| | |
|---|---|
| Title | Constructing Cultural Identity: Intercultural Adaptation and Transformation Demonstrated by Integrated Global Studies (IGS) Students at Hiroshima University |
| Author(s) | TAKITA, Fuyuko; SIDDIQI, Hedayatullah |
| Citation | 広島大学森戸国際高等教育学院紀要 , 4 : 37 - 54 |
| Issue Date | 2022-03-31 |
| DOI | |
| Self DOI | 10.15027/52359 |
| URL | https://ir.lib.hiroshima-u.ac.jp/00052359 |
| Right | |
| Relation | |

# Constructing Cultural Identity: Intercultural Adaptation and Transformation Demonstrated by Integrated Global Studies (IGS) Students at Hiroshima University

**Fuyuko TAKITA**
**Hedayatullah SIDDIQI**

**Abstract**

This paper provides an analysis of relations between religion, nationalism, cultural identity construction and cognitive elements in four social domains. This pilot study investigated how perceptions and beliefs relating to religious and political social constructs may have some impact to reframe students' attitudes towards multiculturalism and their cultural identities. Based on analysis of four domains--Religion, Nationalism, Cognition, and Multiculturalism--67 Japanese and international students in the Integrated Global Studies (IGS) program at Hiroshima University students self-analyzed and reported their intercultural experiences throughout their lives. We investigated the adaptive experiences of participants exposed to a multicultural environment and explored their personal intercultural transformations, accompanied by changes in their cultural identities.

**Keywords:** Cultural Identity Construction, Intercultural Adaptation, Multiculturalism, Cultural Cognitive Development, Intercultural Competence

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The manifestation of ideology in social domains such as politics and religion may have some significant impact on discourses used by individuals in society. In one instance, religious discourses pursuing different discursive traditions could succeed in constructing cultural identities of individuals. Religious, cultural traditions and ideologies could also have some significant influence in spreading, producing, and reproducing political thoughts and ideologies. Do socio-political aspects lead to instilling certain values, perceptions, beliefs, and attitudes in individuals' minds? How do they affect individuals' cultural identity based on their intercultural experiences throughout their lives? How do these aspects evolve their cultural identity based on their intercultural experiences? This paper identifies four factors that constitute a rationale behind students' preferences and behaviors for cultural identity construction as well as for increasing their level of multiculturalism.

There is limited research on the role of religion and politics influencing cultural identity construction of national and international students in Japan. Therefore, this study calls for the need to analyze the emerging phase of transformation in religious and political influences in framing students' preferences and behaviors towards their cultural identity construction. It also

necessitates analysis of self-reflection and cognitive processing, based on students' interpretations of their religious, political, and cultural values. In order to discuss how their intercultural experiences in Japan are manifested, we measured the dynamics that facilitate conditions and circumstances for such a change.

## 2.BACKGROUND

### 2.1. Cultural Identity Construction and Multiculturalism

In discussing cultural competence and shifting views in intercultural context, it is important to deepen our understanding of the issues of cultural identity and its construct. There is a fluid process where individuals exchange aspects of their cultural identity; however, when individuals negotiate some aspects of their cultural identity, their own cultural worldview becomes examined. For instance, this phenomenon can be seen when someone moves from his or her home country to another country and learns a new language and cultural behaviors. In adapting to another culture, a person in a new setting may feel pressured to conceal parts of his or her cultural views in order to adjust to a new environment where new worldviews and behaviors appear normal and accepted.

Jackson (2002) describes three basic premises of cultural contracts theory: 1) Identities that require affirmation; 2) Identities that are constantly being exchanged; and 3) Identities that are contractual. What Jackson means here is that if we are simply accepted for who we are by society, we do not need to concern about identity negotiation or social or cultural contracts. However, individuals do feel a need for social and cultural affirmation or acknowledgment.

Bennet describes "identity" and "successful" identity construction:

> *The term "identity" suggests a sense of belonging to a group. One's successful coexistence in a society signifies a certain grasp of what is normal and that one has the ability to broadly function in that social world. In other words, individuals are affirmed when they act normally. What is normal is determined by the values, mores, beliefs, and customs of a society. These are also known as "norms". When individuals embrace and act out the norms successfully, they are not affirmed but also by definition normal.* (Bennet, 2015, p. 160)

Our self-definition of who we are is always being negotiated within interaction with others. Bennet explains, "There is a socially, politically, and culturally binding feature to all cultural contracts, and when this is breached, there are consequences or penalties incurred. Sometimes this can feel like ostracism, exclusion, marginalization, discrimination, dismissal, or

devaluation" (Bennet, 2015, p.216). In essence, when we belong to a culture that values certain ways of thinking and behaving, any deviation or interruptions can be considered as problematic.

