

- Fieldworks and internships by IDE -
Lessons and achievement from ITPS internship

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I participated in internship at ITPS (Institute for Transport Policy Studies) as one of the graduation requirements during Integrated Doctoral Program. Integrated Doctoral Program offers students to have a chance in working in abroad or domestic research institutes or related companies. This time, my internship was to be conducted in ITPS located in Tokyo, Japan for three months. The duration period was from September 17, 2013 to December 13, 2013.

When I started the internship, I had several questions to be answered during the internship. One was whether I fit to the research or not and the other was motivation for doing Ph.D. These two questions actually bothered me when I finished my master's degree. I realized that no one could give answer for this and that is why I decided to internship right after the graduation before deciding my dissertation theme to explore my interests and passion about the research.

ITPS is an independent, non-profit foundation established under the auspices of the Japanese Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport. Institute for Transport Policy Studies conducts researches related the following topics:

- Proposing policies
- Evaluating and analyzing the effects of policies
- Conducting research to obtain basic data for the above activities

Its aim is to contribute towards the development of transport policy in order to promote the welfare and quality of life of people in Japan. There are about 20 researchers working at the institute under Research Department and five are working under Planning Office Department in ITPS.

First, I was asked to assist two researchers' works and one vice counselor's work during the stay. I wasn't informed anything when I first started the internship so I definitely had no idea about what to do. During the first month, I got accustomed to the new environment and Japanese culture in ITPS. The work started from 10 A.M. to 6 P.M. every day. I had to fill out and get the sign

of my advisor researcher for daily checkup as in Figure 1. During the first month, understanding current transportation related issues in Japanese was difficult for me at the beginning but I took time in broadening viewpoint in this activity every morning.

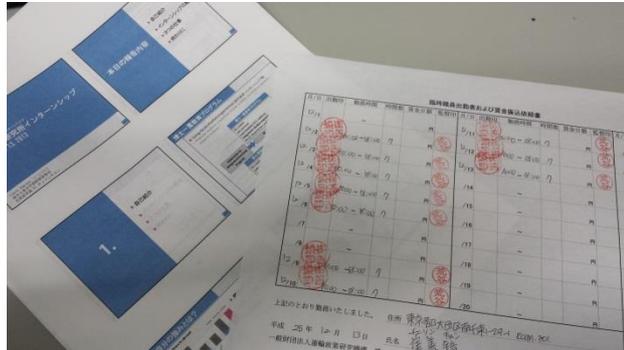


Figure 1 Daily checkup for internship

There are mainly three tasks as I mentioned in the beginning during the stay at ITPS. First research is “Tourist Demand Analysis on Regional Inbound Tourism”. Second is “Airport Operation in Great East Japan Earthquake.” The last is “Analysis on National Travel Survey in three countries.” Two of them were very new to me and I didn’t have any background information. On the other hand, the second research was pretty much related to my master’s work so it was easier for me to get involved.

Main task was about analyzing any given data and to make a graph or figure ensuring assumption of the studies. I would say this is very critical for researchers to convince public and others to get interested in the study. The process was about continuous confirmation of the research flow whether it is reasonable research or not. Figure 2 shows one of the result analyzed during the internship and this was used in Annual ITPS Research Seminar held on November 26, 2013. Related government organizations, researchers, and companies were invited to join this seminar and there were about 200 people. This was one of the unforgettable moments during the Internship and gave confidence me and encouraged me to think myself as a researcher.

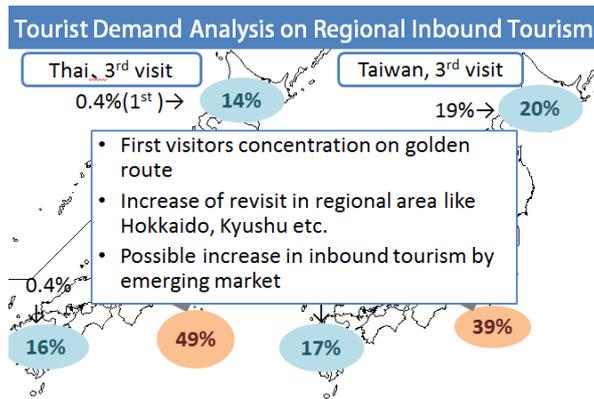


Figure エラー! 指定したスタイルは使われていません。 2 Analysis used in ITPS Research Seminar



Figure 3 ITPS Research Seminar

The other experiences are participating in-institution seminar, colloquium, and briefing sessions between senior researchers, and interview survey as shown in Figure 4. Every experience stimulated me since it was the first experience in participating outside the school. Sometimes, reality was much different from what I have thought and learnt through literature reviews and studies in the school. By spending three months, I could conclude three key components that construct the research. Three components are the following: concentration, expansion, and selection.

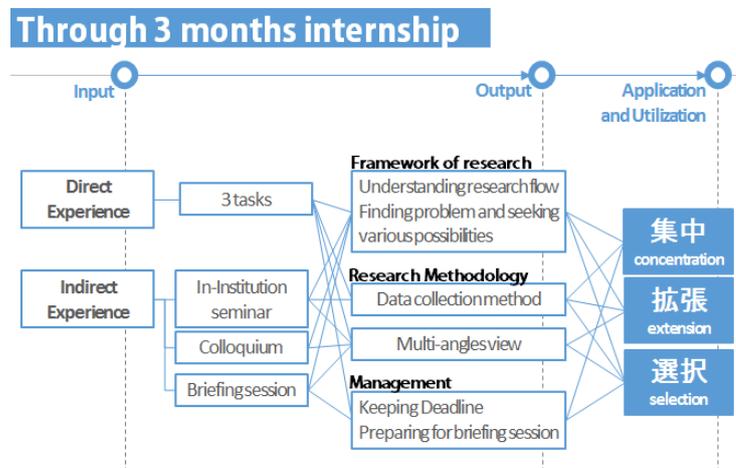


Figure 4 Experiences during the ITPS internship

Even though the internship didn't give direct output for my research, I learnt valuable

lessons that I couldn't see myself. Also, I could answer for questions that I had in my mind with assurance. Because the research gives incomparable joy when it gives value to others despite the zero status at first, I would be eager to devote in conducting researches from now on. In addition, my attitude now is a lot different from the time when I started the internship. The experience certainly gave me motivation for doing a long journey of Ph.D.

The one last thing I would like to share is to explore as much as you can when there is a chance given to you. Also, it is critical for each individual to be ready with their language skills, communication ability, and professional techniques. It is surprising that one could have a whole different view when going under the internship. I strongly would recommend my colleagues or junior colleagues to take an active role in internship and find out whether the task fits you or not and whether you enjoy it or not.