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The Implications of Social Skills on the Formation of Relationships Between Indonesian Muslims and Japanese

Sachiko Nakano

Yamaguchi University, Japan, s-nakano@yamaguchi-u.ac.jp

Tomoko Tanaka

Okayama University, Japan

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Abstract

This study aims to investigate social skills adopted by Japanese people in Indonesia relevant to developing satisfactory interpersonal relationships with Indonesian Muslims. Twenty-seven Japanese people living in Indonesia were questioned on coping strategies used to overcome interpersonal difficulties (Nakano & Tanaka, 2016, July) and behaviors used to form satisfactory relationships. The results indicated that the subjects used two coping strategies: (1) *cognitive*, which involves understanding and tolerating cultural and religious characteristics or differences; and (2) *behavioral*, which involves accommodating one's behavior to characteristics and differences, observation, and mimicry. It was also revealed that three specific skills are needed: a) Religious consideration, b) Frank self-expression, and c) Well-mannered behaviors and common sense. The narratives of informants showed that these skills are used to resolve the stress and problems in interpersonal relationships with Indonesian Muslims and to have comfortable relationships. This study was able to identify specific social skills that proved effective in maintaining interpersonal relationships with Indonesian Muslims. In future research, it is necessary to examine these behaviors among native Indonesian Muslims and to enhance the credibility of the skill list.

Keywords: social skills, coping strategies, Indonesian Muslims, Japanese people in Indonesia

The Implications of Social Skills on the Formation of Relationships Between Indonesian Muslims and Japanese

Recently, the number of Japanese people in Indonesia has been steadily increasing, being roughly 18,463 in 2015 (Embassy of Japan in Indonesia, 2016). More than 90% of the Indonesian population is Muslim. The religious needs of Muslims and their behavioral patterns, which differ from those of the Japanese, affect the way they adjust culturally. For instance, drinking alcohol and eating pork are forbidden, and worshipping five times a day is common. Furthermore, they observe the month of Ramadan, avoid close conversations with members of the opposite sex unless they are family members, and cover certain parts of the body in front of non-family members of the opposite sex (Tanaka, 2012). Due to these differences in cultural and religious norms, Japanese people experience some interpersonal behavioral difficulties when interacting with Indonesian Muslims (Nakano & Tanaka, 2016, July). Relationships among Indonesian Muslims and Japanese sometimes do not progress due to interpersonal cultural difficulties (Nakano & Tanaka, 2017). As Furnham & Bochner (1982) suggested, adequate social skills and coping strategies could reduce interpersonal cultural difficulties. Therefore, there is a need to explore and develop a variety of effective social skills that Japanese people could apply in different societies throughout the world.

However, the coping strategies and cross-cultural social skills that they use to overcome difficulties and build relationships with Indonesian Muslims are not clear. Hence, this study aims to investigate the social skills adopted by Japanese people in Indonesia relevant to developing satisfactory interpersonal relationships with Indonesian Muslims. In order to achieve this goal, 27 Japanese living in Indonesia were questioned about the coping strategies they employ to overcome interpersonal challenges, and behaviors that they use to form satisfactory relationships. The present study would contribute to the development of valuable insights on how Japanese individuals can better understand and build intercultural relationships with Indonesian Muslims. In addition, it is argued that a learning process such as acquiring intercultural social skills and understanding cultural standards and proper behavior are essential for cross-cultural adaptation (Yaping, 2003). If effective social skills are revealed, we will be able to carry out a social skill learning session using role-play aimed at Japanese in the future.

Methods

Participants

The informants were 27 Japanese people living in Indonesia (6 men, 21 women). They had resided in the country for a period of between 1 month to 16 years. The average age

of the informants was 32.03 years ($SD=11.25$). Their Indonesian language skills ranged from beginner to advanced. Participant characteristics are shown in Table 1.

Table 1
Characteristics of the Informants

Informant	Age	Gender	Occupation	Level of Indonesian	Years of stay in Indonesia
A	50s	Female	Housewife	Advanced	1 year
B	20s	Male	Student	Beginner	6 months
C	20s	Female	Student	Intermediate	7 months
D	20s	Female	Student	Intermediate	7 years
E	30s	Female	Worker	Intermediate	7 months
F	40s	Female	Worker	Advanced	10 years
G	30s	Female	Worker	Advanced	8 years
H	50s	Female	Housewife	Intermediate	2 years
I	20s	Female	Student	Beginner	6 months
J	20s	Male	Worker	Beginner	1 month
K	20s	Female	Student	Beginner	2 months
L	30s	Male	Worker	Beginner	2 months
M	20s	Male	Student	Intermediate	7 months
N	40s	Female	Housewife	Advanced	10 years
O	70s	Male	Worker	Advanced	4 years
P	30s	Female	Worker	Advanced	5 years
Q	40s	Female	Housewife	Advanced	8 years
R	30s	Female	Housewife	Beginner	1 year
S	30s	Male	Housewife	Advanced	5 years
T	20s	Female	Worker	Beginner	4 months
U	30s	Female	Worker	Advanced	8 years
V	20s	Female	Worker	Intermediate	3 years
W	30s	Female	Worker	Advanced	5 years
X	20s	Female	Worker	Advanced	5 years
Y	20s	Female	Worker	Advanced	5 years
Z	20s	Male	Student	Beginner	1 month
AA	40s	Female	Worker	Intermediate	6 months

