

Discussion Meeting with the Consumer Affairs Agency (CAA)

Policy Recommendations for Resolving Purchasing Inequality and Promoting Ethical Consumption

(Based on the Current State of Food Access in
Minami Town, Tokushima Prefecture)

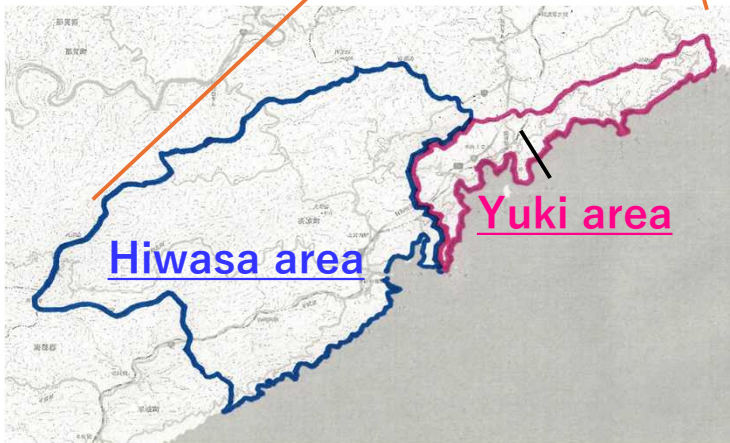
For National Government, Local Authorities, and Businesses

Tokushima University

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Natural Assets of Minami Town, Tokushima

History and Geography



Hiwasa Town and Yuki Town Merged in 2006

Specialties and Tourism Resources



Ria Coastline Topography
(Mountain and Sea)



Yakuoji Temple, (Major site for
warding off misfortune)



Hiwasa Sea Turtle Museum



Roadside Stations as
Industrial Distribution Hubs

Key Primary Industries



Coastal Fisheries



Koriki Forestry for Charcoal
Production

Ethical Consumption and the Current State of Purchasing Inequality

Ethical Consumption

- Ethical Consumption refers to consumer behavior that considers factors such as the environment, human rights, local economies, and welfare, etc.
- This concept addresses the issue of social inequality characterized by people who cannot afford to purchase goods or lack access to healthy food options
- Ethical consumption involves consideration for the entire food lifecycle (production, distribution, and consumption) and is therefore a consumer behavior that does not ignore people who have difficulty accessing food

Social Background and Purchasing Inequality

- Declining birthrate and aging population
- Store closures and reduced transportation means in rural and mountainous areas
- About 8.24 million people nationwide were categorized as “shopping-disadvantaged” as of 2020 (METI)
- The rise of e-commerce widens the information gap for those who remain unfamiliar with digital technology

Current State of Minami Town

- Population decline (Loss of 2,626 residents over 14 years) and rising aging rate (36.3% → 49.4%)
- Population predicted to halve by 2045
- Settlements scattered across mountainous areas and coastlines, lack of public transportation
- Many “transport-void areas” exist
- Weakening and decline of industrial foundations, including small retailers and primary sectors like fisheries

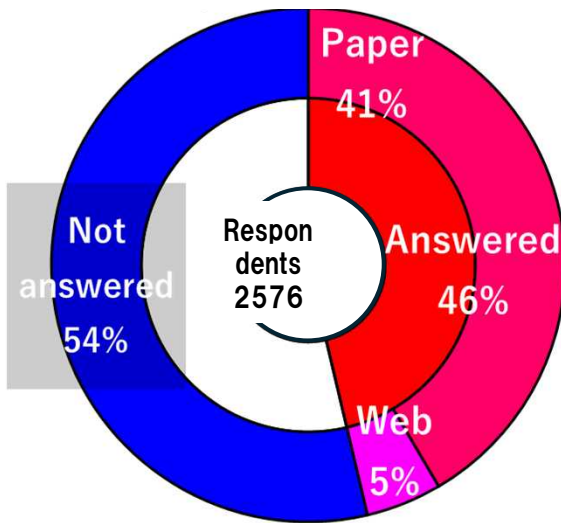
General Information	
Area	140.74km ²
Population	5,653
Households	3,035
Male	2,663
Female	2,990

As of March 31, 2025

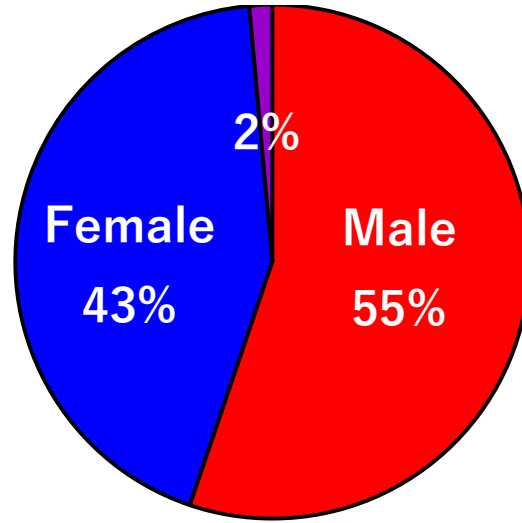
Minami Town Resident Survey Results

Mailed to all households in Minami Town from the end of 12/2024 through the end of January 2025
(Responses accepted until 03/15/2025)

