

This document is the author deposited version.

You are advised to consult the publisher's version if you wish to cite from this version. Published article: Takamatsu, R., Min, M. C., Wang, L., Xu, W., Taniguchi, N., & Takai, J. (2021). Moralization of Japanese cultural norms among student sojourners in Japan. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 80, 242-249. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijintrel.2020.12.001>

Moralization of Japanese cultural norms among student sojourners in Japan

Reina Takamatsu

Kyoto University

May Cho Min

Yangon University of Education

Lina Wang

Nagoya University

Wenzhen Xu

KDDI Research, Inc.

Norihito Taniguchi

Nagoya University

Jiro Takai

Nagoya University

Author note

Reina Takamatsu, Graduate School of Education, Kyoto University, Kyoto, Japan

May Cho Min, Department of Educational Psychology, Yangon University of Education, Yangon, Myanmar

Lina Wang, Graduate School of Education and Developmental Sciences, Nagoya University, Nagoya, Japan

Wenzhen Xu, KDDI Research, Inc. Tokyo, Japan

Norihito Taniguchi, International Education & Exchange Center, Nagoya University, Nagoya, Japan

Jiro Takai, Graduate School of Education and Developmental Sciences, Nagoya University, Nagoya, Japan

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to the first author (tel: 075-753-7531; takamatsu.reina.4c@kyoto-u.ac.jp).

Present address: 606 Yoshidahonmachi, Sakyo Ward, Kyoto, 606-8501 Japan

Abstract

This study investigated the relationship between different domains of cultural adaptation among international students in Japan and the moralization of culture-specific norms. Newcomers may adapt certain norms of the host culture and ascribe moral meanings to initially nonmoral activities or objects. Building on the existing model of sociocultural adaptation, we investigated how different types of sociocultural adaptation are associated with the moralization of Japanese cultural norms. For international students in Japan, there are three aspects of sociocultural adaptation: academic, daily living, and interpersonal. Our results showed that cultural adaptation in the interpersonal domain, but not in the academic and daily living domains, predicted harsher moral judgments of behaviors that violated Japanese cultural norms. These findings suggest that international students who are well adjusted in the interpersonal domain gain an understanding of what is sanctioned in the Japanese cultural context and come to see certain behaviors as morally appropriate. We discuss several implications for further investigating the moralization of certain behaviors within the context of acculturation.

Introduction

One challenge for newcomers is to learn what is morally sanctioned in the new cultural context and to behave in line with these cultural norms. Given that human sociality is built on morality (Haidt, 2008), learning cultural norms should be a critical part of cultural adaptation, but little is known about the role of cultural adaptation in understanding morality sanctioned in the new culture. Cultural adaptation is multi-faceted and entails a psychological process through which newcomers adjust themselves to a new life in a different cultural context (Takai, 1989). In the process, newcomers may discover that behaviors that had no moral significance in their country of origin are morally significant in the host country. Moralization is the process through which an individual attaches moral meaning to neutral behaviors and attains new behavioral repertoires (Rozin, 1999). In this study, we set out to investigate the associations between the three domains of cultural adaptation (academic, daily living, and interpersonal) and the moralization of Japanese cultural norms among student sojourners in Japan.

The Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology-Japan (2008) had announced a strategic plan to recruit 300,000 international students from a broader diversity of countries by offering full scholarship, housing opportunities, and English-taught courses. Consequently, the 2019–2020 academic year saw Japan hosting 312,214 international students with the annual increase still in momentum, showing 12,234 students (4.4 %) increase from the previous year (Japan Student Services Organization, 2020).

While the government mentions social engagement as one of the important factors that contribute to the quality of student experience, most universities tend to focus more on the academic program rather than on cultural adjustment. MEXT had encouraged top-ranked universities with incentives to offer both undergraduate and graduate degree programs taught entirely in the English language, to cater to students who lack adequate Japanese language ability. However, such over-accommodation only encouraged the separation between international students and Japanese students (Jiang, Ikegami, & Osawa, 2017), which had traditionally been an issue in Japanese educational cross-cultural exchange. International students often complain of feeling isolated from the Japanese student community, and desire more opportunities for social engagement with the hosts (Simic-Yamashita and Tanaka, 2008).

Two dimensions of adaptation, psychosocial and sociocultural, have been proposed in the acculturation literature (Searle & Ward, 1990; Ward & Kennedy, 1999). In this study, we focus on sociocultural (behavioral) adaptation, which entails the ability

to assume the integrative aspects of a new culture through cultural learning and social skills acquisition (Searle & Ward, 1990). These two types of cultural adaptation are best examined separately (Ward, Okura, Kennedy, & Kojima, 1998). A variety of factors, including the length of stay in the host culture, language proficiency, the amount of contact with the locals, and cultural knowledge have been found to predict levels of sociocultural adaptation across different acculturation contexts (Ward & Kennedy, 1993; Ward et al., 1998; Zlobina, Basabe, Paez, & Furnham, 2006).