Procedures

The study was performed in West Java, Indonesia, in September 2016. Semi-structured interviews were conducted, each lasting from one to two hours. Informants were first asked questions about their demographic characteristics. Following this, each was asked to describe their experience in Indonesia, especially pertaining to interpersonal behavioral difficulties (e.g., “How would you describe your relationships with the Indonesian Muslim people around you?”; “Are you dissatisfied with Indonesian culture or the behaviors of Indonesian Muslim people?”). After these questions, they were asked about coping strategies to overcome their difficulties and interpersonal social skills to construct relationships with Indonesian Muslims (e.g., “Are there skills to making relationships with Indonesian Muslims?”, “How do you cope with their intercultural difficulties?”, or “After conducting those skills and coping strategies, what happened to the relationship?”).

We had reported on their interpersonal difficulties at another conference (Nakano & Tanaka, 2016, July). In this paper, we report data on social skills and coping strategies as cross-cultural social competencies in Indonesia. Informants extensively discussed concerns related to life in Indonesia. Interviews were recorded with a voice recorder with the informant's consent and later transcribed for analysis. Informants were told of the study's purpose and assured that their privacy would be kept confidential. We obtained consent from all informants before the interviews.

Analysis

To identify cross-cultural social skills in interpersonal behavior, we analyzed informant comments using the KJ method (Kawakita, 1967). This is a bottom-up method employed to form new concepts from the data gathered. Informant comments were sorted according to units of meaning. First, we extracted segments of the transcribed narratives corresponding to points in the interviews, during which informants discussed their skills and coping strategies to form relationships with Indonesian Muslims. We judged whether they overcame interpersonal difficulties by using skills and, as a result, whether relationship formation had progressed or not. We excluded from the analysis the coping strategies which dealt with things that negatively affected relationship formation, or what the informants felt failed (e.g., Answering "*I don't believe in God*" because I don't want to talk about religion or engage in relations so as to reduce stress). Second, all information was written on individual cards. The cards were shuffled, spread out, and those containing similar content were grouped together. Following this, a title was given to each group and placed on the group of cards. This process of grouping was repeated to further divide primary categories into secondary ones.

Results and Discussion

In total, 355 segments were obtained from the analysis of comments of Japanese people living in Indonesia. The number of comments averaged 13.1 ($SD = 2.64$) per informant. The results indicated that the subjects used two kinds of social skills: (1) *cognitive*, whereby they attempt to understand and tolerate cultural and religious norms, characteristics, and differences; and (2) *behavioral*, whereby they adapt to these characteristics and differences through observation and mimicry. After the analysis, these cross-cultural social skills were classified into three categories: *Religious consideration*, *frank self-expressions*, and *Well-mannered behaviors and common sense*. These are further detailed in Figure 1.

