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The Identity and Networks of Uchinanchu in the 7th Worldwide Uchinanchu Festival —Based on the Survey on Festival Participants—

Junzo Kato

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JICA Ogata Sadako Research Institute for Peace and Development, Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA)

10-5 Ichigaya Honmura-cho, Shinjuku-ku, Tokyo, 162-8433, JAPAN

TEL: +81-3-3269-3374

FAX: +81-3-3269-2054

The Identity and Networks of Uchinanchu in the 7th Worldwide Uchinanchu Festival

— Based on the Survey on Festival Participants —

Junzo Kato*

Abstract

The Worldwide Uchinanchu Festival, Okinawa Prefecture's largest international convention, brings together descendants of Okinawan emigrants from across the globe to reconnect with their cultural roots and interact with both local Okinawans and fellow members of the diaspora. The main purpose of this study is to describe the characteristics of festival participants attending the 7th Worldwide Uchinanchu Festival, held during the COVID-19 pandemic. A questionnaire survey was administered to festival participants to examine the key concepts underpinning the festival: Okinawan descent identity and the development and expansion of the *Uchina*-network through the festival. A total of 665 valid responses were received, comprising 257 overseas, 65 out-of-prefecture, and 343 in-prefecture participants. A characteristic of the festival participants was that many were from the US, with many also third-generation descendants. While the primary purpose of participation was to interact with *Uchinanchu* from around the world and other Okinawans, little networking was accomplished in terms of expanding new *Uchina*-networks during the actual festival. Regarding identity, overseas, out-of-prefecture, and in-prefecture participants had high levels of Okinawan identity. Among overseas participants, Okinawan identity was high across generations, but differences in the structure of identity by generation were also observed. For overseas participants, Okinawan identity remained high across generations, but there were also differences in the structure of identity by generation. In particular, hybrid identities were common among the third and later generations, who comprise the core of the current immigrant generation. As for regional differences, identification with the country or region of immigration was high in Hawai'i, while in South America, participants demonstrated strong attachments to both their Okinawan and *Nikkei* identities.

Keywords: *Uchinanchu*, Okinawa, Identity, Network, Ethnicity, Migration

* College of Social Sciences, Ritsumeikan University (jkato@fc.ritsumei.ac.jp).

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1. Introduction

COVID-19 broke out in 2019, quickly spreading around the globe. It resulted in a pandemic that infected more than 670 million people and led to more than 6.8 million deaths before the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the end of the public health emergency of international concern in May 2023.¹

COVID-19 also disrupted the movement of people and goods—the lifeblood of today’s globalized society—and daily life was constrained in various ways, including lockdowns and restrictions on movement and activities (e.g., METI 2020).

The 7th Worldwide Uchinanchu² Festival was held from October 30 to November 3, 2022, during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Uchinanchu Festival has become Okinawa Prefecture’s largest international convention, where Okinawan descendants from overseas gather in their “home prefecture” to interact with the people of Okinawa Prefecture and other members of the diaspora. The term “World Uchinanchu” was coined in the 1980s by local media, including the Ryukyu Shimpo newspaper series and Okinawa TV’s “World Uchinanchu Travels (*Sekai Uchinanchu Kikou*)”. Since the reversion of Okinawa to mainland Japan, it has also been widely used in Okinawan society to reaffirm the island chain’s uniqueness and highlight its complex relationship with the mainland. The TV series had a significant impact on Okinawan society following the return of Okinawa to Japanese governance.

As awareness and interest in *Uchinanchu* around the world have grown, the Worldwide Uchinanchu Festival has emerged at the intersection of Okinawa Prefectural Government policies, the longing of first-generation immigrants for their homeland, the hope of second- and third-generation descendants to reconnect with their roots, and the desire of the Okinawan people to find pride and inspiration for their future (Kinjo 2005). While the objectives and basic policies of each festival vary, the underlying purpose is to “honor the achievements of Okinawans from around the world—Okinawa’s invaluable human assets expand and develop the *Uchina*-network through exchanges with the Okinawan people and to gather them in Okinawa to confirm and pass on its roots and identity to the next generation” (7th Worldwide Uchinanchu Festival Executive Committee 2022).

The 6th Worldwide Festival was held in 2016, and the 7th was originally planned for five years later, in 2021. Due to the spread of COVID-19, the festival was postponed by one year. It

¹ Data on the number of infections and deaths are through March 10, 2023, when Johns Hopkins University was compiling the data.

² “Uchina” means Okinawa and “Uchinanchu” means Okinawan people in the Okinawan dialect. Although Uchinanchu is not strictly defined, it is a polysemic concept that encompasses ethnicity, ancestor worship, kinship, and identity and is broadly used to include Okinawan immigrants and families of people with Okinawan ancestry (Maemura 2016). There are approximately 420,000 people of Okinawan descent worldwide. While the largest populations are in North America, including Hawai’i, and South America, Okinawan descendants are also spread across Asia, Europe, Oceania, and other parts of the world. Okinawan immigration began with the first wave of immigrants to Hawai’i in 1899. For more details on the history and background of Okinawan immigration, see Ishikawa (2005).

was ultimately held in 2022, coinciding with the 50th anniversary of Okinawa reversion to mainland Japan. In the leadup to the festival, the number of COVID-19 infections in Japan was increasing, with more than 200,000 new cases per day in July, and Japan had the highest number of new cases per week in the world. However, vaccination rates were also increasing, and people were gradually returning to their normal lives. As the festival date approached, in June 2022, the acceptance of foreign tourists resumed for the first time in two years. This made it possible for foreign nationals to participate, but due to restrictions—such as the requirement that foreign visitors travel in organized group tours—the four South American Okinawan associations, Brazil, Peru, Bolivia, and Argentina abandoned plans to send delegations (Dairio Brasil Nippou 2022 August 27th).

A major difference between the 7th Festival and previous versions was that it combined face-to-face and online participation, allowing some *Uchinanchu* in Japan and abroad—who were unable to travel to Okinawa due to pandemic restrictions and other factors—to still take part. As one of the basic policies of the 7th festival was “to hold the festival with the aim of inheriting and developing the *Uchina*-network, practicing sustainable exchange and cooperation by utilizing soft power and the latest technology, and contributing to the development of Okinawa and other regions,” various events such as the eve parade, opening ceremony, and closing ceremony were broadcast online, and web conferencing systems and metaverse were also used (7th Worldwide Uchinanchu Festival Executive Committee 2023) (Figure 1). This online access was significant because it provided an opportunity not only for the *Uchinanchu* who wanted to come but could not but also allowed those who had only a passing interest in the festival or were unfamiliar with the festival to participate in a more casual way. According to a report by the Festival Executive Committee, more than 214,000 people participated online, including those who joined sponsored, co-sponsored, municipal, and collaborative events.³

This study is based on a survey of participants at the 7th Worldwide Uchinanchu Festival, which was held under different circumstances and organized by a different body than previous festivals. This study is a longitudinal survey⁴ conducted following the 4th (2006), 5th (2011), and 6th (2016) festivals. Considering the continuity of the survey and research, this paper focuses on conducting a basic analysis of each festival and presenting the important insights they generate about each festival. Therefore, in this paper, we first describe the results concerning festival participants and festivals.

³ The report provides no details regarding the counting method, offering only the total aggregate results. It is not clear how many people participated by event, country/region, or interest group. Although additional data and detailed analysis will take time and effort, it is necessary to clarify which events attract Uchinanchu around the world, where most participants are located, and to take account of time differences, as well as whether those with passing interest or no prior interest were attracted to the events.

⁴ This study is a repeated survey with participants of the Worldwide Uchinanchu Festivals as the sample population. The principal investigator for the 4th festival was Hiroyuki Kinjo (University of the Ryukyus); for the 5th festival, Munehiro Machida (University of the Ryukyus); and for the 6th festival, Junzo Kato (University of the Ryukyus). The affiliations are as of the respective time periods.

