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Determinants of Local Okinawans' Acceptance of Okinawan Emigrants Overseas: Insights from the 7th Worldwide Uchinanchu Festival

Naoka Maemura^{*} and Junzo Kato[†]

Abstract

This study aimed to clarify the determinants of local Okinawans' attitudes toward Okinawan emigrants and their descendants living overseas. For this purpose, we examined local Okinawan participants' attempts to engage with overseas Okinawans at the 7th Worldwide Uchinanchu Festival held in Okinawa Prefecture in 2022. A questionnaire survey was conducted at the festival, and responses were obtained from 258 local Okinawan participants. The results showed that local Okinawan participants demonstrated a generally high level of positive attitudes toward Okinawans living overseas. Based on previous research, attitudes toward overseas Okinawans were examined in terms of feelings of "acceptance" and "confusion." Using structural equation modeling, this study showed that attitudes toward overseas Okinawans were influenced by shared Okinawan identity and knowledge of Okinawan emigration. In contrast, the frequency of contact with overseas emigration had a significant influence on feelings of confusion. This study revealed that the frequency of contact with Overseas Okinawans is a crucial factor in attitudes toward acceptance of Overseas Okinawans.

Keywords: Emigration, Worldwide Uchinanchu Festival, Local Okinawans, Accepting attitudes, Psychological models

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1. Introduction

According to the Okinawa Prefecture Exchange Promotion Division (2016), there are an estimated 420,000 Okinawan descendants—known as “Worldwide Uchinanchu”—globally. Since 1899, when Okinawan emigration began, Okinawans and their descendants have adapted to and contributed to the local communities of their destinations. They achieved high retention rates and engagement in agriculture and industry despite the harsh environment of hard labor and discrimination in their host countries. The current development and expansion of the Okinawan descendant communities is built upon the foundations laid by the first and second generations of emigrants. These emigrants and descendants overseas have made immeasurable contributions not only to their new local communities but also to Okinawa Prefecture, their ancestral homeland, including remittances that supported the economically impoverished prefecture and reconstruction assistance for postwar Okinawa.

Overseas emigration is an essential part of recent Okinawan history. At a time when overseas emigration was a social phenomenon in Okinawa, there was no strong sense of networking among the Uchinanchu(s) (meaning “Okinawans” in the local dialect¹). They naturally maintained ties across the sea, as they had feelings among relatives or shared connections between Okinawan communities (Kinjyo 2008). However, as generations passed, kinship relations weakened and interracial marriage increased, with lineage-based ties becoming increasingly tenuous. In this context, for example, within the Hawaii Okinawa Federation, “heart” or “spirit” rather than “blood” has emerged as a vital aspect in determining Okinawan identity (Arakaki 2017). Thus, the nature of ties and networks has been transforming over time.

This can also be seen from the Okinawan side, on the islands from which the migrants had departed. After Okinawa’s return to governance by the mainland following WWII, the slogan of being “just like the mainland” proved empty—the economic situation did not improve, and the continued presence of US military bases remained controversial. In the 1980s, with a growing desire to break away from the mainland complex,² the media began to feature images of Uchinanchu around the world who were active. Intertwined with Okinawa’s collective memory of the Ryukyu Kingdom and maritime peoples, this became proof that Uchinanchu were global citizens, reshaping a positive identity in the age of globalization and triggering a significant cultural boom in Okinawan society at the time (Arakaki 2002; Noiri 2025). In other words, the Uchinanchu of the world did not mean merely relatives abroad but were positioned as key contributors to Okinawa as creators of new values and identities. In 1990, the “Worldwide Uchinanchu Network Concept” was launched to expand and systematize the connections between Okinawa prefecture and Uchinanchu around the world. Since then, the Worldwide Uchinanchu Festival has served as the embodiment and realization of this concept.

¹ Uchina is a sort of prefix that means “Okinawan [something],” and Uchinanchu(s) refers to the Okinawan people. Thus, Okinawan people in Okinawa and across the world call themselves Uchinanchu.

² Although not formally defined, it was said that Okinawans of relatively older generation have a mainland complex, i.e., a sense of inferiority towards mainland Japan.

The Worldwide Uchinanchu Festival is Okinawa's most extensive international convention, bringing overseas Okinawans to Okinawa to interact with each other and with the local people in Okinawa. According to the 7th Worldwide Uchinanchu Festival Executive Committee (2023), the purpose of this international convention is "to honor the achievements of Okinawans from around the world, who are Okinawa Prefecture's valuable human assets, and to expand and develop the Uchina-network through exchange with the people of Okinawa Prefecture, as well as to gather in Okinawa, the home prefecture, to confirm their roots and identity and pass them on to the next generation."

