Design Methodologies to the Wayfinding System of Public Transport Networks in West Japan – Sign Systems in the Transfer between Trains and City Buses –

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Abstract
Japan has a huge public transport network with highly developed transport systems. The
governments in Japan give a significant weight with respect in the promoting the accessibility
of public transport networks, particularly some *White Papers* reported by MLIT (Ministry of
Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism) outlined countermeasures to create a convenient
and accessible environment for the bus utility at terminal stations, as well as the revitalization
of the public transport networks to forge the Tourism Nation.
The study integrated insights from a broad review of the literature and particularly pays
attention to the sign system in the transfer between trains and city buses at terminal stations in
West Japan. Firstly, the research purpose is to identify that how the current sign system affects
people’s wayfinding behavior in the transfer process in order to obtain problem-solving
wayfinding strategies for improving the sign system. Secondly, the study attempts to develop a
theory and establish a benchmark of design methodologies to the sign system between trains
and city buses in the public transport networks. Thirdly, the research outcome will be discussed
to improve urban intangible values.
In this study, it is structured in three sections and six chapters. The study selected Hakata
Station in Fukuoka City and Kyoto Station in Kyoto City to conduct surveys and wayfinding
protocols due to the stations’ importance and the cities’ attractiveness in West Japan to
understand the characteristic of sign distribution and characteristic of sign usage by current sign
systems. Based on the summaries and comparisons of the commonalities and differences
regarding the sign systems at two sites, a problem-solving proposal to the wayfinding system in
the transfer between trains and city buses was suggested. The proposal was composed of four
aspects: plans of the urban positioning, surveys and analysis at terminal stations on site,
implementations of common sign systems, and expansion of assistant service networks. In
addition, checkpoints of the proposal were also pointed out as design improvement guidelines
on wayfinding designs. The proposal was an attempt to have a viewpoint to improve urban
intangible values. The urban intangible values were to evaluate a wayfinding system of public
transport networks and included three elements: individual value, information value, and spatial
value. The three elements should be taken into account for creating a successful sign system of
public transport networks.