Figure 1: Major festival events

Source: 7th Worldwide Uchinanchu Festival Photo Album (cover, p. 31)

In their survey of the 6th festival, Kato et al. (2018) examined the key concepts of Okinawan identity and the development and expansion of the *Uchina*-network through the festival. The results showed that recognition of Okinawan identity was high among both Okinawan descendants and local Okinawan people. When comparing Okinawan identity with the identity tied to their country or region of immigration, the first generation showed a strong connection to their Okinawan identity. In contrast, the second generation and beyond demonstrated significantly higher identification with both identities, with no difference between the two identities, and both were found to be high. In another study conducted by Kato et al. (2018), as mentioned above, the two identities of Okinawan descendants are their Okinawan identity and a new identity related to the country or region of immigration (e.g., Hawai'i, Brazil, etc.). However, these identities cannot be reduced to a simple binary, they evolve over time and across generations (Mori 2000). These complex identities are also expressed in different ways depending on the situation. For example, among Okinawans in Hawai'i, identities such as “being both Japanese and Okinawan” or “not Japanese but Okinawan” demonstrate how Japanese identity becomes one component of a more layered identity, with personal representation transformed by self- and other-defining factors (Shiramizu 2004; 2015).

It has also been noted that Japanese descendants, including Okinawan descendants, who emigrated from Japan to foreign countries for permanent residence, along with their descendants, are considered part of the broader *Nikkei* community. This *Nikkei* identity serves as a transnational connection between Japan and the country of emigration (Kojima 2005; Nonaka 2020, etc.). Thus, the identities of Okinawan descendants are multifaceted and complex. This study will examine the characteristics of current Okinawan descendants' identity from four perspectives: Okinawan, Japanese, member of country or region of immigration, and *Nikkei*. It will also explore the intergenerational transmission of Okinawan identity, which is a core purpose of the festival.

As for the *Uchina*-network, similar to Kato et al. (2018), we will examine the extent to which new networks among Okinawans were established through the festival. In the 6th festival,

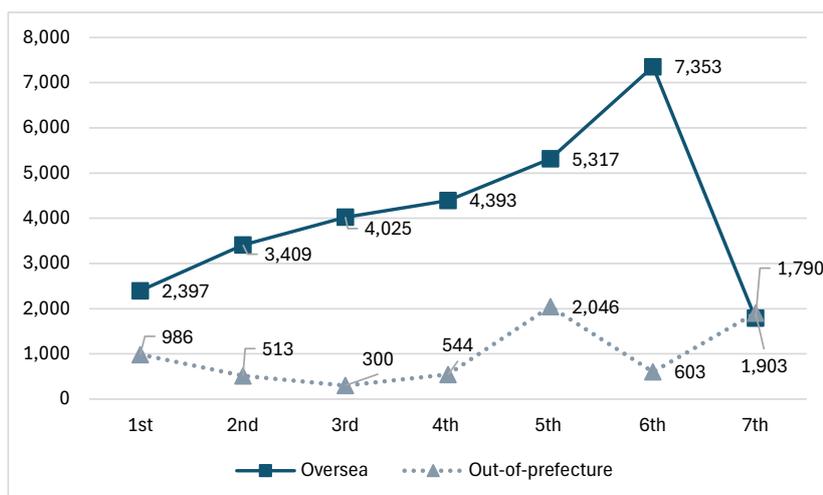
although there was almost no expansion of networks among in-prefecture participants, it was revealed that overseas participants had established “home networks” that connected Okinawa with their country or region, “transnational networks” that connected countries, and “local networks” that connected within their own country (Kato et al. 2018). Owing to the COVID-19 pandemic, the 7th festival was held as a hybrid event, both in-person and online, and even in-person events were restricted in terms of interpersonal contact, such as wearing masks and social distancing. Under these conditions, this study examined the extent to which new *Uchina*-networks were established both in person and online. To address these objectives, we conducted a survey at the 7th festival.

2. Methods

2.1 Overview of the 7th Worldwide Uchinanchu Festival⁵

The 7th Worldwide Uchinanchu Festival was held from October 30 to November 3, 2022, at Okinawa Prefecture’s Onoyama Park (Okinawa Cellular Stadium Naha). Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the number of participants from overseas was the smallest ever at 1,790, while the number of domestic (out-of-prefecture) participants was the second largest ever at 1,903 (Figure 2). The total number of in-person visitors to the festival was approximately 215,000, about half the number of the previous festival in 2016. The most significant feature of the 7th festival was that it was a hybrid face-to-face and online event. The number of online participants was approximately 214,000, bringing the total number of participants to approximately 429,000—about the same as the previous festival. The objectives of the 7th festival were to “inherit and develop the *Uchina*-network and to practice sustainable exchange and cooperation by utilizing soft power and the latest technology, and to contribute to the development of both Okinawa and other regions.” The catchphrase for the festival was “*Uchina-no-Shinka* [meaning “fellow members” in the Ryukyuan dialect], now is the time for us to connect the world.” During the festival, various events were held, from the eve parade to the closing ceremony, with measures taken to prevent infectious diseases.

⁵ The data presented here are based on the report of the 7th Worldwide Uchinanchu Festival (7th Worldwide Uchinanchu Festival Executive Committee 2023).

Figure 2: Transition in the number of participants (overseas and out-of-prefecture)

Source: 7th Worldwide Uchinanchu Festival Executive Committee 2023 (p.155)

2.2 Survey method

As part of the “Research about Movements of Japanese Descendants and Networks between Japan and Latin America” project (lead researcher, Yukako Nagamura⁶) by JICA Ogata Sadako Research Institute for Peace and Development, this survey was conducted primarily by faculty members and former members of Ryukyu University, along with researchers from universities outside the prefecture.⁷

The survey was conducted using both paper-based and online questionnaires. For the face-to-face survey at the festival site, survey staff approached festival participants and invited them to complete the survey.⁸ Survey participants chose whether to respond on paper or online. This in-person survey was conducted on the second and fourth days of the festival (November 1 and 3), taking into consideration the schedule of events and the bad weather. The survey was also conducted at Naha Airport on November 4, 6, and 8, targeting overseas participants who were departing after the festival. At both the festival site and the airport, participants were asked to

⁶ Visiting researcher of JICA Ogata Sadako Research Institute for Peace and Development.

⁷ The research organization consists of the following members. Naomi Noiri (University of the Ryukyus, Principal Investigator), Junzo Kato (Ritsumeikan University), Kai Fujinami (Kanto Gakuin University), Yukako Nagamura (JICA Ogata Sadako Research Institute for Peace and Development), Naoka Maemura (Kobe City University of Foreign Studies), Gustavo Meireles (Kanda University of International Studies), Jose Kohatsu (Utsunomiya University, Center for the Multicultural Public Sphere), Kinuko Yamazato (University of the Ryukyus). Ayaka Ishihara joined the management as a research staff member, and the student staff included 28 from the University of the Ryukyus, eight from Kanda University of International Studies, six from Kobe City University of Foreign Studies, four from Kanto Gakuin University, and 28 from Okinawa International University. The affiliations of the members are as of that time.

⁸ As part of the research ethics, the survey was subjected to an ethical review by JICA Ogata Sadako Research Institute for Peace and Development based on Article 7 of the Research Ethics Guidelines for Human Subjects of the institute. Before the survey, an explanation of informed consent was provided, and only those who gave consent were asked to complete the survey. The survey instructions were uploaded online so that the survey participants could check and contact us at any time.

respond either on the spot or online at a later time. To further encourage online participation, the survey was also distributed via the festival website and social networking services, including the official festival website and personal connections. The survey remained open throughout the festival, and responses were accepted even after the festival ended. A small number of online responses continued to be received in December, with the final deadline for responses set for December 30.

The survey questionnaire was prepared in four languages: Japanese, English, Spanish, and Portuguese. Since there were some differences in the questions asked of overseas, out-of-prefecture, and in-prefecture participants, we created separate versions for each group: overseas participants received the question in all four languages, while out-of-prefecture participants and in-prefecture participants received theirs in Japanese and English. To create the multilingual questionnaire, we first created a Japanese version of the questionnaire and then asked a translation company to translate it into each respective language. The translated survey sheets were checked and revised multiple times by researchers within the research team who were experts in each language, and the final survey sheets were printed on both sides of an A3 document. For the online survey, we used Google Forms with constructing the exact same items as the paper-based version. The survey items consisted of approximately 25 questions, with slight variations in the number of items for the overseas, out-of-prefecture, and in-prefecture versions, and took approximately 15 minutes to complete. As a reward for completing the survey, respondents were able to download a *Ryukyu Bingata* (Okinawan traditional dyed cloth) wallpaper featuring Shuri Castle in Okinawa.

