

A Study on the Characteristics of the Kaku-uchi (liquor store) culture in Kitakyushu City, Japan

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Abstract

The Kaku-uchi culture has a very long tradition in the city of Kitakyushu, Japan. Kakuuchi means that people don't sit but stand during they drink inside the liquor shop. In former times, this way of drinking played an important role in the daily life of many factory workers, as refreshing themselves after a tough long working day. Unfortunately, recently the number of those kind of liquor shops are decreasing rapidly because there is a decrease of the number of factory workers and the way of enjoying liquor stores has changed too. In this study we have investigated the characteristics of kaku-uchi liquor stores. The method we have used is a survey on site, by interviewing the owners of the liquor stores, to understand better the current local business conditions. We also have collected data to find out about the historical background of the Kaku-uchi culture, as well as statistical data information. We found several sources to collect our data, literature review, interviews, site survey, and the more recent data we've found on the internet. We found that of all the liquor stores which had been in Kitakyushu, only 57% of the stores do still have commercial activities. Most of the liquor stores were built during the period 1910-1970. We searched whether the stores had been renovated during that period. And we found that 79% of the stores were renovated. Mostly, the interior of the stores had been changed, to make the store more attractive to the customers. Because of the aging of population in Japan, 79% of the liquor stores has no successor. This is one of the biggest issues on how to preserve the local traditional businesses, in times were modern commercial facilities are increasing rapidly.

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1. Introduction

“Kaku-uchi in Kitakyushu City” is the unique aspect of many liquor stores which allow people to drink while standing in the liquor store. Kaku-uchi was very popular among many factory workers and steel mill workers after they finished a hard day’s work (Kitano, 2015). According to Sanada (2011), Kaku-uchi is the essential place for a factory worker of Kitakyushu City. His investigation is quantitative and qualitative. He interviewed the customers who came to the liquor stores, 43 liquor stores were investigated within the city of Kitakyushu. It became clear that most customers came alone to Kaku-uchi. The place has the characteristic that they drink liquor and stay for a long time talking with another customers. It can be mentioned that Kaku-uchi plays the role of a community facility within the neighborhood. Also, it is clear that this drinking style is unique and contribute to the sociability. Usually, people choose to sit while they drink and talk with their friends about daily life and private topics. On the other hand, he found that people who choose to stand during drinking with other people, do more often talk about general topics.

However, Kaku-uchi which is a traditional Japanese liquor store, and due to the fact of the decreasing number of factory workers, this influences the economic situation of the liquor stores. Additionally, some liquor stores facing the risk of closing down in the near future because there are no successors. This issue should be addressed for studying to find out a guideline solution in order to promote a table liquor store characteristic. This study is able to support city development based on promoting industrial tourisms. At present, the city of Kitakyushu concentrates its industrial tourism on visiting manufacturing companies by providing city tours and organizing night trips viewing the light up factories (Kitano, 2015). Therefore, people could experience the factories and the local Kaku-uchi culture together.



Figure 1. Kaku-uchi in Kitakyushu City.

2. Methods

2.1 Investigation Methods

In order to obtain the information and data to archive of the research, the necessary data for the study in terms of primary and secondary data are listed below.