The number of overseas participants has increased with each festival, reaching over 7,000 at the 6th festival, marking the highest attendance to date.³ Past festivals have also resulted in the establishment of the Uchina Ambassador Program (1st festival), the establishment of WUB (Worldwide Uchinanchu Business) (2nd festival), Junior Study Tour (3rd festival), Host Bank Families (4th festival), and the World Federation of Young Uchinanchu (5th festival). The Uchina-network system and organizations have been established to connect Okinawans in Okinawa, both locally and globally. Furthermore, the 6th festival established "Worldwide Uchinanchu Day," allowing these ties to become symbolized and confirmed. As described above, the network linking Okinawan residents and Overseas Okinawans is considered to have advanced to a new stage of development, becoming more multifaceted, functional, and emotionally resonant through the Worldwide Uchinanchu Festival.

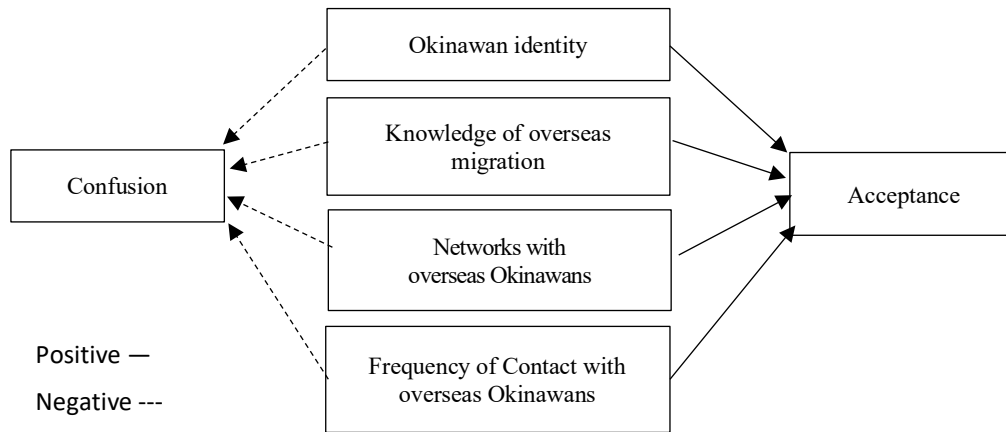
Under these circumstances, what changes are occurring in the attitudes of local Okinawans—the current residents of immigrants' mother prefecture—toward Okinawan emigrants? Kato and Maemura (2022) examined this issue from the perspectives of homogeneity (sharing the same ethnicity) and heterogeneity (living in different countries with distinct cultures) in cross-cultural acceptance. Using SEM, they found that Okinawan residents' attitudes were relatively positive and that two factors shaped their attitudes toward overseas Okinawans: acceptance and confusion. The study focused on the attitude of general Okinawan residents via an online survey. In this study, we apply this attitude model of general Okinawan residents to an actual opportunity for intercultural exchange, the participants of the Worldwide Uchinanchu Festival. By doing so, we can confirm the model's validity and gain insights into the characteristics of Okinawans who participated in the festival (in short, the "in-prefecture participants"), which may differ from those of the general Okinawan population.

The primary objective of this study is to elucidate the attitudes of in-prefecture participants at the Uchinanchu festival toward Okinawans and their descendants overseas. We aim to examine the determinants of these attitudes and the psychological process by which local Okinawans engage with Overseas Okinawans through festival participation. Figure 1-1 shows the

³ The 7th festival, held in 2022 during the COVID-19 pandemic, had 1,790 overseas participants, less than a quarter of those attending the previous festival, due in part to the absence of organized dispatches from the four major South American Okinawan associations: Brazil, Peru, Bolivia, and Argentina.

hypothetical model for this study derived from the results of Kato and Maemura (2022).

Figure1. Hypothetical Model of this Study



The following variables are included in the model. The determinants of Okinawan residents' attitudes have been examined from social, psychological, and sociological perspectives, including social identity theory (Tajfel and Turner 1979), the network hypothesis (Tanabe 2002), and intercultural competence (Yamagishi, Inoshita, and Watanabe 1992). Specifically, significant relationships have been found between Okinawan identity, networks with overseas Okinawans, and knowledge about them in shaping attitudes toward overseas Okinawans. In this study, we also examine the relationships between these variables.