2.3 Participants

As a result of the survey conducted according to the above procedures, a total of 744 answers were collected. However, data cleaning after collection revealed that some of the survey forms did not correspond to the actual participation categories (overseas, out-of-prefecture, or in-prefecture⁹), there were many non-responses, and some responses were from respondents aged 15 or younger.¹⁰ As a result of excluding 79 of these answers from the data, 665 questionnaires were finally included in the participants for analysis. There were 257 (38.6%) from overseas participants, 65 (9.8%) from out-of-prefecture participants, and 343 (51.6%) from in-prefecture participants. Regarding the percentage of participants at the 7th Festival, 257 overseas respondents represented 14.4% of the 1,790 participants and 65 out-of-prefecture respondents represented 3.4% of the 1,903 participants.

⁹ Out-of-prefecture participants were those from mainland of Japan other than Okinawa prefecture, and in-prefecture participants were those who live in Okinawa prefecture and joined the festival.

¹⁰ In this study, the survey included participants who were minors but at least 16 years old so that opinions could be collected from festival participants in younger age groups. The Code of Ethics established by Japanese Association for Social Research requires that a proxy be present if the participant is 15 years of age or younger. In accordance with this standard, the age range was set to 16 years old or older so that the participants could decide to cooperate with the survey on their own without the need for a proxy.

Table 1: Transition in the number of responses (5th~7th survey)

Participants	5th	6th	7th
Number of valid responses	1,045	1,093	665
Overseas	651(62.3%)	381(36.5%)	257(38.6%)
Out-of-prefecture	90(8.6%)	35(3.3%)	65(9.8%)
In-prefecture	252(24.1%)	677(64.8%)	343(51.6%)
Unknown	52(5.0%)	-	-

Compared with the fifth and subsequent surveys, which targeted overseas, out-of-prefecture, and in-prefecture participants, the number of valid responses for this survey was significantly lower because of the much smaller number of in-person participants owing to the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite the reduced number of overseas participants, more than 10% of them responded to the survey. Moreover, in terms of percentage, the number of responses from out-of-prefecture participants was the highest for any survey to date (Table 1).

Furthermore, of the 665 valid responses, 225 (33.8%) were paper-based and 440 (66.2%) were online. Regarding the respondents' mean of participation in the festival, excluding non-responses, the data obtained from this survey revealed that 88.8% of the respondents participated in person, and only 2.6% participated online (Table 2)¹¹. This survey invited online participants to participate in the survey through the festival website and social networking sites, however, only a few responded. Thus, the responses obtained in this survey were primarily based on face-to-face participants and hardly reflected the opinions and attitudes of online participants. This issue is discussed in detail in the Discussion section. Nonetheless, the focus on in-person participants is consistent with previous surveys.

Table 2: Mean of participation in the festival

	Overseas participation	Out-of-prefecture participant	In-prefecture participant	Total	
In-person participation	231	45	300	576	88.8%
In-person and online participation	12	15	29	56	8.6%
Online participation	9	5	3	17	2.6%
Total	252	65	332	649	

2.4 Survey Items Used in This Study

Various survey items were developed for this study in order to examine the actual conditions of

¹¹ Respondents were asked whether they participated in the festival in person, both in-person and online, or online only.

the festival participants, the evaluation and effectiveness of the festival, and the awareness and attitudes associated with *Uchinanchu*. The following items were examined in this study.

(1) Demographic items

- **Overseas, Out-of-prefecture, In-prefecture:** Participation category, place of birth, place of residence, gender, age, nationality, educational background, socio-economic status
- **Overseas/ Out-of-prefecture:** Okinawan descent or other, generation of Okinawan descent, affiliation with and degree of participation in Okinawan associations

(2) Festival-related items

Purpose of attending the festival, evaluation of the festival, and means to participate in the festival

(3) Awareness and attitudes associated with *Uchinanchu*

• Identity

Regarding the respective identities of Okinawan (*Uchinanchu*), Japanese, immigrant place person, and *Nikkei*, participants were asked, “Do you consider yourself ____?” (The “____” part includes options for “Uchinanchu,” “Japanese,” “person from your country/region,” and “Nikkei”). Responses were given using a four-point scale from “1. not at all” to “4. very much,” with out-of-prefecture and in-prefecture participants asked about two types of identity, Okinawan and Japanese, and overseas participants asked about all four types of identity.

• *Uchina*-Network

The participants were asked to freely indicate the number of *Uchinanchu* with whom they have developed new contacts through the festival. We asked about five types of networks for overseas participants: “people in your area (state/prefecture),” “people in your country (other state/prefecture),” “people in Okinawa Prefecture,” “people in Japan (excluding people in Okinawa),” and “people in other countries,” and four types for out-of-prefecture participants: “people in your area (prefecture),” “people in Japan,” “people in Okinawa,” and “people overseas,” and three types for in-prefecture participants: “people in Japan,” “people in Okinawa Prefecture,” and “people overseas.”

3. Results

3.1 Basic Analysis of the 7th Worldwide Uchinanchu Festival

3.1.1 Analysis of the Demographics of Participants

• Gender and Age

The gender and age of the participants are shown in Table 3. The mean age of participants was 49.11 years ($SD = 18.25$). By participation category, the average age of overseas participants was higher ($F(2,638) = 31.58, p < .001, \eta^2_p = .09$). Disaggregating the age composition of the overseas participants, 8.8% were in their 10s and 20s, 15.2% were in their 30s, 10.0% were in their 40s, 14.4% were in their 50s, 26.8% were in their 60s, and 24.8% were in their 70s or older, with those in their 60s or older accounting for half the total.

Table 3: Gender and age of survey participants

	Gender				Age
	Man	Woman	Others	Prefer not to say	
Overseas participants	88	163	2	4	<i>M</i> =55.86
	34.2%	63.4%	0.8%	1.6%	<i>SD</i> =17.19
Out-of-prefecture participants	33	29	2	1	<i>M</i> =47.46
	50.8%	44.6%	3.1%	1.5%	<i>SD</i> =14.70
In-prefecture participants	131	203	4	5	<i>M</i> =44.28
	38.2%	59.2%	1.2%	1.5%	<i>SD</i> =18.09
Total	252	395	8	10	<i>M</i> =49.11
	37.9%	59.4%	1.2%	1.5%	<i>SD</i> =18.25

3.1.2 Characteristics of Overseas Participants

The survey collected data on the overseas participants, who comprised the largest group at the festival, capturing their place of residence (country and state) from 9 of the 25 countries represented at the festival. The largest number of participants came from the US, accounting for 77.4% of the total, with 96 of those coming from Hawai'i.¹² Table 4 shows the number and percentage of participants published by the festival executive committee. Since the percentages of participants in this survey are approximate, they are considered representative of the actual situation at the festival.

Table 4: Number and percentage of overseas participants by region

Area	Country and Region	Collaborator	Participant
North America	US	199 (77.4%)	1306 (72.3%)
	(Hawai'i)	96 (37.4%)	
	(Mainland)	56 (21.8%)	
	(Unknown)	47 (18.3%)	
	Canada	1 (0.4%)	26 (1.5%)
Central and South America	Brazil	19 (7.4%)	87 (4.9%)
	Argentina	8 (3.1%)	78 (4.4%)
	Peru	15 (5.8%)	139 (7.8%)
	Bolivia	2 (0.8%)	30 (1.7%)
Asia	South Korea	2 (0.8%)	9 (0.5%)
Oceania	New Caledonia	6 (2.3%)	10 (0.5%)
	Australia	1 (0.4%)	4 (0.2%)
	No Answer	4 (1.6%)	Other area total 101 (5.6%)
		257	1790

¹² There were 47 respondents who did not list their place of residence. Of these, 21 listed Hawai'i as their place of birth. If these 21 respondents also listed Hawai'i as their current place of residence, the total number of participants from Hawai'i would be 117, representing 58.8% of the total number of participants from the United States.

When asked about their occupation, educational background, and perceived social class, the most common occupation among the overseas participants was professional (24.3%), followed by unemployed (including retirees) (19.9%), management (10.4%), and self-employed (7.2%). In terms of educational background, 39.9% of the respondents had university degrees, followed by 29.6% with postgraduate degrees. When asked the question about their socioeconomic status, “If the society in which you live were to be divided into the following five classes, which do you think you would belong to?,” 59.9% of the respondents identified that they were in the “middle” and 29.8% in the “upper-middle,” with these two categories accounting for about 90% of the total. These results indicate that the overseas participants in the festival were relatively well-educated, well-off, and held white-collar occupations such as professional and managerial positions.