To date, several sociocultural domains of acculturation have been proposed (Navas et al., 2005), but little is known about the relationship between sociocultural adaptation and the understanding of morality. Also, the models have been tested exclusively on long-term immigrants of Western contexts (Zhang & Goodson, 2011). More studies are needed to understand how short-term sojourners, such as international students, adapt new cultural norms to navigate their life smoothly in the new environment (Brunsting, Zachry, & Takeuchi, 2018). Studies on sociocultural adaptation among international students in Japan have focused on the three dimensions of cultural adaptation: academic, daily living, and interpersonal and found that the three domains are differentially associated with adaptation predictors and outcomes (Simic-Yamashita & Tanaka, 2010). In this study, we recruited short-term and long-term student sojourners and investigated how three domains of sociocultural adaptation are associated with the understanding of culture-specific norms in the moral domain that is operationalized as moralization.

Moralization

According to the theory of moralization (Rozin, 1997, 1999), previously neutral activities may become morally meaningful once they are associated with moral values. In particular, positive or negative moral values become associated with initially neutral (nonmoral) activities or objects. Moralization may occur at a macro (e.g., within a cultural group) or a micro (e.g., individual) level (Horberg, Oveis, Keltner, & Cohen, 2009; Rozin, 1999). The moral belief system can be spontaneously modified by moralization, and the individual acquires a new and enduring behavioral repertoire that is in line with the new moral belief (Rottman, Young, & Kelemen, 2017; Rozin, Markwith, & Stoess, 1997).

Previous studies on moralization have focused on changes in moral beliefs and attitudes within a cultural context. Today, in the age of globalization, more people live and work in foreign countries than in the past; thus, they have more opportunities to come into contact with a new culture. Acculturation encompasses a wide array of psychosocial and behavioral changes within an individual, and his or her personal

values may also change (Marín & Gamba, 2003). Because cultures differ in terms of what moral values are more important than others and what is morally appropriate (Miller, Bersoff, & Harwood, 1990), in the process of acculturation, a shift in the individual's moral value system should occur. Particularly, newcomers should undergo a process of moralization through which they learn about norms in the host culture by observing and interacting with local people and gradually adjusting their behaviors in accordance with the values of that culture.

One question of interest is, do short-term sojourners experience the transformation of neutral behaviors into morally significant ones, or is such moralization more characteristic for long-term migrants? Past studies on moralization focus on a gradual acquisition of moral values (Rozin, 1999), but accumulating evidence indicates that moralization may entail both gradual and more immediate processes (Landy & Goodwin, 2015). For example, psychological experiments have shown that moral attitudes could be shifted by simple manipulations (Valdesolo & DeSteno, 2006), and a fast, intuitive judgment process influences moral cognition (Haidt, Koller, & Dias, 1993). However, such findings are limited to the experimental or Western contexts (Henrich, Heine, & Norenzayan, 2010). We cannot be certain about their durability nor permanence. The issue of short-term moral attitudes in real life settings need be addressed. Applying the psychological concept of moralization to the acculturation model of sociocultural adaptation would help us to understand how people acquire new notions of morality when they come into contact with a new culture.

Japanese cultural norms

Japanese cultural norms are founded on concerns for relational harmony, and self-regulating behaviors are essential for maintaining harmony (Hashimoto & Yamagishi, 2013; Yuki, 2003). In Japanese culture, many norms involve indirect communication skills that require discerning others' feelings and intentions (Midooka, 1990). In a group discussion, for instance, the Japanese seek to reach complete unanimity rather than to compare and evaluate different views (Honda et al., 2017). The tendency to seek agreement without discussion is also evident in social relationships with varying degrees of intimacy, and failure to do so may cause relational discord (Tanaka & Fujihara, 1992). In short, relational harmony is the core of Japanese social relationships, and many cultural norms involve maintaining harmony by conforming with the majority or behaving in line with what others would approve. Honda and her colleagues (2016) developed a scale to measure the extent to which an individual uses moral foundations that are based on Japanese cultural norms for moral judgments. The dominant theories and measures of human morality are based on the

premise that the human moral system is built on several innate and universally shared moral foundations (Graham et al., 2013). Cross-cultural investigations of morality have been using the dimension of individualism/collectivism (Miller et al., 1990), but considerable variations exist within the cultural context defined by the dimension. For example, Japan and China are categorized into collectivistic using the dimension, but Chinese international students find many Japanese cultural norms for interpersonal harmony unfamiliar or difficult to comprehend (Mao & Daibo, 2016).

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationships between three types of cultural adaptation (academic, daily living, and interpersonal) and moral judgments that involve understanding of Japanese cultural norms among international students in Japan. We conducted this study in Japan for two reasons. The first reason is that the Japanese language is spoken only in Japan, and many norms arising from that language are not shaped by those of other cultures. Hence, Japanese norms are quite unique, and difficult to comprehend to newcomers, including those from Asian countries (Mao & Daibo, 2016; Tanaka & Fujihara, 1992). The other reason is that Japanese cultural norms are not communicated explicitly, and therefore, require implicit learning through extensive interaction with native speakers (Midooka, 1990). We chose to focus on students as targets of this study, due to their varied length of stay in the host country, and their high motivation to learn the Japanese language and culture. We predicted that student sojourners would learn Japanese cultural norms from native Japanese speakers. Assuming that the understanding of Japanese morality is attained rapidly or gradually, we also predicted that their length of stay would be unrelated. That is, student sojourners who had successfully adapted to Japanese social relationships would show a tendency to make harsh judgments of behaviors that violate Japanese cultural norms. These harsh moral judgments would reflect that they had moralized Japanese cultural norms.

