that they had received from other publicly available sources such as posters, magazines and cinema or TV documentaries about Osaka World Expo 1970. Recognising that the initial (pilot) interviews are likely to have reinforced and perhaps further elaborated the interviewees' original memories, the proposed continuation of this research project will ask interviewees to draw or otherwise visually depict, share and then comment on the most salient ('memorable') of their memories of the 'Osaka 1970 Expo'.

The intergenerational influence of memories

Sugimoto has observed distinctive patterns of family lineage and the horizontal nature of relationships and communication between members of families living in the Kansai region (2014:68). Correspondingly, a continuation of this exploratory study will be designed to elicit data from children, grandchildren and other related members of generations born after 1970 about what memories the initial interviewees shared with them while they were growing up in Hyogo Prefecture.

For, generally speaking, and despite their relative geographical remoteness from Osaka and, thus, from the site of Osaka World Expo 2025, residents in rural areas of Hyogo live close enough to public transport links such that they might organise their visits 'Osaka 2025' as day trips: as we learn, these transport links are now more fully developed across the Kansai region than they were in 1970; the patterns of human migration and commuting have been transformed and intensified (Utsunomiya et al, 2021). Where villages once stood, vibrant suburbs now obtain. The region has become home to multitudes of inward migrants who have come here to work, to study, and to set up new businesses.

Correspondingly, the interviewees who participated in this exploratory study were asked to share details of how their memories of the Osaka Expo might have influenced critical decisions they made in life: e.g. when choosing a job or career, a place of residence or education, along with decisions about where and when to travel for domestic and / or international holidays and / or to visit public events similar in nature to Osaka 1970. In a continuation of this exploratory study, interviewees will be asked to comment on the extent to which their memories of experiencing and engaging with Osaka's 1970 Expo might have influenced critical decisions made subsequently by close members of their respective families: e.g. regarding where to live, how to live, what professional or commercial interests to pursue. From the researcher perspective, an attempt will be made to evaluate the extent to which transfers of memories between generations might generate positive impacts on rural re-vitalization in Hyogo Prefecture and, generalising from these observations, on rural communities across Japan.

Although (for now) small in number, the sample population of interviewees whose initial testimony appears (in extract form) later on in this paper is equivalent in size to that appearing in the aforementioned Anderson and Shimizu (2010) article. Furthermore, and echoing Brinton (2003:204), the interviewees whose memories inform this current paper can be justified as being 'representative' of a younger generation of visitors who lived in Hyogo Prefecture in 1970.

To summarise: the research upon which this paper draws has been designed to explore how visitors to the 2025 Expo might prepare themselves, mentally and practically, to form long-term memories of their experiences that, upon retrieval, might positively influence their individual decisions regarding personal and professional development as residents of the less urbanised regions of Hyogo Prefecture.

Theory

Edward Hall was an anthropologist specialising as a researcher of *cultures*. For much of his career he was an internationally renowned management consultant specialising in the challenges of effective *cross-cultural communication*. Hall posited starkly that “communication is culture, and culture is communication” (Hall, 1976). Inspired by Hall’s work, one example I commonly use in class with students is the image of a ‘blue’ traffic signal in Japan. Is the light ‘green’ or ‘blue’? What does a ‘blue’ light signify to drivers of vehicles approaching the signal: e.g. in comparison to a red light?

One of Hall’s most powerful and still influential metaphors is the ‘iceberg of culture’: i.e. we as social researchers can observe patterns in the ‘above the surface’ behaviours among members of a society or group of people such as: language, dialect, ‘typical’ forms of dress (e.g. *kimono*), food prepared for eating (e.g. *natto*), styles of public commemoration (e.g. *matsuri*), artefacts of public architecture (e.g. *tori-i* marking the boundary of a *jinja*) together with the rituals that appear to be associated with them help us describe and visually compare whatever we describe and compare socially as ‘cultures’ and ‘subcultures’. Reasons for (possibly) explaining why our observations (Hall emphasises) as cultural ‘outsiders’ to the behaviours demonstrated by members of culture-specific groups need to be elicited: as researchers we should not ‘assume’; we should attempt systematically to ask critical questions such as ‘why?’, ‘why not?’, ‘what if?’ As observers and researchers of the social

and culture-specific behaviours in defined groups of people, we use the techniques of critical enquiry to ‘get below the surface’ to what we assume is the bulk of the iceberg.