Regarding their connections to Okinawa, overseas participants were asked if they were of Okinawan descent. In response, 73.6% said, “I am an Okinawan descendant,” and 15.0% said, “I am not Okinawan, but I have some family members who are Okinawan descendants.” The “others” category, which included 11.4% of the respondents, specifically included interpersonal, cultural, and emotional ties such as “friends,” “boss,” “*Karate*,” “*Eisa*,” “*Sanshin*,”¹³ and “a love of Okinawa.” Next, when respondents of Okinawan descent were asked about their descendant generation,¹⁴ the third generation was the most common (44.4%), followed by the second and fourth generations (18.7%). In contrast, there were only 12.8% of the first generation¹⁵ and 1.1% of the fifth generation (Figure 3). Compared with previous surveys, the proportion of the third generation increased even more, making them the core of the participants. Further, the percentage of the fourth generation increased markedly. In contrast, the proportions of the first and second generations continued to decline, indicating a generational shift in the participants' demographics (Figure 4).

¹³ These are Okinawan traditional culture and arts.

¹⁴ When examining the age distribution across the descendant generations, the mean age of the first generation was 64.3 years, 53.7 years for the second generation, 59.7 years for the third generation, and 37.7 years for the fourth generation. There was a significant main effect by descendant generation ($F(3,168) = 20.23$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 p = .27$), with the fourth generation being younger. Since there were only two fifth-generation respondents, they were excluded from the subsequent analyses.

¹⁵ As for the first-generation immigrants, not all emigrated during the prewar and immediate postwar periods when emigration from Japan was high. The number of Okinawan emigrants, in particular, declined sharply after 1963, when Japan entered a period of high economic growth, and after 1972, when Okinawa returned to the mainland (Ishikawa 2005). However, a small number of emigrants continued to move abroad during this period. Emigrants who left after the 1960s are called “new first-generation immigrants” (Tanaka 2023). The survey participants in this study are also considered to include the new first generation. Since we did not ask when they emigrated, it is difficult to determine the exact number of the new first generation, but if we use 1963 (age 59 at the time of the survey) as the base year, 8 out of 24 respondents would fall into this category. This division is an extreme example but the percentage of the new first generation would be much higher when the length of time spent in Japan is taken into account. Although first generation and the new first generation have different characteristics (Tanaka 2023), the analysis was conducted within the framework of the first generation because of the small sample size and the common experiences that they were born in Okinawa and went abroad on their own.

When asked about their membership in Okinawan associations (*Kenjinkai* or *Shi/Cho/Son-jinkai*), 51.6% of the respondents said they belong to such associations, while 48.4% said they do not belong to any associations, an almost 50/50 split. When those who belonged were asked about the extent of their participation, 38.8% said “I participate almost every time” and 34.2% said “I often participate,” while 26.3% said “I rarely participate.” When we examined whether there were differences in the degree of participation in Okinawan Associations, no significant differences were found between descendant generations ($\chi^2_{(6)}=9.35, n.s.$).

Figure 3: Distribution of Okinawans and descendant generations

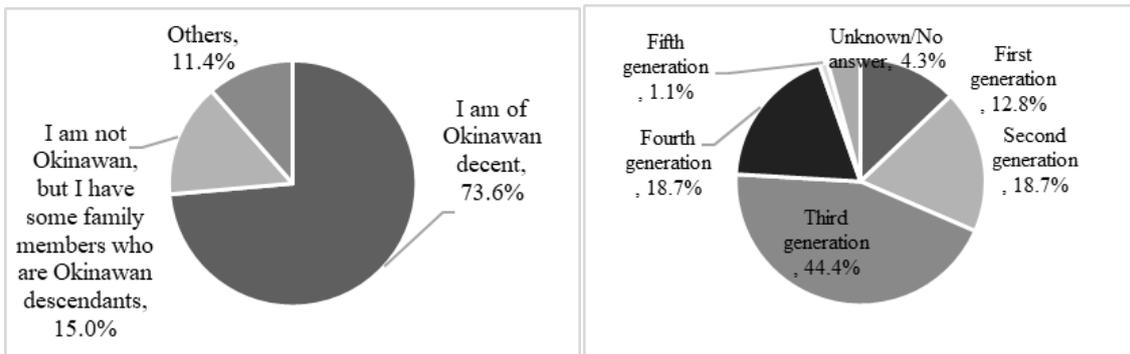
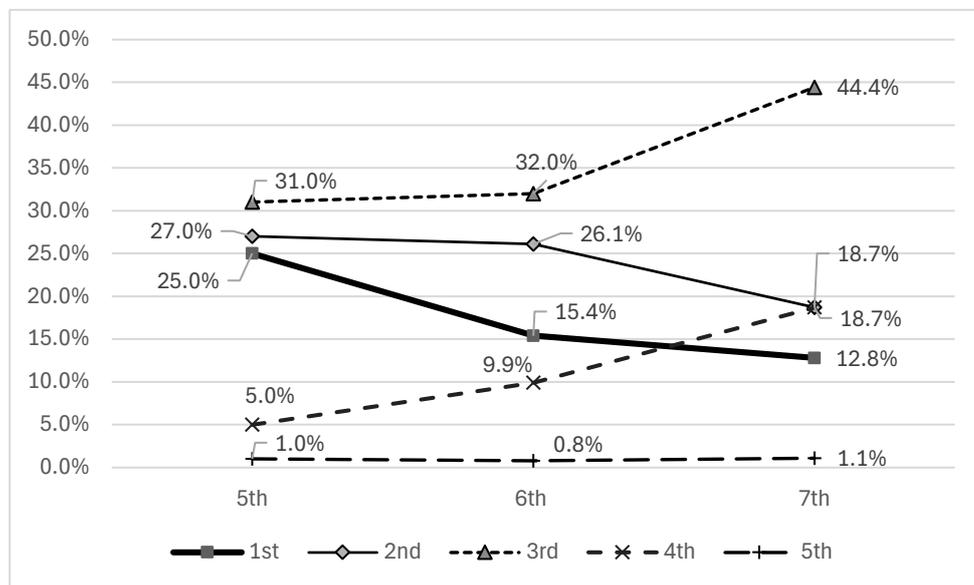


Figure 4: Transition of generations of overseas respondents (5th~7th survey)



3.1.3 Analysis of the Festival

• Purpose of Participation

The respondents were asked to select the reasons for their participation in the festival, choosing from a multiple-response form with the 14 items listed in Table 5. The most common reasons for participation were “to meet with *Uchinanchus* from around the world” and “to learn about

Uchinanchus from around the world,” for all overseas, out-of-prefecture, and in-prefecture participants. Participants from overseas and out-of-prefecture who do not normally live in Okinawa also aimed to “learn about Okinawan culture and traditions. For overseas participants, “to find my roots,” “to meet the people of Okinawa,” “to meet relatives,” and “to meet friends and acquaintances” were also given as reasons for participation.

Table 5: Purpose of participation in the festival (by participation category)

		Overseas participant		Out-of-prefecture participant		In-prefecture participant	
1	To find my roots.	103	40.8%	9	13.9%	22	6.4%
2	To meet with <i>Uchinanchus</i> from around the world.	137	53.3%	30	46.2%	139	40.5%
3	To meet the people of Okinawa.	152	59.1%	21	32.3%	41	12.0%
4	To meet <i>Uchinanchus</i> of different generations.	101	39.3%	20	30.8%	80	23.3%
5	To learn about Okinawan culture and traditions.	189	73.5%	32	49.2%	104	30.3%
6	To learn about various cultures from around the world.	67	26.1%	13	20.0%	122	35.6%
7	To learn about <i>Uchinanchus</i> from around the world.	116	45.1%	30	46.2%	146	42.6%
8	To meet relatives.	130	50.6%	10	15.4%	18	5.3%
9	To meet friends and acquaintances.	106	41.3%	21	32.3%	55	16.0%
10	To deepen friendships with members of my own Okinawan Association.	55	21.4%	9	13.9%	26	7.6%
11	Encouraged to participate by family, relatives, friends, Okinawan association, etc.	84	32.7%	9	13.9%	49	14.3%
12	To accompany someone.	50	19.5%	3	4.6%	22	6.4%
13	To participate in events as a performer or watch performances.	105	40.9%	30	46.2%	132	38.5%
14	To work or study.	18	7.0%	15	23.1%	50	14.6%
Average number of objectives selected		5.50 (3.20)		3.88 (2.71)		2.93 (2.22)	

The number of multiple-response selections (number of purposes of participation) was tabulated to test whether the number of selections differed by participation category, and a main effect of participation category was found ($F(2,662) = 67.00, p < .001, \eta^2_p = .17$). Multiple comparisons revealed that the number of overseas participants was higher (5.50), while the number of out-of-prefecture participants was lower (3.88) and the number of in-prefecture participants was lower (2.93). In other words, participants coming from farther away, such as overseas and out-of-prefecture participants, had more reasons for participation, especially for overseas participants, who shared a wider range of purposes for participation.