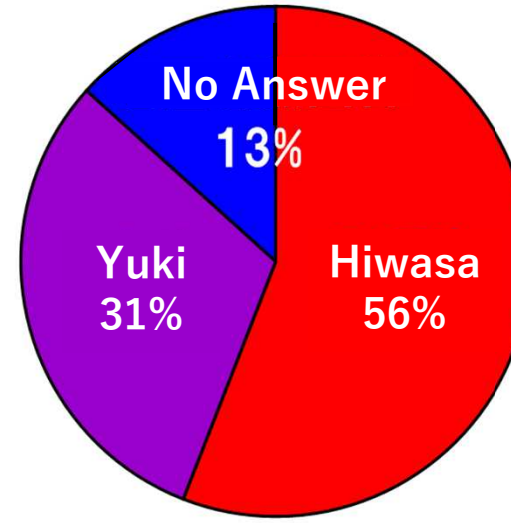
Resident Survey Response Rate



Valid response rate: 46%
90% of responses were via paper
⇒ Suggests lack of digital communication/adoption

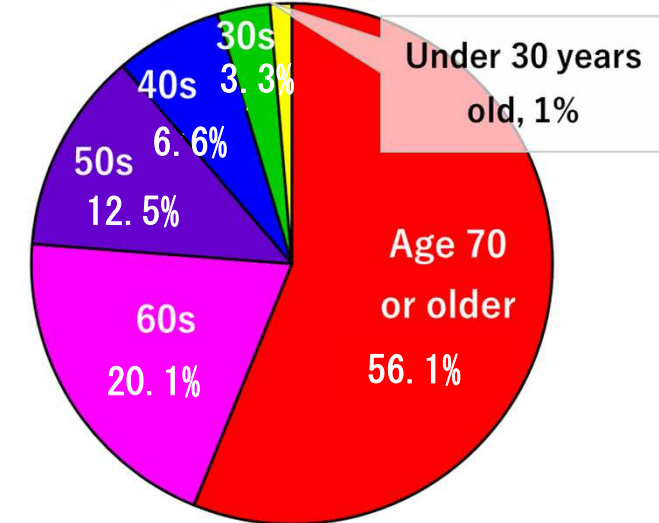


By Area



Hiwasa and coastal areas saw higher response rates, which tend to have poor transportation access

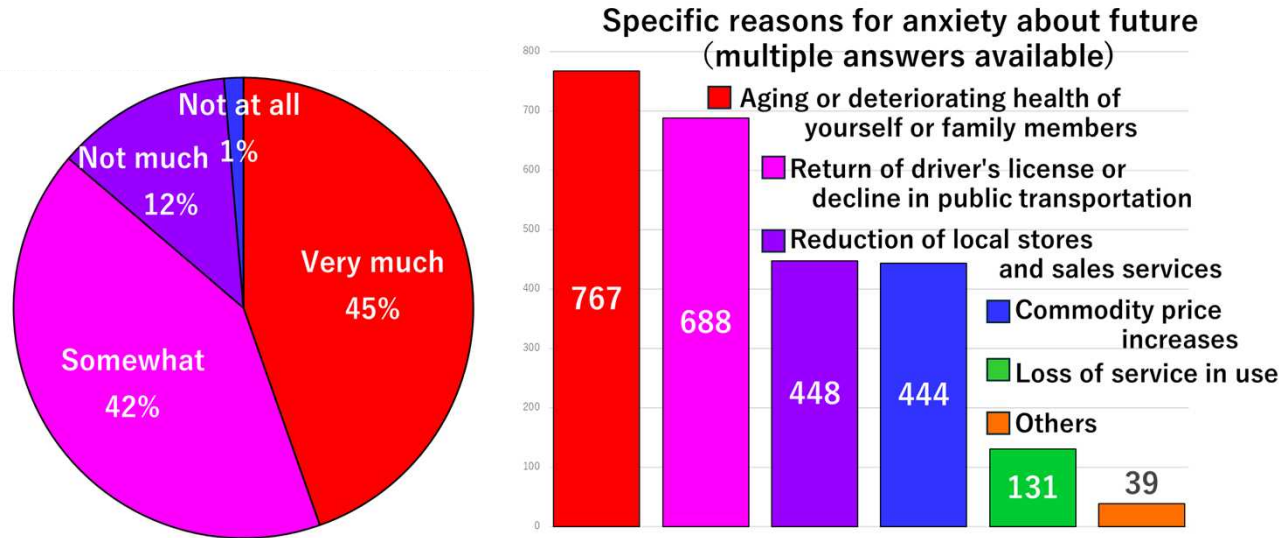
By Age



More than 75% of the respondents were elderly, highlighting the aging population, where household heads are often seniors.