Additionally, as this study involved actual intercultural contact situations in field settings, we set variables for past cross-cultural contact experiences to examine one of the behavioral factors that may influence attitudes. Mukai and Kaneko (2006) found that the frequency of cross-cultural contact can influence attitudes toward acceptance of other cultures. In Okinawa Prefecture, there have been various opportunities to meet Okinawan emigrants and their descendants, such as at past Worldwide Uchinanchu Festivals, at school, during prefectural and municipal events, and through local media coverage. This study considers these opportunities for contact, information, and learning about overseas Okinawans and examines the effects of this frequency on attitudes of acceptance. To fulfill the above research objectives, this study was conducted during the 7th Worldwide Uchinanchu Festival, held from October 30 to November 3, 2022.

2. Methods

2.1 Survey Methods

The present study⁴ was conducted by JICA Ogata Sadako Research Institute for Peace and Development as part of the project “Study about Movements and Networks of Japanese Descendants between Japan and Latin America” (lead researcher: Yukako Nagamura).⁵

The survey was administered during the 7th Worldwide Uchinanchu Festival held in Okinawa, Japan, October 30–November 3, 2022. An overview of the festival and details of the survey are described in Kato (2025). A questionnaire survey was conducted on festival participants, who completed the survey either on paper or online using Google Forms. The survey was delivered at the festival venue, at Naha Airport, and online, and responses were accepted from November 1 to December 30. Separate questionnaires were prepared for overseas, out-of-prefecture⁶ and in-prefecture participants, as different questions were asked for each group. The survey languages were Japanese, English, Spanish, and Portuguese (the questionnaire for out-of-prefecture and in-prefecture participants was prepared in Japanese and English). We first made the questionnaire in Japanese as a prototype and then requested a translation service provider to translate it into other languages. The questionnaire translated by the company was checked and revised multiple times by researchers who were experts in each language within the research team. The final version was printed on both sides of A3 paper. The online questionnaire used Google Forms and had precisely the same items as the paper version.

2.2 Participants

After data cleaning, the overall results of the survey show that 257 (38.6%) of the overseas participants, 65 (9.8%) of the out-of-prefecture participants, and 343 (51.6%) of the in-prefecture participants provided valid responses. Note that while this study targets in-prefecture participants, there are also a variety of in-prefecture participants—for example, those who are originally from

⁴ The research organization consists of the following members. Naomi Noiri (University of the Ryukyus, Research Group Leader), Junzo Kato (Ritsumeikan University, Research Supervisor), Kai Fujinami (Kanto Gakuin University, Research Group Secretariat), 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 research staff, and the student staff included 28 from the University of the Ryukyus, 8 from Kanda University of International Studies, 6 from Kobe City University of Foreign Studies, 4 from Kanto Gakuin University, and 28 from Okinawa International University. The affiliations of the members are as of that time.

⁵ 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 JICA Ogata Sadako Research Institute for Peace and Development’s Research Ethics Guidelines for Human Subjects. 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.

⁶ Out-of-prefecture participants include attendees from mainland Japan.

outside Okinawa and immigrated to the prefecture, returned migrants⁷ who immigrated to Okinawa from overseas, and those born and raised in Okinawa. Because of the significant influence of where they grew up on each variable, such as the implications for attitudes toward acceptance of overseas Okinawans⁸ and school learning experiences, and the fact that the majority of the in-prefecture participants were from within the prefecture (258 participants, 75.2%),⁹ the analysis was conducted with the survey participants who were born in Okinawa prefecture, as identified by the survey items: “participation category” and “place of birth.”

2.3 Measures

Various survey items were set up for this study to examine the actual conditions of the festival participants, their evaluation of the festival, and their attitudes and awareness related to Uchinanchu from multiple perspectives. The following items were used in this study. Given that the survey was conducted while and after the participants were attending the festival, the items used were carefully chosen to avoid burdening them—for example, by using a single item to measure attitudes towards the reception of Okinawans from abroad.¹⁰

(1) Demographic Measures

Participation category (overseas, out-of-prefecture, or in-prefecture), number of previous participations in the Worldwide Uchinanchu Festival, place of birth, region of residence, gender, age, occupation, etc.

(2) Attitudes Toward Overseas Okinawans

One item from each of the two factors of Kato and Maemura’s (2022) Attitude Scale for Overseas Migrants with high factor loadings was used. Specifically, “I want to make friends with overseas Uchinanchu(s)” as the acceptance factor and “Uchinanchu(s) overseas seem kind of scary” as the

⁷ In this context, the term “returning migrants” refers to Okinawan emigrants or their descendants worldwide who return to Japan mainly for job opportunities. Some cases are temporary, while others become long-term residents. In general, returning Japanese migrants, so-called *dekasegi*, has increased since the 1990s.