• **Evaluation of the Festival**

Participants were asked to rate the 7th Worldwide Uchinanchu Festival on a 4-point scale from “1. Dissatisfied” to “4. Satisfied.” The mean for all participants was 3.31 ($SD = .86$), indicating a

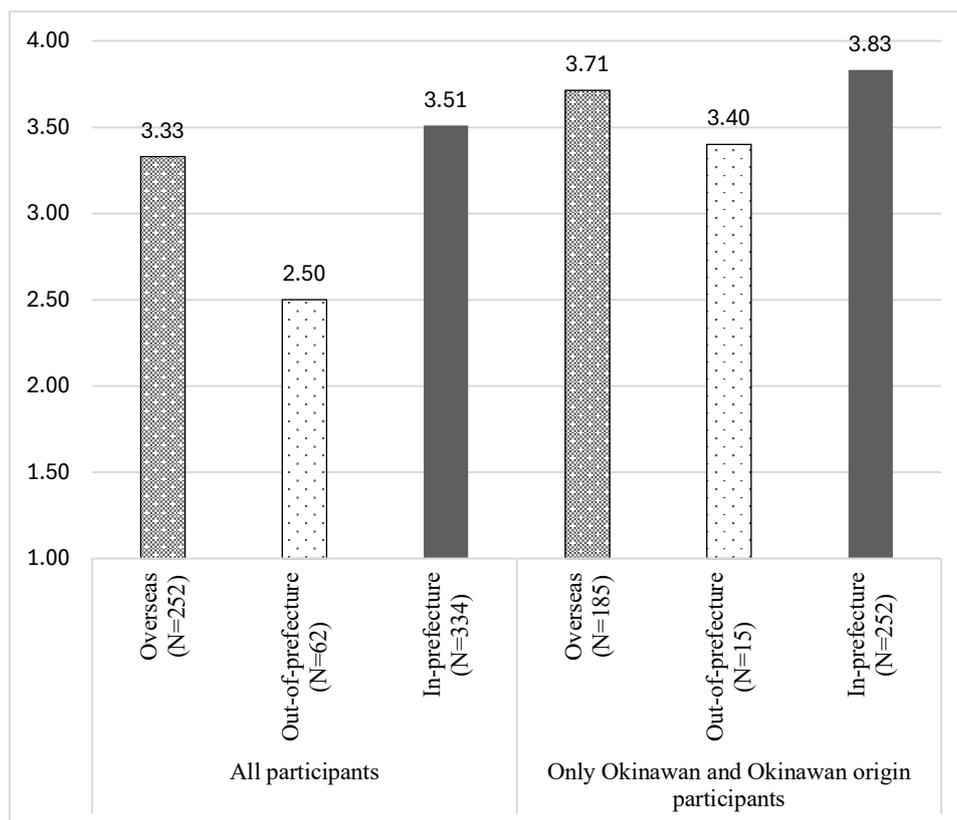
high level of satisfaction with the festival. By participation category, the scores were 3.63 for overseas participants, 3.11 for out-of-prefecture participants, and 3.11 for in-prefecture participants, with overseas participants having a significantly higher score ($F(2,652) = 30.26, p < .001, \eta^2_p = .09$).

3.2 Analysis of Identity

3.2.1 Comparison of Okinawan Identity by Participation Category

Building on the analysis of identity and participation, we examined whether there were differences in Okinawan identity across participation categories (Figure 5). The results of the analysis showed a main effect of participation category ($F(2,645) = 28.06, p < .001, \eta^2_p = .08$). Multiple comparisons using Holm’s method revealed that the scores were higher for in-prefecture participants than overseas participants, and higher for overseas participants than out-of-prefecture participants. Out-of-prefecture participants, in particular, scored significantly lower, almost at the mid-point.

Figure 5: Comparison of Okinawan identity by participation category



The above analysis includes respondents who are not of Okinawan descent among the overseas and out-of-prefecture participants, as well as respondents who are not of Okinawan origin among the in-prefecture participants. It is highly likely that these non-Okinawan and non-

Okinawan origin respondents would have difficulty identifying themselves as *Uchinanchu*. Similarly, Kato et al. (2018) conducted an analysis targeting only Okinawan and Okinawan-origin participants. Therefore, we conducted another analysis by selecting overseas and out-of-prefecture participants of Okinawan descent and in-prefecture participants of Okinawan origin. The analysis showed a main effect of participation category ($F(2,449) = 6.21, p < .01, \eta^2_p = .03$), with significant differences between out-of-prefecture and in-prefecture participants. However, the number of responses from out-of-prefecture participants was small ($N=15$) and the effect size was also small, as was the mean score of 3.40. Despite the statistically significant differences, it was clear that Okinawan identity was higher among respondents of Okinawan descent and Okinawan origin in all participation categories.

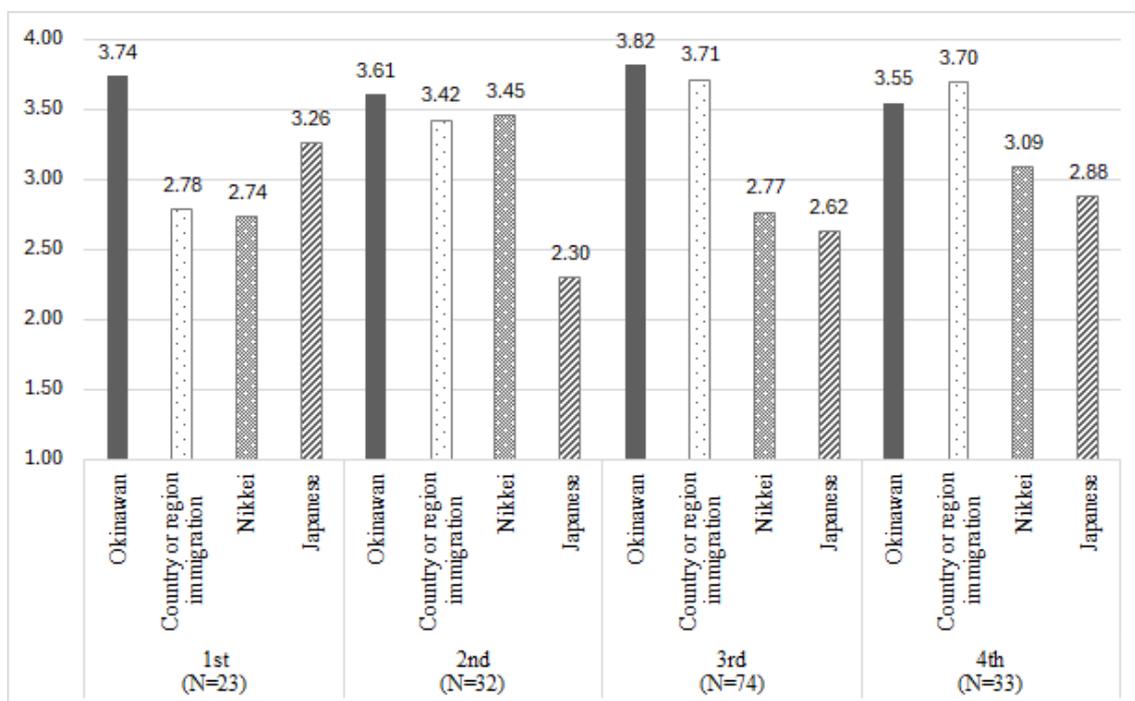
3.2.2 Identity Structure of Overseas Participants

To clarify the multifaceted and complex characteristics of the identities of the overseas participants, we examined them using four types of identities: Okinawan, immigrated country/region, *Nikkei*, and Japanese. It should be noted that identities may differ depending on the influence of historical and situational factors throughout the life course, such as the number of generations of descendants (Kato et al. 2018) and region (Noiri 2018).