Re-connecting with Hall’s claim that ‘culture is communication’, we can note how Anthony Giddens, a sociologist, defines ‘communication’ as “the transfer of information from one individual or group to another, whether in speech or through the mass media of modern times” (2009:585). Each of us during the current COVID-19 global pandemic has had to become socially and professionally more adept at communicating through the ‘media of modern times’. While preparing this paper, I have speculated on how the technological transition caused by Covid has impacted on our social roles as teachers, researchers, administrators, family members and friends – people with whom we, over spatial, virtual and perhaps temporal distances, attempt to communicate effectively. Do the communications technologies we each now more routinely use cause us to perceive the people we seek to interact with increasingly as *strangers*? If yes, why is this?

We can begin to answer this question by invoking general models of **communication theory**. Looking at Figure 1, we can recognize a depiction of a linear process: the bias is left-to-right, typical for linearly depicted models and abstractions derived from western academic perspectives (Jackson, 2011). Here, the sender prepares (‘encodes’) a message to another person (the ‘receiver’): perhaps, a class of students, or a geographically distant family member. We might be using an information communication technology

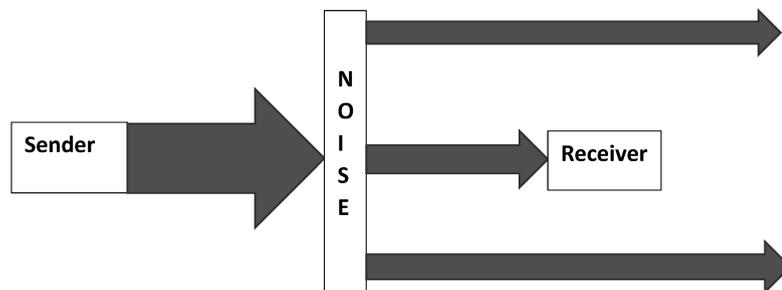


Figure 1. Communication theory (*signalling*)

(ICT) platform such as Zoom. Whether face-to-face or virtually, we utilize evolutionary developed techniques of non-verbal communication (gesture, facial expression, etc.) in addition to verbal requests for direct feedback (*Did you hear me?*) to ascertain the extent to which our intended receiver has understood (i.e. effectively ‘decoded’) our message. We recognize that ‘noise’ or interference (e.g. an unstable internet connection, our own tiredness) might distort our message, meaning that much of its content ‘passes by’ the intended receiver, as illustrated by the arrows emerging from the ‘noise filter’ depicted in Figure 1.

Signalling theory represents an elaboration of communication theory in that it emphasizes how ‘sender’ and ‘receiver’ might have access to different sources of information, knowledge or culture-specific insight: the distorting impact of ‘noise’ is assumed (potentially) to be more intense. In such cases, the sender might need to demonstrate qualities such as ‘intercultural empathy’: e.g. as a Japanese passenger instructing a non-Japanese driver of a hire car in Japan: “Look! The (green) traffic signal is ‘blue’ now: you can drive on”.

Key concepts

Perception

Before discussing *memory* as a discrete phenomenon for research, it is worth exploring interdisciplinary perspectives on processes of human **perception**. To this purpose we can draw on the work of Henry Gleitman and fellow psychologists, perception describes “a process that describes how human beings and other living organisms detect and interpret information that reaches them through sensory receptors of sight, hearing, smell, touch and intuition. The process thus combines cognition, calculation and feeling in both physical and psychological terms, comprising perceptual sensations that proceed from a human biological base” (2001:182).

Socialisation

According to Fred Jandt, an anthropologist, human perception describes ‘an act of becoming aware of, knowing, or identifying by means of the senses’ (2010:G-9). These senses include sight (we can think back of the ‘blue traffic signal’), touch, taste, hearing, and intuition as shaped by our evolution as *homo sapiens* (Harari, 2011), our individual genetic structure, our physical capabilities and, decisively, by our powers of perception. In each individual, processes of perception are shaped during our early life by our individual experiences of **socialization**, which Giddens defines as “a process whereby the helpless infant gradually becomes self-aware, knowledgeable person, skilled in the ways of the culture into which he or she was born” (2006:163).