Jackson (2002) further suggests three types of cultural contracts individuals' sign: 1) Ready-to sign; 2) Quasi-completed; and 3) Co-created. The 'Ready-to-sign' contract is about assimilation where individuals are unwillingly ready to give in. The 'Quasi-completed' contract is one where two or more individuals have decided to partially accept one another. The 'Co-created' cultural contract means that people from two different cultures with different values manage to value, appreciate, and respect their differences. According to Jackson, "Multicultural persons tend to seek after co-created contracts" (p. 160). Thus, a multicultural person is someone who crosses different cultural boundaries and adapts to new norms and values by internalizing two or more cultures. While these individuals may maintain their own cultural values, they recognize that new cultures require and demand new co-created cultural contracts.

Given the argument above, we can say that culture or cultural identity is not persistent or fixed but rather fluid and subject to change within time and geography. Such changes may happen with or without an individual's consent or agreement or being 'ready-to-sign' the cultural contract. The indigenous cultures in North America and the Ainu culture in Japan are some of the few examples that show that individuals' cultural assimilation does not always happen through Jackson's theory of intercultural contracts. In other words, irrespective of cultural contract between individuals, it is the dominant culture that shapes the cultural identity of individuals or groups.

## 2.2 Intercultural Competence

In an increasingly interconnected world, people need to learn to respond constructively and effectively to cultural differences. Intercultural communication competence can be conceived as:

> the ability to negotiate cultural meanings and to execute appropriately effective communication behaviors that recognize the interactants' multiple identities in a specific environment, but also how to fulfill their own communication goals by respecting and affirming the multilevel cultural identities of those with whom they interact." (Asante, Miike, & Yin, 2008, p. 219)

Spitsberg and Cupach (1984) propose seven generic types of competence: 1) fundamental competence, 2) social competence, 3) social skills, 4) interpersonal competence, 5) linguistic

competence, 6) communicative competence, and 7) relational competence. To understand the mutual negotiation of cultural meanings in intercultural communication, Dinges (1983) identified six approaches: 1) overseasmanship, 2) subjective culture, 3) multicultural person, 4) social behaviorism, 5) topology, and 6) intercultural communicator.

The overseasmanship approach, first proposed by Cleveland, Mongone, and Adams (1960), identified common factors in effective performances among sojourners or individuals on extended, nonpermanent stays in cultures other than their own. According to this approach, in order to be considered competent, a sojourner must show the ability to convert lessons from foreign experiences into effective job skills (Chen & Starosta, 2008, p. 220).

The subjective culture approach requires individuals to have the ability to understand the causes of interactants' behaviors and reward them appropriately, and to modify their own behaviors suitably according to the demands of the setting (Trandis, 1976, 1997).

The multicultural person approach emphasizes that a competent person must be able to adapt to exceedingly difficult circumstances by transcending his or her usual adaptive limits (Adler, 1975, 1982). According to this approach, individuals must learn to move in and out of different contexts, to maintain coherence in different situations.

The social behaviorism approach emphasizes that successful intercultural coping strategies depend more on the individual's pre-departure experiences, such as training and sojourning in another country, than on inherent characteristics or personality (Guthrie, 1975).

On the other hand, the typology approach develops different models of intercultural communication competence. For instance, Brislin (1981) proposed that a successful intercultural interaction must be based on the sojourner's attitudes, traits, and social skills. He argued that non-ethnocentrism and non-prejudicial judgments are the most valuable attitudes for effective intercultural interaction. Ethnocentrism is "the judgment of an unfamiliar practice by the standards and norms familiar to one's own group or culture" (Brislin, 1981). The major adaptive personal traits Brislin identifies as important for intercultural communication are personality strength, intelligence, tolerance, social relations skills, recognition of potential for benefit, and task orientation. Important social skills he advocates are knowledge of subject and language, positive orientation to opportunities, effective communication skills, and the ability to use personal traits to complete tasks (Chen & Starosta, 2008, p. 220).

The intercultural communicator approach emphasizes that to be interculturally competent, an individual must be able to establish interpersonal relationships by understanding others through the effective exchange of verbal and nonverbal behaviors (Hall, 1959, 1966, 1976).

Further, the last approach, cultural identity assumes that communication competence is "a dynamic and emergent process in which interactants are able to improve the quality of their experience by recognizing the existence of each other's cultural identities" (Collier, 1989, 1994; Cupach & Imamori, 1993). According to this approach, thus, interculturally competent persons must know how to negotiate and respect meanings of cultural symbols and norms that are changing during their interactions (Colliers & Thomas, 1988).

## 3. Religion, Nationalism, Cognition and Multiculturalism

### 3.1 Religion

Religion and religious teachings, in general, attempt to regulate social situations that are conducive to moral and religious values (Soares 1961, p.12). Since religion is concerned with the development of moral life, it is evident for religious leaders perform religious services, like weddings, funerals, or baptisms, to build their authority within the community. The authority to define what constitutes ethical conduct and proper behavior in a society make religious leaders highly respected in the public eye (Bano, 2007, pp. 43-44).