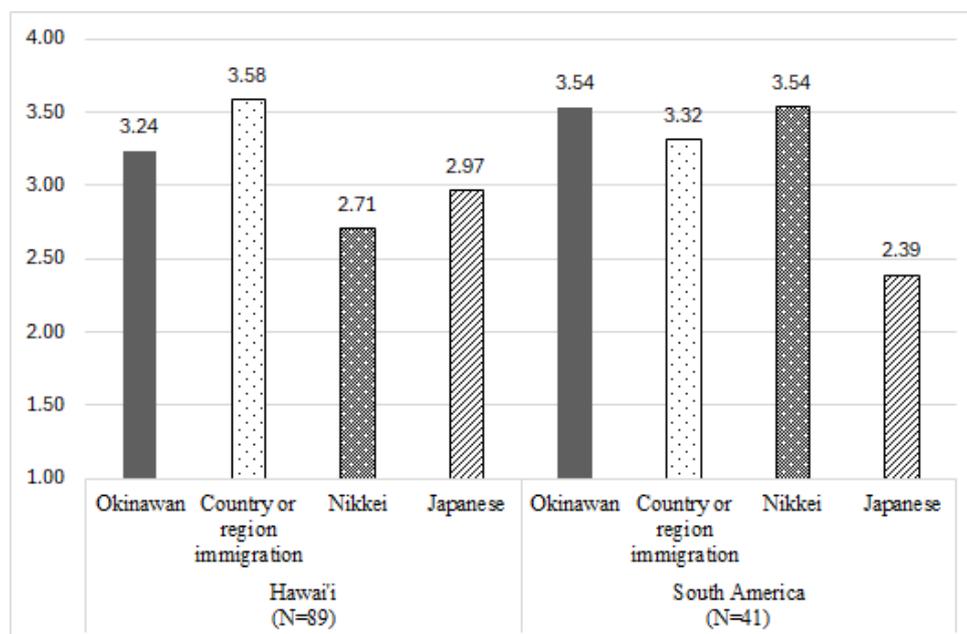
Therefore, in this study, we first conducted a two-way ANOVA for the mixed design¹⁶ of descendant generations (first–fourth) \times identity type (four types) to understand the characteristics of identity by descendant generation. The results of the analysis showed that the main effect of identity type ($F(3,486) = 34.10, p < .001, \eta^2_p = .17$) and the descendant generation \times identity type interaction ($F(9,486) = 7.41, p < .001, \eta^2_p = .12$) was significant. The results of Holm’s method post-hoc test showed that the Okinawan identity was not significantly different across the descendant generations but was high for all generations. The result for country or region of immigration identity was significantly lower for the first generation, with no difference among the second, third, and fourth generations. *Nikkei* identity was significantly higher among the second generation than among the first and third. Japanese identity was significantly higher among the first generation than among the second and third. Among these generation categories, the first generation was significantly more likely to identify with the Okinawan than with any other identity. The second generation was more likely to identify with Okinawan, country or region of immigration, and *Nikkei* identity among the third and fourth generation, with Okinawan and country or region of immigration identities being higher than *Nikkei* and Japanese identities (see Figure 6).

¹⁶ Since there were differences in age among the generations, the analysis was conducted with age as a covariate, but no main effect or interaction of age was found. Therefore, the results of the analysis of variance are presented here.

Figure 6: Comparison of identity by descendant generation



Next, we examined regional differences. Noiri (2018) identified the “island community type” in Hawai’i and the “continental network type” in Brazil in a hypothetical typology that extracts the characteristics of the residential areas of overseas Okinawan descendants. In this study, regions were set based on this typology, but since there were only a few participants from Brazil in the 7th festival, and in order to capture the characteristics of the continental network type, it was meaningful to examine countries connected by continents. Four South American countries (Brazil, Argentina, Peru, and Bolivia) were combined into one region to allow comparisons with Hawai’i, which is an island community type. A two-way ANOVA for a mixed design of region (Hawai’i and South America) \times identity type (four types) was conducted. The results of the analysis showed that the main effect of identity type ($F(3,384) = 15.93, p < .001, \eta^2_p = .11$) and the interaction of region \times identity type ($F(3,384) = 12.51, p < .001, \eta^2_p = .09$) were significant. The results of Holm’s method post-hoc test showed no significant differences between regions for Okinawan identity and country or region immigration identity, and both were high in all regions. In contrast, regional differences were significant for *Nikkei* identity and Japanese identity, with the former being higher in South America and the latter in Hawai’i. Looking at characteristics by region, country or region of immigration identity was notably higher in Hawai’i, while in South America, there were no significant differences between Okinawan, country or region of immigration, and *Nikkei* identities, and all three were high (Figure 7).

Figure 7: Comparison of identities by region

3.3 Analysis of the *Uchina*-Network: Expansion of the Network Through Festivals

We asked how many *Uchinanchus* participants had formed new contacts with during the festival to examine the construction of networks. The responses were categorized into the following five levels based on the overall frequency distribution: 0, 1 to 10, 11 to 30, 31 to 50, and 50 or more.¹⁷ The overall percentage of non-responses was high, and including these responses in the total would have skewed the results considerably. The analysis here is based on valid data, excluding non-responses.

Although it is difficult to make direct comparisons because the type of *Uchina*-network asked about differed by participation category, the overall trend was that more than half of the in-prefecture and out-of-prefecture participants answered “0 persons” in any network, and even if they provided some numbers, the number was small (“1 to 10 persons”). Among overseas participants, more than half answered “0 persons” regarding those who live in Japan and other countries. However, in relation to those who live in their community (same state/same prefecture), or in Okinawa, the percentage of “1–10 persons” was high, and “11–30 persons” was also reported by a significant number of participants. This indicates that although the network size was not large, a partial expansion trend could be seen in the domestic network of overseas participants and their network with their home prefecture (see Table 6).

¹⁷ Some of the responses, such as “A few,” “A lot,” “Many,” “Muchos,” and “None,” were of the linguistic type. Those that could be clearly presented, such as “None,” were replaced with numbers and tabulated, while the rest were treated as missing values because the range of numbers was ambiguous.

Table 6: New *Uchina*-networks created through the 7th festival

Participation category	Type of newly formed Uchina networks	0 person	1~10 persons	11~30 persons	31~50 persons	51 persons or more	Total	Non-respons
Overseas participant	Those who live in my community (same state/same prefecture)	44 27.3%	56 34.8%	43 26.7%	9 5.6%	9 5.6%	161 100.0%	96 37.4%
	Those who live in my country (other state/other prefecture)	45 30.4%	63 42.6%	31 20.9%	7 4.7%	2 1.4%	148 100.0%	109 42.4%
	Those who live in Okinawa	37 23.7%	87 55.8%	21 13.5%	7 4.5%	4 2.6%	156 100.0%	101 39.3%
	Those who live in Japan	87 60.4%	49 34.0%	6 4.2%	2 1.4%	0 0.0%	144 100.0%	113 44.0%
	Those who live in other countries	74 52.1%	56 39.4%	10 7.0%	2 1.4%	0 0.0%	142 100.0%	115 44.7%
	Out-of-prefecture participant	Those who live in my community (same prefecture)	33 78.6%	8 19.0%	1 2.4%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	42 100.0%
Those who live in Japan (other than above)		26 59.1%	15 34.1%	2 4.5%	0 0.0%	1 2.3%	44 100.0%	21 32.3%
Those who live in Okinawa		23 53.5%	14 32.6%	5 11.6%	0 0.0%	1 2.3%	43 100.0%	22 33.8%
Those who live overseas		28 62.2%	13 28.9%	3 6.7%	0 0.0%	1 2.2%	45 100.0%	20 30.8%
In-prefecture participant	Those who live in Okinawa	99 61.5%	54 33.5%	3 1.9%	2 1.2%	3 1.9%	161 100.0%	182 53.1%
	Those who live in Japan (excluding Okinawa)	89 80.2%	18 16.2%	2 1.8%	0 0.0%	2 1.8%	111 100.0%	232 67.6%
	Those who live overseas	78 63.4%	39 31.7%	4 3.3%	0 0.0%	2 1.6%	123 100.0%	220 64.1%

In order to examine whether there were differences in the expanded network depending on the method of participation in the festival, we selected 17 respondents who had “participated only online,” and the results were tabulated. Because of the small number of participants, we did not distinguish between overseas, out-of-prefecture, and in-prefecture participants. Instead, we examined the common responses to items on “those who live in Okinawa,” “those who live in Japan,” and “those who live overseas (in other countries).” As a result, two out of seventeen respondents (11.8%: one overseas participant and one out-of-prefecture participant) responded at least one person about “those who live overseas (in other countries).” Only two respondents (two overseas participants) reported making contact with at least one person among “those who live in Okinawa,” and no respondents reported contact with at least one person about “those who live in Japan.” Although the small number of responses from online participants precludes generalization, it can be assumed that few of those who participated only online went so far as to network directly through online platforms.

