

A Study on Residents' Awareness in Ethnic Area under the Ethnic Tourism Context: Case Study of Ōkubo, Tokyo

1X16DG71-2 Luo WANG

Within the context of increasing foreign residents in Japan, many new ethnic enclaves are born. While they show unique feature and vitality, considering the high population mobility of the new comers and their unique occupation features, potential risks of conflict exist as well. This research is conducted in order to see residents' awareness in the Ōkubo area in Tokyo, a new ethnic area which arises in 80s', as well as their recognition of the effect which the ethnic shops give to the neighborhood under the context of Korean ethnic tourism. This research aims at providing observation of ethnic area and its residents from the perspective of the urban planning, filling the vacancy of this subject in the ethnic area research field as in East Asia. The main method of this research is postal questionnaire investigation. As the result finds, usage and awareness of local ethnic shops strongly affect local residents' awareness toward the ethnic tourism and the area.

Keyword: Ethnic area, Ethnic urban tourism, Residents' awareness, Ōkubo, Questionnaire investigation

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background

According to the Ministry of Justice of Japan, the number of foreign residents has reached a new peak, and the amount still tends to increase¹⁾. As a response, new ethnic enclaves or clusters appeared in the Tokyo metropolitan area over the past decades, such as the Ikebukuro north exit area in Toshima-ku and the Ōkubo area in Shinjuku-ku. Unlike the enclaves with a long history, which establish a stable relationship with the host society, such as Yokohama China Town, the foreign population of these new ethnic enclaves are of high population mobility.

In a report given by the Shinjuku-ku government, it is said that over 70% of the foreign residents in Shinjuku-ku have lived here for less than five years²⁾³⁾. The report also shows that about 70% of the foreign residents are living as a single household, and many of them are working for the local ethnic business.

Such high population mobility and their job features might affect inter-ethnic relationship and give potential risk to the local community. The Ōkubo area used to be a region full of foreigners of diversified background and nationalities in the 1980s' and 1990s', however, due to the Korean wave(韓流) popularity in Japan since 2000s, Korean came into the Ōkubo area and became the majority of foreigners in the region. The ethnic business in Ōkubo then turn to cater to the host society rather than the locals, and the area became famous for Korean restaurants and shops. Large number of young Japanese tourists who visit

the place for the ethnic atmosphere bring noises and rubbish to the streets, warnings which ask people to stop littering appeared in the 2010s, and these signs usually contain several different languages. Although the ethnic business has been active in the area for several decades, an association of local ethnic business was established only in 2017, and Islamic groups turned out to be more active than before⁴⁾.

Ōkubo is an ethnic area with foreigners of diversified backgrounds, with Korean as the major group of all foreigners in recent decades. Moreover, the streetscape and the local business is greatly affected; this phenomenon suggests that a unique ethnic area is formed in the Ōkubo, and many things could be learned from it. Many researches are conducted on the topic of ethnic studies; however, the number of papers which start from the view of urban planning is relatively small, and such vacancy is particularly notable in East Asia.

1.2. Research Purposes

Depending on the hypothesis that residents' awareness could affect inter-ethnic relationship, this research aims to see how people in the Ōkubo area see the ethnic shops and how they understand the effect these shops bring to the area under the context of the increasing popularity of ethnic tourism, and how do this understanding affect their feelings toward the area. It is hoped that this research could provide an observation of ethnic town from the perspective of urban planning, filling the vacancy of this kind of research in East Asia, and possibly become a reference for the future urban planning when regarding the ethnic area issues.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Previous Studies about the Area and urban ethnic studies in Japan

There are several studies about the Ōkubo area in Japan, and some of them depend on the view of urban planning. INABA Yoshiko gives a systematic overview of the Ōkubo area, which indicates the history and the demographic changes of the area⁷⁾. It is showed that before 2000, the streets of Ōkubo were full of ethnic facilities with diversified backgrounds, including several different southeast Asian countries, China and Korea.

On the other hand, KIM Yeonkyung describes the Korean ethnic business in the Ōkubo area from mid-2000s'to mid-2010s⁸⁾. It is observed that the number of Korean restaurants and retail shops increased significantly, and they took place in the main street, replacing the place where Japanese local markets used to exist. Also, while the number of Korean restaurants and shops increased significantly, the kinds of shops didn't increase much.