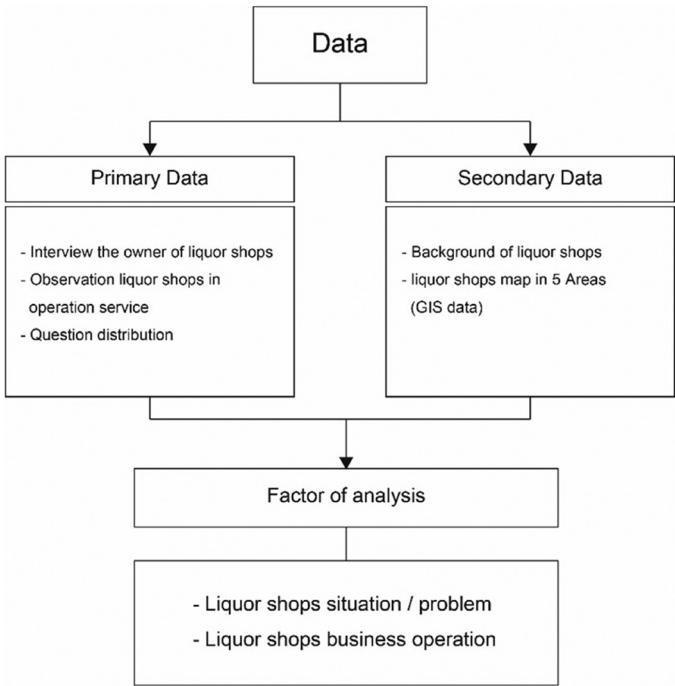


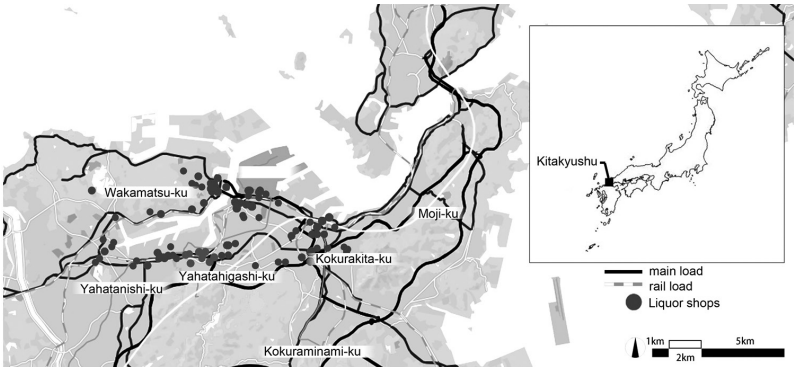
Figure 2. Research Flow.

- Primary data focused on the specific issues for the analysis part. Liquor store characteristics survey and owners interview methods were conducted to understand the current existing local business conditions. The interview questions are listed below:
 - Is this liquor store still open?
 - How long is this liquor store open?
 - How many generations long does this store continue?
 - Is there any successor?
 - From what time to what time does this liquor store opens?
 - What is the time peak with most customers?
 - Generally, how many customers come to this liquor store by day?
 - How is the condition of the building?
 - How old is this liquor store's building?
 - What did you renovated in this liquor store?

These questions were asked the entrepreneurs of the liquor stores by face-to-face communication during our field survey. By gathering information on this step was important for a clearly background of liquor stores, customers, business management, and shop renovation. Additionally, the opened liquor stores owners were selected for interviewing.

- Secondary data was required to find out how is Kaku-uchi ongoing as history, background, statistic data, and so on. It was collected from various primary sources i.e. documentary, internet that provide up-to-date data.

Figure 3. Liquor Store Distribution in Kitakyushu City.



2.2 Field Survey

Figure 3 shows the location of the liquor stores in Kitakyushu City. The liquor stores are spread in five areas as well as surrounding the manufacturing areas including Kokura-Kita Ward (23 stores), Tobata Ward (23 stores), Wakamatsu Ward (18 stores), Yahata-Higashi Ward (16 stores), and Yahata-Nishi Ward (20 stores). These five areas features are shown in Table 1.

Surveying 100 liquor stores in five districts was conducting within 11 days (May 21 - July 16, 2014) as shown in Table 2. Time is from 9:00 to 17:00 (Table 2).









Table 1. Area Feature of Liquor Store Location.

District	Population	Area	Main features
Kokura-Kita Ward	184,545 inhabitants	39.27 km ²	It is the main hub of railway of Kitakyushu and the largest commercial and industry area.
Tobata Ward	64,330 inhabitants	16.66 km ²	It is the smallest ward of the city. There is Nippon steel factory with approximately 8,000 employees.
Wakamatsu Ward	88,594 Inhabitants	67.86 km ²	Important facilities include: Wakamatsu wind farm, Ecotown recycling area, The Kitakyushu Science and Research Park, and Hibiki container terminal.
Yahata-Higashi Ward	77,077 inhabitants	36.36 km ²	It is the second smallest ward. The ward contains the Space World amusement park. It also contains the Kawachi Dam, built to provide cooling water for the Yahata steelworks in the 1920s.
Yahata-Nishi Ward	260,318 Inhabitants	83.04 km ²	Several schools and universities nearby. Yaskawa Electric, a global electrical equipment and robot manufacturing company is headquartered in the ward.

Date of survey	Ward	Number of investigated stores
2014/5/21	Yahata-Nishi Ward	3
2014/6/6	Yahata-Nishi Ward	3
2014/6/9	Yahata-Nishi Ward	8
2014/6/11	Yahata-Higashi Ward, Yahata-Nishi Ward	13
2014/6/16	Wakamatsu Ward	5
2014/6/17	Wakamatsu Ward	11
2014/6/18	Wakamatsu Ward	2
2014/6/25	Tobata Ward	23
2014/6/28	Yahata-Higashi Ward, Yahata-Nishi Ward	9
2014/7/15	Kokura-Kita Ward	13
2014/7/17	Kokura-Kita Ward	10

Table 2. Survey Date and Time.

