The Life-style Business of JR East has deployed retail shops such as “NOMONO (see Note 1)” and “farm fresh market” in the Rediscover the Region Project (Fig 1). In that project, we are working to communicate information on local areas through specialty sales in the greater Tokyo area in order to trigger tourism to those areas. In this study, we surveyed customers twice (in 2014 and 2016) to investigate and see whether specialty sales could call attention and interest to the areas that leads to creation of tourist flow.

(Note 1) Shops of foods and other specialties from areas in East Japan that introduce the attraction of the communities. Six restaurants and shops in total are open in the greater Tokyo area as of October 2, 2017.
3.1 Analysis of Customer Recognition of Information Disseminated from NOMONOs

We analyzed the survey results obtained at NOMONO permanent shops.

3.1.1 Customer Recognition, Impression, and Appreciation of Local Specialties

More than 80% of the survey respondents continuously recognized that a NOMONO is a local specialty store. The rate of customers who know that NOMONO shops mainly sell foods from the areas in East Japan increased by 8.8% from 2014 to 2016 (Fig. 2).

Regarding the impression of NOMONO shops when using them, more than 90% responded that they “could enjoy local food culture” and that NOMONO “has products that cannot be found at other shops”, showing continuous appreciation of product lineup of NOMONO shops. Affirmative replies of “interested in/want to visit the areas products are from” decreased in 2016 when compared the rate in 2014, yet 72.8% of the respondents replied that they were “interested in the areas” and 54.7% replied that they “want to visit the areas”, showing continuous appreciation by more than a half of the respondents. We thus can say that local specialties have great effect on calling attention to and interest in the areas and tourism (Fig. 3).

3.1.2 Motivation to Action and Motivating Information from Products

Next, in order to find what action was motivated by visiting these specialty shops, we asked NOMONO visitors (not including first-time visitors on the survey date) about the types of the action they actually took after using NOMONO shops. Among the options presented (Fig. 4), “word-of-mouth communication (spoke about products with family and/or friends)” accounted for 52.3%, the largest rate. Persons who replied that they “actually visited the areas of the products sold”, which is the most hoped-for reply in light of our objective, accounted for 7.6% in 2014 and increased to 10.0% in 2016. That confirms a certain level of continuous effect from local specialty sales on information dissemination. To the question in the 2016 survey on whether those persons visited the areas using a mode of transport operated by JR companies, 50 of those 631 persons (7.9%) replied that they used a mode of transport operated by JR companies, clearly confirming an effect on creation of railway demand (Fig. 4).

To the question on information that the respondents wanted to know along with products to make them choose the areas the products are from as their travel destination, the option “what can be experienced/seen” accounted for 10.7% in the 2016 survey. To know about the areas the products are from and “could easily experience the good taste and selling points of the products” accounted for 5.7% and 2.2% respectively in the same year. The survey results also confirm an effect on creation of railway demand (Fig. 4).

3.1.3 Factors Leading to Tourism Action

Here, we looked at the relation between tourism action where shop customers actually visited the areas of the products and the questionnaire replies on impression and appreciation of the shops. It is easy to understand that persons who...
replied “want to visit the areas products are from” to the question on shop impression more often took tourism action. In connection with the replies to the question on other shop impressions, we found that shop customers who gave affirmative replies “can shop while communicating with producers and local people of the areas” showed a higher rate of tourism action than shop customers who did not appreciate that. The difference suggests us that direct information provision by local people may have a larger effect on creation of actual tourist flows (Fig. 6).

3.2 Analysis of Recognition of Information Dissemination (by Farm Fresh Market and NOMONO Marché Shops)

We analyzed the survey results obtained at Ueno farm fresh market and Akihabara NOMONO Marché opened for a limited period.

3.2.1 Recognition and Impression/Appreciation as a Local Specialty Store

As farm fresh market and Marché shops were opened for a limited period, unlike with permanent NOMONO shops, the motivation to visit being “happened to pass by the shop” accounted for an overwhelming majority of the replies about the motivation (Fig. 7). Concerning the impression of the shops, high appreciation shown by the reply rate of “could enjoy local food culture” and “has products that cannot be found at other shops” continued.

A remarkable difference from the replies from NOMONO permanent shop customers was seen in “can shop while communicating with producers and local people of the areas”. Affirmative replies on that from the respondents at Ueno farm fresh market accounted for 76.9% and those at Akihabara NOMONO Marché for 65.5% (Fig. 8), while such replies “can shop while communicating with producers and local people of the areas” showed a higher rate of tourism action than shop customers who did not appreciate that. The difference suggests us that direct information provision by local people may have a larger effect on creation of actual tourist flows (Fig. 6).
3.2.2 Motivation to Action after Visiting Shops and Motivating Information from Products
The rate of the persons who replied that they “actually visited the areas of the products sold” after visiting the shops sharply increased at Akihabara NOMONO Marché from 3.8% in 2014 to 14.3% in 2016, while that rate at Ueno farm fresh market remained almost the same at 13.2% in 2014 and 13.3% in 2016 (Fig. 9).

These rates of tourism action seen at Akihabara NOMONO Marché and Ueno farm fresh market were higher by 3 to 4 percent points when compared to that at NOMONO permanent shops. The remarkable difference seen in “communicating with producers and local people of the areas” is likely linked to those high rates.

4. Consideration
We looked into creation of tourist flows motivated by using NOMONO and farm fresh market shops in the two surveys. The rate of the customers who “actually visited the area products are from” increased at NOMONO permanent shops from 7.6% in 2014 to 10.0% in 2016 and at farm fresh market and NOMONO Marché from 10.6% in 2014 to 13.6% in 2016, proving a continuous effect that local specialty sales in the greater Tokyo area have on creation of tourist flows to a certain extent. We also could confirm that 7.9% of the customers of NOMONO permanent shops and 9.3% of those of farm fresh market and NOMONO Marché visited the areas of the products sold using a mode of transport operated by JR transport, although this is only for 2016 (Fig. 10).

When comparing the survey results at NOMONO permanent shops and farm fresh market / NOMONO Marché, we found a remarkable difference about the communication with the producers and other local people. Appreciation by customers of such communication was lower at NOMONO permanent shops; however, direct communication between producers and local people at the shops could have an effect on enhancing creation of tourist flows (Fig. 11).

5. Conclusion
Looking at recognition level of local information dissemination and customer action after using shops in the surveys at NOMONO and farm fresh market shops, we could confirm continuous creation of tourist flows at a certain level. On the other hand, we could not clearly prove the relation between customer communication with producers and local people and tourism action and the relation between the products customers actually bought and tourism action. Those remained as our research objectives.

After those surveys, NOMONO restaurants in the Shinagawa and Ueno stations have changed their business style and a new NOMONO shop has opened in Tokyo station as a part of their business promotion. New farm fresh market shops have also started to open in shopping complexes adjacent to stations instead of just in the stations. Those have been increasing opportunities of local information dissemination in the greater Tokyo area, giving more opportunities to create tourist flows. With the aim of expanding the effect of NOMONO and farm fresh market shops and restaurants on creation of tourist flows, we will work on sharing the findings of this survey companywide to reflect those in our business operation.