Methods

Procedures

The participants chose from three languages (Japanese, English, and Chinese) with which to take the survey. No student chose the Japanese version. They completed the survey online or in paper-and-pencil format of their choice.

Demographics

The participants were asked to indicate their age, gender, country of origin, and length of residence in Japan. Self-rated language proficiency was not included because

with one exception (Simic-Yamashita & Tanaka, 2010), studies have failed in gaining evidence that language proficiency is instrumental in predicting cultural adaptation among student sojourners in Japan (Jiang et al., 2017). For example, higher proficiency in Japanese was associated with lower sociocultural adjustment (Takai, 1989) and weaker connectedness to the Japanese community (Tanaka et al., 1994). Moreover, international students with higher Japanese skills and longer residence in Japan reported more dissatisfaction in relationships with the Japanese (Iwao & Hagiwara, 1987).

Table 1

Sample Characteristics

Gender	Female = 76	Male = 45	Missing = 1
Length of residence (in months)	2 – 12		51 (41.8%)
	13 – 24		31 (25.4%)
	25 – 36		14 (11.6%)
	Over 37		26 (21.2%)
Geographic area	Africa		3 (2.5%)
	Europe		5 (4.1%)
	East Asia (China)		78 (63.9%)
	East Asia (Others)		6 (4.9%)
	South East Asia		16 (13.1%)
	Western Asia/Middle East		8 (6.6%)
	America/South America		2 (1.6%)
	Oceania		1 (0.8)

Note. $N = 122$. East Asia (Others) include: Korea, Mongolia, and Taiwan

Sociocultural Adaptation Scale (SCAS) for international students in Japan

To measure sociocultural adaptation, we chose the SCAS (Ward & Kennedy, 1999) because it has been proven effective across various cultural backgrounds on student sojourners (Renner, Salem, & Menschik-Bendele, 2012). We used a modified SCAS for international students in Japan, as developed by Simic-Yamashita and Tanaka (2010), who extracted items from the SCAS and, used exploratory factor analysis to establish a scale for measuring sociocultural adaptation of international students specifically in the Japanese context. One methodological issue in acculturation studies is that psychological measures should be specific to the target group (Matsudaira, 2006). Acculturation experiences should be assumed to be unique to the particular group of people being studied, within specific situations and contexts, and using study methods best suited for the occasion (Bornstein, 2017).

The SCAS for international students in Japan consists of three subscales with 18

items: 1) Academic adaptation (e.g., “Understanding what is required from you at university”, “Coping with academic work”, and “Expressing your ideas in class”), 2) Daily living (e.g., “Finding your way around”, “Using the transport system”, and “Getting used to the pace of life”), and 3) Interpersonal adaptation (e.g., “Making friends”, “Dealing with people of higher status”, and “Understanding jokes and humor”). The response scale used a five-point scale ranging from 1 (Extreme difficulty) to 5 (No difficulty). Higher scores indicate higher cultural adaptation in the domain. Cronbach’s alphas were .71 (academic adaptation), .75 (daily living), and .82 (interpersonal adaptation).

Moralization of Japanese cultural norms

We used a subscale of the Japanese Moral Foundation Questionnaire (JMFQ: Honda et al., 2017), which measures an individual’s reactions to violations of Japanese cultural norms in the domains of *muenryo* (no enryo) and immodesty. The original version of the JMFQ consists of three subscales: After consulting with collaborators and two international students from diverse cultural and religious backgrounds, we omitted items that illustrated unfamiliar situations for people from other cultures (e.g., “Not cheering for your homeroom team in a school sports competition”). Items that illustrated an occupational setting were excluded because they may be unfamiliar to university students (e.g., “Sitting in a manager’s chair”). After excluding inappropriate items, we had five remaining items, including “Opposing when everyone else in your group agrees”, “Ordering a dish that is different from everyone else’s”, “Crying when everyone else is laughing”, “Leaving a party before your guests leave”, and “Selling a thing that you got from a friend.” The third and fourth authors, and one volunteer (international student) checked the moral items as to whether they reflect moral values that are different from their own cultures’.

There are three ways to measure moralization of certain values: moral judgments, moral attitudes, and expansiveness of moral consideration (Rhee, Schein, & Bastian, 2019). In this study, we used moral judgments to measure the extent to which an individual moralizes Japanese cultural norms. Participants were presented with five statements of behaviors that transgressed Japanese cultural norms because reactions to moral transgressions tend to be more prominent than morally desirable behaviors, which are likely to be taken for granted (Haidt et al., 1993). The participants responded to each transgression (“Please rate the extent to which each behavior is morally appropriate for you, using the following scale”), using a six-point scale ranging from 0 (Definitely appropriate) to 5 (Not appropriate at all). Higher scores indicate harsher moral judgments and higher moralization. Cronbach’s alpha was .72.