When religion is taught as a conceptual entity, socio-political matters in societies remain intrinsically tied with religious law. According to Horkheimer (2002, p. 58), "religions acquire their own specific forms, which in turn influence the psychic apparatus and destiny of men…within social evolution." However, each religious discourse and teaching has a distinct character, principle and different view on world order and the afterlife. For example, mainstream Christianity accepts attempts of modernity and the development of secular science, while Islam indiscriminately embraces different cultures, traditions and scientific developments and modernity as long as they do not contradict the fundamental principles of Islam's *Shari'ā*.

However, the level of authority and the community's respect towards a religious leader is determined by the space available to maneuver religious activities in social and political domains. Factors and conditions that make religion highly influential to orient individuals' aspirations towards religious purity and religio-political actions and identity depends upon the traditional role of religion in the social and political spheres of that society.

## 3.2 Nationalism

From a politico-legal perspective, nationalism is a modern expression of collective identity that is constructed by the state institutions (e.g., education system and mass media) (Malesevic 2006, 28). In fact, national constitutions define and formulate patterns of nationality. States with a statutory provision that institute nationalism that determines national identity by the rights of blood (*jus sanguinis*) or ethnicity (Turkish, Japanese, Uzbek, Korean, German, Spanish, etc.) face greater challenges to promote an inclusive environment in which people of different ethnicity and/or culture produce shared social, economic, and political values.

Nationalism does not always emerge as a result of historical processes, antecedents, events, legends, and myths (Grosby, 2005, 8; Frost, 2006, 7; Malesevic, 2006, 28), but also produced by human interests. Thus, nationalism is also associated with the reproduction of shared values that are perceived by an individual or group of individuals important, which is always subject to change. Collective values are usually perceived in line with the dominant tradition because the dominant cognitive framework and moral values frame communal values through "hackneyed sayings of daily habits" (Malesevic, 2006). However, nationalism is not merely a public narrative or a general claim, but a legal status that shows belonging or affiliation of an individual to a specific community that is organized, managed, and controlled by a political system or state.

Nationalism tied with discriminatory statutory provisions generates a sense of "us" that refers to those who are perceived to be of the same ethnic, religious, or cultural grouping, world view and political position. On the other hand, "them" are those who are perceived to hold different, sometimes opposing views, if not a threat to "our" culture and heritage (Malischewski, 2016, p. 30). According to Tamir (1993, 83), "the version of nationalism that places cultural commitments at its center is…perceived as the most conservative and antiliberal from a nationalism," whereas a version of nationalism that places acceptability and multiculturalism at its center is perceived as liberal nationalism. Thus, nationalism is a modern phenomenon that is produced and reproduced through institutional and societal settings in society. Its impact shaping individual and collective behavior and identity are dependent on its role and level of influence on social, cultural, and political domains.

## 3.3 Cognition

Individuals interpret and acquire knowledge of their social setting, religio-cultural values, and

political structure through their cognitive skills. Cognitive skills are not inborn abilities of human beings; rather, they are socially acquired context-dependent abilities that develop, evolve, and change by observing (visually, verbally), experiencing, and learning within a time span and space. Hence, self-exploration, understanding of one's identity, culture, worldview including others are vastly different among individuals of different cognitive skills. For instance, there is a "reliable difference in the way in which individuals process identity-related information" (Berzonsky 2006, 137). According to Berzonsky, there are three identity processing orientations: 1) Informational, 2) Normative, and 3) Diffuse-avoidant.

Informational Processing Orientation (scientific self-theorist) types of individuals are skeptical and self-explorer, and their knowledge, attitude, behavior including worldview is based and informed by rational reasoning.

Normative Processing Orientation (dogmatic Self-theorist) individuals are internalized and adhere to goals and values that are constructed in reference to others - they tend to follow a set of dogmatic views and principles unequivocally without rational analysis and critical evaluations.

The worldview, knowledge, attitude, and behavior of Diffuse-avoidant (ad-Hoc Self-theorist) types of individuals are based on context-sensitive judgments, confused personalities' identity changes based on action and choices that are determined based on situational demand and consequences.

These identity processing orientations are not immutable. Rather, they are subject to change in accordance with the constantly changing social, economic, technological, and political milieus.

