

## Outline of the 2007 National Survey of Prices

### 1. Purpose and History of the Survey

The purpose of the National Survey of Prices is to obtain basic data concerning prices. For this purpose, the survey studied the actual conditions of price differentials among outlets, brands, regions, etc. by widely surveying the prices of goods and services as important objects of consumer spending, as well as the factors that influence price decisions including the types of outlets and their management styles in dealing with such goods and services.

The survey was first conducted in 1967 as a designated statistics survey (survey for the designated statistics No. 108) under the Statistics Act (Act No.18 in 1947),<sup>(Note)</sup> and subsequently conducted in 1971, 1974, 1977, 1982, 1987, 1992, 1997 and 2002. The 2007 survey marks the tenth survey.

Note: In order to organize the public statistics systematically and efficiently, Statistics Law was totally revised and new Statistics Act (Act No.53 in 2007) was enforced in April 2009.

### 2. Characteristics of the 2007 Survey

The 2007 survey was intended to comprehend the current status of diversified sales channels and the effects on prices by adding such survey items as discount and privilege services that have become widespread in recent years, along with the management of this business, the presence of online/mail-order sales by outlets, and other items. Moreover, given the fact that online/mail-order sales including the Internet sales have been constantly expanding, the survey also extended its range to other types of outlets and the current status of transactions in this area, as well as price differentials compared with outlet sales.

### 3. Date of the Survey

The survey was conducted on November 21 (Wednesday), 2007 (hereinafter the "survey date").

### 4. Municipalities Surveyed

The survey covered all cities with a population of 100,000 or more including the special wards (ku) of Tokyo, according to the Population Census results as of October 1, 2005.

The survey also covered 410 selected municipalities with a population of less than 100,000.

**Table 1 Number of Municipalities Surveyed**

Classification of Municipalities	Number of municipalities surveyed	(Reference) Total of municipalities (As of November 21, 2007)
Cities with a population of 100,000 or more	263	263
Cities with a population of less than 100,000	263	520
Towns and villages	147	1,018
Total	673	1,801

## 5. Coverage of the Survey

The survey covered **retail** outlets, eating, drinking and service industry-related establishments, etc. in the municipalities surveyed.

### (1) **Retail** outlets

The **retail** outlets located in the municipalities surveyed were grouped into two types according to total sales floor space, industrial classification and type of outlet, and about 137,000 outlets were selected from those groups to be surveyed.

#### A. Large-scale outlet (with sales floor space of 1,000 m<sup>2</sup> or more)

Every outlet in the municipalities concerned was surveyed in principle.

#### B. Small-scale outlet (with sales floor space of less than 1,000 m<sup>2</sup>)

The survey targeted 2,779 survey areas in the municipalities concerned, and about 125,000 outlets (45 outlets per area) were selected at random.

**Table 2 Number of Outlets Surveyed**

Size of outlets	Number of outlets surveyed
Large-scale outlet	About 12,000
Small-scale outlet	About 125,000
Total	About 137,000

### (2) Eating, drinking and service establishments

About 65,000 eating, drinking and service industry-related establishments located in the municipalities concerned were selected.

### (3) Companies providing wide-area services, online/mail-order companies, hotels and golf courses

Companies providing wide-area services, about 2,200 companies engaged in online/mail-order sales, about 400 hotels and ryokan (Japanese-style hotels), and about 400 golf courses were selected nationwide.

## 6. Survey Items

### (1) Types of questionnaires

Six types of questionnaires were prepared for "Outlets", "Prices", "Weekly Prices", "Service Charges and Fees", "Online/Mail-order Sales" and "Online/Mail-order Sales Prices."

#### A. **Retail** outlets

- (a) Questionnaire for outlets (1 type) concerning survey items related to the basic attributes of outlets
- (b) Questionnaire for prices (23 types) concerning survey items related to the prices for goods
- (c) Questionnaire for weekly prices (2 types) concerning survey items related to the prices for specific goods

#### B. Eating, drinking and service establishments

Questionnaire for service charges and fees (29 types) concerning survey items related to the basic attributes, service charges and fees of these establishments

C. Companies providing wide-area services, online/mail-order companies, hotels and golf courses

(a) Questionnaire for service charges and fees (5 types) concerning survey items related to the basic attributes, service charges and fees of companies

(b) Questionnaire for online/mail-order sales (1 type) concerning survey items related to the basic attributes of companies

(c) Questionnaire for online/mail-order sales prices (3 types) concerning survey items related to the prices of specific goods

(2) Survey items by questionnaire

A. Questionnaire for outlets included the following items:

(a) Name of outlet

(b) Type of outlet

(c) Number of persons engaged

(d) Items related to management

(e) Discount and privilege services

(f) Presence of online/mail-order sales

(g) Main supplier of goods

B. Questionnaire for prices included the following items:

(a) Outlet sales prices and online/mail-order sales prices

(b) Items related to specification

C. Questionnaire for weekly prices included the following items:

The lowest prices in the past month and prices during last week

D. Questionnaire for service charges and fees included the following items:

(a) Name of establishment

(b) Phone number

(c) Service charges and fees

E. Questionnaire for online/mail-order sales included the following items:

(a) Name and phone number of companies

(b) Number of persons engaged

(c) Contents of online/mail-order sales

(d) Discount and privilege services

F. Questionnaire for online/mail-order sales prices included the following items:

(a) Online/mail-order sales prices

(3) Items of goods and services surveyed

Among the goods and services considered important to consumers, 180 items were selected in order to survey their prices on the survey date.