According to previous studies, the Ōkubo area is defined as an area consist of Ōkubo 1-Chōme, Ōkubo 2-Chōme Hyakuninchō 1-Chōme and Hyakuninchō 2-Chōme. According to both INABA and KIM, The Korean shops are mostly located in Ōkubo 1-chōme and Ōkubo 2-chōme, while shops of other ethnicities such as China and Southeast Asia mostly settle in Hyakuninchō 1-chōme and Hyakuninchō 2-chōme. A large number of ethnic stores are located along the main road, such as Ōkubo-dōri, Shokuan-dōri and Otakibashi-dōri. However, significant number of Korean shops are located along a pathway called Ikemen-dōri, which connects the Ōkubo dōri and Shokuan-dōri.

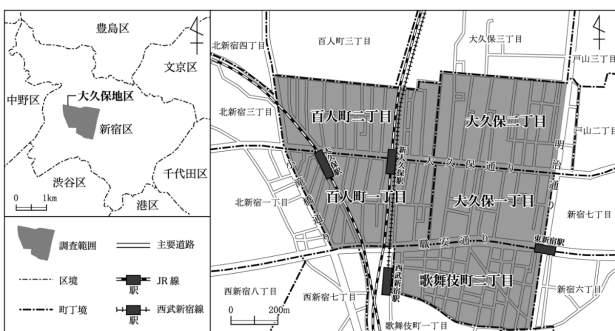


Fig 1. The range of Ōkubo area⁸⁾

Also, for the field of urban sociology, OKUDA⁹⁾ conducted several investigations about the foreigners in Tokyo in 1990s', including the Ōkubo area.

OKUDA apply the Chicago paradigm in the researches he leads, however; HIGUCHI¹⁰⁾ criticizes such approach, and suggests that researchers today should consider about the factors of state and market as well as the notions of space and place. One of the arguments that HIGUCHI makes is that the earlier researches of OKUDA could be linked with the enhancing prejudice towards Asian foreigner in Tokyo. Such prejudices lead to the strengthening of law enforcement in the area especially to Asian immigrants. Their studies, thus, suggest a critical approach on understanding the ethnic relationship and residents' awareness of the area.

2.2. Reviewing Previous Studies

Except the researches regarding about the Ōkubo area, review of ethnic studies is conducted as well. The review is conducted through followed process.

At first, keywords are classified as follow:

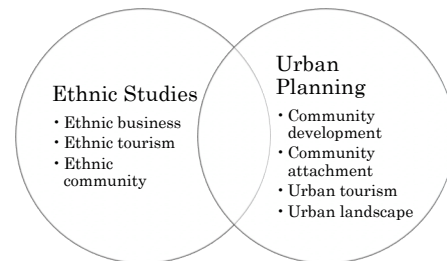


Fig 2. Classified Keywords

Then, the combination of every two of different keywords are input into web search engine such as Google scholar and J-stage. Papers are filtered and selected according to authors' keywords and abstract. There is no limitation for published year. In the end, 28 papers are selected.

2.3. Summary of Previous Studies

The role of different factors in urban ethnic studies is then summarized in Fig 3. according to the review.

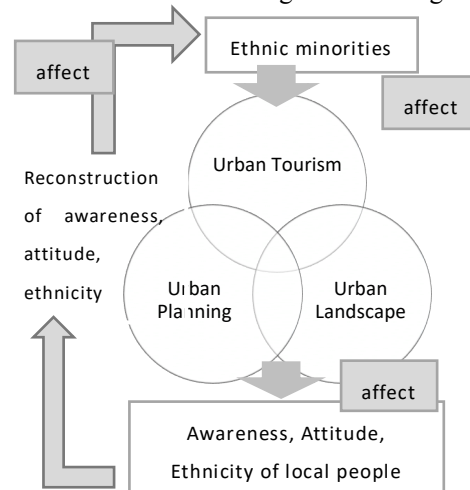


Fig 3. Role of different factors in urban ethnic studies

Fig 3. describes the phenomenon in ethnic communities summarized from literature. It is observed that the appearance of ethnic minorities would firstly affect urban tourism, urban planning and urban landscape of the area. Urban tourism, urban landscape and urban planning usually affect each other under the ethnic context as well. And then, the development and change of urban tourism, urban planning and urban landscape, would then affect the awareness, attitude, as well as the ethnicity of local people. Under these affects, people's awareness, attitude and ethnicity might go through a process of reconstruction, which could then come back to affect the ethnic factor: the population of ethnic minorities might increase or decrease as a response; the inter-ethnic relationship might change according to the change of awareness as well.