### 3.4 Multiculturalism

Multiculturalism is a multidimensional concept that puts in its core the interplay of recognition, equality, tolerance, and acceptability of sub- and countercultures within the dominant culture. These relationships have been explained and theorized by scholars of different research fields, including politics, sociology, history, psychology, and anthropology. Although, people of different races and cultural identities have lived in multicultural societies (though sub- or countercultures not equally recognized as equal to dominant tradition) since human domestication, it was not until end of the 1945 that multiculturalism become central to

academic debates and policy discourses. According to Chin (2017, p.3), “Until the mid-1990s, … multiculturalism was peripheral to the central narratives of European history.” For Chin, multiculturalism owes its recognition in the West to a series of post-Cold War, immigrant (Muslim) associated terrorist attacks in Western world.

In fact, an upsurge in global migration both regular (economic and student migration) and irregular (refugee and asylum seekers), particularly from south to north since the end of World War II, has forced states in North America and Europe to develop multicultural policies and legislation accepting migrants as new citizens. Although multicultural policies provide equitable terms for minorities, including migrants, to integrate into host societies, the recent revival of nationalist movements in the North shows that in practice toleration of minority groups and their accommodation of equal rights by host societies has been difficult to maintain.

In other words, the process and the level of multiculturalism are determined by both the institutional environment (statutory provisions, legal frameworks, political will, and receptive policies) and societal settings (religion, traditions, cultural beliefs, practices, and other shared values) of societies. Institutional settings with non-discriminatory statutory provisions, legislation, and policy interventions that institute equality and diversity as a hegemonic paradigm of sociopolitical stability and economic prosperity tend to function as effective instruments in promoting multiculturalism in society.

Access to socioeconomic and political rights based on the legal status of an individual or group create structural barriers that may hamper the integration of minorities (including migrants), including social cohesion and multiculturalism .From a migrant perspective integration,widely used as an alternative concept to multiculturalism and assimilation, means “preparedness to adapt to the lifestyle of the host society without having to lose one’s own cultural identity”, while “from the point of view of the host society, it requires a willingness for communities to be welcoming and responsive” (Poteet & Nourpanah, 2016, xix). Whether it is integration, multiculturalism, or social cohesion the core concept is “the ability of a society to resolve conflict, manage inequalities and differences in a way that all parties perceive as positive and successful” (Hickman, et al., 2012, pp. 12-13).

## 4.METHODOLOGY

The data for analysis came from 67 students of Cross-Cultural Negotiation I and II of the

Integrated Global Studies (IGS) program at Hiroshima University in fall, 2021. This course includes international students from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds, which offered the opportunity to investigate how students from different cultural backgrounds demonstrate how their behaviors, attitudes and preferences evolved and transformed over the years.

There were 32 male and 35 female participants. The youngest participant was 20 while the oldest was 24 years old. In terms of duration of stay in Japan (excluding Japanese nationals) the shortest was two years while the longest was 10 years.

We employed a mixed method of secondary literature review and quantitative convenience sampling. The theoretical framework of this article comprises analysis of four concepts: religion, nationalism, cognition and multiculturalism. The rationale for this framework is that, first, religion and nationalism need to be analyzed in the context of social spheres. Second, the process of constructing religious behavior and moral standards of a community (cultural identity) is the product of interactions, which are intrinsically linked to social, cultural, and political spheres of life. Third, social norms or belief systems are not self- or inner- production of an individual. Rather, these norms are mind-perception of shared cultural, social, political, and religious belief, often defined through inter-subjective interactions in everyday life.

The questionnaire asked students how they assessed themselves through their entire early family and school lives, how they perceived their surroundings and society, including self-exploration, worldview, and identity. Responses for the questions in four domains were recorded on a five-point Likert-type scale that follows strongly agree (five points), agree (four points), neutral (three points), disagree (two points) and strongly disagree (one points).

Additionally, we collected students' self- narratives about how and to what degree their family, school, and society played a role in shaping their cultural identities.

## 5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 5.1 Analysis

Out of 67 participants of this study, the majority (47) of our students expressed that their level of nationalism decreased, and their level of multiculturalism increased significantly since entering the IGS program at Hiroshima University. In the following sections, we assess data

gathered from students (Japanese and international) in four domains: religion, nationalism, cognition, and multiculturalism.

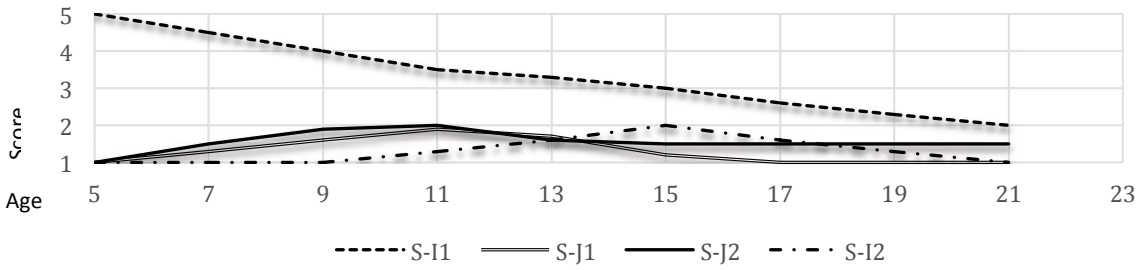
## 5.2 Religion

Figure 1 shows that general attitudes on religion trended downward, but at different degrees. While Japanese students' religiosity trended upward in early age (5 – 11), as they grow up and start to construct their world vision (age 12 – 20), their religious feelings trended downward. On the other hand, international students from different socio-cultural backgrounds trended downward. This shows that the role of religion is not only influenced by social and political spheres but also on the role of religion in family settings.