Identity

A major stream of Giddens’ thinking links experiences of socialisation with the formation and negotiation of individual **identity**. Adopting an approach that conceptualises an individual’s social identity by invoking processes of self-perception allows researchers to assume that each individual in society forms, expresses and otherwise negotiates various *identities*: e.g. as defined by attributable and self-attributable social roles such teacher, friend, parent, foreigner, researcher.

Giddens’ discussion of each individual’s early life normative experiences of *socialisation* into whatever might be considered ‘normal’ behaviour by influential ‘gate-keeping’ members of specific social groups and subgroups. These groups might be defined spatially and temporally as (for example) family, school, work, and so on. Within these social sub-groups – and within the subcultures, etc. is the notions of ‘social identity’: i.e. as we individually attempt to locate and define ourselves in society and, crucially, negotiate how influential members in society move to define us as (accepted) ‘ingroup or (rejected) outgroup members

of that society. According to Giddens (2009:1020), key and *observable* (i.e. ‘above-surface’) features of each individual’s social identity include: distinctive attitudes and behaviours expressing a person’s character or the character of a *group* which they relate to and expressions of *what is meaningful* to them: e.g. a blue traffic signal?

Further, according to Giddens:

- Some of the main sources of social identity include *gender*, sexual orientation, *nationality* or ethnicity, *education* and *social class*. An important marker of an individual’s identity is his or her *name*, and naming is also important for *group identity* (Giddens, 2009:1020 – *my emphasis*)

In the individual case studies presented subsequently in this paper, we can find vivid illustrations of the impact of how individuals socialised into both nationally (Japan) and regionally (Kansai) defined cultures might become ‘re-named’ by visitors to the Osaka World Expo 1970 with, it appears, startling effects on processes of self-perception and individual

identity.

Life orientation

Pre-empting the case study data, it is relevant to highlight how Sugimoto links experiences of socialisation in Japan to normative family expectations of children’s engagement with formal education and job-seeking efforts. According to Sugimoto (2017:139): “The children of professionals and managers study after school far more than those whose parents are in other occupations”. Developing the theme further, Sugimoto observes how “job-oriented students expect to live independently of their parents, to become self-supporting in their future full-time jobs, and to marry earlier than school-oriented students”. As social researchers, we might expect that the on-going COVID-19 pandemic has influenced the current reliability and validity of Sugimoto’s proposed distinction between ‘school-oriented’ and ‘job-oriented’ young people in Japan. Many undergraduate students in Japan have been experiencing severe

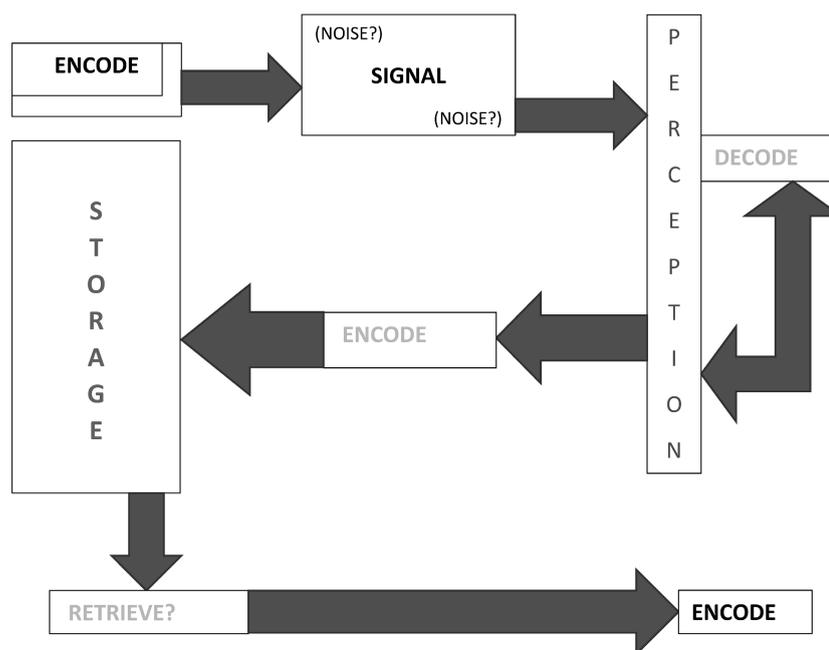


Figure 2. Visual decoding and memory

difficulties to secure part-time jobs that, Sugimoto claims, “facilitate students’ self-reliance, self-support and independence” (2017:139).