The studied region in the review includes US, Canada, Australia, UK, Germany, Singapore and Jerusalem. Most of the studies are about Asian ethnic enclaves in or around big cities, while in North America, European or Latino ethnic area in suburbs are studied as well. For North America as well as Australia, the inter-ethnic relationship is relatively peaceful, which might be related with their common point as settler country. In US, the authority usually tends to let the free market decide when regarding with ethnic tourism, while government may intervene in a municipal level occasionally. For Canada, conflicts happen sometimes between authority and ethnic minorities; while in Australia, local authority plays a positive role for both tourism and inter-ethnic relationship. For European countries such as Germany and UK, the urban planning project designates places for developing ethnic tourism, which are usually historical Asian ethnic enclaves in the city. However, problems and conflicts emerge between policies and these enclaves; it is also questioned that exactly who would benefit from ethnic tourism while the "ethnicities" of minorities are being consumed.

For the Singapore case, ethnic tourism strengthens the tension between different groups: Indian and Chinese; people who benefit directly from development of tourism and people who don't. Further questions, such as gentrification, emerge as the ethnic tourism develop.

Jerusalem is a special case which is under the context of inter-ethnic conflicts already. City

planners are usually ignored, while in Jerusalem, politicians need planners for political statement and expression in urban planning. The fear and safety landscape are developed by researchers and the division between different ethnic groups is further examined as well.

It is widely observed that problems such as gentrification, and the controversy about the exact beneficiary in ethnic tourism, appear in many areas which have ethnic tourism. In the process of developing ethnic tourism, political expression and reconstruction of ethnicity usually happen as well.

2.4. Characterization of the Research

As the review indicates, the urban ethnic studies in East Asia is relatively less. It is understandable, as East Asian countries are not traditional settlers' s countries. Even if there are ethnic minorities in East Asian countries, they are usually resided in rural places or have their specific residential region, such as ethnic minorities in China, and Ainu people in Japan. However, mega cities like Tokyo still need to face the issue of increasing foreign residents and forming ethnic enclave, as immigrants in Tokyo increase in globalization process. Clearly, it would be very difficult to apply the rather successful North America paradigm Japan: East Asian countries are lack of both the multi-ethnic culture and the liberalism thoughts. But the review still provides ideas for examining the difficulties and developing methods for Japan.

Depending on the review, this research aims to investigate residents' awareness of local ethnic shops; find out the relationship between residents' awareness of local ethnic tourism and their usage, as well as their attributes; and also, reveal the current problems as well as the risk of possible conflicts. It is hypothesized that in the Ōkubo area, locals' awareness toward the area and tourism, as well as the inter-ethnic relationship, would be affected by the attribute of residents, as well as their usage and attitude about ethnic shops, as indicated by the review. Without the multi-ethnic culture and liberalism background, also within the existence of prejudice toward Asian immigrants, it might be more appropriate to assumed that risks of potential conflicts exist in the area. In the ideal situation, the result could possibly serve as a step of improving the urban planning situation, as well as the urban landscape of the area.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Flow of the Research

Due to the COVID-19 outbreak in Japan, the opportunities for fieldwork and face-to-face interview largely decrease. Postal questionnaire is thus considered to be the major method. The general flow of the research is listed below.