Participants who come from societies with a relatively strong religious background tend to report that the level of their religiosity slightly decreased after arrival in Japan. However, the decrease in religiosity does not indicate their decrease in their faith in religious teachings; rather their perceptions towards religion shifted to more diverse perspectives

As shown in Figure 1, when students encounter individuals of different religious backgrounds and world views, their cognitive approach towards religion changes. Yet, the degree in which students' understanding of religion change depends upon their family and socio-cultural background as well as the level of their interactions with individuals of different cultural backgrounds.

**Figure 1: Religion**

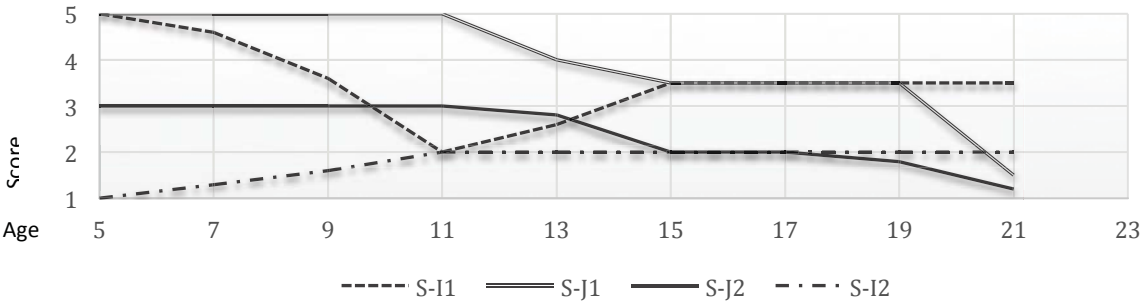



S-I1: Student-International 1
S-I2: Student-International 2
S-J1: Student-Japan 1
S-J2: Student-Japan 2

## 5.3 Nationalism

Nationalism is constructed by both internal political structures (constitution, legal framework, socio-cultural settings) and external political pressures (nationality based in reference to "others"). As shown in Figure 2, while international students' nationalism sentiments trended upward after their departure from their countries of origin to Japan, for Japanese students as they encounter with individuals of different cultural background, their sense of nationalism trended downward. Structural and societal differences for foreign nationals to access socioeconomic and political rights could explain this contrast.

Figure 2: Nationalism



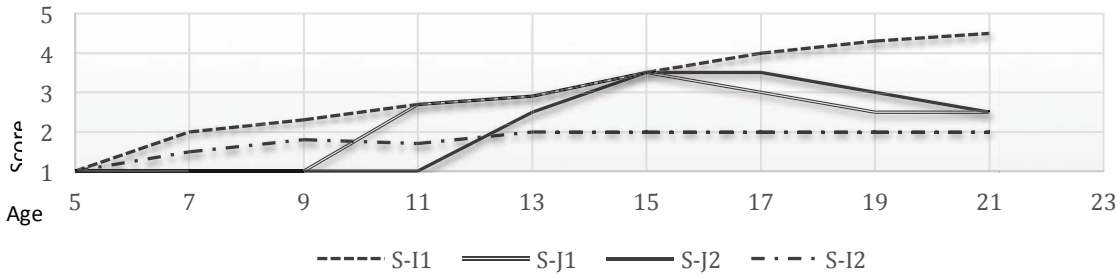

S-I1: Student-International 1
S-I2: Student-International 2
S-J1: Student-Japan 1
S-J2: Student-Japan 2

## 5.4 Cognition

Our findings suggest that students with greater multicultural experience tend to acquire their cognitive skills observing and experiencing new cultural values (see cognition trend of an international student (SI1 in Figure 3) who grow up in multicultural society. In other words, students with multicultural experiences tend to reflect ad hoc or informative cognitive abilities.

Figure 3 shows that the rational basis of cognition among Japanese students with a strong cultural background (collective values, belief, and loyalty) is relatively influenced by past traditions and cultural values.