Results

Means, standard deviations, correlations, and Cronbach's alphas are provided in Table 2. Length of stay was positively correlated with adaptation in the academic domain, $r = .27, p = .001$. Moralization of Japanese cultural norms was positively related to adaptation in the interpersonal domain, $r = .23, p = .005$. There were no gender differences in any of the variables. Therefore, we omitted gender from further analyses.

Table 2

Means, Standard Deviations, Correlations and Cronbach Alphas

Key variables	1	2	3	4	5
1. Length of stay (months)	—	.27**	.03	.08	-.05
Cultural adaptation					
2. Academic		—	.55***	.54***	.13
3. Daily living			—	.61***	.08
4. Psychosocial				—	.23*
5. Moralization					—
<i>M</i>	24.09	19.29	28.24	22.23	12.88
<i>(SD)</i>	(26.79)	(3.63)	(3.93)	(5.00)	(5.15)
Cronbach alpha		.71	.75	.82	.72

Note. $N = 122, p^* < .05, p^{**} < .01, p^{***} < .001$.

Multiple regression analysis was conducted to ascertain whether the three types of cultural adaptation predicted moral judgments that involved Japanese cultural norms. Length of stay was included because it has been found to influence the acculturation process (Huff, Song, & Gresch, 2014) together with the three types of cultural adaptation (academic, daily living, and interpersonal). The results are provided in Table 3. In the model, cultural adaptation in the interpersonal domain positively predicted harsher judgments of violating Japanese cultural norms, $\beta = .24, t = 2.05, p = .043, CI [.008, .477]$. Age was also a positive predictor, $\beta = .31, t = 3.24, p = .002, CI [.134, .556]$. The regression model was significant, $F(5, 112) = 3.99, p = .002, R^2_{\text{adjusted}} = .11$.

For additional analysis, we included the country of origin as a predictor. The country of origin that was measured as a nominal variable was coded as a categorical

variable by region. The results showed that the country of origin was not a significant predictor, $\beta = .001$, $t = .02$, $p = .988$, CI $[-.762, .773]$. Cultural adaptation in the interpersonal domain, but not in the academic and daily living domains, predicted harsher judgments (interpersonal: $\beta = .24$, $t = 2.03$, $p = .045$, CI $[.006, .480]$; academic: $\beta = .04$, $t = .32$, $p = .752$, CI $[-.276, .381]$; daily living: $\beta = -.10$, $t = -.85$, $p = .401$, CI $[-.440, .177]$). Age and length of stay were also significant predictors (age: $\beta = .32$, $t = 3.19$, $p = .002$, CI $[.135, .581]$; length of stay: $\beta = -.20$, $t = -2.07$, $p = .041$, CI $[-.076, -.002]$).

Table 3

Multiple Regression Analysis Predicting Moralization of Japanese Moral Values

Predictors	β	t	CI
Age	.31**	3.24	.134, .556
Length of stay (months)	-.19 [†]	-1.95	-.072, .001
Cultural adaptation			
Academic	.04	.31	-.270, .371
Daily living	-.10	-.88	-.438, .169
Interpersonal	.24*	2.05	.008, .477

Note. $N = 122$. $p^* < .05$, $p^{**} < .01$.

Considering that over 60 % of international students were from China, we coded the country of origin as 0 = China, 1 = others, and included the predictor to the regression model. Length of stay and the country of origin were negatively associated with moralization of Japanese cultural norms (length of stay: $\beta = -.20$, $t = 2.10$, $p = .038$, CI $[-.073, -.002]$; country of origin: $\beta = -.22$, $t = 2.33$, $p = .022$, CI $[-.423, -.357]$). Cultural adaptation in the interpersonal domain remained as a significant predictor, $\beta = .24$, $t = 2.05$, $p = .02$, CI $[.008, .477]$.

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to test a moralization hypothesis that cultural adaptation in the interpersonal domain is associated with the moralization of certain behaviors that are sanctioned in the host culture. We aimed to build on the model of cultural adjustment by Ward and colleagues (Searle & Ward, 1990; Ward & Kennedy, 1993, 1999) by adding morality to the domain of sociocultural adaptation. To this end, we investigated the associations between three types of cultural adaptation (academic,

daily living, and interpersonal) and moral judgments that relate to Japanese cultural norms among student sojourners in Japan. Our results showed that adaptation in the interpersonal domain, predicted harsher judgments of behaviors that violate Japanese cultural norms.

These results imply that international students learn cultural norms through daily interactions with close Japanese friends. Midooka (1990) noted that Japanese tend to disclose their true feelings or intentions exclusively to close others, suggesting that those international students who have close host ties are the ones that have the opportunity to learn and adopt cultural norms, and hence, are able to navigate social interactions smoothly. To this effect, past findings on value transmission have indicated that normative values are transmitted from someone who has been socialized in the context to a close other in the acculturation process (Phalet & Schonpflug, 2001).