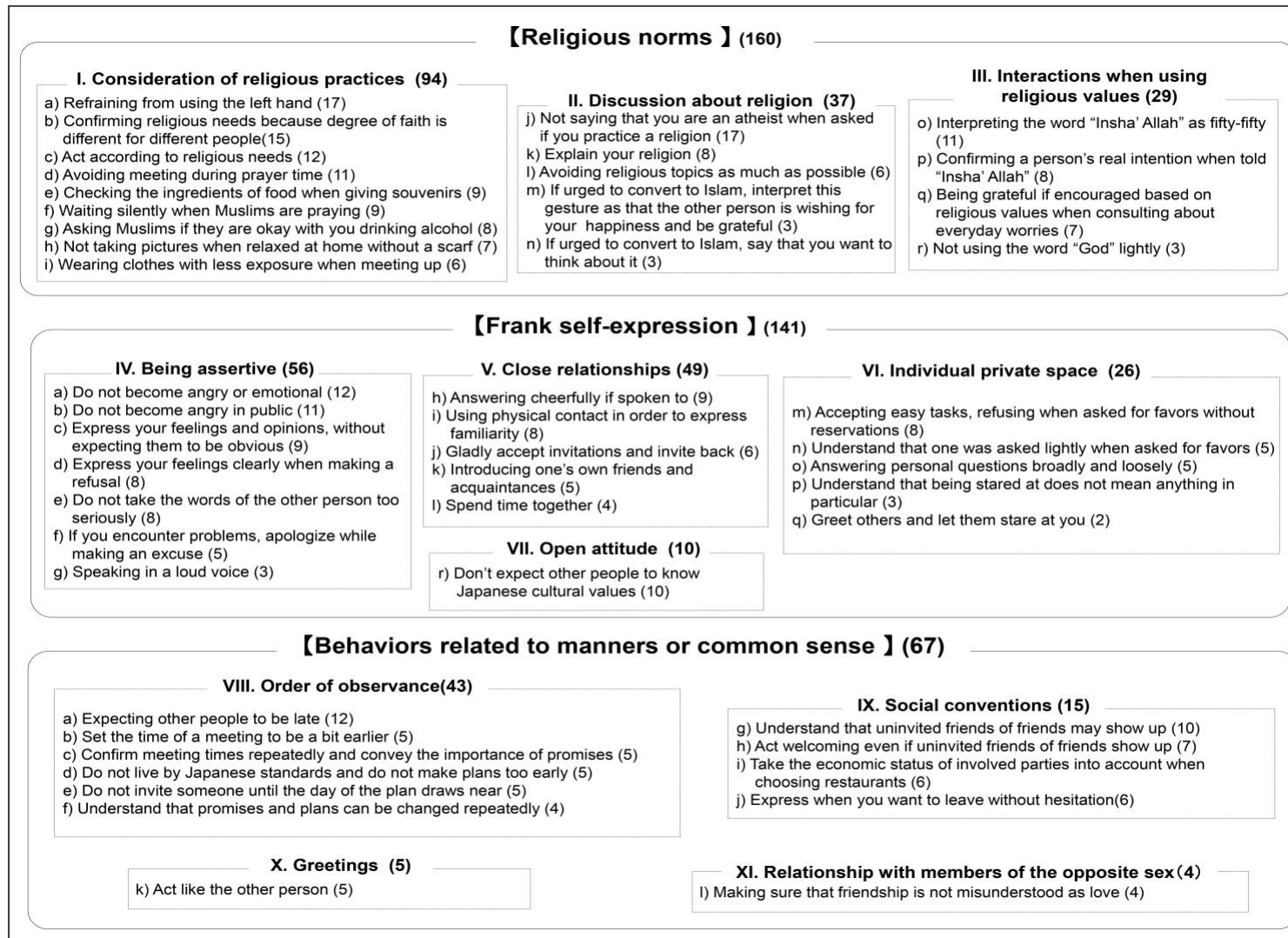


Figure 1. Cross-cultural social skills used in Indonesia to form relationships with Indonesian Muslims.

The first category was *religious consideration*, which consists of three sub-categories: *consideration of religious practices, discussions of religion, and interacting using religious values*. This category is a skill that corresponds to differences in Indonesian Muslim religious norms. We will explain the sub-categories below. In addition, the examples of informant narrative are shown in Table 2.

The first sub-category of *I) consideration of religious practices* is a skill pertaining to being aware of Indonesian Muslims religious customs. Muslims have specific religious norms based on Islam; for example, eating halal food, worshipping five times a day, and observing the month of Ramadan (Shimada, 1997). The Japanese informants said it was necessary to consider these aspects in order not to hinder religious practices during exchanges with Indonesian Muslims. Hence, they used consideration of religious practice as an interpersonal skill to form comfortable relationships, especially in terms of: confirming religious needs because the degree of faith varies for different people, acting according to religious needs, checking ingredients of food when bringing souvenirs from Japan, and asking whether Muslims are okay if they drink alcohol.

In addition, there were concerns about worship, avoiding the time for prayers when meeting, and waiting silently while Muslims pray. According to Nakano and Tanaka (in press), Japanese who interact with Muslims for the first time feel confused that, while Muslims are praying, they do not know how to behave. In this research, the appropriate behavior during waiting for praying is shown by the Japanese who have many interactions with Muslims.

Regarding exposure of the body, according to Islam, certain parts of the body must be covered in front of non-family members of the opposite sex (Tanaka, 2012). Informants described skills such as not taking pictures, being relaxed at home without a scarf, and wearing clothes with less exposure when meeting others.

Some informants said they try to refrain from using the left hand when they give something to Indonesian Muslims or when they shake hands with them. In Islam, it is said that the left hand is unclean, so Japanese people have been mindful to this. As examples, detailed narratives are shown below (Table 2).

The second sub-category of *II) discussions of religion* pertains to responses on religious topics. According to Matsushima, Kawashima, and Nishiwaki (2016), Japanese people tend to not recognize that they believe in any particular religion. Matsushima reported that 50% of Japanese people said they did not believe in religion when asked if they had religious beliefs. On the other hand, all Indonesian people are religious (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, 2013). It is probable that Indonesians are more strongly religious than Japanese people. Indonesian people find the response "I have no religion" strange and might sometimes lose trust in others due to this (Nakano & Tanaka, 2016, July). Therefore, they avoid providing such an answer. Regarding skills in this category, informants mentioned not saying that one is atheistic, explaining about one's own religion, and avoiding religious topics as much as possible. If urged to convert to Islam, interpret this as if a Muslim is wishing for one's happiness and be grateful, saying, "*I want to think about it.*" Using these methods, informants avoided arguments or ending conversations with Indonesian Muslims. The informants felt that these responses were necessary for

calm and comfortable time with Muslims.