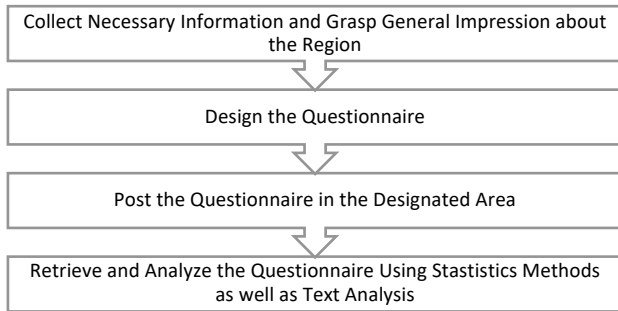


Fig.4 Flow of the research

3.2. Questionnaire about Resident’s Usage and Awareness about Ethnic Shops

As the research aim at finding the relationship between people’s attribute, action and their awareness, the method of correlation analysis is anticipated already at the stage of questionnaire design. The questionnaire is therefore designed in a way that could be rather conveniently analyzed through and related statistics method.

Table 1. Structure of Questionnaire

| | Content | Target information |
|-----------|---|--|
| Statement | General situation of ethnic shops | - |
| Part 1 | Question of usage and attitudes for ethnic facilities | Frequency of visiting, reason of visiting, approximate location of the shops impression about the ethnic shops. |
| Part 2 | Question of awareness of ethnic tourism | How do people perceive the current situation of ethnic tourism and how do they feel about it |
| Part 3 | Question for awareness of the area | People’s attachment and awareness of the area and residents’ relationship |
| Part 4 | Attribute questions | Age, occupation, nationality, status of residence, approximate address, years of residence in the area, communication with people of other ethnicities |

3.3. Process of Questionnaire Delivery

The questionnaires are delivered into mailbox of the residents by hand, and retrieved by mailing. Except for some of the apartments which restrict outsiders from going in, the questionnaires are delivered almost averagely among each area. Information about the questionnaire delivery is listed below in Table 2.

Table 2. Summary about Questionnaire Delivery

| Day of Distribution | 2020.06.28~2020.06.29 | |
|---------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------|
| Area | Number of Distributed Questionnaires | Number of Households |
| Ōkubo 1-chōme | 200 | 3,139 |
| Ōkubo 2-chōme | 400 | 5,633 |
| Hyakunincho 1-chōme | 200 | 3,064 |
| Hyakunincho 2-chōme | 200 | 3,487 |
| Total | 1,000 | 15,323 |

4. RESULTS

4.1. General Information and statistics about the Response

In total, 1000 questionnaires are sent, and 85 are retrieved, giving the retrieving rate of 8.5%. Among the 85 questionnaires, 3 are invalid, the number of effective questionnaires is 81.

Table 3. Retrieving Rate of Questionnaire

| Address | Retrieved | Delivered | Rate |
|---------------------|-----------|-----------|------|
| Ōkubo 1-chōme | 19 | 200 | 9.5% |
| Ōkubo 2-chōme | 34 | 400 | 8.5% |
| Hyakunincho 1-chōme | 14 | 200 | 7% |
| Hyakunincho 2-chōme | 16 | 200 | 8% |
| Not Answering | 2 | - | - |
| Total | | 1000 | 8.5% |

Regretfully, only 6 of the respondents are foreigners, 2 of them are Chinese, 2 of them are Korean, 1 is South African and the last one chose not to answer the nationality, while the status of residence is responded. The responses of foreign respondents are thus, taken into considered and described separately. The following statistics and analysis are about 76 Japanese respondents only.

4.2. Respondents' Usage and Attitudes for Ethnic Shops

Japanese respondents' usage of different ethnic shops is summarized in Fig 5. It Over 60% respondents use ethnic shops. Over 50% of respondents who use Korean shops use shops of other ethnic background as well. Over 75% of respondents who use other ethnic shops use Korean shops as well. Also, respondents' address affect respondents' usage of different ethnic shops as well, which is correspond to the distribution of ethnic shops of different culture.

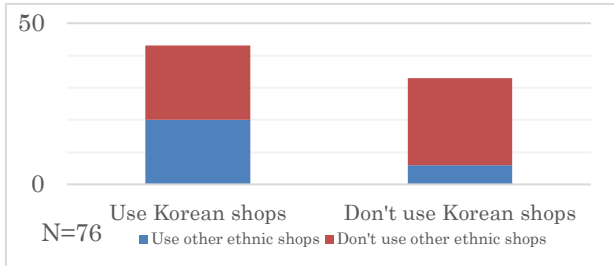


Fig.5 Respondents' usage of ethnic shops

For both 43 respondents' who Korean shops and 26 respondents' who use ethnic shops other than Korean shops, over two thirds of respondents use ethnic shops for dining purpose and buying necessities, while the proportion of using ethnic shops for leisure is relatively low. For both kinds of shops, respondents' positive responses outnumber the negative ones, while the proportion of positive attitudes among users of other ethnic shops is higher than that for Korean shops. For all kinds of ethnic shops, cleanliness is the question that most people leave no comments with.