●Kokurakita-ku

	Types			
	1story	2story	3story	6story
	 4%(1shop)	 78%(18shops)	 4%(1shops)	 4%(1shop)
Size(m ²)	102 m ²	101 m ² (23~267 m ²)	69 m ² (61~75 m ²)	110 m ²
Function of whole liquor shops				
Main structure	wood	wood	RC	RC
Materials	mortar	mortar,eave	mortar,eave	tile
Number of people	18 /day (13~20 /day)			

●Tobata-ku



















	Types		
	1story	2story	3story
	 5%(1shop)	 89%(18shops)	 9%(1shops)
Size(m ²)	62 m ²	127 m ² (58~252 m ²)	69 m ² (61~75 m ²)
Function of whole liquor shops			
Main structure	wood	wood	RC
Materials	mortar,signboard	mortar,eave	signboard,eave
Number of people	20 /day (10~25 /day)		

Table 3. Character of Each Area.









●Wakamatsu-ku

	Types	
	1story	2story
	 6%(1shop)	 94%(17shops)
Size(m ²)	126 m ²	138 m ² (56~273 m ²)
Function of whole liquor shops		
Main structure	wood	wood
Materials	cedar board	mortar
Number of people	8 /day	(4~12 /day)

●Yahatahigashi-ku

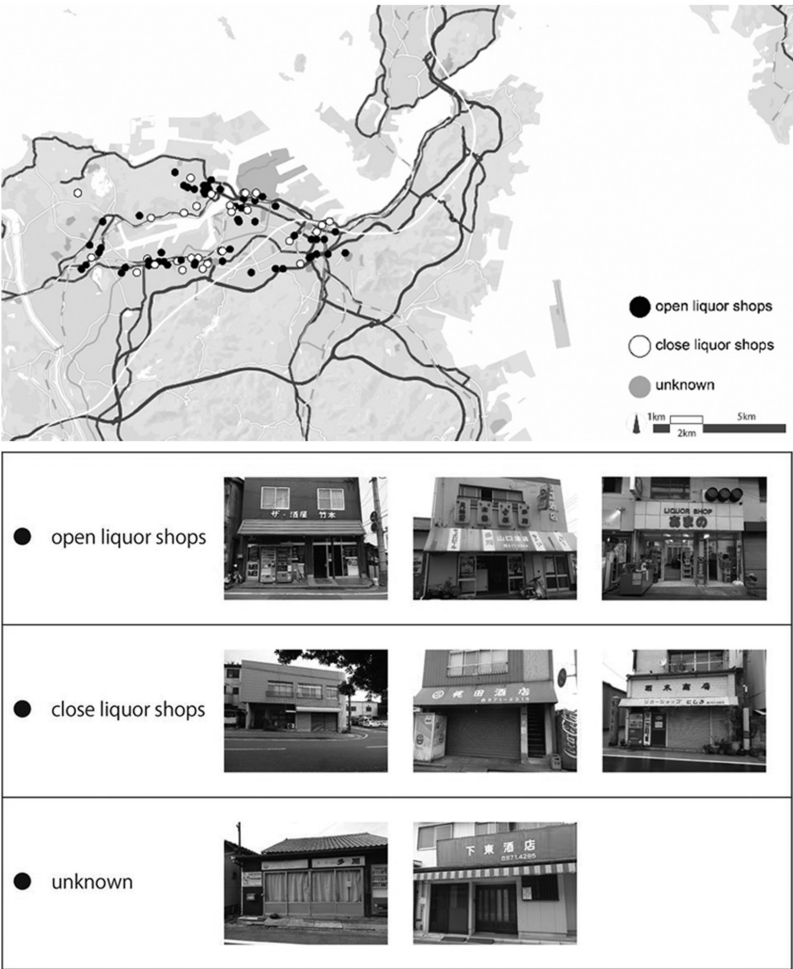
	Types			
	2story	3story	4story	6story
	 79%(12shop)	 7%(1shop)	 7%(1shop)	 7%(1shop)
Size(m ²)	113 m ² (41~300 m ²)	78 m ²	49 m ²	126 m ²
Function of whole liquor shops				
Main structure	wood	wood	RC	RC
Materials	mortar,eave	tile,eave	siding board	mortar,eave
Number of people	11 /day (6~20 /day)			

●Yahatanishi-ku

	Types			
	1story	2story	3story	4story
	 5%(11shops)	 79%(15shops)	 11%(2shops)	 5%(1shop)
Size(m ²)	162 m ²	110 m ² (36~274 m ²)	114 m ² (46~182 m ²)	92 m ²
Function of whole liquor shops				
Main structure	wood	wood	RC	RC
Materials	cedar board,eave	mortar,eave	tile,signboard	mortar
Number of people	24 /day (3~125/day)			

Through the whole, 1, 2, 3, 4 and 6 stories building type are seen. Their style are shown by photos. Among them most of the stores are 2 stories buildings. And the functions of the whole liquor store building is the store space on the first floor, and a residence on the second floor. There was nearly no difference between the floor area size and the main structure among the stores of each area. Concerning the number of customers, we found the fewest in the Wakamatsu Ward. In Kokura-Kita Ward, Tobata Ward and Yahata-Nishi Ward there are about 20 customers a day.