Research is already emerging that highlight the social, psychological, economic and mental health traumas that young people in Japan have been experiencing (Ueda et al, 2020). Echoing the initial findings of this current study, we might boldly interpret the Osaka Expo of 2025 as an event that might generate positive memories for people (young and old) of the Hyogo Prefecture today.

Memory

Can you recall the title of this paper? Rather than return to the top of the paper and check, look and try to make sense of **Figure 2** (above).

The aforementioned ‘blue’ is ‘green’ conundrum particular to Japan illustrates the importance of perception in contexts for cross-cultural communication. As discussed above, it also serves to highlight how processes of socialization impact on us psychology and, by extension, how each individual’s memory *works*.

As with the ‘noise / interference’ filter highlighted in discussion of Figure 1, the filter of perception that appears axial in depictions of ‘visual decoding and memory’ illustrated in Figure 2 appears salient to our discussion. Drawing on the ground-breaking work of psychologists such as Atkinson and Shiffrin (1968), we can combine processes of human communication and theories of the human mind, and specifically of human memory. While designing Figure 2, I noted how Atkinson and colleagues draw on seminal work by researchers such as those contributing to Baddeley et al (2002), whose systematic explorations of our deeper mind influenced how social psychologists and clinical neurologists today describe how processes of the retroactive interference in contexts for communication impact on each individual’s short- and long-term memory storage – what Baddeley describes as a ‘visual-spatial buffer’ – and retrieval processes.

Figure 2 illustrates how the human mind forms –

filtered by individual perception – and then stores memories. Over time, these memories might be lost or remain retrievable: e.g. when a researcher seeks to elicit the memories of an interviewee by asking questions such as:

- *What is your most vivid memory of the Osaka 1970 Expo?*
- *What do you remember of artist Okamoto Taro’s ‘Tower of the Sun’?*
- *Could you draw for me what you remember of this tower?*

The systems-approach towards depicting a flow of sequential cognitive functions depicted in Figure 2 that suggest, in order to answer from memory the third question (above), the respondent would need to recall (decode) their perceived image of a concept (‘Tower of the Sun’) associated with a real-life object (the Tower) that the researcher assumes the respondent had seen and perhaps repeatedly: i.e. during their experiences of visiting the Expo, and though multiple media since that ‘real-time’ experience of visiting the Expo. Along with the passage of time along with the effects of human ageing, the ‘noise’ that intervenes between the encoded image (e.g. as the artist intended his structure to appear and signal) and the image decoded originally in the mind of the observer (now research respondent) influences his / her perception of what then was the aforementioned ‘Tower’ and what subsequently became committed (decoded) to the respondent’s memory.

The example interview questions I list above are designed explicitly to elicit and further prompt respondents to encode the ‘Tower’ in question and then search their stored memories for its replica. If ‘found’, the memory can be retrieved and subsequently encoded in ‘here-and-now’ communication to the researcher. As mentioned previously, in the semi-structured interviews I am attempting to elicit the respondent’s fresh encoding of their memory of the ‘Tower’ in spoken and written words *and* as rich data in the form of self-created images (photographs, drawn sketches, etc.) which I and the respondent might then compare to another’s

person's image of the actual Tower as it was then and/or as it appears today.

Worked example

The assumptions informing the formulation of interview questions such as those listed above are informed by reference to concepts specific to the study of human memory. Drawing on Atkinson and Shiffrin (1968), Baddeley et al (2002) and Gleitman et al (2011), these include:

- Working memory: most adults can store 7 ± 2 items in their short term (working) memory. These items are commonly stored temporarily and 'worked' during processes of problem-solving.
- Eidetic memory: Children whose memories are in the formative stages of socialisation are generally more able than adults to store and maintain precise memories of images, perhaps associated with sounds. In this sense, the memories of children are generally more impressionable because they are less 'cluttered' with experiences filtered through perception. Examples of such long-term storage items include the nursery rhymes and songs they learn along with the images and spoken words that might accompany these. Echoing Baddeley (1986), items that through perception are connected through a variety of senses (vision, sound and touch, etc) are more easily stored long-term as 'phonological buffers'.
- Elaboration: Memories that are first encoded and then connected to other stimuli tend to remain more vivid in the long-term memory: i.e. remain more *memorable* and thereby (potentially) more *retrievable*. Examples include: connecting a memory to an emotional experience such as a child's 'special' birthday visit to an event such as the Osaka Expo together with parents.