⁸ For example, in the case of return migrants, it is possible to situate oneself among overseas Okinawan descendants, even if one currently lives in Okinawa. In other words, the relationship with the Okinawans overseas, who are the focus of the attitudes of acceptance, can change depending on their place of origin and thus cannot be treated similarly.

⁹ The other percentages among the in-prefecture participants were 61 (17.8%) from outside the prefecture, 22 (6.4%) from abroad, and 2 (0.6%) unknown. We limited the number of survey participants to those from within the prefecture due to the small sample size for statistical testing and the inability to obtain valid test results. Respondents who participated in the festival online were included (3 respondents).

¹⁰ Because of the large number of items and the differences in sample size, it is difficult to make a direct statistical comparison with the previous survey by Kato and Maemura (2022) ($N = 507$ in the survey). Therefore, we will not conduct statistical tests; however, we will describe the characteristics of in-prefecture participants in a hypothesis-generating manner through a comparison of the numbers obtained.

confusion factor were used on a 5-point scale ranging from “1. strongly disagree” to “5. strongly agree.”

(3) Okinawan Identity

The respondents were asked about Noiri’s (2012) Okinawan identity item (“I consider myself Uchinanchu”) using a 4-point scale (“1. not at all” to “4. very much”).

(4) Networking With Okinawans Overseas¹¹

The respondents were asked about their networks with overseas Okinawans. Specifically, we asked how many “Uchinanchu overseas” they interact with regularly and let them respond with an open-ended question.

(5) Knowledge of Overseas Emigration

Respondents were asked to rate themselves on how much they know about overseas emigration. Specifically, respondents were asked about the history of overseas emigration—i.e., when it started and when most of them emigrated, the number of overseas Okinawans (how many overseas Okinawans there are now), and the regions where Overseas Okinawans reside (which regions have overseas Okinawans and which ones have the most). The respondents were asked to answer on a scale of “0. I don’t know anything”, “1. I know a little”, and “2. I know a lot” for each of the following questions.

(6) Opportunities for Contact with Overseas Okinawans

We listed opportunities for contact, learning, and information related to Okinawan migration overseas undertaken by public institutions, organizations, and media in Okinawa, as well as private ones. Specifically, respondents were asked to answer all of the items on opportunities they had in a multiple-choice format comprising nine items: participation in a “past Worldwide Uchinanchu Festival”, “events and publicity by prefectural and municipal governments”, “events and publicity by local organizations and NPOs in Okinawa”, “media reports in newspapers and TV”, “SNS information”, “school classes”, “exhibits at libraries, museums, and JICA” (Japan International Cooperation Agency), “information from relatives and friends overseas,” and “information from relatives and friends in Okinawa.”

2.4 Analysis Procedure

As shown above, the main variables for this study were acceptance and confusion in measuring attitudes toward overseas Okinawans. They also measured Okinawan identity, knowledge of overseas emigration, networks with overseas Okinawan descendants, and frequency of contact

¹¹ Items in the measures (4) to (6) asked participants about their experience and knowledge prior to participating in the festival.

with overseas Okinawans. First, descriptive statistics were calculated for each variable. Since the frequency of contact with Okinawan residents is a composite variable unique to this study, and each major item was measured for the first time in this survey, it was analyzed by generation. The variables were analyzed using SEM according to the hypothetical model shown in Figure 1-1.

3. Results

3.1 Basic Attributes of Survey Respondents (In-Prefecture Participants from Okinawa)

The mean age of the survey respondents was 43.63 years ($SD = 18.71$). Gender was 34.9% male, 62.4% female, and 2.8% other/no response. Naha City was the most common place of residence (44.2%), followed by Urasoe City (6.2%) and Okinawa City (5.0%), indicating that participants came from various cities, towns, and villages in the prefecture, mainly from the central and southern parts of the main island of Okinawa. “Student” was the most commonly given occupation (20.5%), indicating the younger generation also participated in the festival. This was followed by professional and technical occupations (12.0%), service occupations (10.9%), and clerical occupations (10.5%). Regarding the number of times the respondents had participated in past Worldwide Uchinanchu Festivals, the most common response was 0 (45.1%), followed by 1 (25.3%), 2 (15.8%), 3 (8.3%), and 4 or more times (5.6%). In other words, although many of the survey respondents attended the 7th festival for the first time, more than half were repeat participants who had attended previous festivals.