4.3. Respondents' Awareness toward Ethnic Tourism

Over half of the respondents reply that they don't think the increase of tourists is good. Life of respondents is affected by the tourism significantly, and the proportion of negative feeling is much higher than the positive one. Many respondents see the both sides of the change brought by tourism and increasing tourists and tend to be tolerable, but it is undeniable that problems such as increasing noise and littering have negative impact.

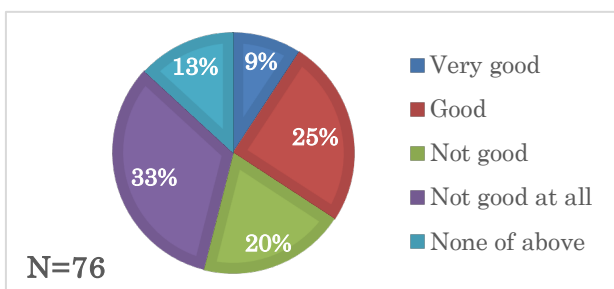


Fig.6 Respondents' attitude toward rapid increase of tourists

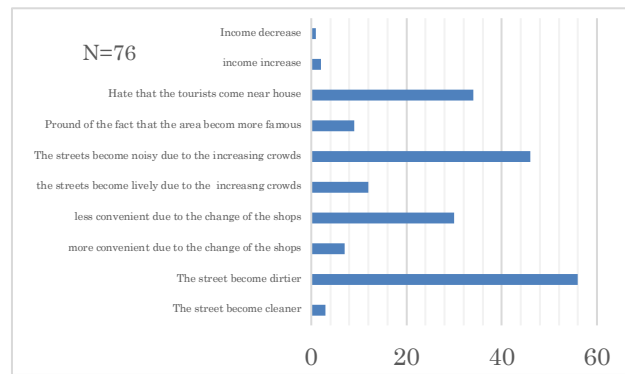


Fig.7 Response about specific influence of tourism

People who expect further development of tourism and people who expect to stop developing tourism share almost the same proportion, while the former one slightly outnumbers the later one. Also, the people who expect development on multi-ethnic tourism obviously outnumber the people who want further development for Korean tourism only.

4.4. Respondent's Awareness of the Area

Over 60% of the respondents claim that they like the area. In text, many elder respondents write down the reason as "because I was born and raised up here".

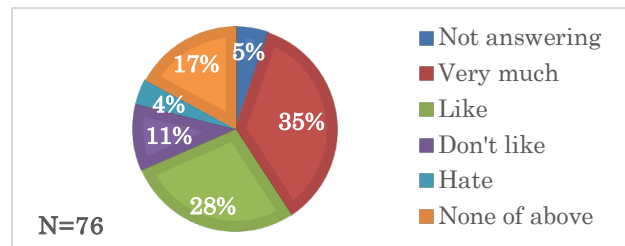


Fig.8 The degree of respondents' favor toward the area

The proportion of people who like the area is over 60% percent, but less than a half of the respondents regard themselves as part of the community. The people think Ōkubo is good as an ethnic town outnumber the people who don't like it as an ethnic town, but the proportion of the latter group is not low.

4.5. Data Analysis

In order to see the relationship between respondents' attributes and their usage of ethnic shops, as well as their attitudes toward ethnic tourism and the area, correlation analysis is applied. Cramér's V is a parameter which shows correlation between two nominal variables which based on Pearson's chi-squared statistic. Formula is shown below:

$$V = \sqrt{\frac{x^2}{n(k-1)}} \quad (0 \leq V \leq 1)$$

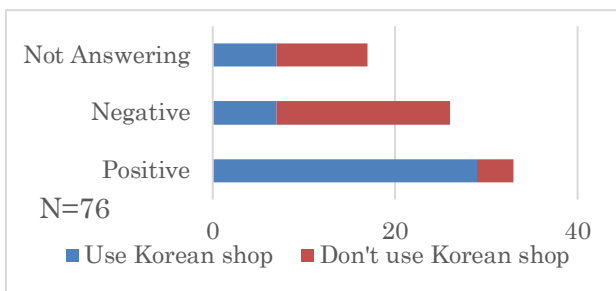
Here, x^2 is the Pearson's cumulative test statistic, n is sample size, while k is the smaller among number

of columns and number of rows in cross tabulation table. The degree of correlation and the value of Cramér's V are explained below in Table 4.