Figure 4. Current Condition of the Liquor Stores.



2.3 Analysis Method

All information in section 2.1 was interpreted by descriptive method analysis: categorized contents of data into four aspects are current existing situation, business operation, services, and shop renovation. Also, GIS (geographic information system) is application software that involved as visualize data interpretation to understand the liquor store situation. GIS data were plunged into CAD showing the geographical location of all liquor stores.

3. Results

3.1 Liquor Stores Situation

Liquor stores which are still doing commercial activities, liquor stores who closed down, and unknown situation are respectively 57%, 33% and 10%. There are many closed down liquor stores in the Yahata-Higashi Ward and Tobata Ward. (Figure 4) 7% of all liquor stores sale only liquors. Some stores do still have Kaku-uchi activities, but due to generation change which results in the change of business style. Liquor stores are likely an agglomeration form and can be found in commercial and industrial areas in the city especially surrounding the Dokai Bay area, an area serving steel production and logistics center for economic movement.

3.2 Business Operation and Successor

Figure 5 and Figure 6 show about the current state of business years and successor. These Figures do explain the history and future tendencies of liquor stores. Figure 5, asking the managers or business owners in terms of future prospect, we found that there are only 9% of the stores which have successors. Meanwhile, 79% of the current managers answered they do not have any successor. Running business is quite difficult due to competition between local and commercial business as people can get liquors in various places such as large discount stores; supermarkets; and convenience stores (field interview, 2014). Moreover, young people who consume liquors have been decreasing by law reinforcement such as

penal regulations in terms of driving after consuming alcoholic drinks. From **Figure 6**, it could be mentioned that the liquor stores in the Kitakyushu City have been established during the period 1910–1970. There are also some liquor stores established before the war (in the 1940’s), which also did do business during the wartime. The average of establishment year was found for 1945. There are a lot of liquor stores which began doing business in the 1930s and the 1950s.

We investigated the operation of business by generation and found that most managers or owners are the second and third generation managers. The average of the managers of the third generation started their business in 1936, for the second generation was found in 1947, whereas the first generation started their business in 1964. (**Figure 7**)

In the 1910’s, most business started around the Dokai Bay (Orio, Wakamatsu & Yahata). In the 1930’s, in addition to the area of the Dokai Bay, liquor businesses also started to be founded in Kokura. And in the northern part of Tobata and Kokura, liquor shops increased in the 1940’s-1950’s (**Figure 8**).

From the above data, the interrelation between the number of population and number of liquor stores in Kitakyushu is shown in **Figure 9** The increase of liquor stores and population from 1920s to 1940s are proportional to each other. And then, except for the 1950s, the two growth rates are rather similar.

3.3 Liquor Stores Services

Figure 10 shows a typical liquor store that normally opens at 10.00 AM and closes at 20.00 PM (10 hours/day) and some stores open even more early in the morning. Considering the business peak hour, Kakuuchi starts from 17:00 PM to 20:00 PM, a time zone were many people come to the stores after finishing working back on the way home. Some of stores were the owner has already retired show to be open all time.

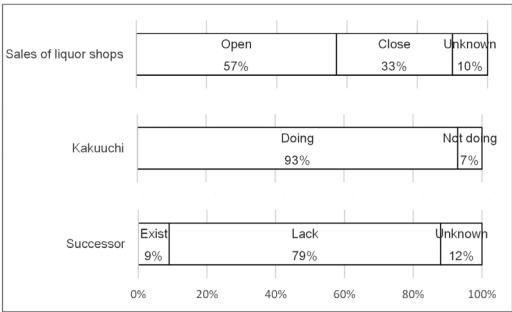


Figure 5. Condition of Business Operation.