An interesting finding was that when the country of origin was entered into the regression model, it negatively predicted harsher judgments of behaviors that violated Japanese cultural norms. In particular, Chinese international students were less likely than those from the other countries to moralize Japanese cultural norms. This is in line with the culture-specific hypothesis of acculturation model (Bornstein, 2017), backed by findings of Zlobina et al. (2006) that factors predicting sociocultural adaptation is specific to the cultural group. In addition, Renner et al. (2012) found that German student sojourners in Austria had adaptation issues specific to the interpersonal domain, while they had no difficulties in academic performance. From these findings, we conclude that geographic proximity, cross-linguistic similarity, and the compatibility between the country of origin and destination country in terms of cultural orientation (collectivism/individualism) may not be effective predictors of acculturation outcomes when ethnic tension prevails within the host culture. Perhaps, in the case of Chinese students in Japan, due to territorial disputes and other political friction between Japan and China, either or both the hosts and the sojourners had negative attitudes toward each other, making it difficult for them to assume Japanese values of morality.

To this effect, the interactive acculturation model (IAM: Bourhis, Moise, Perreault, & Senécal, 1997) focuses on the propensity of the sojourner toward acculturation, and the interaction of that of the hosts. IAM proposes that both parties must be willing to accommodate to each other to realize quality intergroup interaction. While language proficiency and having similar cultural orientations certainly seem to be antecedents for a successful intergroup relationship (such as between the British and Americans), they are not adequate to mitigate political and economic grudges between the countries in question. In our study, although Japan and China are geographically

close, and both cultures are based on Confucianist tradition, the territorial, economic, and political tensions undermine what should be a harmonious relationship (Takamatsu & Takai, 2014). Asian international students in Japan have reported experiencing racial discrimination much more than Western students (Iwao & Hagiwara, 1987). Such experiences may impede their willingness to emulate Japanese culture, and to this fact, Yamazaki (1993) noted that internationals who had not experienced discriminating attitudes by the locals had more favorable attitudes toward Japanese cultural practices.

Building on the IAM, the relative acculturation expanded model (RAEM; Navas et al., 2005) postulated that preferred acculturation strategies and the actual implemented strategy vary, depending on aspects of daily living (e.g., work, family relations, religious beliefs, customs, and ways of thinking). Most acculturation models, including the IAM and RAEM models, have not been tested on the student population (Smith & Khawaja, 2011). To clarify the relationship between the country of origin and moralization of norms in the acculturating culture, future studies should take account the role of acculturation orientations endorsed and actually adopted by student sojourner groups and host majority students in several sociocultural domains. One practical implication is that university programs that successfully reduce discordance in ideal and real acculturation orientations between the host and international students may reduce sociocultural adaptation problems and promote not only academic productivity, but also cultural exchange (Wekullo, 2019).

Finally, one significant strength of this study was that the measure of cultural adaptation was developed specifically for the target group. Because acculturation experiences have been found to depend on a wide variety of demographic and ecological factors, empirical studies should use a measure that is specific to the group under investigation (Matsudaira, 2006). Using the context-specific measure, we found that adaptation in the academic domain was positively correlated with length of study but not with the moralization of Japanese cultural norms. Academic success predicts self-efficiency and student satisfaction (Mak, Bodycott, & Ramburuth, 2015), but has little effect on understanding the moral significance of culture-specific norms. It is possible that international students can attain academic success, but not sociocultural adaptation in the interpersonal domain, without understanding Japanese cultural values.

Limitations and Future Directions

The link between understanding of morality in the new culture and acculturation introduced by this study has opened the door to further examination of this relationship. While we focused on sociocultural adaptation in three domains (academic, daily living, and interpersonal), acculturation strategies may also involve marginalization or

separation from the host culture (Barry, 2001; Sam & Berry, 2010), and this is one possibility that we had overlooked. Based on past findings (Berry & Sabatier, 2011; Berry, Phinney, Sam, & Vedder, 2006; Inoue & Ito, 1997), acculturation styles with low sociocultural adaptation outcomes should be negatively associated with moralization. In contrast, student sojourners who have adopted an assimilation acculturation strategy should have higher cultural adaptation levels and show more moralization of culture-specific norms (Ward & Rana-Deuba, 1999).

A second shortcoming was that we did not check whether participants had already been amenable to Japanese moral values before arriving to Japan. Students may have already been aware of Japanese cultural norms, and felt that they were more in consistency to their own moral values than their home culture. To address this issue, future studies should check to see if participants had chosen to study in Japan anticipating that its values were in consonance with their own.