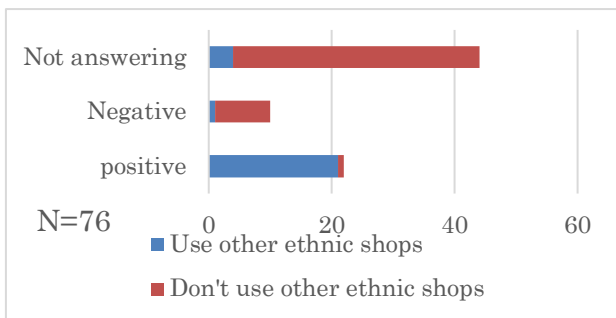
Table 4. Standard for degree of correlation regarding Cramér's V

| | |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| $V > 0.80$ | Very strong correlation |
| $0.5 \leq V \leq 0.80$ | Strong correlation |
| $0.25 \leq V \leq 0.50$ | Correlation exists |
| $0.10 \leq V \leq 0.25$ | Weak correlation |
| $0 < V \leq 0.10$ | Almost no correlation |

It is observed that among all attribute features, communication situation with people of different culture have biggest impact, giving Cramér's V value of 0.466 and 0.494. It is also observed that as long as the respondents visit ethnic shops, they tend to have more positive impression or attitude toward ethnic shops, no matter Korean shops or ethnic shops of other culture, giving the Cramér's V value of 0.526 and 0.824. The results of their cross tabulation are shown below.



(a) Usage of Korean shops and attitude toward Korean shops



(b) Usage of other ethnic shops and attitude toward Korean shops

Fig 9. Respondents' usage and attitudes of ethnic shops

Respondents' awareness of tourism is strongly affected by time of residence and attitude toward Korean shops, while awareness of the area is strongly affected by time of residence, attitude toward Korean shops, and opinion about increasing tourists. The most conspicuous correlation is the one between attitude toward Korean shops and attitude toward increase of tourists. It could be assumed that the respondents regard Korean shops as critical existence to attract tourists, and that Korean shops have direct

relationship with the phenomenon of increasing tourists.

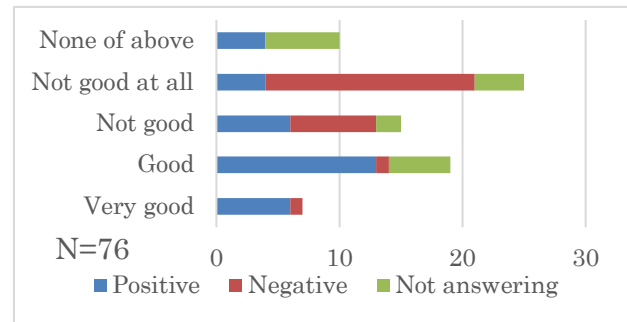


Fig.10 Respondents' attitude toward Korean shop and attitude toward increase of tourists

For tourists' awareness about the area, it is observed that respondents' favor of the area relates the most with attitude and impression about the Korean shops, giving the Cramér's V of 0.363; respondents' s feeling as part of the communities gives the highest Cramér's V value, 0.383, when relating with respondents' usage of other ethnic shops. For the recognition of the area as an ethnic town, the combination with usage of Korean shops give the highest Cramér's V, which is 0.429.

It could be summarized that usage and attitude toward various ethnic shops significantly affect respondents' awareness to ethnic tourism as well as the area.

4.5. Text Analysis

There are 6 designated blanks in the questionnaire for free description about respondents' feelings. 76 effective questionnaires from Japanese residents give 273 responses. The times which critical keywords or phase appear would be calculated to show the general inclination of text response.