Figure 3: Cognition

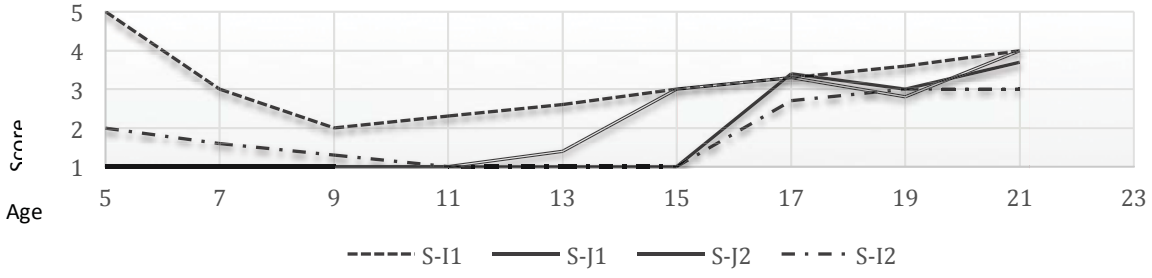



S-I1: Student-International 1
S-I2: Student-International 2
S-J1: Student-Japan 1
S-J2: Student-Japan 2

## 5.5 Multiculturalism

As shown in figure 4, while Japanese students' (S-J1 & S-J2) multicultural scores remained 1 until age 15, as they enter high school (between age 15 and 18) their sense of multiculturalism increase and peaked at the age of 17. The reason why S-J1 scores higher at earlier age (13, see Figure 4) is likely due to the fact that he went to international high school where had exposure to diverse cultural backgrounds (foreign language, international students, teachers and staff). On the other hand, S-J2 went to a traditional Japanese school where he is less likely to have had intercultural experiences. It is important to note that there is a tendency of alignment between cognitive skills (see Figure 3) and multiculturalism among Japanese students. Generally, as students (both Japanese and international student) exposed to multicultural environment at GIS program at Hiroshima University their sense of multiculturalism trended upward (see Figure 4).

Figure 4: Multicultural




S-I1: Student-International 1
S-I2: Student-International 2
S-J1: Student-Japan 1

## 6. Student Self-narratives and Case Study of H from Malaysia

The majority of students wrote in their self-narratives how they have developed to become a 'multicultural person' explaining their intercultural experiences in their lives. Their Multiculturalism score increased the older they became. This multicultural identity is based on a fluid and dynamic movement of the self, which is their personal ability to move in and out of old and new contexts. Further, many students wrote their experiences of constructing new identities, mostly within their existing cultural definitions. While some international students wrote specifically of the influence of Japanese language proficiency on their adjustment in a new culture, they also wrote of their capacity to blend in and adapt to different cultural and social settings according to the need of the settings. Finally, some Japanese and international students mentioned their shifts in identity which seem to happen intuitively. Overall, students' responses reflect views of identity which are interactive and responsive to social and cultural contexts. It is interesting to note that this study partly revealed that students' cultural identity is sometimes less conscious than it is intuitive, although self-awareness seemed come after self-reflection.

Below is an example of an international student from Malaysia which shows how her individual identity was influenced and shaped by some level of social, religious, and cultural integration:

*I was born in Malaysia into a Malaysian-Chinese father and a Japanese mother. My parents decided to settle in Malaysia where I grew up. As a child, I attended a public kindergarten which had children of different races. I also attended Sunday school in church which also allowed me to meet many people of different races. My religious point of view was established there. I then went on to a Chinese elementary school where my classmates were mostly all one race. I went on to a junior high school run by a government, which consisted of students of different races. However, the school was very much governed by Shari'ā law, and I had to follow a few common rules such as not showing skin or segregation of genders. My high school was the same environment as my junior high school. I am currently studying abroad at Hiroshima University where there are many international students. I have friends who come from many different countries now.*

**Religion**:

*As a child, I was brought up in a religious background (Christianity and Islam). Children are easily influenced, and this is the peak time to form the way of thinking of a person. As I grew up as a person, I learned new things, met others of different races, beain to see my religion differently. I still believe in it but am not as religious as before.*

**Nationalism**:

*At elementary school, my peers were very homogeneous. At university, I began to realize the beauty of my country while living abroad.*