- Encoding: By extension, perceptions can be manipulated to 'elaborate' experiences and thus memories. As with communication (Figure 1), individuals can attempt to decode real-life objects such as the '*Tower of the Sun*' by adding the richness and variety of fresh connections to their experience of it: e.g. remarking how similar or different it is to other 'towers' they have observed, or attach their perception and decoding of the object while studying subjects such as architecture and exterior/landscape design. In order to first store the item in their working memory, individuals could take time explore angles from which to photograph or draw it; physically re-visit, think and talk about it frequently.

With these concepts in mind, we can now explore using media-sourced 'worked example' of how data from the case studies that form the focus for my proposed research might be analysed.

The competition to design the logo for the Osaka World Expo of 2025 attracted 5,894 submissions. The winning design team, TEAM INARI, is based in Osaka. Their logo appears as an 'O' form (representing Osaka) composed of a crown of connected 'bouncing' blood-red cell shapes interspersed with white eye-shaped elements. Shimada Tamotsu, the firm's art director, explained the character's representation of life's enlivened spirit: "because it dances and bounces, it lives". He further explained how he had been influenced by seeing the 'Tower of Sun' when visiting the Osaka World Expo as a child in 1970.¹⁾

Worked example: researcher's comments:

A creative team of people with diverse personal backgrounds and a shared professional purpose can boost **working memory** while working on complex problems. Shimada Tomatsu retrieved the image and

1) Sources: <https://www.bie-paris.org/site/en/news-announcements/expo-2025-en/expo-2025-osaka-kansai-reveals-its-logo>; <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/aug/27/tomatoes-a-scrunchie-japan-perplexed-by-osaka-world-expo-logo>

emotional impact of seeing the ‘Tower of the Sun’ as a child - a process of **eidetic memory**. Over time, this original experience might have influenced his decision to become a professional artist and designer. Working with his team, Shimada san creates opportunities to **elaborate** his original memory of the Tower in its spatial-temporal location: i.e. through powers of **perception**. He can repeatedly **decode** and **encode** iterations of the Tower by re-visiting it in its current location, thereby further **decoding, encoding** and **elaborating** his **perceptions** and stored memories of it.

Case studies

The discussion in this paper concludes with extracts from two on-going case studies with individuals who grew up and live in Hyogo Prefecture. As we shall see, each in the own way engaged actively with the Osaka World Expo of 1970. Prompted to reflect, each proved able to identify how the experiences they remember making at the Expo influenced critical decisions they made in terms of their individual personal and professional development in later life.²⁾

Case study 1: ‘Y’ san (female)³⁾

Social identity

“At the time of the Osaka Expo I was twenty years old. I had no plans to go to university or women’s college as my parents couldn’t afford it. I grew up in a village near Takarazuka, which later became part of Takarazuka City. My first ambition was to train as a nurse. But I remembered how my closest friends at school said repeatedly that I should audition for the

Takarazuka Revue because I was ‘so pretty’. I felt too shy to apply. And when I mentioned it to my mother, I could sense she was not in favour”.

Memory

“Anyway, this idea stayed with me when I applied to become a ‘companion’ at the Osaka Expo. I was surprised when my parents agreed to support my application; I remember my father saying something like ‘Good. You might find a nice husband in Osaka’. Once accepted, I and other companions were trained to guide visitors around certain ‘Pavilions’ at the exhibition. We had to study hard about each Pavilion. We also had to learn some phrases in English. This was so different from school. I was amazed to hear myself speaking English! I’m still amazed by how many phrases in English I remember today!”

Influence on life decisions

“What influence did my experience at the Osaka Expo have on my life? Well, during the Expo I decided to apply to become an air stewardess.⁴⁾ I had seen and (shyly!) spoken to some American stewardesses at the Expo. They, their job, their uniforms, (their hairstyles!) and their lifestyle seemed so glamorous. I thought: ‘Hollywood’. Someone told me that Osaka, like Tokyo, was thinking of building a new airport to take bigger planes and help Osaka and the Hyogo region become more connected to the world – another theme, I think, of the Expo. Actually, I remember one of the American stewardesses asking me to show her how to make an

2) As mentioned previously, the testimony presented here has been extracted from initial (pilot) interviews with Japanese people who grew up (were socialised) in rural areas of Hyogo Prefecture. These are indicative of data that can be expected to appear the full-scale empirical and longitudinal research proposal, towards which this current paper is directed. An additional factor influencing the tentative and exploratory nature of the current state of my research has been the imposition of various states of emergency across Japan in response to COVID-19 pandemic. For reasons to be detailed in the final research, the on-going longitudinal approach towards gathering and analysing primary data is likely (*hopefully!*) to prove more effective and, in empirical research terms, ‘richer’ when the contexts for interviewer-interviewee communication and memory retrieval are organised more frequently and securely as a face-to-face conversation.