3.2 Descriptive Statistics for Each Variable

Descriptive statistics were calculated for each variable (Table 1). First, acceptance of overseas Okinawans was high at 4.57, while confusion was low at 1.43. Both results suggest a ceiling or floor effect, and it can be said that the attitude of the survey participants from within the prefecture toward overseas Okinawans was extremely positive. Okinawan identity was also high, at 3.83 out of 4. Next, scores for the three items regarding knowledge of overseas emigration were calculated (range: 0–6), and the average score was 2.42. The average score for each item (history, number of overseas Okinawans, and region) was not very different, ranging from 0.65 to 0.91. The knowledge of overseas emigration was lower than the “1. I know a little” score.

The frequency of contact with overseas Okinawans was calculated by summing up the number of selections for the nine items. The result was 2.30, indicating that the frequency of contact was not very high. To examine the frequency of contact in more detail, we calculated the selection rate (opportunities for contact) for each item (Table 2). The most frequent contact opportunities were “media coverage such as newspapers and TV” (53.9%) and “past Worldwide Uchinanchu Festivals” (45.3%). The rest were in the 20% range or lower. However, when looked at by age group, there were differences in opportunities for contact: for those in their 30s and older generations, the media coverage and past festivals served as opportunities, but for those in their 20s and younger, these opportunities were low. The foremost opportunity for those in their 20s and younger generations to learn about overseas emigration was in “school classes.”

Regarding networks with overseas Okinawans, we asked for responses regarding the number of people, but there were some linguistic responses such as “a lot” and values that would be outliers, as well as many “no” responses. Since it was difficult to calculate summary statistics accurately, we categorized the cases in which respondents answered that they had at least one person, including linguistic data, as “having a network” and recalculated the data. As a result, 21.3% of all respondents had some kind of a network with overseas Okinawans.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics for Each Variable

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Acceptance	4.57	.61
Confusion	1.43	.83
Okinawan identity	3.83	.49
Knowledge of overseas emigration	2.42	1.48
Frequency of contact with overseas Okinawans	2.30	1.79
	Freq	%
Network with overseas Okinawan descendants	55	21.3%

Table 2: Frequency of Contact with Overseas Okinawans, by Item and by Age

	Total	Category by age					χ^2 Value
		20s and younger generations (N=71)	30s (N=35)	40s (N=45)	50s (N=34)	60s and older generations (N=60)	
Past Worldwide Uchinanchu Festival	45.3%	28.2% ▼	51.4%	42.2%	61.8% △	55.0% △	15.11**
Events and publicity by prefectural and municipal governments	23.3%	16.9%	31.4%	17.8%	29.4%	25.0%	4.53
Events and publicity by local organizations and NPOs in Okinawa	14.0%	11.3%	20.0%	17.8%	14.7%	11.7%	2.25
Media reports in newspapers and TV	53.9%	39.4% ▼	54.3% △	64.4% △	67.6% △	58.3% △	11.02*
SNS information	19.8%	26.8%	25.7%	24.4%	14.7%	10.0%	7.50
School classes	19.0%	52.1% △	20.0%	4.4% ▼	0.0% ▼	3.3% ▼	72.58***
Exhibits at libraries, museums, and JICA	18.2%	15.5%	22.9%	15.6%	14.7%	21.7%	1.84
Information from relatives and friends overseas	17.1%	11.3%	20.0%	17.8%	20.6%	23.3%	3.59
Information from relatives and friends in Okinawa	19.8%	18.3%	25.7%	17.8%	8.8%	26.7%	5.30

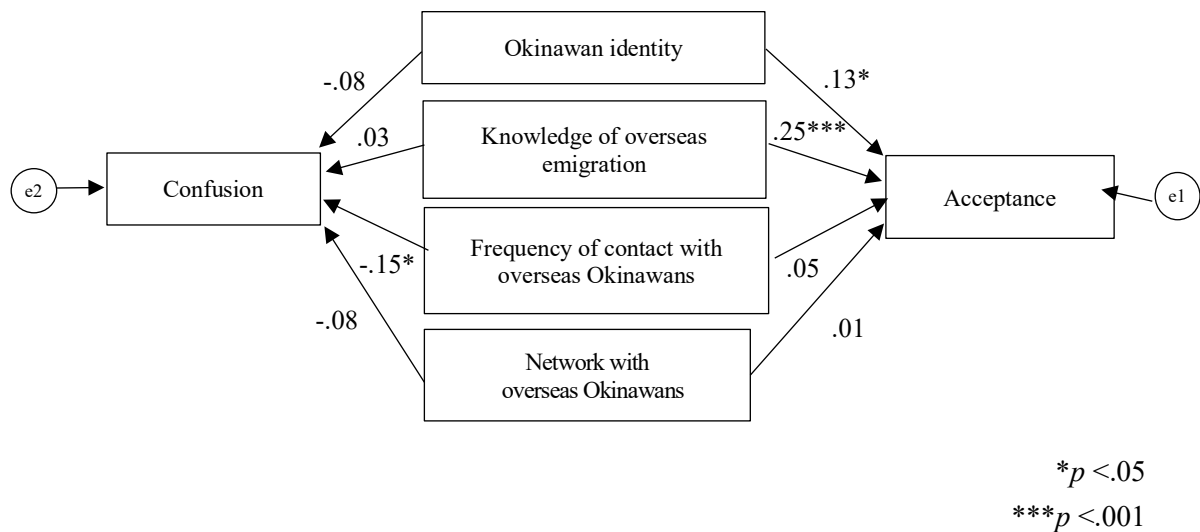
3.3 Psychological Model of Attitudes Toward Acceptance of Overseas Okinawans