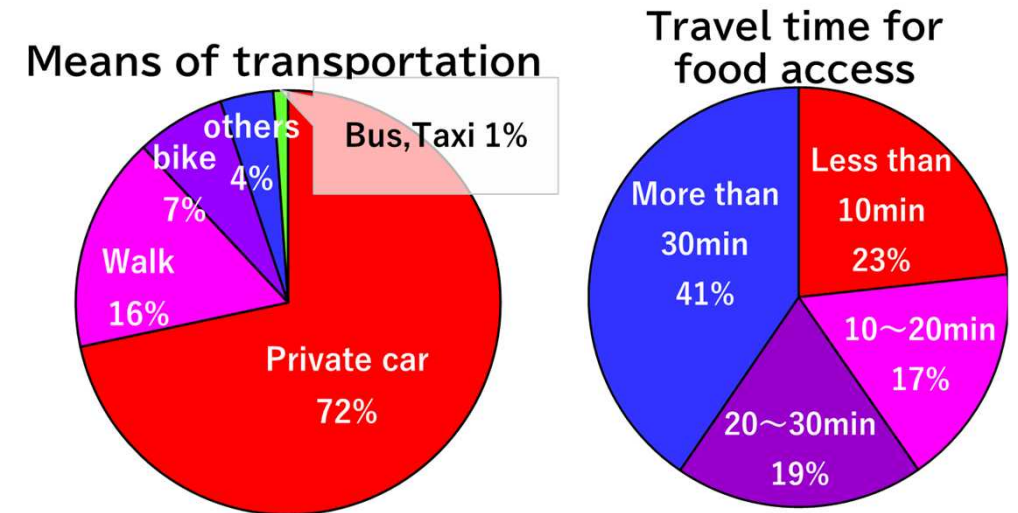
Food Purchasing Anxiety and the Challenges for Ethical Consumption

Reasons for Shopping Disadvantage Anxiety



- Nearly 90% are worried about the future, and is **expected to increase further**
- Anxiety from perceptions of their own declining capabilities
- High demand for home delivery services
- Services that minimize resident travel are highly valued

Food Purchasing Access Means and Time



- **Over 70% travel by private car**
- 60% of households need over 20-minutes of travel time
➡ For many residents, a single shopping trip requires a lot of time and effort

Policy Recommendations for Resolving Purchasing Inequality and Revitalizing Primary Industries

Challenges	Solutions
Increase of shopping disadvantaged residents due to aging and driver's license surrender	Expand mobile sales services (economic circulation WITHIN the town)
Decline of primary industries, which are directly linked to the local economy; Lack of successors, decline in farm workers, and increase in abandoned farmland	Reform primary product distribution = Expand sales promotion in customer-oriented areas (roadside stations); Capital inflow from outside the town = Sales channels expansion (economic circulation IN and OUT of town)
Disparity between areas lacking mobile sales services	Expand services into underserved areas by increasing the number of mobile sales units
High initial investment needed to launch mobile sales; Increasing costs due to rising vehicle maintenance and fuel costs	Ensure sustainable business operations by establishing a subsidy system
Lack of widespread digital information (digital divide)	Analog awareness activities using newsletters and circulars for residents who prefer face-to-face and non-digital communication

Our Recommendations

- ✓ **Subsidy system** to partially cover the purchase and lease costs of mobile sales vehicles, fuel costs, etc.
- ✓ Provision of **detailed information** about mobile sales services through effective use of local government newsletters and other sources

The Ideal Vision for Minami Town (Based on Our Recommendation)



Establishment
of a
coexistence
model



Road Station HIWASA
道の駅「日和佐」

Maximize the utilization of
the large consumption
market generated by
900,000 annual visitors

**Foster economic circulation
among the 4 stakeholders**



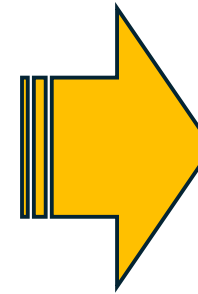
Residents as both
consumers and producers

Measures to
support
shopping-
disadvantaged
residents

**Economic
circulation
within the town**

Measures to
support
small-scale
retailers

**Economic
circulation
outside the town**



Enhancement of resident well-being

- ✓ **Sustainable town development** for Minami Town
- ✓ Establish as a **model for others**

Ethical consumption, as we see it, involves consumption practices that allow for equal and sustainable food access, even in areas with food inaccessibility, ensuring strong consideration for the local economy.

Thank you for your attention