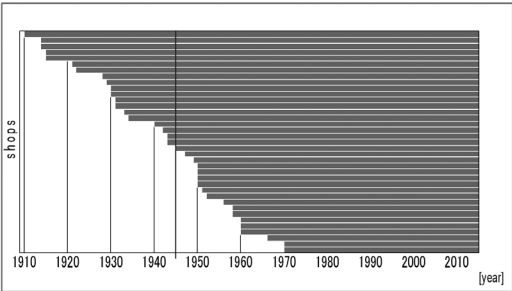


Figure 6. Business Years.

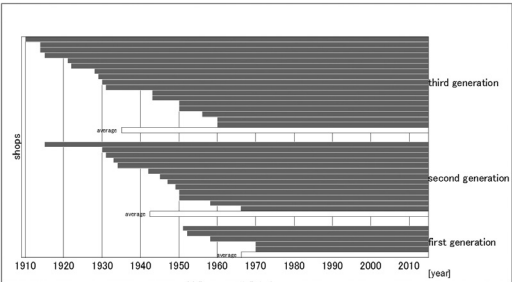


Figure 7. The Business Years and Generation.

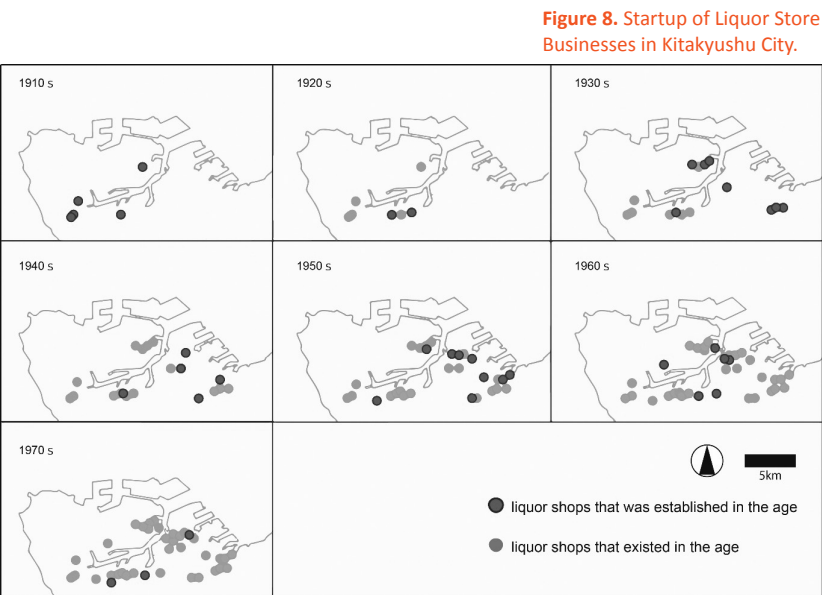


Figure 8. Startup of Liquor Store Businesses in Kitakyushu City.

Figure 9. Change in Number of Population and Liquor Stores in Kitakyushu.

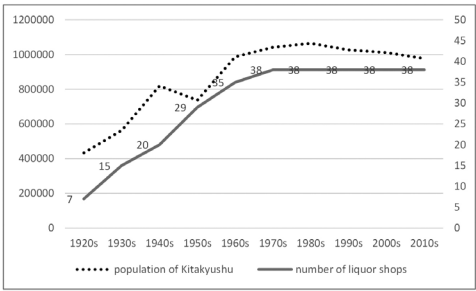


Figure 10. Business Hours and Peak Time.

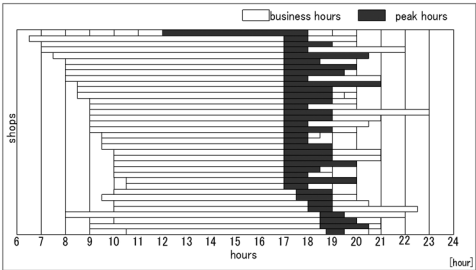


Figure 11. Peak Day of Week.

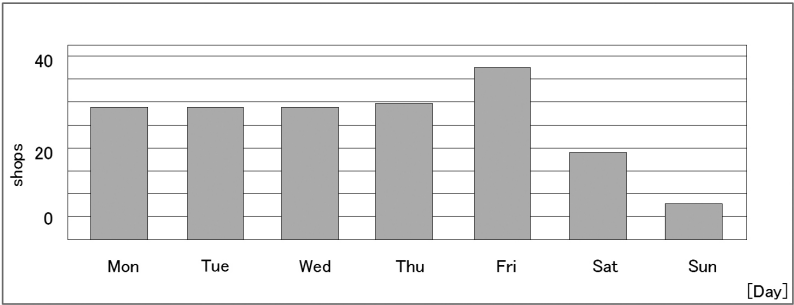


Figure 12. Number of Visitors Per Day and Area.

