Commuting by High Speed Rail Shinkansen

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Abstract: The numbers of commuters who are using high speed railway (Shinkansen) are increasing in Japan. The fare for the Shinkansen is higher than the fare of other commuter railways. This report describes research on the reasons commuters choose the Shinkansen. The average commuting time in the Tokyo area is about 2 hours a day. The commute from residential areas within a one hour radius of Tokyo Station is expensive. The congestion level at rush-hour is more than 200% (twice the number of seats) capacity. Therefore, on commuter railways, commuting is not comfortable. It is necessary to choose a residential area further away to buy a reasonably priced, comfortable house. By commuting by way of Shinkansen, people can obtain both a comfortable house and a comfortable commute.

1. INTRODUCTION

Recently, some Japanese people use high speed trains, called bullet trains or Shinkansen in Japanese, in order to commute. The number of these commuters is increasing, but now more than ever, the Shinkansen fare is high. This report is about, first, whether the number of commuters using the Shinkansen is increasing or not, and second, why the number is increasing or decreasing.

2. RESULTS

The number of commuters using the Shinkansen totaled about 42 million in 2007. The number of irregular users of the Shinkansen accounts for about 13 percent of all users in 2007. The number of irregular users is increasing every year. For example, the number of regular users (i.e. for official trips, going to school, etc.) on the Nagano Shinkansen rose from 652 thousand people in 1999 to 1 million 298 thousand people. Also, the number of irregular users accounts for about 15 percent of all users. Therefore, the Nagano Shinkansen relies on regular users. Also the number of irregular users (for travel, official trips, etc.) on the Tokaido Shinkansen rose from 10 million 724 thousand people in 1999 to 13 million 724 thousand people. But the number of irregular users accounts for about 10 percent of all users. Therefore, the Nagano Shinkansen relies on regular users. These data show that the number of Japanese commuters using the Shinkansen is increasing[1].

3. CONCLUSION

First, the price of a plot of land near downtown Tokyo was about 560 thousand yen per m² in 2008, but the price of a plot of land in Takasaki (Takasaki is 100 km north of downtown Tokyo) was about 56 thousand yen per m² in 2008[2]. So, the price of a plot of land near downtown Tokyo is ten times as much as the price of a plot of land 100 km away outside of Tokyo. Therefore, people who want to get their own homes should buy a plot of land in a nearby town outside of Tokyo. Second, there is a commuting allowance in many Japanese companies, and the Japanese government exempts commuting costs from taxation, up to a maximum of 50 thousand yen. Therefore, commuters could ride the higher priced Shinkansen train. Third, Japanese people need a comfortable commute. Japanese commuters want to commute comfortably, but Japanese commuter trains are crowded and uncomfortable to ride in. The Shinkansen should be used in order to commute. Japan Railway sells Shinkansen commuter tickets. Some Japanese companies introduced flexible schedules[3]. These things help commuters to get to their own homes and enjoy comfortable commuting!

4. REFERENCES

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