4. Discussion

The primary purpose of this study was to describe the characteristics of the participants who attended the 7th Worldwide Uchinanchu Festival and examine the key concepts related to the festival—namely, Okinawan identity and the development and expansion of the *Uchina*-network through the festival. Before discussing these points based on the survey results, however, it is necessary to review the festival itself and the limitations with the data collected.

4.1 Reflection on the festival and research limitation

First of all, the 7th Worldwide Uchinanchu Festival was held under the unprecedented circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic, compounding the previous limitations on attendance due to the high cost of traveling from overseas to participate. The number of participants from abroad decreased to 1,790, about one-fifth of the previous festival, with just one-eighth (340 people) attending from Latin America. Since Latin America comprises one of the two pillars of the overseas *Uchinanchu*, the cancellation of organized group travel contributed significantly to the decline. Many Okinawan associations (*Kenjinkai*) did not send any participants or those that did were only able to send a few people (7th Worldwide Uchinanchu Festival Executive Committee 2022).

To enable more overseas *Uchinanchu* to participate, the 7th festival was conducted both in-person and online, however, it was difficult to invite online participants to complete the survey. Then the responses were heavily weighted by those who participated in person. In other words, if the entire *Uchinanchu* population of the world is considered part of the statistical population, the sample of this survey is undeniably subject to double bias (even under the COVID-19 pandemic, those surveyed were able to attend the festival in person). However, for Okinawa Prefecture, which aims to become “an island of exchange and symbiosis open to the world” (New Okinawa 21st Century Vision Basic Plan: Basic Policy 4 2022), Okinawans abroad are an important foundation for a global exchange network. Among them, those of Okinawan descent who attend the Worldwide Uchinanchu Festival are participants with a strong sense of Okinawan identity and a willingness to actively engage with Okinawa, as shown in the results of the analysis of identities and purposes of participation. Thus, festival participants are the core of the *Uchina*-network and can serve as role models for the Okinawa vision. In this sense, it is important to reveal the trends of the festival participants, even if there are biases.

Let us discuss the specific results obtained. To begin with, the demographics of the overseas participants in the survey were dominated by those from the US, and among them, Hawai’i. This result was consistent with the overall trend observed among the participants. When asked if they were of Okinawan descent, 73.6% responded that they were of Okinawan descent, 15% stated that their family members were of Okinawan descent, and 11.4% had interpersonal, cultural, or emotional ties with Okinawa. The Worldwide Uchinanchu Festival is a diaspora strategy (Oishi 2024) designed to reintegrate Okinawan descendants who have flown from around the world, forming a diaspora known as “World Uchinanchu” in order to strengthen ties between their home

prefecture and communities around the world and contribute to economic and social development in their home prefecture.

In recent years, a new form of the diaspora concept called “affinity diaspora” has emerged, and its role has been discussed. It adds to traditional diasporas based on family relations such as blood and marriage (Oishi 2024). Affinity diaspora refers to a broad range of people who are supporters of a country or region, such as those who have an attachment to and interest in or feel a deep connection to the culture.¹⁸ Approximately 10% of the participants at the 7th festival were part of this affinity diaspora. The prefecture’s diaspora strategy is expected to expand both vertically and horizontally as these two groups—Okinawan descendants as a strong network that shares roots and the affinity diaspora as a “related population”—are connected as world wide *Uchinanchu*.

Turning to the results of the analysis related to the festival, the satisfaction rating for the festival was 3.31 out of 4, indicating that the festival was generally well-received. Overseas participants and out-of-prefecture participants offered more reasons for participation. For overseas participants, in particular, the main purposes were cultural and interpersonal exchange in Okinawa, such as “to learn about Okinawan culture and traditions” and “to meet the people of Okinawa.” For both out-of-prefecture and in-prefecture participants, the main reasons were to meet *Uchinanchus* from around the world, as well as to learn about *Uchinanchus* from around the world. In terms of the number of new *Uchina*-networks created through the festival, more than half of both in-prefecture and out-of-prefecture participants did not develop any new networks, and the number of respondents who answered “1–10” for new networks was small. In other words, only a limited number of new *Uchina*-networks were established through the festival among both in-prefecture and out-of-prefecture participants.

Not only were there fewer overseas participants in the 7th festival because of COVID-19, but people's fear of infection risk remained high at the time of the event. Okinawa, in particular, was heavily affected by COVID-19, with emergency declarations and prefectural policies issued many times. This was coupled with regional and social challenges on the islands, and travel from abroad was prohibited until several months before the event. Participants may have felt psychologically restrained from actively interacting with overseas participants face-to-face. However, the fact that few networks were established between in-prefecture and out-of-prefecture participants is similar to the previous festival, which was held under normal, non-COVID-19 circumstances (Kato et al. 2018). To examine this point further, we would like to refer to a free description (partially modified) of an in-prefecture participant.

If there are no opportunities or mechanisms for the people of Okinawa who do not have relatives or friends overseas to interact with Uchinanchus, the festival could become an “inside-only” event. If we could interact with overseas Uchinanchus, it would have a

¹⁸ *Uchinanchu-at-heart*," a common phrase used in contexts of *Uchinanchu* around the world, is typical of the affinity diaspora.

strong impact on the identity of Okinawa residents, such as how much they think about Okinawa, and more Okinawa residents would think about Okinawa in the future. But it is a shame that there are almost no opportunities to do so. I also participated in the grand finale for the first time this time, and I was really glad to have been able to experience the excitement firsthand. I laughed and danced with the overseas Uchinanchus who were sitting nearby and whom I did not know, but I thought it was a shame that we only shared the occasion because we never had a chance to talk about their lives and thoughts (40s, male).

If, as this comment suggests, the festival seemed to be an intimate affair for in-prefecture participants, who are not well connected with overseas *Uchinanchus*, it would not be easy for them to join in. The experience of the festival suggests that it is important for networking not only to share a physical space but also to create a mechanism that promotes dialogue and exchange among participants.

On the other hand, among overseas participants, although the network size was not large, an expanding trend could be seen in “domestic networks” and “networks with Okinawa, home prefecture.” However, more than half of the participants did not establish “transnational networks” with people from other countries, despite their expansion at the previous festival. Participants from the US accounted for three-quarters of the overseas participants this time, while there were few overseas participants from other regions such as Latin America. In other words, the higher number of participants from the US may have increased opportunities to expand domestic networks and made it more difficult to build transnational networks. Due to the lack of data on online participants, the results remain unclear, but the difficulty of online participation as a way of expanding transnational networks may also be a factor.

Among the 214,000 online participants in the 7th festival, the on-demand method, which allows participants to join without worrying about time differences, led to high levels of participation across countries. While the on-demand method allows individual participants to access the website, it does not provide a forum for dialogue or exchange of ideas among participants. Hybrid festivals can be effective in promoting participation for those unable to attend or who are less interested in participating. Finding ways to create interaction opportunities online will be an important challenge for future festivals.

4.2 Discussion of identity

The first comparison of Okinawan identity among overseas, out-of-prefecture, and in-prefecture participants showed that awareness of Okinawan identity was high among in-prefecture and overseas participants, and relatively low among out-of-prefecture participants. However, when we re-analyzed the results by selecting overseas and out-of-prefecture participants of Okinawan descent and in-prefecture participants of Okinawan origin, Okinawan identity was high across all groups, although there were significant differences. In terms of Tajfel’s (1981) social identity

theory, this means that they share the same social category of Okinawa (or *Uchinanchu*) and have high levels of Okinawan identity, cohesiveness, and collective self-esteem (Luhtanen and Crocker, 1992) as members of the same in-group. Regardless of whether people live abroad, outside the prefecture, or within the prefecture, the representation of “*Uchinanchu*” unites people as “*Shinka*,” which means “fellow members” in the Ryukyu dialect.