Table 2

Informant Comments on Coping Strategies on the "Consideration of Religious Practices"

I. Consideration of Religious Practices (94)

a) Refraining from using the left hand (17)

Informant Q: "I think it is a basic behavior here. I don't use my left hand when I give something to Indonesian Muslims. If I am carrying a bag with my right hand, I give it using my right hand and say *"I'm sorry, I used my left hand."* I learned this from Indonesian Muslim people."

b) Confirming religious needs because the degree of faith differs for people (15)

Informant B: "Though I believed that all Muslims are the same, the degree of the faith is different person to person. Some Muslims don't drink, some do. One day, I asked "Why do you drink liquor even though you're a Muslim?". The relationship soured. You can easily get along with them if you confirm their religious needs beforehand."

c) Act according to religious needs (12)

Informant R: "It is easy for me approach them. I don't have restrictions like them. We can get along, unless I do a rude thing and insult them. It's easy."

d) Avoiding meeting during prayer time (11)

Informant C: "You should avoid meeting someone who is Muslim during prayer time. There are many mosques and prayer spaces in Indonesia, therefore you don't need to worry about this. But if we meet after prayer time it's better for everyone."

e) Checking the ingredients of food when giving souvenirs (9)

Informant A: "Please check whether food, sweets and drinks have alcohol or pork in them. If souvenirs from Japan are not halal, they can't eat them."

f) Waiting silently while Muslims pray (9)

Informant Z: "While praying, they focus very deeply on God. Therefore, we should be quiet and wait patiently and silently. There are a lot of mosques throughout Indonesia, but if there isn't one nearby, they must pray in my room. During this time, I don't mind them praying, but I don't speak to them, and I turn the TV and music off."

g) Asking Muslims if they are okay with you drinking alcohol (8)

Informant R: "There are many degrees here to which each Muslim is religious, Therefore, we better confirm this with each person. For example, by asking, *"Is there any food you cannot eat?"* or when we want to drink, asking *"May I drink alcohol here?"* We can answer very casually, not seriously."

h) Not taking pictures when relaxed at home without a scarf (7)

Informant K: "Female Muslims usually wear the headscarf, but remove it while relaxing at home with members of the same sex. Don't take pictures at that time, even though you might enjoy it. You must especially not show this picture to someone of the opposite sex, and must not upload it onto Facebook."

i) Wearing clothes with less exposure when meeting up (6)

Informant A: "Because I'm not Muslim, I don't need to act according to them. But I don't make them disappointed and uncomfortable wearing clothes which expose skin. Consideration is necessary in friendship."

Notes: number of segments of comments I: names of sub-categories a)–i): names of small categories corresponding to those provided in Figure 1.

Table 3

Informant Comments on Coping Strategies Concerning "Discussions of Religion"

II. Discussions of religion (37)
<p>a. Not saying that you are an atheist when asked if you practice a religion (17) Informant E: "If they ask you <i>"What is your religion?"</i>, don't say <i>"I have no religion."</i> If you answer so, they will think you strange. If discussing your religion, it may be better to say, <i>"I am Buddhist."</i> It is an easy coping strategy to build relationships."</p>
<p>b. Explain your religion (8) Informant M: "I was often asked <i>"What is your religion?"</i> I answered <i>"Buddhist."</i> They asked <i>"What kind of religion is Buddhism? Does the God of Buddhism give it to you?"</i> At first, I couldn't explain this, so conversations ended and I thought it prevented relationships."</p>
<p>c. Avoiding religious topics (6) Informant R: "It is difficult for us Japanese to explain religion. I found it better to avoid religious topics as much as possible. Because if I can't explain myself, I may not be trusted."</p>
<p>d. If urged to convert to Islam, interpret this gesture as that the other person is wishing for your happiness and be grateful (3) Informant G: "You sometimes may be recommended to convert to Islam, when you make friends. For me, in the beginning, I thought <i>"I would stop associating with that person"</i>, however, I understood that the reason that person said that was because he wants me to be happy. I can respond kindly if I interpret it like that.</p>
<p>e. If urged to convert to Islam, say that you want to think about it (3) Informant A: "I am often urged to convert to Islam, I didn't know how I should answer. But I found the best answer: <i>"thank you for your information "I need time to think about my religion. Because I've never thought about religion, I need to think on this alone"</i>".</p>

Notes: (): number of segments of comments II: names of sub-categories j)-n): names of small categories corresponding to those provided in Figure 1.

The third sub-category of *interactions when using religious values* is a coping technique. According to the informants, Muslim people often use the word "Insha Allah." The meaning of this Arabic word is "if Allah wills." Concerning this word, informants interpreted "Insha' Allah" as "fifty-fifty," confirming a person's real intention when told "Insha' Allah." Informants also recommended some behaviors: being grateful if encouraged based on religious values when consulting about everyday worries, and not using the word "God" lightly (details in Table 4).