One other concern of this study was that the sample of international students was not large, hence groups other than the Chinese were underrepresented. Samples should encompass a wide variety of factors underpinning sociocultural adaptation for structural model testing, such as region of origin, second and third language proficiency, previous experience in study abroad in general and in the host country, extent of knowledge of host culture, and acculturation attitudes of international students and locals. In this study, language proficiency was not included in the regression model, given the weak or curvilinear relationship between Japanese language skills and acculturation outcomes among international students in Japan (Iwao & Hagiwara, 1987; Simic-Yamashita & Tanaka, 2010; Takai, 1989; Tanaka, Takai., Kohyama., & Fujihara, 1994), unlike acculturation studies conducted in Western contexts (Brunsting et al., 2018; Zhang & Goodson, 2011). However, English may be more useful than the local language in some contexts, such as the host institution's campus, which highlight their internationalism (Simic, Tanaka, & Hasegawa, 2006). Because English is regarded to have much higher ethnolinguistic vitality than the Japanese language, the host students may have not expected international student to have mastered the Japanese language, making non-Japanese speakers more desirable, leading to high sociocultural adaptation for those with high English skills, not Japanese. On the other hand, in less international campuses, English proficiency may not be associated with sociocultural adaptation because Japanese students feel incompetent in speaking in English (Simic-Yamashita & Tanaka, 2008; Takai & Ota, 1994). Future studies should clarify the relationship between the second (Japanese) and third (English) language skills, sociocultural adaptation, and understanding of morality in the new culture.

Conclusions

The results of our study has added to the existing model of sociocultural adjustment, as well as the moralization literature, by providing evidence that even short-term sojourners can learn culture-specific morality through interacting with the locals, and the individual's moral evaluation of a given action may shift toward what is valued in the host culture. Morality is not only about what is ethically permissible, but also about how people think and behave (Haidt, 2008). Our findings suggest that moral values can be re-shaped by experience, and within the context of acculturation, sojourners may experience changes in their moral attitudes irrespective of their length of residence in the host culture.

Acknowledgments

We thank all the international students who volunteered in our survey and Gamze Kelle, Rumana Aktar, and Jeremy A. Rappleye for data collection.

References

- Barry, D. T. (2001). Development of a new scale for measuring acculturation: The East Asian Acculturation Measure (EAAM). *Journal of Immigrant Health*, 3, 193–197. <https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1012227611547>.
- Berry, J. W., & Sabatier, C. (2011). Variations in the assessment of acculturation attitudes: Their relationships with psychological wellbeing. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 35, 658–669. doi:0.1016/j.ijintrel.2011.02.002.
- Berry, J. W., Phinney, J. S., Sam, D. L., & Vedder, P. (2006). Immigrant youth: Acculturation, identity, and adaptation. *Applied Psychology: An International Review*, 55, 303–332. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1464-0597.2006.00256.x>.
- Bornstein, M. H. (2017). The specificity principle in acculturation science. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 12(1), 3–45. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1745691616655997>.
- Bourhis, R. Y., Moise, L. C., Perreault, S., & Senécal, S. (1997). In A. Mummendey, & B. Simon (Eds.), *Immigration und Multikulturalismus in Kanada: Die Entwicklung eines interaktiven Akkulturationsmodells [Immigration and multiculturalism in Canada: The interactive acculturation model]*. Identität und Verschiedenheit. Bern, Switzerland: Verlag Hans Huber.
- Brunsting, N. C., Zachry, C., & Takeuchi, R. (2018). Predictors of undergraduate international student psychosocial adjustment to US universities: A systematic review from 2009–2018. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 66, 22–33. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijintrel.2018.06.002>.
- Faul, F., Erdfelder, E., Lang, A.-G., & Buchner, A. (2007). G*Power 3: A flexible statistical power analysis program for the social, behavioral, and biomedical sciences. *Behavior Research Methods*, 39, 175–191. Retrieved from <http://www.psych.uni-duesseldorf.de/abteilungen/aap/gpower3/>.
- Graham, J., Haidt, J., Koleva, S., Motyl, M., Iyer, R., Wojcik, S., et al. (2013). Moral Foundations Theory: The pragmatic validity of moral pluralism. *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*, 47, 55–130. <https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-12-407236-7.00002-4>.
- Haidt, J. (2008). Morality. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 3, 65–72. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1745-6916.2008.00063.x>.
- Haidt, J., Koller, S., & Dias, M. (1993). Affect, culture, and morality, or is it wrong to eat your dog? *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 65, 613–628. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.65.4.613>.
- Hashimoto, H., & Yamagishi, T. (2013). Two faces of interdependence: Harmony seeking