3) For this exploratory paper, the names of the respondents have, for ethical reasons, been withheld. In the full-scale research report, respondents will have a choice about whether to reveal their true names and other personal details or not.

4) Today, identified (more neutrally) as ‘cabin crew’

origami bird [crane] that she'd seen on a previous visit to Japan.

In the end, I didn't become a stewardess. I started the training and met a man who was training to become a pilot. We married and moved to where he lived in Hyogo. My son lives in Takarazuka City. Each time I go to visit him, I think of me as a young Japanese woman, and then I think of that young woman nervously talking English to visitors at the Osaka Expo".

Case study 2: 'M' san (male)

Social identity

"At the time of the Osaka Expo I was nineteen years old. My father had a small metalworking business in Hyogo. I had a sister. After finishing school, we both worked for the family business, and it was clear that my father expected me to take over the business when he retired.

I liked the metalwork we did. I saw how it helped people in their daily life or business. Through my teenage years I used to practice making things that were not for everyday use or for sale. I don't know where this interest came from, but I started to be interested in 'craft' and 'art'. I remember my excitement when I first visited a large library in Kobe City, looking through big books with pictures of the work of Renaissance artists in Europe. I remember practising and trying to pronounce names such as 'Bonzino' and 'Leonardo da Vinci'",

Memory

"Whenever I had the time and money, I would travel alone to visit the Expo, taking the bus and, a couple of times when I ran out of money, walking. The queues to enter the American and Soviet Pavilions were usually so long that I started to explore other Pavilions. My favourite became the Quebec Pavilion. This was because, each day, I think, between four and six o'clock they had a disco. This was my first experience of pop music outside of the radio or the TV in Japan; this was

my first live experience of 'disco'. The women dancing there appeared so glamorous. I was shy at first but after a couple of visits I found the courage and asked some of the women to dance with me.

Because it was disco and we were dancing, I didn't have to speak much. When I did, I was amazed how non-Japanese people pronounced my name. I thought: 'Is that me? Is that who I might become?'"

Influence

"What did I want to become? Professionally? I remember the Matsushita Pavilion, designed by a (then) young architect [Yoshida, Ishoya]. It made such an impact on me and later, after studying more about the Expo, I realised that 1970 was a time when many young Japanese artists were making reputations, in Japan and internationally. That became my dream: to travel abroad and study art.

I spoke to my father about this. Could I study abroad before re-joining the family business? Could I dream about starting my own business?

I can't remember now exactly how it happened. My father knew someone in Kobe who imported works of art from Europe: an art dealer. He was very successful. He wanted to hire someone in Japan who could search for possible art acquisitions in Italy, and especially in Milan. After being introduced to and talking with the art dealer, I was offered the chance to be that person. Perhaps he was impressed by how I pronounced 'Leonardo da Vinci'!

So, the art dealer invited me to accompany him on a visit to Hong Kong where some of the big British auction houses held art fairs and sales. I realised how important it was to learn English for professional communication in the art and auction business. After a couple of visits to Hong Kong, I was sent to Milan on a probationary basis to contact art dealers and visit other possible sources of art works to import to Japan. In addition to English, I began to study Italian. Also, I began to travel to places outside Milan.

This arrangement went on for a number of years. If I

hadn't made those experiences at the Expo, enjoyed the excitement of adventure, of entering, dancing in what for me were 'new worlds', I don't believe I would have dared to take the leap I did to live and work in Italy. I was living a dream, *la dolce vita!*"

Researcher's note: After listening and noting the testimony summarised above, I invited 'Y' san to participate in a role play exercise whereby she talked to me as if I was a foreign visitor to the Osaka Expo. As prompts, we used photos from the Expo Pavilion she had worked in. In 'M' san's case, I invited him to sketch from memory Okamoto Taro's 'Tower of the Sun'. We then compared his sketch to a photograph of the original. His rendition was near perfect!