Except in avoiding using the left hand, the skills regarding religious values and behavior are similar to the social skills that Japanese people in Turkey employ to build relationships with Turkish Muslims (Nakano & Tanaka, 2016, October). The results of this study found more detailed categories than those of Nakano and Tanaka, which investigated the social skills of Japanese people in Turkey. From the results of both Nakano and Tanaka (2016, October) and this study, we could point out the skills and considerations needed to avoid

Table 4

Informant comments on coping strategies concerning "Interactions when using religious values"

III. Interactions when using religious values (29)

a) Interpreting the word "Insha' Allah" as fifty-fifty (11)

Informant J: "Indonesian Muslims often say "Insha' Allah." For example, if I ask someone for something or make a promise, he replies "OK, Insha'Allah." The meaning of this differs depending on the person. It does not mean "yes I do" 100% of the time, so you cannot interpret it as "We promise." You had better interpret it as, "I hope so, I'll do my best," or "Yes" only half the time or less.

b) Confirming a person's real intention when told "Insha' Allah" (8)

Informant H: "The meaning of the word "Insha Allah" is not "Absolutely." So I think we should ask what people mean, like "Will you really do it?" If I misunderstand, I may be irritated or disappointed, wondering "Why didn't you do it? You promised, didn't you?!" It's one of the skill for making good relationships, I think."

c) Being grateful if encouraged based on religious values when consulting about everyday worries (7)

Informant L: "I had trouble getting along with people at work, so I sought advice. I was told "Don't worry, Allah will help you, he will resolve your problem. You can't do anything, just wait for his help." I was surprised and I couldn't say anymore, I answered: "Tha...thank you." If someone Japanese encounters the same situation, please say thank you. The reason why they give this advice is for kindness' sake. Now I understand and can reply "That may be right", I'll trust God and relax; it's one of the best ways to resolve problems."

d) Not using the word "God" lightly (3)

Informant J: "Please pay attention, don't use the words "God" lightly. When I ate dinner with Indonesian friends, I told them "There are seven Gods in a grain of rice." then they were very surprised and said repeatedly "Why? There is only one God." I was in trouble."

Notes: (): number of segments of comments; III: names of sub-categories; o) –r): names of small categories corresponding to those provided in Figure 1.

The second largest category was *frank self-expression*, which comprises four sub-categories: *being assertive*, *close relationships*, *individual private space*, and *open attitude*. Japanese people use frank expressions in order to make friends with Indonesian people, as the latter prefer to communicate in an honest, direct way. We will explain the sub-categories below in detail.

The Fourth sub-category *Being assertive* relates to communication style. Specifically, it refers to expressing one's feeling and opinions without expecting them to be obvious, expressing one's feelings clearly when refusing, not taking the words of another person too seriously, not becoming angry or emotional, not getting angry in public, making some excuse if one encounters problems and apologizing, and speaking with a loud voice. Communication skills such as avoiding ambiguous expressions and stating something gently are also techniques learned by Japanese hosts who interact with international

Table 5

Informant comments on coping strategies concerning "Being assertive"

IV. Being assertive (56)
<p>a) Do not become angry or emotional (12) Informant Y: "Although you should express your feelings clearly, they get depressed easily. Therefore, I speak easily without becoming emotional when I give advice."</p>
<p>b) Do not become angry in public (11) Informant M: "I think Indonesian people don't like public displays of anger. If you want to say something negative, comments are best made face to face, one on one. Then you can stay friends."</p>
<p>c) Express your feelings and opinions, without expecting them to be obvious (9) Informant L: "If you keep using the Japanese style of communication, you won't establish a healthy relationship with them. If you want to refuse something, you should express yourself clearly. Even if you refuse firmly, Indonesian don't care. If you communicate indirectly in the Japanese style, you will be misunderstood."</p>
<p>d) Express your feelings clearly when refusing (8) Informant C: "We must say what we feel clearly if we want to refuse something. Don't worry, if you speak plainly they won't mind."</p>
<p>e) Do not interpret the words of another too seriously (8) Informant P: "Japanese people are too serious, they remain so even when hearing obvious jokes. But I found out that Indonesian don't speak as seriously as Japanese. For example, someone told me "<i>Could you bring me a Japanese book?</i>" and a week later, I brought one. But he didn't remember asking for one. Don't blame them. I should change, and not interpret the words of another too seriously."</p>
<p>f) If you encounter problems, apologize while making an excuse (5) Informant O: "You need to make excuses when you refuse. If you don't make excuses, you might be thought to dislike someone."</p>
<p>g) Speaking in a loud voice (3) Informant U: "They speak and laugh with a loud voice. If I speak with small voice, I might seem a boring person. I recommend you speak loudly."</p>

Notes: (): number of segments of comments; IV: names of sub-categories; a) –g): names of small categories corresponding to those provided in Figure 1.

students studying in Japan (Tanaka & Fujiwara, 1991). According to Tanaka and Fujiwara, a cultural characteristic of Japanese communication is using indirect expression. This cultural "distance" can lead to misunderstandings or cause people to become uncomfortable with each other (Nakano, Okunishi, & Tanaka, 2015). Therefore, people need to acquire social skills regarding communication with Indonesian people. In addition, the informants said they try to not get angry or emotional in public. They explained that if they get angry, Indonesian people are depressed more than necessary. Accordingly, it is suggested that healthy relationships need good communication without misunderstanding.