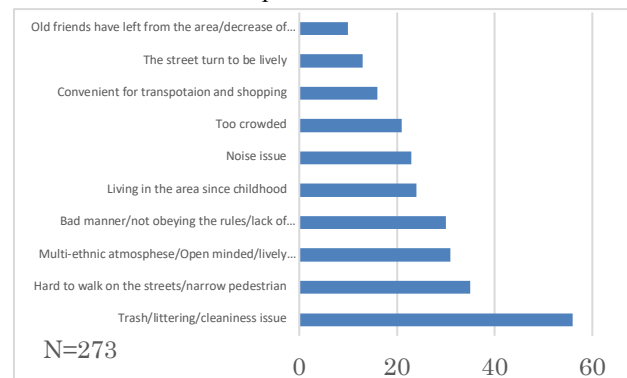


Fig.11 Count of critical phase and texts

It is also observed that many respondents have negative feelings toward ethnic shops without visiting them, which suggest that they have preceding prejudice toward foreigners. However, many other

respondents express their will of living together with the foreigners, as well as the ethnic shops, within the improvement of planning and landscape.

4.6. Response from Foreign Residents

As the responses indicate, among 6 of the foreign respondents, 5 of them are in the age range of 23~39, and one in the range of 40~59. 4 of them have lived in the area for 3~5 years, one live in the area for 5~10 years, and the last one has lived in the area for 10~20 years. Also, 4 of them have communication with people of other culture currently, while 2 of them only used to communicate with people of other culture. They communicate people of other culture during work or as friends.

All of them have positive attitude toward Japanese shops; also, all of them visit Korean shops and 5 of them give positive response. Except for the two Korean, the remained 4 foreign respondents all visit ethnic shops other than Korean shops, and they all have positive attitudes about other ethnic shops.

As their text response shows, they feel the same problems annoying as the Japanese respondents: trash, crowd, and noise. However, 6 of them still support further development of the area. 4 of them claim that they like the area, for the area is convenient, easy to live for foreigners; while 2 of them dislike the area, as the area has trash issue, also too crowded and noisy.

5. CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

5.1. Conclusion

This research finds out that the awareness toward ethnic tourism and the area of Japanese residents are strongly affected by their usage and attitude toward ethnic shops, as well as their attribute features. It is shown that the time of residence, communication situation with people of different culture are critical factors which could affect Japanese residents' usage and attitude toward ethnic shops, while their usage and attitude toward ethnic shops, especially Korean shops, then continue to affect their awareness about the entire ethnic tourism and the area.

The hypothesis that the Korean ethnic tourism could affect the ethnic relationship in Ōkubo area is proved: the noise, crowds and trash issue incur almost universal discontent. Considerable number of respondents are optimistic about the benefits that tourism and the multicultural atmosphere could bring to the region, it is still widely hoped that current situation could be improved. However, as the data from foreigners is severely lacking, the hypothesis

only holds for Japanese residents, while Korean and other foreigner's attitude about tourism and their attachment towards the area, remain unknown.

5.2. Discussion

This research gives the preliminary outcome which partially proves the hypothesis, indicates that the attitude toward ethnic minorities and ethnic tourism of residents from the host society could be largely affected by their own attribute features, as well as their usage ethnic shops. It reveals the current problems in the Ōkubo area, such as trash, noise, crowds, and furthermore, lack of inter-ethnic communication. This research also suggests ideas about how to improve the situation by showing respondents' feelings and suggestions. However, further studies about foreigner's awareness of ethnic shops of the area need to be made in order to comprehensively know about the current situation of Ōkubo area. As some of the xenophobic response and preceding studies suggest, inter-ethnic conflicts have bred, and more meticulous intervention from the perspective of urban planning could be made. Some of the respondents as well as the data hint some critical points: widening the pedestrian seems to be a universal demand, also, as the data shows that people who have communication with people of different culture tend to be more tolerated about ethnic tourism, thus, more interethnic citizen activities could be conducted; and public space for citizen interaction could be developed to improve the situation.

In general, Ōkubo is a unique place with representative features, further studies on this area would surely benefit not only the Ōkubo area, but also other ethnic enclaves in Japan, as well as world-wide ethnic studies.

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