**Cognition**:

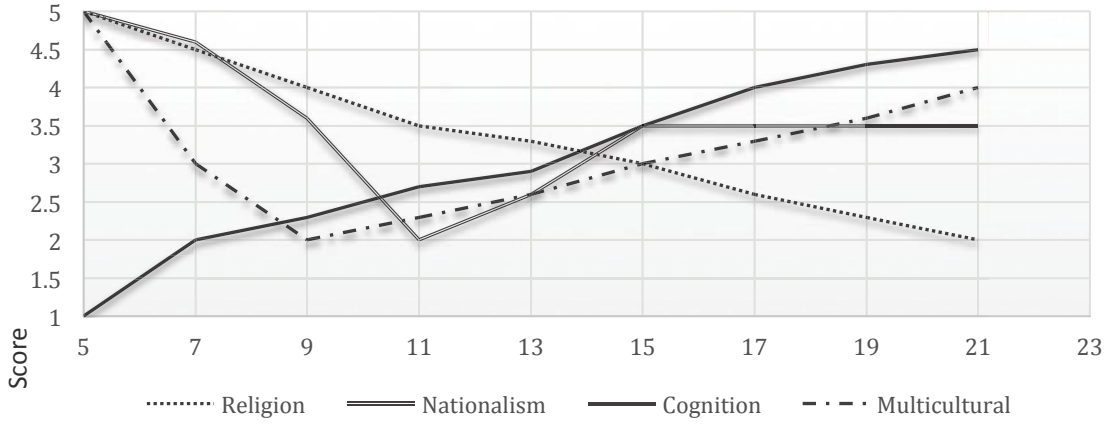
*As a child, my cognition was very much dogmatic self-theorist. As I moved into middle and high school, I developed a more ad-hoc theorist mindset. I learned about scientific logic, but still chose to believe in religion. At university, my mindset has not changed significantly yet.*

**Multiculturalism**:

*My personal values or beliefs towards people with different backgrounds has not changed. As I have already been exposed to multicultural environments back home in Malaysia all my life, being tolerant, understanding different traditions in other cultures, is something I am taught to do as a daily habit and activity. Entering university in Hiroshima with people of other cultures is nothing new to me and is very much the same as back home.*

What is notable about H's self-analysis is that her Religion score significantly starts to decrease after the age of 18 when she left Malaysia for Japan. In the domain of Multiculturalism, her score drops down sharply until the age of 12 or 13 years old, when she attended a Chinese elementary school where students were all Chinese. However, when her score starts to increase significantly as soon as after she transferred to her middle school where there were students from different cultural backgrounds. As for the domain of Nationalism, the score drops down until the age of 12 or 13 like her Multicultural score, and then starts to increase again and remains the same since her arrival in Japan. It is also interesting to note that while her Multicultural score appears to keep going up, the level of Nationalism at the age of her current age (20) remains the same. In her narrative, H reported that she started to recognize the beauty of her culture and value it while living abroad.

**Figure 5: Intercultural Adaptation and Transformation of H**



Age

H's analysis shows that she experienced an opportunity to adjust and construct her individual, social and cultural identity in different types of school settings based on their cultural and religious backgrounds. For instance, in limited interactions in Chinese school where mostly all the students were of one race, her multicultural identity score sharply decreased. As for the religious discourse, H claims that she is "not as religious as before." It would seem important to explore the changing views of her self-identity and its relation to religious discourse when locating to a new cultural and religious environment.

## 7. CONCLUSION

This is the first study to explore how students' perceptions of religion, nationalism, cognition, and multiculturalism develop and change over time through their intercultural experiences in the IGS program at Hiroshima University. Students reflected numerous factors and complexities involved in their cultural identity construction and multicultural experiences. They were asked to score their perceptions of religion (how religious they are at a given age), nationalism (how much they identified themselves as their nationality", cognition (how their attitude towards life) and multiculturalism at given age (ages from 0, 5, 10, 15 and 20 and above). It became evident both from the students' scores provided in four domains and their essays that most of their Cognitive levels kept going up as they aged while their Multiculturalism scores increased simultaneously.

The analysis of this data illustrated how some Japanese and international students successfully accomplished a desired level of acculturation and adaptation in Japan. Further, students' self-narratives reflected a high level of satisfaction with their development of intercultural competence as well as their construction of individual cultural identity. Finally, this study implies that such self-transformation in intercultural experiences can be significantly influenced by factors such as religion and nationalism (social constructs) experienced in their home countries. Furthermore, insights from this study suggest that such behavioral transformation can be accompanied by a change in one's cultural identity from single cultural identity to an intercultural identity. It revealed that multicultural identity is based on a fluid and dynamic process of the individual self through varieties of situations and contexts.

Our findings revealed that social structural factors such as religion, nationalism and social interaction can be significant determining cultural factors for shaping individuals' cultural identities in both individual and collective societies. Further, this study implied that religion and nationalism holds some impact on defining parameters of socio-political behaviors and preferences towards individuals' cultural identity construction and multiculturalism.

Looking at participants' progression of adaptive intercultural experiences, we learned that students underwent a set of identifiable changes in their patterns of cognitive and behavioral responses. Thus, it becomes imperative to further formulate critical reflections on established theories and proven methods to investigate cultural identity construction and multiculturalism impacted by religious and political factors in the future.

## Reference:


Adler, P. (1975). The transnational experience: An alternative view of culture shock. *Journal of Humanistic Psychology, 15,* 13-23.