The fifth sub-category *Close relationships* relates to how to develop and maintain good relationships with Indonesian people. Nakano and Tanaka (2016, July) researched cross-cultural

Table 6

Informant Comments on Coping Strategies Concerning "Close Relationships"

V. Close relationships (49)
<p>a) Answering cheerfully if spoken to (9) Informant J: Indonesian people often told me even the first meeting. The first time I thought "<i>What is their purpose? Something's fishy.</i>" But my mind is changed, it is a good chance to make friends. So I think it's better to answer brightly if spoken to."</p>
<p>b) Using physical contact in order to express familiarity (8) Informant Y: "They're very friendly and very close, even when meeting for the first time. But in Indonesia, it is better to use physical contact in order to express familiarity. I am used to it now. For example, when greeting, I say hello by touching her shoulder."</p>
<p>c) Gladly accept invitations and invite back (6) Informant Z: "If you are invited by someone, you had better invite them the next time. This expresses a positive feeling, as if you were saying, "I want to develop a relationship with you.""</p>
<p>d) Introducing one's own friends and acquaintances (5) Informant S: "Here, if you get along with one person you get along well with that person's friends and acquaintances. It means my friend introduces his friend to me, his friend introduces his friend's friends etc. Then interpersonal relationships spread. You should introduce your friend to your new friend."</p>
<p>e) Spend time together (4) Informant U: "The best trick to making good relationships is to spend time together. Study, work, eat, watch TV and so on. Even if you don't understand Indonesian, please spend time together."</p>

Notes: (): number of segments of comments; V: names of sub-categories; h) –l): names of small categories corresponding to those provided in Figure 1.

interpersonal conflicts of Japanese people in Indonesia. They reported that Japanese people felt they became too close with Indonesian people. Adversely, international students in Japan felt Japanese people were too distant (Nakano et al., 2015; Tanaka & Fujihara, 1992). Therefore, Japanese people need to follow Indonesian customs of developing close relationships with them. Informants said Indonesians answered cheerfully if spoken to, used physical contact in order to express familiarity, gladly accepted invitations and invited others, also introduced their friends and acquaintances, and spent time together. They spent time with Indonesian hosts and regarded social acquaintances as important. Some informants described that they do not touch their body against Japanese people, but do with Indonesian friends who are the same gender, in order to express familiarity. When first coming to Indonesia, informants felt uncomfortable with the Indonesian way of getting closer to each other, but it seems that as they imitated Indonesian behavior they relaxed and their friends increased.

The sixth sub-category of *individual private space* refers to the coping strategy of protecting personal privacy and maintaining a distance that feels comfortable. Informants mentioned examples such as accepting easy tasks, refusing when asked for favors without reservations, understanding that one was asked lightly when asked for favors, answering

Table 7

Informant comments on coping strategies concerning "Individual private space"

VI. Individual private space (26)
<p>a) Accepting easy tasks, refusing when asked for favors without reservation (8) Informant J: "They are always asking me to be less serious, but we are serious and try to respond seriously, and I'm not comfortable with that. You don't have to do what you cannot do, and they won't be offended. This is key to keeping relationships."</p>
<p>b) Understand that one was asked casually when asked for favors (5) Informant AA: "I was often asked favors by Indonesians, like <i>"Could you do something?"</i> but keep in mind, they asked casually. Don't think: <i>"He is rude."</i>"</p>
<p>c) Answering personal questions broadly and loosely (5) Informant L: "We need a way to reply to very personal questions. For example, in response to the question, <i>"How much is your salary?"</i> we can laugh and say <i>"It is about average."</i>"</p>
<p>d) Understand that being stared at does not mean anything in particular (3) Informant R: "I was stared at while getting on bus or walking. At first it was irritating. Then I told an Indonesian friend and he answered <i>"They don't have any particular meaning, just because they want to see you, they are only watching and thinking like, oh, she is Japanese."</i> After I heard that, my stress decreased."</p>
<p>e) Greet others and let them stare at you (2) Informant C: "I was surprised that Indonesian people stare at me without hesitation. If someone stares at you, don't become angry, greet that person with a smile. They look at you simply because they are interested in you."</p>

Notes: () : number of segments of comments; VI: names of sub-categories; m) – q): names of small categories corresponding to those provided in Figure 1.

personal questions broadly and loosely, understanding that being stared at does not mean anything in particular, and greeting people. Nakano and Tanaka (2016, July), who studied the interpersonal cross-cultural difficulties of Japanese people in Indonesia, reported that Japanese people perceived regular questions from Indonesians as private information. There is a difference regarding cultural sensitivity and the degree to which one should have an open mind. Therefore, Japanese people need skills to adjust to questions from and conversations with Indonesians; they mentioned that it is difficult for them to behave exactly like an Indonesian due to psychological hesitation. As a result, they cannot ask questions about privacy even if they know asking private questions may be a chance to become close friends. Rather, they felt that the skill to answer vaguely with humor was the best way. Additionally, Japanese people realized that when they ask something from others, it concerns something they cannot solve alone, thus the contents of each request are kept to a minimum. Indonesian people are not so. After understanding differences in how Indonesians deal with privacy, and knowing empirically that Indonesians will not be hurt even if they refuse, the Japanese people attempted to adapt to avoid stress and misunderstandings.