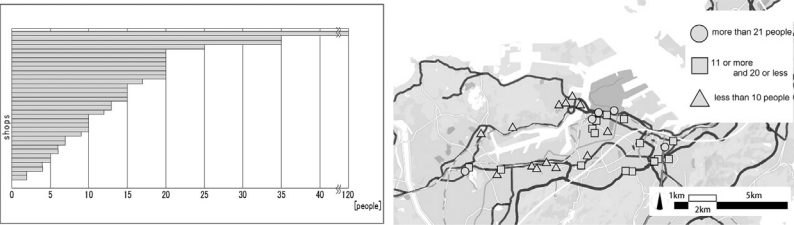
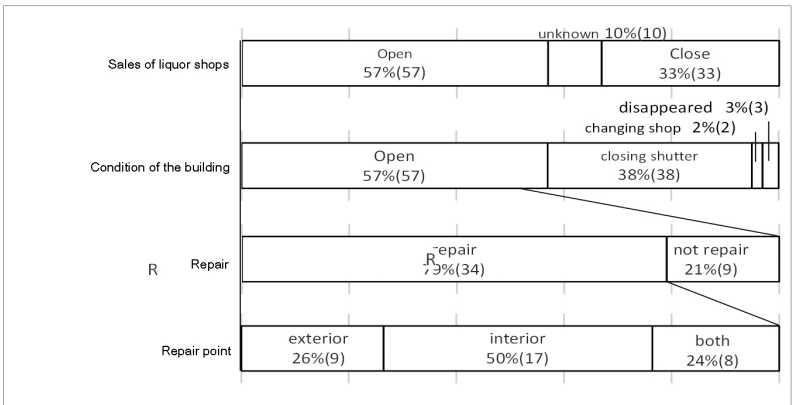


Figure 13. Condition of the Building.



Additionally, the results of interview found about 36 liquor stores have a lot of customers drinking on Friday while on weekend days (Saturday and Sunday) are the lowest because many liquor stores are closed on Saturday or Sunday. In some stores there are less customers on rainy days, regardless which day of the week. According to the number of visitors per day, Figure 12 shows the number of the visitors is usually from 10 to 20 people. Due to the small space of the store that causes a limitation inside the Kaku-uchi (Figure 12). The number of visitors per day is divided into three groups: 1) more than 21 people, 2) 11 to 20 and 3) less than 10 people. This is shown in Figure 12. Comparatively, the stores located in the eastern area of the city have many customers. And all of the stores in the Wakamatsu area have fewer visitors because they show all less than 10 people.

4. Building Conditions

4.1 Condition of the Building

The conditions of the liquor stores building were revealed as shown in Figure 13. Closed down stores are divided into 3 groups (closed shutter, function change of the stores and completely disappeared). The closed shutter group is 38%, function change stores is 2% and completely disappeared stores is 3%. All the stores were the function has changed are located in the Kokura-Kita Ward, and now they are used as bars. Disappeared liquor stores are found on vacant land plots. It is not decided how they will be used in the future. Liquor stores that have been renovated is 79%, liquor stores that were not renovated is 21%. In addition, the contents of the renovation are exterior, interior and both exterior and interior. The cases that did interior decoration renovation is 50%, and the cases that did decoration and both renovated was around 25% each. Furthermore, stores which do still have commercial activities were divided into 3 groups (Liquor stores and residence, Liquor store and Multi-tenant building, only liquor

store, as is seen in Figure 14. In most cases the liquor stores are belong to the liquor shop and residence group.

4.2 Building Age and Renovation

Building age and business years are not the same because in some cases they built a new building or moved. For example, expansion of space due to an increase in customers is taken as one reason. As for the renovation of the exterior, the deterioration of the wall is mostly the major reason. Stores were renovated and changed also the interior decoration around 15 to 30 years ago, representing 80% of the stores. The stores which were renovated within 10 years were seen in only 1 case. Renovation period of liquor stores have concentrated around 25 years ago.