As for 20 of the 180 items, "lowest prices in the past month" and "daily prices from Thursday,

November 15, to Wednesday, November 21" were also surveyed.

Survey items were divided into five groups according to the coverage.

The brand, size and quantity (referred to as "specification" or "specifications" as applicable) were fixed for each item and the same items were designated throughout Japan. Two or more specifications were designated for some items.

**Table 3 Number of Items and Specifications Surveyed by Coverage**

Coverage	Number of items surveyed	Number of specifications surveyed
<b>Retail</b> outlets	141	279
Eating, drinking and service establishments	34	50
Companies providing wide-area services	3	6
Online/mail-order companies	24 <sup>(Note)</sup>	62 <sup>(Note)</sup>
Hotels and golf courses	2	2
Total	180	337

Note: 24 items and 62 specifications surveyed in online/mail-order companies were not included in the total numbers, since they were also surveyed in **retail** outlets.

(4) Items to be obtained from other survey by data linkage

The data of **retail** outlets linked to the data of 2007 Census of Commerce by the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry, and for eating, drinking and service establishments, hotels and golf courses was linked to the data of 2006 Establishment and Enterprise Census by the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications. Linked items are as follows:

A. **Retail** outlets

- (a) Location
- (b) Sales floor space
- (c) Annual sales of goods per square meter of sales floor space
- (d) Availability and capacity of parking space
- (e) Business hours and closing times
- (f) Opening year of outlets

B. Eating, drinking and service establishments, hotels and golf courses

- (a) Number of persons engaged
- (b) Type of legal organization
- (c) Opening year of establishments
- (d) Branch-offices

**7. Flow of the Survey Process**

(1) **Retail** outlets

Minister of Internal Affairs and Communications — Prefectural governors — Heads of

municipalities — Enumerators (Supervisors) — Enumerators — Outlets

(In case of a collective survey of chain stores through their head offices: Minister of Internal Affairs and Communications — Headquarters of companies for a collective survey)

(2) Eating, drinking and service establishments

Minister of Internal Affairs and Communications — Prefectural governors — Heads of municipalities — Establishments

(3) Companies providing wide-area services, online/mail-order companies, hotels and golf courses

Minister of Internal Affairs and Communications — Companies and establishments

## 8. Survey Method

(1) **Retail** outlets

The enumerators distributed the "Questionnaires for outlets" together with the "Questionnaires for prices" and the "Questionnaires for weekly prices" that were prepared to suit the types of outlets to be surveyed as per the previously designated outlets, asked a representative of each outlet to fill out the questionnaires, and then collected them. The survey items had been previously designated depending on the outlet, and applicable questionnaires were distributed to each outlet.

Some chain stores that conduct business in a wide area were surveyed collectively, however, through their head offices by the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, which sent applicable questionnaires by mail (including electronic questionnaires stored on electronic media) to the headquarters of companies subject to the collective survey, and then collected the filled-out forms. In addition, such companies were able to respond using the Online Survey System of the Inter-Ministry Information System for Official Statistics through the Internet.

(2) Eating, drinking and service establishments

The staff members of municipal governments conducted surveys based on the "Questionnaire for service charges and fees" by interviewing the representatives of these establishments.

(3) Companies providing wide-area services, online/mail-order companies, hotels and golf courses

For online/mail-order companies, the "Questionnaire for online/mail-order sales" and the "Questionnaire for online/mail-order sales prices" were mailed and later collected. In addition to sending by mail, the responses of companies using the Online Survey System of the Inter-Ministry Information System for Official Statistics through the Internet were also accepted.

Regarding companies and establishments whose service charges and fees were to be surveyed, staff members of the Statistics Bureau of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications conducted the survey by interviewing the representatives of those companies based on the "Questionnaire for service charges and fees".

## 9. Tabulation and Publication of the Results

The tabulation was conducted by National Statistics Center under the classifications of Table 4. The Statistics Bureau of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications released tabulated results upon

completing each type of tabulation, and provided through the Internet.

**Table 4 Classification for tabulation**

Classification for tabulation		Contents of tabulation	Schedule of release
Regional Difference Index of Prices		Results indicating regional differences in price levels in terms of index values	December 2008
Outlet Prices		Results related to average prices, price distribution and sale prices per regions, outlet attributes and specifications with regard to the prices of retail outlets and results related to service charges and fees of eating, drinking and service establishments	March 2009
Online/Mail-order Prices	First Tabulation	Results related to online/mail-order prices of online/mail-order companies and <b>retail</b> outlets	June 2008
	Second Tabulation	Detailed results related to online/mail-order prices <b>of retail outlets</b>	March 2009

**Table 5 Questionnaire used for each classification for tabulation**

	Questionnaire for outlets and Questionnaire for prices	Questionnaire for weekly prices	Questionnaire for service charges and fees	Questionnaire for online/mail-order sales and Questionnaire for online/mail-order sales prices
Regional Difference Index of Prices	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>	
Outlet Prices	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
Online/Mail-order Prices	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>