Based on Kato and Maemura (2022), a hypothetical model (see Figure 1) was set up as a psychological model influencing attitudes toward acceptance of overseas Okinawans and analyzed using structural equation modeling (SEM). Amos 27.0 was used for analysis, and values were calculated using the maximum likelihood estimation method. In the analysis, each variable

in Table 1 was used as an observed variable. As shown in Table 2, some variables, such as participation in past festivals and frequency of contact with Okinawan emigrants, are thought to vary depending on age and generation. Therefore, we examined the relationship between age and other variables. The results showed that age had a weak correlation with “acceptance” ($r = -.19$, $p < .01$) and “knowledge of overseas emigration” ($r = .14$, $p < .05$). No significant correlations were found with the other variables. Since no concerning confounding variables were identified, we proceeded with the analysis. Regarding networks with overseas Okinawans, a dummy variable indicating having a network (1) and not having a network (0) was included in the analysis.

The results showed a relatively good fit of the hypothesized model with GFI=.94, AGFI=.81, RMSEA=.16, and AIC=81.25. The numbers in Figure 1 are standardized coefficients. For acceptance, the paths from Okinawan identity ($\beta=.13$, $p < .05$) and knowledge of overseas emigration ($\beta=.25$, $p < .001$) were significant, and for confusion, the negative path from frequency of contact with overseas Okinawans ($\beta=-.15$, $p < .05$) was significant.

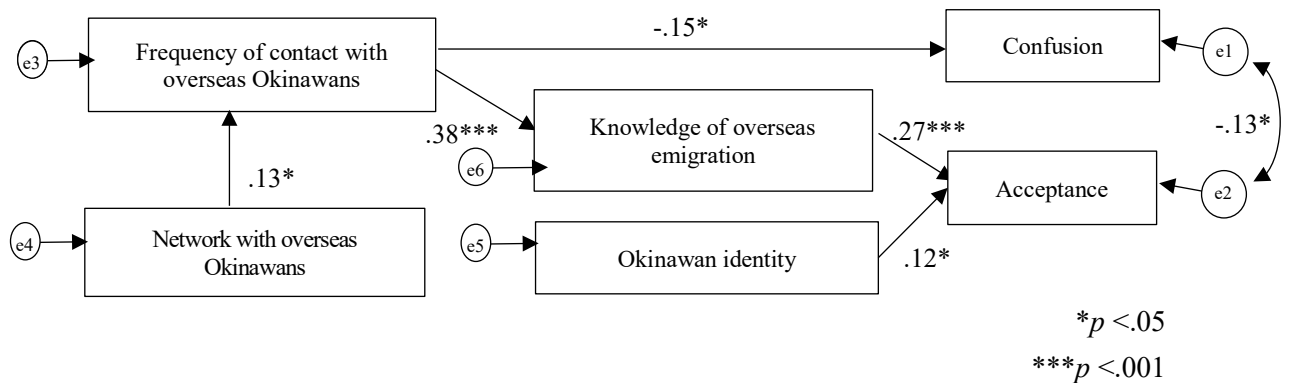
Figure 2: Hypothetical Model and Results From SEM



To examine a better fit, the model was modified based on the modification indicators obtained from the analysis of the hypothetical model. Non-significant paths were excluded and the final modified model is shown in Figure 2. The fitness of the model was GFI=.99, AGFI=.98, RMSEA=.01, and AIC=32.09, indicating the model was more sophisticated. For the main effects, the paths to positive acceptance and confusion, as in the hypothesized model, the paths to Acceptance from Okinawan identity ($\beta=.12$, $p < .05$) and Knowledge of overseas emigration ($\beta=.27$, $p < .001$) and the path to Confusion from Frequency of contact related to overseas emigration ($\beta=-.15$, $p < .05$) were significant. The primary difference between the hypothetical and modified models was the relationship between the explanatory variables. First, a significant

path was found from Network with overseas Okinawans to Frequency of contact related to overseas emigration ($\beta=.13, p < .05$). There was also a significant path from Frequency of contact with overseas Okinawans to Knowledge of overseas emigration ($\beta=.38, p < .001$). In other words, the frequency of contact with overseas Okinawans had a direct effect on Confusion and an indirect impact on Acceptance.