The seventh sub-category of *open attitude* is a cognitive skill that prevents cultural conflicts. For example, Japanese living in Indonesia do not expect locals to be familiar with

Table 8

Informant Comments on Coping Strategies Concerning "Open attitude"

VII. Open attitude (10)
<p>a) Don't expect other people to know Japanese cultural values (10)</p> <p>Informant N: "In my opinion, the most important thing to form relationships with Indonesians is having an open attitude about cultural differences. If they care about Japanese customs, they will become familiar with them. You cannot expect they would sympathize and guess what your feelings are."</p>
<p>Notes: (): number of segments of comments; VII: names of sub-categories; r): names of small categories corresponding to those provided in Figure 1.</p>

Japanese cultural values. They felt it was key to peaceful relationships to tolerate cultural differences.

The third largest category was *Well-mannered behaviors and common sense*, which consists of four sub-categories: *order of observance*, *social conventions*, *greetings*, and *relationships with the opposite sex*. This is a skill to develop, adjusting for differences in social manners between Indonesia and Japan. We will explain the sub-categories in detail below.

The eighth sub-category *Order of observance* refers to skills to cope with Indonesian cultural characteristics, such as recognizing that Indonesians tend not to be punctual and change plans easily. Regarding these categories, Indonesian students in Japan also experienced cultural conflicts: they perceived Japanese people as too strict in being on time and keeping promises (Asano, 1996). The Japanese informants spoke about cognitive skills that entailed getting rid of a sense of Japanese culture concerning this. It is important to understand their characteristics based on their culture. For example, the informants described specific actions such as: expecting other people to be late, setting the time of a meeting to be a bit earlier, confirming rendezvous times repeatedly and conveying the importance of promises; giving up Japanese standards, not forming a plan too early, not inviting someone until the day of the plan draws near, and understanding that promises and plans can be changed easily. They mentioned that these behaviors are good compromises for interactions without frustration.

The ninth sub-category of *social conventions* encompasses skills for how to behave during social occasions. The informants described techniques for overcoming cultural differences between Japanese and Indonesians in relations. The informants indicated such behaviors as understanding that uninvited friends of friends may appear, and being welcoming when they do; taking the economic status of involved parties into account when choosing restaurants; and expressing when you want to leave without hesitation. According to Nakano and Tanaka (2016, July), Japanese people were surprised that uninvited friends of friends arrived when meeting Indonesian people. Japanese people will often reserve a restaurant, prepare some souvenirs in advance, and ask if they can bring their own friends.

Table 9

Informant comments on coping strategies concerning "Order of observance"

VIII) Order of observance (43)
<p>a) Expecting other people to be late (12) Informant Q: "You should expect that plans and promises might change. Hence, we must get rid of our cultural expectations. If they arrive late, do not become irritated; you should maintain a positive attitude."</p>
<p>b) Set the time of a meeting to be a bit earlier (12) Informant W: "If you promise to meet someone, you had better set a meeting time well in advance. You had better set the meeting time a little earlier, 10 minutes or more. They may come late."</p>
<p>c) Confirm meeting times repeatedly and convey the importance of promises (5) Informant M: "In the case of a really important promise, you should confirm with them closer to the appointed day. If you tell them the importance of that promise, they understand and keep their promise."</p>
<p>d) Do not live by Japanese standards and do not make plans too early (5) Informant R: "If you want to get along with them, first of all, you should throw away your cultural values. According to Japanese standards, when I make a promise, we will plan a few days ahead. We will invite someone at least one day beforehand. For big events, we will make an appointment one month in advance. But for them, it is too early. They may forget it and there is a possibility that other later promises will be given priority. For example, asking, "Shall we go somewhere next month?", they will answer "I don't know." They make a troubled face to express their bother. Conversely, I was often invited to something suddenly. We must get used to their ways."</p>
<p>e) Do not invite someone until the day of the plan draws near (5) Informant D: "As much as possible, you should invite people close to deadlines. They seem to with this. Since I started doing this, it was easier to make friends."</p>
<p>f) Understand that promises and plans can be changed repeatedly (4) Informant G: "Their schedule is easy to change. When Japanese people make a promise, we adjust our schedule accordingly. But they reschedule flexibly. So, if you have something else to do, you can negotiate to change dates. You had better keep in mind that their schedule may change or you will be upset."</p>

Notes: (): number of segments of comments; VIII: names of sub-categories; a) –f): names of small categories corresponding to those provided in Figure 1.

The sub-category of *relationships with members of the opposite sex* refers to how to behave when interacting with people of the opposite sex. The Islamic faith recommends avoiding close conversations and forming relationships with members of the opposite sex (unless they are family members) and covering certain parts of the body in front of such individuals (Tanaka, 2012). In Japanese society, it is common to remain in contact with their friends. In Indonesia, they tried to not have their friendships be misunderstood as romantic. Specifically, they tried to never be alone with the opposite sex, to not talk more than necessary, or smile. Examples of the narratives are shown below.