- and rejection avoidance. *Asian Journal of Social Psychology*, 16, 142–151. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ajsp.12022>.
- Henrich, J., Heine, S. J., & Norenzayan, A. (2010). The weirdest people in the world? *The Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, 33(2-3), 61–83. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0140525X0999152X>.
- Honda, S., Ishimaru, A., Utsunomiya, S., Yamane, T., Oda, M., Sakamoto, K., et al. (2017). Considering the relation between the Haidt's Moral Foundations Theory and Japanese morality through developing a new scale. *Bulletin of the Faculty of Education, Yamaguchi University*, 66, 95–106 (in Japanese).
- Horberg, E. J., Oveis, C., Keltner, D., & Cohen, A. B. (2009). Disgust and the moralization of purity. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 97(6), 963–976. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0017423>.
- Huff, K. C., Song, P., & Gresch, E. B. (2014). Cultural intelligence, personality, and cross-cultural adjustment: A study of expatriates in Japan. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 38, 151–157. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijintrel.2013.08.005>.
- Inoue, T., & Ito, T. (1997). Acculturation attitudes and mental health of international students in their first year. *The Japanese Journal of Psychology*, 68(4), 298–304. <https://doi.org/10.4992/jjpsy.68.298> (in Japanese).
- Iwao, S., & Hagiwara, S. (1987). The image of foreign students toward Japan (9): Differences with length of stay and Japanese language competence. *Bulletin of the Institute for Communications Research, Keio University*, 29, 55–75 (in Japanese).
- Japan Student Services Organization. (2020). The summary of result on an annual survey of international students in Japan: International students in Japan 2019. Retrieved from https://www.jasso.go.jp/en/about/statistics/intl_student/_icsFiles/afieldfile/2020/05/08/data19_brief_e_1.pdf.
- Jiang, C., Ikegami, T., & Osawa, Y. (2017). The relationship between acculturation strategy and mental health among students studying abroad : Moderation effects of social environments. *Studies in Urban Cultures*, 19, 27–39. <https://doi.org/10.24544/ocu.20171213-009> (in Japanese).
- Landy, J. F., & Goodwin, G. P. (2015). Does incidental disgust amplify moral judgment? A meta-analytic review of experimental evidence. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 10, 518–536. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1745691615583128>.
- Mak, A. S., Bodycott, P., & Ramburuth, P. (2015). Beyond host language proficiency: Coping resources predicting international students' satisfaction. *Journal of*

- Studies in International Education*, 19, 460–475.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1028315315587109>.
- Mao, S., & Daibo, I. (2016). The effectiveness of a social skills training program with Chinese cultural characteristics: Examining the cognitive and behavioral changes in Chinese undergraduates using self-assessment and evaluation by others. *Japanese Journal of Social Psychology*, 32(1), 22–40.
<https://doi.org/10.14966/jssp.0870> (in Japanese).
- Marín, G., & Gamba, R. J. (2003). Acculturation and changes in cultural norms. In K. M. Chun, P. Balls Organista, & G. Marín (Eds.), *Acculturation: Advances in theory, measurement, and applied research* (pp. 83–93). Washington: American Psychological Association.
- Matsudaira, T. (2006). Measures of psychological acculturation: A review. *Transcultural Psychiatry*, 43(3), 462–487. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1363461506066989>.
- Midooka, K. (1990). Characteristics of Japanese-style communication. *Media Culture & Society*, 12, 477–489. <https://doi.org/10.1177/016344390012004004>.
- Miller, J. G., Bersoff, D. M., & Harwood, R. L. (1990). Perceptions of social responsibilities in India and in the United States: Moral imperatives or personal decisions? *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 58, 33–47.
<https://doi.org/10.1037//0022-3514.58.1.33>.
- Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology-Japan. (2008). Outline of the student exchange program: Study in Japan and abroad 2008 (in Japanese). Retrieved from https://www.mext.go.jp/a_menu/koutou/ryugaku/main4_a3.htm.
- Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology-Japan. (2020). Enrollment of international students in Japan and Japanese students overseas (in Japanese). Retrieved from https://www.mext.go.jp/content/20200421-mxt_gakushi02-100001342_1.pdf.
- Navas, M., García, M. C., Sánchez, J., Rojas, A. J., Pumares, P., & Fernandez, J. S. (2005). Relative acculturation extended model: New contributions with regard to the study of acculturation. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 29, 21–37. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijintrel.2005.04.001>.
- Phalet, K., & Schonpflug, U. (2001). Intergenerational transmission of collectivism and achievement values in two acculturation contexts: The case of Turkish families in Germany and Turkish and Moroccan families in the Netherlands. *Journal of Cross-cultural Psychology*, 32, 186–201.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0022022101032002006>.
- Renner, W., Salem, I., & Menschik-Bendele, J. (2012). German students in Austria: A