5. Liquor Stores Location Analysis

5.1 Location Situation of Building

Kaku-uchi (liquor stores) are places that were used by workers who worked in factories. There are many liquor stores located in between the industrial and residential area (Figure 15). The reason is they drop in at Kaku-uchi when they are going home. Through the field survey, the reinforcement of laws and regulations for drink driving has close relationship with Kaku-uchi. Therefore, a solution for liquor stores can be running business that how important location nearby public transport contribute their business. People could spend more time by less concerned of driving as a convenient travelling. So, by that reason, accessibility from public transport mode to location of liquor stores was investigated. Also, public transport is important to solve the traffic jam problem and push vibrant economic activity (Iamtrakul, Satichobb & Hokao, 2013, pp. 21-34). So, the public transport is related closely to economic as business location should be promoted as well as liquor stores in the city. In Japan, the railway system is an efficient public transport

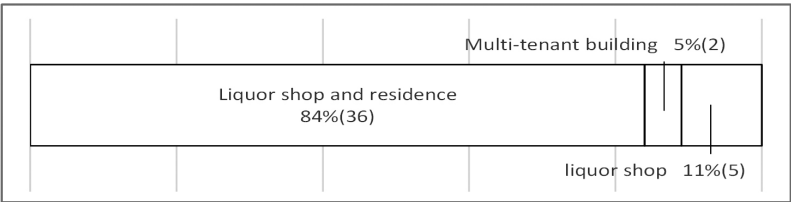


Figure 14. Condition of the Open Building.

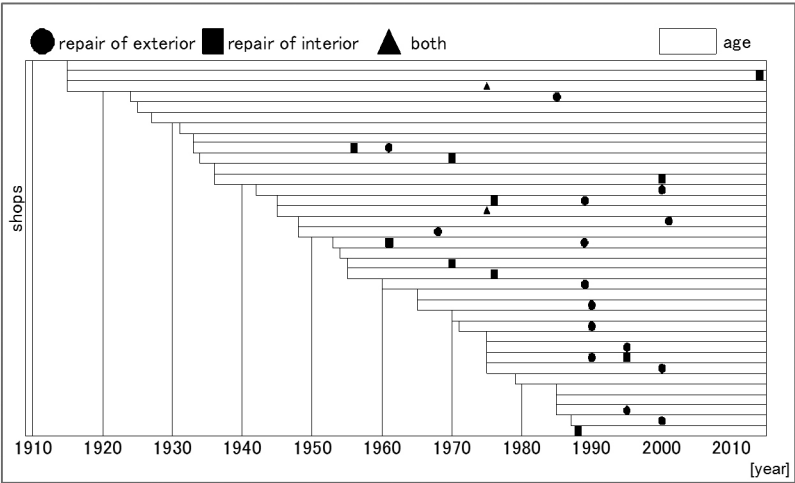
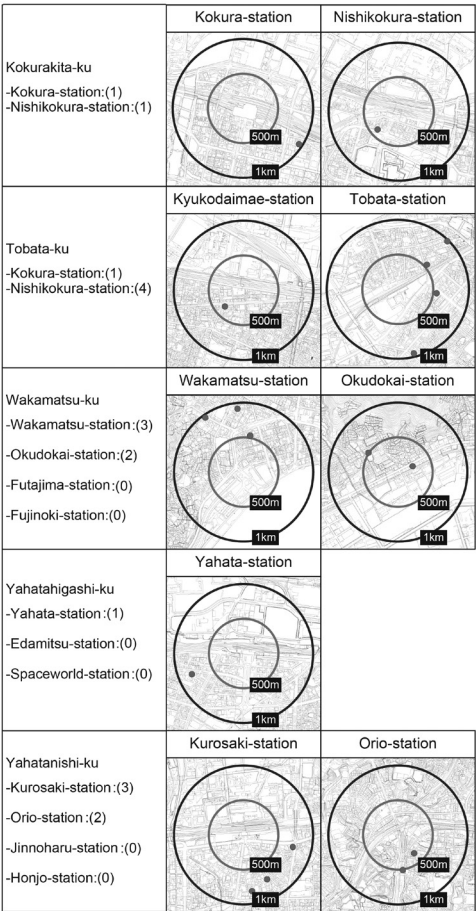


Figure 14. Building Age and Repair.



Figure 15. Master Plan and Current Liquor Stores.

Figure 15. Each Stations of Analysis.



() The number of liquor shops which there is within the radius of 1km from the each station

Figure 16. Distance from the Train Station.

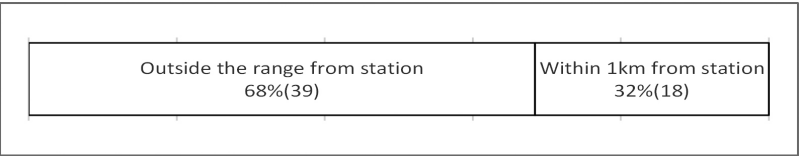
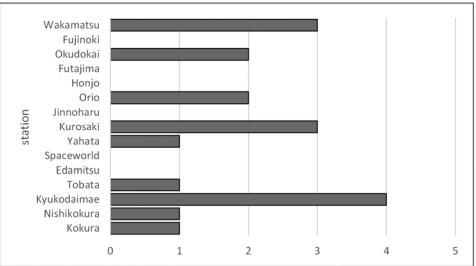