Table 10

Informant Comments on Coping Strategies Concerning “Order of observance”

IX. Social conventions (15)

a) Understand that uninvited friends of friends may appear (10)
 Informant F: “We must understand that uninvited friends of friends may appear when we promise to meet Indonesian people, at dinner, shopping, and so on. If uninvited friends of friends appear, don’t be surprised.”

b) Act welcoming even if uninvited friends of friends appear (7)
 Informant I: “If you prepare some souvenir for your Indonesian friends, be aware an uninvited friend of your friends may come. But don’t express any trouble. Be welcoming. It’s important.”

c) Take the economic status of involved parties into account when choosing restaurants (6)
 Informant J: “One of the important skills for establishing a relationship is to let your friend choose restaurants since you might not be aware of their economic status. So, when I go out to eat, I ask my friend’s opinion on which restaurant they want to go to.”

d) Express when you want to leave without hesitation (6)
 Informant S: “If Japanese go to dinner, everyone will leave at once, right? Declaring - “*Well, let’s go home soon.*” However, in Indonesia the end time is not decided. Previously, I was confused. “I want to go home but cannot, because nobody *will go home.*” Now I know no one minds. Please don’t ask them before “*What time will we finish the day?*” I can leave anytime without hesitation. Just say: “I’m sorry, I will be leaving soon as I have something to do.” It’s Ok.”

Notes: (): number of segments of comments; IX: names of sub-categories; g) –j): names of small categories corresponding to those provided in Figure 1.

Table 11

Informant Comments on Coping Strategies Concerning “Greetings”

X. Greetings (5)

a) Act like the other person (5)
 Informant U: “You should follow another’s customs when greeting them. I recommend following ways in which other people greet each other as your first step, because there are various ways of greeting, which depend on the person or religion. You usually do not hug people of the opposite sex, unless they are your family or relatives.”

Notes: (): number of segments of comments; X: names of sub-categories; k): names of small categories corresponding to those provided in Figure 1.

Therefore, they felt it necessary to understand and accept Indonesian flexibility and welcome strangers without confusion.

The tenth sub-category of *greetings* refers to how to behave when greeting Indonesian people. Japanese people do not generally hug, kiss, or shake hands. Therefore, Japanese people become confused when Indonesians greet them (Nakano & Tanaka, 2016, July). Japanese need to acquire social skills for appropriately greeting Indonesians, especially in greeting Muslims of the opposite sex. Because the degree of

faith differs among individuals, it is not clear how to greet them. Therefore, informants stated the best approach was to follow another's behavior. The informants should try to act as Indonesians do. Example narratives are shown in Table 11.

Table 12

Informant Comments on Coping Strategies Concerning "Relationship With Members of the Opposite Sex"

XI. Relationship with members of the opposite sex (4)

a) Making sure that friendship is not misunderstood as love (4)

Informant D: "I recommend maintaining an appropriate distance from members of the opposite sex who aren't family. Even if you tell him he is just a friend, he may not be. For example, I do not smile at or touch people of the opposite sex more than needed. I may make someone think that I love them."

Notes: (): number of segments of comments; XI: names of sub-categories; I): names of small categories corresponding to those provided in Figure 1.

General Considerations

This study investigated social skills adopted by Japanese people in Indonesia relevant to developing satisfactory interpersonal relationships with Indonesian Muslims. Such skills do not merely imitate Indonesian behavior. If Japanese people behave similarly to Indonesians, they may feel less awkward, but more stressed or uncomfortable. There is a possibility of reducing motivations for forming relationships. This could be understood from following this informant's narrative:

There is a saying that "when in Rome, do as the Romans" but, after all, I can't do exactly as they do. I can't completely eliminate Japanese cultural values. For example, they may be late, but I can't be as I would be uneasy. Therefore, it's easier for me to set a meeting time with a margin, to tell another an earlier time, and check several times conveying the importance. I think I won't keep relationships for long if I am too strict. (Informant P)

As you can see from this comment, the informant tried to form a healthy relationship by eliminating cultural difficulties and psychological stress in exchanges with Indonesian Muslims, using skills to promote relationship formation with them. These skills have to be clear to Indonesians and reasonable for Japanese. In this study, actions and cognitive behavior that Japanese who lived in Indonesia employed to overcome interpersonal difficulties and maintain relationships were studied. Additionally, behaviors and ways of thinking that helped to form relationships easily were identified. These findings could contribute to helping Japanese individuals living in Islamic societies to prevent misunderstandings and potential conflicts in order to form good relationships. This

research has revealed skills that are easy for the Japanese to use. Future work needs to find how these behaviors are evaluated by Indonesian Muslims to enhance the skills' credibility.

Conversely, several limitations of this research should be noted. First, because of a relatively small sample size, further research is needed to verify the findings. Second, the present results concern social skills experienced by Japanese people in the West Java province only. Regional differences were not taken into account. Finally, a challenge for future research is to investigate whether Indonesian Muslims regard these skills as effective. Consequently, we will be able to develop more effective social skills that Japanese people could apply in interactions with Indonesian Muslims.

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