In terms of the identity structure of the overseas participants, there was no difference in Okinawan identity among the descendant generations, and it was high among all generations from the first to the fourth generation. This suggests that the main purpose of the festival—the inheritance of Okinawan identity—is passed down from generation to generation. However, there were differences in the multifaceted and complex characteristics of identity among the generations. First, among the first generation (including the new first generation) who emigrated overseas, Okinawan identity was remarkably high, while Japanese identity was also high, although there were significant differences. In other words, even in the places where they emigrated, they have continued to maintain a high level of identity with respect to their origins in Japan, their nationality, and Okinawa, where they were born and raised. The first generation, in particular, has laid the foundations for the development of the Okinawan community abroad. This community continues to this day and has contributed to Okinawan society through economic remittances and support for postwar reconstruction, navigating the challenges of being a minority within the dual minority in both the local and *Nikkei* communities (Arakaki 2002). It is precisely because the first generation is aware of Okinawa and has maintained a connection with their homeland—even after emigrating abroad—that their Okinawan identity has remained strong.

At the same time, there have been social situations in which the first generation of Japanese emigrants, including Okinawan emigrants, has been strongly conscious of their Japanese identity, such as Japanization within the *Nikkei* community (Mori 2000; Kimura 2005) and the maintenance of a strong Japanese identity among Japanese emigrants (Mita 2002). Based on the historical background of the Okinawan first generation, it is thought that the two identities, Okinawan and Japanese, sit side by side. For the second generation and beyond, the Okinawan identity and the identity in the country or region of immigration were the two most common intergenerational identities. This result is consistent with that of Kato et al. (2018) at the previous festival: the second and later generations were born and raised in their host countries, and many of them have become nationals. In other words, they have acquired an identity in the new country as part of their nationality and as the place of their upbringing and residence. The high level of Okinawan identity among the second and later generations is not only evidence of the inheritance of Okinawan identity as described above but also a result of the activities and organizations of the Okinawan descendants in each country and region, which have been passed on from one generation to the next.

The second generation also demonstrated a high level of *Nikkei* identity, incorporating Okinawan, country or region of immigration, and *Nikkei* status. In Tsujimoto’s (1998) survey of the second generation, *Nikkei* identity was often recognized as a process of ethnic identity

transformation in intercultural migration. Mori (2000) also found that the second generation of Okinawan descent in Brazil expressed continuity and solidarity in their parent-child relationship with the first generation, on the one hand, and their national identity as Brazilians, and that *Nisei* (second generation) identity was accepted among them as a reconciliation of nationality and ethnicity because they shared experience as children of immigrants. The binary opposition of *Naichi* (mainland) and Okinawa does not pose a problem for the *Nisei* identity. Although this study cannot present further analysis of the relationship between the three identities pointed out by Mori, the fact that the three identities—Okinawan, country or region of immigration, and *Nikkei* status—were highly observed among the second generation, although only partially, may support Mori’s discussion from a quantitative point of view.

Among the third and fourth generations, awareness of *Nikkei* and Japanese identities was relatively low, primarily reflecting two identities: Okinawan and country or region of immigration. Mori (2000) notes that “among Okinawan descendants in Brazil, a new identity, ‘Brazilian *Uchinanchu*’, has emerged since the 1970s and continues to be one of the dominant identities” (p. 51). Likewise, in Hawai’i, “about the people of the Okinawan community in Hawai’i, [...] it would probably be closer to the fact to think that they are actually Hawai’ian *Uchinanchu*” (Shiramizu 2004, 36). In other words, the two identities, country or region of immigration and Okinawan, may have been higher because of the combination of the two identities, as in “*Uchinanchu* of XX country/region,” rather than because of the coexistence of the two identities. This “Hawai’ian *Uchinanchu*” and “Brazilian *Uchinanchu*” may represent a new hybrid identity (Smith and Leavy 2008) that would be the identity of the third and fourth generations, the core of the current and future descendant generations.

Regarding regional differences, one of the first characteristics is that Okinawan identity was high in both Hawai’i and South America. These two regions are the two largest centers of Okinawan descent, with an estimated 420,000 people currently living in these two regions. However, it could be said that this indicates the spread of Okinawan identity as a transnational identity that transcends country and region. Next, Hawai’i was characterized by a distinctly high level of immigrated region identity. The data from this festival was dominated by the third generation, epitomized by Aragaki’s (2017) discussion that the Hawai’ian third generation has the strongest sense of being “*loco*” (local, born and raised in Hawai’i) than Okinawan, *Nikkei*, or American.

The results of this study reflect this very characteristic, with participants from Hawai’i having a higher sense of their Hawai’ian identity as *loco*. South America was characterized not only by a high level of Okinawan and country or region of immigration identities but also by a high level of *Nikkei* identity. The high level of *Nikkei* identity among Brazilian *Uchinanchus*, as explained by Mori (2000), was discussed above. When considered from the perspective of the South American continental network type (Noiri 2018), the category of *Nikkei* connects Okinawan descendants in South America and even becomes a broader social category that also connects non-Okinawan Japanese descendants who could be an affinity diaspora. Kojima (2005) also notes

that contact between Japanese descendants across countries provides an opportunity to find attributes common to *Nikkei* and to see unique *Nikkei*-ness. If *Nikkei* serves as a valuable symbol within South American immigrant communities (Higa 2002), *Nikkei* is considered to function as a meaningful transnational social identity.

5. Conclusion

This study examined the actual conditions related to the 7th Uchinanchu festival, including the demographic characteristics of the participants and their evaluations of the festival, based on a survey targeting the festival participants. The 7th festival was held during the COVID-19 pandemic, and the number of participating countries was highly biased, however, there was an increase in the number of third and fourth generation overseas participants. Regarding the development and expansion of the *Uchina*-network through the festival, the survey provided little evidence of the creation of transnational networks connecting countries. Although the 7th festival was a hybrid event, combining in-person and online events, it was not possible to fully examine the expansion of the *Uchina*-network online because of the bias of the data collected in person. The identity structure of Okinawan descendants was examined from four perspectives: Okinawa, immigrated country/region, *Nikkei*, and Japanese. Intergenerational and regional characteristics were discovered. Notably, hybrid identity tended to be more common among the third and later generations, and identification with the country or region of immigration was high in Hawaii, whereas Okinawan and *Nikkei* identities were higher in South America.

Although there have been many studies examining the identity and ethnicity of Okinawans and Japanese descendants, most have been qualitative studies based on interviews and fieldwork, while few of them have been quantitative studies like this research. In this context, some findings of this study quantitatively support the results and hypotheses generated by previous qualitative studies. However, the identity characteristics measured in this study do not capture the qualitative shifts in identity or its internal structures, such as hybrid identities and relationships between various identities. In addition, the current focus of festival participants has shifted to the third generation, where identities have become more multifaceted and complex, with the increase in mixed-race descendants as the generations progress leading to distinctions between the fourth generation (and onwards) in Hawai'ian and mainland Americans (Sato and Ogawa 2021). In order to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the identity of Okinawan descendants, it will be important to conduct a combination of qualitative and quantitative research, as well as to continue longitudinal surveys to closely examine the process of transformation.

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Abstract (in Japanese)

要 約

沖縄県では、世界中の沖縄県系人が母県に集う「世界のウチナーンチュ大会」が開催されている。本研究は、第7回世界のウチナーンチュ大会における調査から、大会参加者の特徴を記述するとともに、大会のキーコンセプトである沖縄県系人のアイデンティティと大会を通じたウチナーネットワークの発展・拡大について検討することを主目的とした。コロナ禍の2022年10月30日～11月3日に開催された第7回世界のウチナーンチュ大会において、大会参加者を対象とする質問紙調査を実施した。有効回答として、海外参加者257名、県外参加者65名、県内参加者343名の計665名から回答を得た。大会参加者の特徴として、米国からの参加者が多く、移民世代としては3世が多かった。参加目的としては、世界のウチナーンチュとの交流や沖縄県民との交流など、交流が大きな目的となっていたが、大会を通じた新たなウチナーネットワークについてはほとんど構築されていなかった。アイデンティティについては、海外・県外・県内いずれの参加者も沖縄アイデンティティが高かった。海外参加者のアイデンティティについては、世代を超えて沖縄アイデンティティが高かったが、世代によるアイデンティティの構造の違いも見られた。特に現在の移民世代の中心である3世以降において、ハイブリッドアイデンティティの特徴が見られた。また地域差として、ハワイでは移住地アイデンティティが高く、南米では沖縄・移住地・ニッケイの3つのアイデンティティが高かった。

キーワード: ウチナーンチュ、沖縄、アイデンティティ、ネットワーク、エスニシティ、移民