- psychometric pilot study on developing a modified version of the Sociocultural Adaptation Scale. *Review of Psychology*, 19(2), 123–130. Retrieved from <http://mjesecc.ffzg.hr/revija.psi/vol%2019%20no%202%202012/Renner.pdf>.
- Rhee, J., Schein, C., & Bastian, B. (2019). The what, how and why of moralization: A review of current definitions, methods, and evidence in moralization research. *Social and Personality Psychology Compass*, 13(12), e12511. <https://doi.org/10.1111/spc3.12511>.
- Rottman, J., Young, L., & Kelemen, D. (2017). The impact of testimony on children's moralization of novel actions. *Emotion*, 17(5), 811–827. <https://doi.org/10.1037/emo0000276>.
- Rozin, P. (1997). Moralization. In A. M. Brandt, & P. Rozin (Eds.), *Morality and health* (pp. 379–401). Taylor & Frances/Routledge.
- Rozin, P. (1999). The process of moralization. *Psychological Science*, 10, 218–221. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9280.00139>.
- Rozin, P., Markwith, M., & Stoess, C. (1997). Moralization and becoming a vegetarian: The transformation of preferences into values and the recruitment of disgust. *Psychological Science*, 8(2), 67–73. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9280.1997.tb00685.x>.
- Sam, D. L., & Berry, J. W. (2010). Acculturation: When individuals and groups of different cultural backgrounds meet. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 5, 472–481. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1745691610373075>.
- Searle, W., & Ward, C. (1990). The prediction of psychological and sociocultural adjustment during cross-cultural transitions. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 14(4), 449–464. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0147-1767\(99\)00014-0](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0147-1767(99)00014-0).
- Simic, M., Tanaka, T., & Hasegawa, Y. (2006). Usage of Japanese as a third language among international students in Japan. *Journal of International Students' Education*, 11, 111–123.
- Simic-Yamashita, M., & Tanaka, T. (2008). The role of Japanese context in the L2 and L3 language use among international students in Japan. *Bulletin of the Graduate School of Humanities and Social Sciences, Okayama University*, 25(1), 45–59. <https://doi.org/10.18926/13307>.
- Simic-Yamashita, M., & Tanaka, T. (2010). Exploratory factor analysis of the Sociocultural Adaptation Scale (SCAS) among international students in Japan. *Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 29, 27–38. Retrieved from http://ousar.lib.okayama-u.ac.jp/files/public/2/20319/20160528013745280696/hss_029_027_038.pdf.

- Smith, R., & Khawaja, N. (2011). A review of the acculturation experiences of international students. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 35(6), 699–713.
- Takai, J. (1989). An overview of international student adjustment studies in Japan. *Bulletin of the Faculty of Education, Nagoya University*, 36, 139–147. <https://doi.org/10.18999/bulfep.36.139>.
- Takai, J., & Ota, H. (1994). Assessing Japanese interpersonal communication competence. *The Japanese Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 33, 224–236. <https://doi.org/10.2130/jjesp.33.224>.
- Takamatsu, R., & Takai, J. (2014). Out-group mind perception before and after territorial conflict: Empathy as a key to reducing extreme prejudice. *Bulletin of the Graduate School of Education and Human Development, Nagoya University*, 61, 69–76. <https://doi.org/10.18999/nupsych.61.69>.
- Tanaka, T., & Fujihara, T. (1992). Difficulty in interpersonal behavior of International students in Japan: Implications of Japanese social skill learning toward cross-cultural adjustment. *Japanese Journal of Social Psychology*, 7(2), 92–101. <https://doi.org/10.14966/jssp.KJ00003725172> (in Japanese).
- Tanaka, T., Takai, J., Kohyama, T., & Fujihara, T. (1994). Adjustment patterns of international students in Japan. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 18, 55–75. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0147-1767\(94\)90004-3](https://doi.org/10.1016/0147-1767(94)90004-3).
- Valdesolo, P., & DeSteno, D. (2006). Manipulations of emotional context shape moral judgment. *Psychological Science*, 17, 476–477. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9280.2006.01731.x>.
- Ward, C., & Kennedy, A. (1993). Where's the “culture” in cross-cultural transition? Comparative studies of sojourner adjustment. *Journal of Cross-cultural Psychology*, 24(2), 221–249. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022022193242006>.
- Ward, C., & Kennedy, A. (1999). The measurement of sociocultural adaptation. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 23, 659–677. doi:0.1016/S0147-1767(99)00014-0.
- Ward, C., & Rana-Deuba, A. (1999). Acculturation and adaptation revisited. *Journal of Cross-cultural Psychology*, 30(4), 373–392. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022022199030004003>.
- Ward, C., Okura, Y., Kennedy, A., & Kojima, T. (1998). The U-curve trial: A longitudinal study of psychological and sociocultural adjustment during cross-cultural transition. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 22(3), 277–291. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0147-1767\(98\)00008-X](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0147-1767(98)00008-X).

- Wekullo, C. S. (2019). International undergraduate student engagement: Implications for higher education administrators. *Journal of International Students*, 9(1), 320–337. <https://doi.org/10.32674/jis.v9i1.257>.
- Yamazaki, M. (1993). Factors influencing Asian students' attitudes toward Japan and the Japanese. *The Japanese Journal of Psychology*, 64(3), 215–223 (in Japanese). Retrieved from https://www.jstage.jst.go.jp/article/jjep1953/45/2/45_119/_pdf-char/ja.
- Yuki, M. (2003). Intergroup comparison versus intragroup relationships: A cross-cultural examination of social identity theory in North American and East Asian cultural contexts. *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 66, 166–183. Retrieved from https://lynx.let.hokudai.ac.jp/~myuki/paper/Yuki_2003_SPQ.pdf.
- Zhang, J., & Goodson, P. (2011). Predictors of international students' psychosocial adjustment to life in the United States: A systematic review. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 35, 139–162. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijintrel.2010.11.011>.
- Zlobina, A., Basabe, N., Paez, D., & Furnham, A. (2006). Sociocultural adjustment of immigrants: Universal and group-specific predictors. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 30, 195–211. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijintrel.2005.07.005>.