Figure 3: SEM Results of the Modified Model



4. Discussion

The purpose of the present study was to elucidate local Okinawans' attitudes toward Okinawan migrants overseas and to examine the determinants of the psychological processes through which Okinawan people try to relate more closely with overseas Okinawans. The research setting was the 7th Worldwide Uchinanchu Festival held in Okinawa Prefecture, and a survey was conducted among participants from within the prefecture who are of Okinawan origin. In general, results show that participants from within Okinawa Prefecture held strongly accepting attitudes toward overseas Okinawans. According to the modified model of SEM, frequency of contact with overseas Okinawans was the key factor that positively influenced acceptance and negatively influenced confusion.

First, regarding attitudes toward overseas Okinawans, local Okinawan participants exhibited highly accepting attitudes, despite both acceptance factors and confusion showing ceiling and floor effects, with a mean of 4.57 for acceptance and 1.43 for confusion. This indicates that they showed no confusion and were strongly positive about accepting overseas Okinawans. Although it is difficult to compare directly, considering Kato and Maemura's (2022) study about Okinawan residents in general, many of whom are born in Okinawa, with 3.33 for acceptance and 2.81 for confusion, the participants in the current study showed a more accepting attitude toward overseas Okinawans. This conclusion may appear somewhat tautological, since it is evident that those who are accepting of emigrants are more likely to participate in the festival. However, from a different point of view, it might be rephrased as "only Okinawan residents"—those with particularly accepting attitudes toward Okinawan emigrants—were participating in the festival.

Next, we took a closer look at the position of festival participants from Okinawa Prefecture

among all Okinawa residents. The 7th Worldwide Uchinanchu Festival was attended in person by approximately 215,000 people in total at events hosted, co-hosted, supported, or organized by municipalities and other organizations (7th Worldwide Uchinanchu Festival Executive Committee 2023). Considering that the population of Okinawa Prefecture at the time of the festival (October 2022) was approximately 1.47 million (Okinawa Prefecture Planning Department Statistics Division 2022), the total number of participants represented about one-seventh of the population by simple calculation. However, of the in-person participants, 1,790 were from overseas, and 3,693 were from outside Okinawa in Japan, suggesting that many participants also attended more than one event. If some of the in-prefecture participants also attended multiple events, then fewer than one-seventh of the Okinawan population participated, and the percentage would be even lower. Since it is not possible to estimate the exact number of participants from within Okinawa Prefecture, however, it is nonetheless essential to foster an accepting attitude toward overseas Okinawans among the general population in order to promote the participation of local Okinawan residents in the festival.

To gain further insights into this, we examined the psychological process results related to the attitude of acceptance of overseas Okinawans among the in-prefecture participants. We found that the pathways from Okinawan identity and knowledge of overseas emigration were significant for acceptance. This result was similar to Kato and Maemura's (2022) psychological model of the general Okinawan population. In other words, there was consistency between the psychological models of the general Okinawan population and the in-prefecture participants, suggesting a process through which individuals in the general population who develop accepting attitudes in line with this model become participants in the festival. A closer examination of the results revealed that the standardized coefficient for the path from knowledge of overseas emigration was high. This suggests that improving knowledge of overseas emigration is essential in strengthening accepting attitudes toward overseas Okinawans. Furthermore, such attitudes may create a positive cycle that leads to participation in subsequent festivals. This study did not examine the behavioral pathways, such as actual participation in the festival, which will be a topic for future research.

The most influential factor affecting knowledge of overseas emigration was the frequency of contact with overseas Okinawans. The standardized coefficient was as high as 0.38, indicating that increased opportunities for contact, information sharing, and learning lead to greater knowledge of overseas emigration. The most frequent opportunities for learning were "media coverage such as newspapers and TV" and participation in a "past Worldwide Uchinanchu Festival." The expression "Worldwide Uchinanchu" itself began in the 1980s through the local media (e.g., Ryukyu Shimpo newspaper series and Okinawa TV's "Worldwide Uchinanchu Travels"), and media coverage was a major source of information for the in-prefecture participants. The next most common opportunity was past participation in a Worldwide Uchinanchu Festival, with more than half of the survey participants being repeat participants who

had attended at least one event in the past. This means that those who have participated in past festivals are likely to repeat their participation in the festivals, gaining greater knowledge of overseas emigration through these experiences.