Adler, P. (1982). Beyond cultural Identity: Reflections upon cultural and multicultural man. In L.A.Samovar & R.E. Porter (Eds.), *Intercultural communication: A reader* (pp. 389-405). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

Asante, M., Miike, Y. and Yin, J. (2008). *The global intercultural communication reader*. New York: Routledge.

Bano, M. (2007). Beyond Politics: The Reality of A Deobandi Madrasa in Pakistan, *of Islamic Studies,* 18, (1), 43-68.

Bennet, J. (2015). The SAGE Encyclopedia of Intercultural Competence. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Ltd.

Berzonsky, M. D. (2006). Identity processing style and self-definition: Effects of a priming manipulation. Polish Psychological Bulletin, 36 (3), 137-143.

Chin, R. (2017). *The Crisis of Multiculturalism in Europe: A History.* New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

Brislin, R.W. (1981). Cro*ss-cultural encounters: Face-to-face interaction.* Elmsford, NY: Pergamon.

Chen, G.-M., & Starosta, W. (2008). *Intercultural communication competence: A synthesis.* New York: Routledge, pp. 215-237.

Cleveland, H., Mangone, J., & Adams, C. (1960). *The overseas Americans.* New York: McGraw-Hill.

Collier, J. (1989). Cultural and Intercultural communication competence: Current approaches and directions for future research. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations, 13*, 287-302.

Collier, J. (1994). Cultural identity and intercultural communication. In L.A. Samovar & R.E. Porter (Eds.), *Intercultural Communication: A reader (pp. 36-44).* Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

Collier, J., and Thomas, M. (1988). Cultural identity. In Y.Y. Kim, and W. Godykunst, *Theories of Intercultural Communication*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage, pp. 99-120.

Cupach, R. and Imamori, T. (1993). Identity management theory: Communication competence in intercultural episodes and relationships. In R.L. Wiseman & J. Koester (Eds.), *International communication* (pp. 112-131). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Dinges, N. (1983). Intercultural competence. In D. Landis & R. W. Brislin (Eds.), *Handbook of intercultural training: Vol.I. Issues in theory and design* (pp. 176-202). Elmsford, NY: Pergamon.

Frost, C. (2006). *Morality and Nationalism.* London: Routledge

Guthrie, G. (1975). A behavioral analysis of culture learning. In R.W. Brislin, S.

Bochner, & W.J. Lonner (Eds.), *Cross-cultural perspectives on learning.* New York: John Wiley.

Grosby, S. (2005). *Nationalism: A Very Short Introduction,* Oxford: Oxford University Press

Hall, E. (1959). *The silent language.* Garden City, NY: Doubleday.

Hall, E. (1966). *The hidden dimension.* Garden City, NY: Anchor.

Hall, E. (1976). *Beyond Cultures.* Garden City, NY: Anchor.

Hickman, M. J., Mai, N., and Crowley, H. (2012). *Migration and Social Cohesion in the UK*. UK: Palgrave.

Horkheimer, M. (2002). *Critical Theory: Selected Essays,* translated by Matthew J. O'Connell and Others, New York: Continuum.

Jackson, R.L. (2002). Cultural contracts theory: Toward an understanding of identity negotiation. Communication Quarterly, 50(3/4), 359-367.

Malesevic, S. (2006). *Identity as Ideology: Understanding Ethnicity and Nationalism,* NY: Palgrave.

Malischewski, Charlotte-Anne (2016), Refugee at the Crossroads: Social and Territorial Dynamics of Integration in Northern Ireland'. In Poteet,

Mogran and Nourpanah, Shiva (Eds.), *The Dynamics of Refugee Settlement and Integration*, pp. 21-40, UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing,

Moshman, D. (2011). *Adolescent Rationality and Development: Cognition, Morality and Identity*, 3rd Ed., New York: Psychology Press.

Poteet, M. and Nourpanah, S. (2016). Introduction. In Poteet, M. and Nourpanah, S. (Eds), *After the Flight: the Dynamics of Refugee Settlement and Integration* (pp. xii-xxxvi). UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing

Soares, T. G. (1916). The Study of Religious Education. *The Biblical World*, 47 (1), 3-15.

Spitzberg, H. and Cupach, R. (1984). *Interpersonal communication competence.* Beverly Hill, CA: Sage.

Tamir, Y. (1993). *Liberal Nationalism.* New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

Triandis, H. (1976). *Interpersonal behavior.* Montrey, CA: Brooks/ Cole.

Triandis, H. (1977). Subjective culture and interpersonal relations across cultures. In L. Loeb-Adler (Ed.), *Issues in cross-cultural research. Special issue of Annual of the New York Academy of Sciences, 285,* 418-434.

van Dijk, T. A. (1998). Ideology: A multidisciplinary approach. California: Sage Publications, Inc.