Rural revitalisation

Research conducted globally by the agencies of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) tend to describe processes of 'rural re-vitalisation' in terms such as 'positively transforming rural areas for present and future generations'. This paper represents an admittedly limited attempt to contribute to these re-vitalisation processes, highlighting real-life cases in Hyogo Prefecture, Japan.

Looking ahead to how this current exploratory research might develop, we can cite further extracts from the two case studies cited regarding the influences that their memories of the Osaka World Expo 1970 might have had on life decisions made by their children: i.e. those family members who, in 1970, were as yet unborn members of a 'future generation' of Hyogo residents.

In 1975, and after returning from his travels in Italy, M-san married and moved to a rural community nearer to Osaka. He says he wanted to live within walking distance of a Hankyu Railway station so that he and his family could more easily commute between home and Osaka, Kobe and Kyoto for both work and leisure purposes. He opened a small antiques business that remains successful even during the Covid pandemic. He is semi-retired and leaves the day-to-day running of

the business to his son. According to M-san: "When we moved here it was a village. During my lifetime it has become a suburb, a home for commuters. Where once there was a dusty corner on the lane I used to walk to the station, there is an ATM next to a small 'German' bakery". Questions I intend to explore further with M-san include the extent to which his training as a craftsman and his subsequent self-education in art has influenced his perceptions of what is 'local' or 'rural', 'central' or 'peripheral' (cf. Reiher, 2014) in people's lives.

As mentioned in the above-cited testimony, Y-san frequently visits her son, who lives near Takarazuka. He runs a small guesthouse designed to host tourists from inside and outside Japan who travel to visit the Takarazuka Revue. Business has not been easy during the Covid crisis. However, Y-san reports that her son remains optimistic and is already preparing to attract domestic and international tourists who are planning to visit the Osaka 2025 Expo. As part of these preparations he offers short-term internships (with accommodation) to undergraduate students of hospitality management and related subjects at Prefectural Universities across Japan.

Research limitations

Because this current paper draws in the main on testimonies from respondents informed by their memories of events of over fifty years ago, we can expect and justify challenges to the reliability and validity of the data that have been received and (for now) tentatively analysed. As illustrated in Figure 1, signals communicated by these respondents (encoders) inevitably will become distorted by various sources of 'noise' and, subsequently, pass the receiver (myself as researcher) by. Furthermore, and as with many vital concepts in studies of the human mind, there is more we do not yet understand of how memory works than we can claim to understand. As with this current research endeavour, *memory* is a 'work in progress'.

That this paper presents only two such case studies reinforces its purpose: i.e. as an initial, exploratory

study that seeks to draw testimony for respondents who, the researcher can claim, are representative of a targeted sample population.

Allowing for these potential limitations in research design and thus in the findings that emerge from its application, I believe we can generate a valid and credible foundation for conclusions that might help guide and prepare younger people from the more rural regions of Hyogo to make experiences of the forthcoming Osaka Expo 2025 that – analogous to the case studies discussed above – might positively influence decisions they make in their own life and, by extension, contribute positively to rural re-vitalization efforts of people and communities across Hyogo Prefecture.

Epilogue

“Fifty years have passed since the first World Expo in Japan: Expo 1970 Osaka. The Expo was held from 15 March to 13 September 1970, under the theme ‘Progress and Harmony for Mankind’. It was a category-one General Exhibition under the Convention Relating to International Exhibitions.

When Expo 1970 was held, I was 10 years old. I visited the Expo site on 18 occasions and went inside all the pavilions. I came into contact with the cultures of many different countries and gained a sense of how diverse the world really is. At the same time, I was amazed by the exhibits that presented possibilities for the societies and lifestyles of the near future, which would surely be brought about by innovations in science and technology.

At Expo 1970, I learned several things that have been important to my life thereafter. One of these is the crucial importance of having a society based on mutual acceptance of different values; another is faith in the advancement of human civilisation in the pursuit of universality. More significantly, I learned of the pivotal role played by International Exhibitions and their power to ignite the imagination of ordinary people. It was at

the age of 10, while visiting Expo 1970, that I decided I would work in the field of International Exhibitions in the future.

I hope that just as I did back in 1970, the children who hold the key to our future will visit Expo 2025, encounter the diversity of cultures there, and be fascinated by the science and technology that will drive the sustainable development of human civilisation into the future”.⁵⁾

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