However, when looking at the selection rates for these two contact opportunities by age group, both selection rates were notably low among those in their 20s and younger generations. In other words, for the younger generations, media coverage and past festivals did not provide many contact opportunities—the most common opportunity was “school classes.” In Okinawa, opportunities to learn about overseas emigration are provided in school classes, for example, the “One School, One Country Activity” (4th Festival), in which each school learns about one country, and the “Let’s Study! World Uchinanchu Project” (6th Festival) (Okinawa NGO Center 2022), and the practice of introducing the Worldwide Uchinanchu Festival through educational materials used in elementary school social studies classes (Kano and Kamiyama 2016). In this survey, the largest number of respondents by age were in their 20s or younger, and their responses can be interpreted as reflecting the outcomes and achievements of these school programs conducted in the prefecture to date. The frequency of contact related to overseas emigration had a negative effect on confusion. Mukai and Kaneko (2006) found that the frequency of cross-cultural contact lowers the level of tension toward foreigners among attitudes toward acceptance of other cultures; however, confusion is a factor that includes interpersonal anxiety and tension, so their findings are consistent with the present study.

As described above, the frequency of contact with overseas Okinawans is a key concept in the attitude toward acceptance of overseas Okinawans, as it not only indirectly influences acceptance but also directly affects feelings of confusion. Considering ways to increase the frequency of contact related to overseas emigration, one way is to have connections with overseas Okinawans such as relatives and friends, as the path from the network with overseas Okinawans was significant. However, as the number of respondents with such networks was small (21.3%), a large proportion of participants did not have such connections. The Worldwide Uchinanchu Festival can be an opportunity to create new networks for such people without overseas communities of Okinawans and their descendants; however, in practice, it does not fully function as a networking opportunity for in-prefecture participants (Kato et al. 2018). One in-prefecture participant expressed their dissatisfaction with the festival, and offered the following suggestion on improvements:

There is a problem with the transmission of the information. ...Shouldn't we be consistently sharing information about overseas Uchinanchu?

It is crucial not only to strengthen the transmission of information on the festival itself but also to create opportunities to encounter overseas Okinawans on a regular basis. Once again, when considering age differences, it is important to provide information to older generations through the media, while for younger generations—those who will be responsible for Okinawa in the

future—learning and practicing in the school classrooms will become increasingly important.

Finally, we discuss some challenges of this study. Many of the scales were measured as single items due to the overall survey design and the need to minimize the burden on survey participants while attending the festival. Although each item was carefully selected based on previous studies, the validity and reliability of the scales cannot be fully examined within this study. Additionally, knowledge of overseas emigration, a crucial factor influencing attitudes, was measured through participants' self-reports. Assessing this knowledge more objectively would not only enhance the validity of the research design but could also inform educational initiatives related to Okinawan migration. Also, due to differences in measurement methods, comparisons with previous studies could not be statistically tested. Despite the practical limitations of the survey, these methodological problems need to be remedied to obtain robust research findings.

In addition, the 7th Worldwide Uchinanchu Festival, where this study was conducted, was held under the exceptional circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic. Some local Okinawan residents may have refrained from participating in the event due to fears of infection, despite wanting to attend. Thus, we cannot rule out the possibility that the in-prefecture participants who took part in the survey were a somewhat biased sample: those motivated to participate even under pandemic conditions. Conducting a similar survey at a future festival held under normal conditions and comparing the results will therefore be necessary.

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Abstract (in Japanese)

要 約

本研究は、世界のウチナーンチュ大会に県内から参加した沖縄県出身者の、沖縄系海外移民に対する受容態度とその規定因について明らかにし、海外移民と関わりを持つとする沖縄県民の心理的プロセスについて検討することを主目的とした。2022 年に開催された第7回世界のウチナーンチュ大会においてアンケート調査を実施し、県内出身者 258 名から回答を得た。分析の結果、調査協力者である県内参加者の海外移民の態度は極めて受容的であることが明らかになった。また海外移民に対する態度の心理的プロセスについて構造方程式モデリングによる分析を行った結果、「受容」には沖縄アイデンティティと海外移民に関する知識が、「困惑」には海外移民との接触頻度が有意な影響を及ぼしていた。本研究の結果、海外移民に対する態度には海外移民との接触頻度がキー概念となることが明らかになった。

キーワード：海外移民、世界のウチナーンチュ大会、沖縄県民、受容態度、心理的モデル