Figure 17. Distribution of Each Stations.



mode, JR Kyushu Kagoshima Main line and Chikuho Main line (Wakamatsu line) were investigated. According to the investigation of Yamagata city (2009), they define less than 1km as ambulant distance from the station. The radius of 1km or 0.6 miles as people could walk comfortable is shown in Figure 15. The data taken out of GIS were edited by CAD. Also, we used 15 railway stations (Figure 18) were we found among 57 liquor stores located near stations. 32% are within the radius of 1km from the station, and 68% are out the radius of 1km. Among those, 32% liquor stores, 4 of them are just 500m away from the station. Figure 17 shows the distribution of each station. In Japan, it is forbidden to drive after having consumed alcoholic beverages. After having drunk liquor, customers must walk or use public transport. To use bus and taxi to access liquor stores that are located far away from the station is necessary. Needless to say, some people walk to the station or store, though it is hard. But many stores are located outside the range of the station. This is one of the reasons why the Kaku-uchi disappears.

6. Discussion and Recommendation

From primary sources of information in 2009 57% (Figure 18) of the stores did still have commercial activities. From before the war, liquor stores continued gradually to increase, they became the largest in the high economic growth period. The growth of number in liquor stores increased until the 1970s, but there was no additional liquor store establishment after that. Therefore, they are only going to decrease. Compared with the modern commercial management, liquor stores are facing the problem because are no successors, in 79% of the liquor stores there are no successors. So, all those stores will close down soon when the current owner stops doing business.

Liquor stores are closed down and closing the shutters that might be encountered in the worst situation. Some liquor stores have been changed, that is very common. However, the cases where the building has disappeared was uncommon, so that means local businesses facing problems which should be addressed for development. Relationship between location of the liquor stores and public transport showed to be an important factor that contributes to those who have businesses. Currently, 68% of the stores are located far from the station, this might be quite difficult based on the convenience of customer traveling. Therefore, preserving traditional liquor stores as Kaku-uchi is not only to promote to be a uniqueness of the city, but multi dimension of socio-economic and infrastructure support need to be addressed.

Social factors of the decrease of Kaku-uchi is the change of the lifestyle. Concretely, a small number of people work in three shifts. Workers in three shifts account for the majority of Kaku-uchi customers (Kakuuchi no susume, 2012). In addition, popularity of Kaku-uchi style declines because bars increased. Social background is changing, a new style of Kaku-uchi could be remained. To extent business operation of liquor stores, it should be integrated such as reinforcement of laws and regulations, using a place of the public transport or convenience stores in order to promote and develop “Kaku-uchi” in the city.

7. Conclusions

Due to the change of times, social factors and commercial facilities, the number of Kaku-uchi is decreasing. Liquor stores in Kitakyushu City have been seriously issued because they might disappear in the future. So, it is necessary to think about a new form of Kaku-uchi and a way of how to increase the number

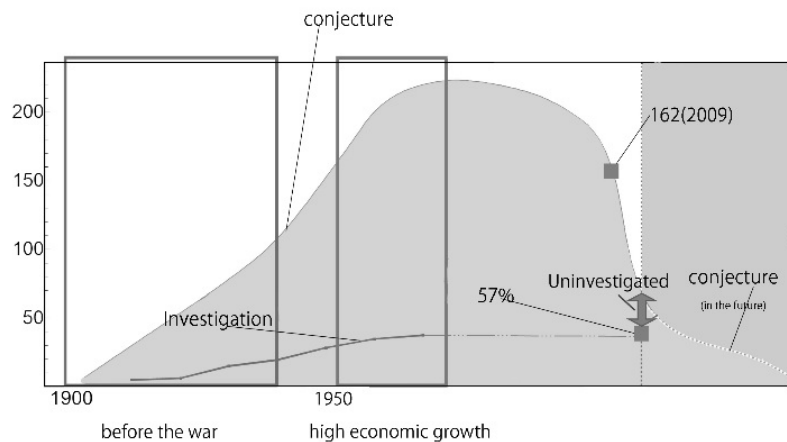


Figure 18. Transition of Liquor Shop.

of customers. New forms of Kaku-uchi by consideration of the reinforcement of laws and regulations of the drink-driving, space in the regular place of the public transport such as stations, a corner of the store that can buy liquors should be concerned to relevant stakeholders. Finally, this study is a preliminary study that reveals the basic information in order to rise a development of traditional liquor stores as a local business in the city.

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