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Investigation of Cultural Identity of Students Who Study Japanese Language at British Universities Between 2012 and 2023

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Abstract: In Japanese language classrooms, students have become more globalised in terms of the students' educational and life experience background. Teaching pedagogies which have been used before globalisation may not be appropriate and effective for students after globalisation. The aim of this study is to investigate any cultural identity characteristics of students who studied Japanese at two British universities in the South of England between 2012 and 2023. The significance of this study is to investigate how students' individualist or collectivist cultural background may affect students' cultural identity. Participants were a total of 22 students who studied Japanese language through an Institution-Wide Language Programme. The majority of these students have studied Japanese for a minimum of 1–3 years. The data were collected between 2012/13 and 2022/23 academic year from two British universities. The research design to investigate students' cultural identity characteristics was a mixed method, using variables such as hometown, languages they speak, their values and their first name. Students' origin, where they were born and where they were educated, was also taken into consideration to analyse the data. The key finding of students' characteristic was that students' identification was closely related to their sense of belonging in the results of students' hometown, languages they speak, their values and their first name, which is in line with other previous research results in the literature. Other findings included that some of the students found it difficult to determine their hometown, that the majority of students were multilingual who have experience in several language learning, that students' values were often influenced by their parents' individualist or collectivist cultural values and that students' first names often showed the students' identification and a sense of belonging. Taking into consideration the individualist or collectivist culture, recommendations are discussed on how the language teaching practitioners may be able to support the sense of belonging of the current students who have diverse educational and life background.

Keywords: sense of belonging, identification, collectivist, individualist, higher education, Japanese language learning, globalisation

1. Introduction

One of the changes which globalisation brought is "unprecedented levels of immigration and displacement" [1]. Globalisation also affected education, specifically students' and teachers' harmony in the Japanese language classrooms.

Comparing the Japanese language teaching classrooms before and after globalisation allows us to see the differences in the Japanese language classrooms. Before globalisation, studying abroad was very rare, and the majority of students studied at a university in the place where they were born and grew up. It was also the norm that language teachers were not native language speakers. It was common that the students and the language teacher shared the same language and culture. According to Hollins [2], if a common culture is shared among teachers and students, "harmony is more likely to naturally exist than in situations where this is not the case" [2] as teachers and students are likely to share ways of knowing, understanding, representing and expressing ideas [2]. As language teachers and students usually came from the same place, they share common culture and language, which means both of their pedagogic expectations of language teaching approach match. Sharing a common language with a teacher may make some students feel a sense of belonging. Language teaching is also easier for language teachers before globalisation as obvious common sense does not need to be explicitly said between the teachers and students.

After globalisation, Japanese classrooms at British universities have become multicultural, consisting of students who came to study from different parts of the world. Teachers and students do not share the common language and culture in Japanese language classrooms anymore. Hollins [2] warns of them not sharing common culture as follows:

> Both teachers and students bring their own cultural value, practices and perceptions into the classroom . . . In classroom setting where a common culture is not shared, careful attention must be given to differences in values, practices and perceptions in order to foster harmony.

If harmony is not shared between teachers and students, a mismatch of expectation between students and teachers in Japanese language

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teaching may occur, which may lead to pedagogic challenges and misunderstandings between students and the teachers. It may also affect students' cultural identification and a sense of belonging. This will be discussed in the literature review.

1.1. Background

Students' written coursework about their hometown which students have to submit is an important insight to set out this study. The majority of the students who were born, grew up and currently live in the UK did not write about their hometowns in the UK. The researcher considered if this may be related to students' parents and asked students if their parent(s) was/were British. The majority of them answered that their parents were of foreign heritage British who immigrated to the UK from other countries. The researcher wishes to know what factors made students decide their hometowns and to investigate characteristics of these students' cultural identity in this study. The researcher believes that this knowledge may help Japanese language teaching practitioners as well as supporting students.

1.2. Purpose and goal of this study

The purpose and goal of this study is to investigate the characteristics of the cultural identity of students who studied Japanese at two British universities between 2012 and 2023.

1.3. Study format

Literature Review starts with the definition of the identification and the sense of belonging, which is followed by the discussion of the sense of belonging in the individualist and collectivist educational culture. Methodology explains the methodology of this study, research questions, participants, validity, ethical issues, data collection and data analysis. This is followed by Discussion, which draws some results linking literature on characteristics of students' cultural identity. In Recommendations, pedagogic practices on how language teaching practitioners who teach in the individualist educational culture are suggested to support students' sense of belonging. Conclusion revisits all Research Questions (RQs) to make a summary of this paper. It also includes limitations and future study.

2. Literature Review

After globalisation, people's values become increasingly diverse. Traditional values which people used to share in the society before have declined. People may find it more difficult to form close an interpersonal relationship due to the emphasis on individuals in the current society, leading to a weak sense of belonging. This also affected Japanese classrooms, which are also culturally diverse language learning environments, where students and teachers do not share the common language and culture.

The literature review starts with the discussion of a sense of belonging and identification. This is followed by the discussion of how a sense of belonging is perceived, encouraged or discouraged in individualist and collectivist culture.

2.1. Definitions of identification and sense of belonging and how they relate

There are various definitions of identification and a sense of belonging. According to the American Psychology Association [3], identification is defined as:

> the process of associating the self closely with other individuals and their characteristics or views. This process takes many forms: The infant feels part of their mother; the child gradually adopts the attitudes, standards, and personality traits of the parents; the adolescent takes on the characteristics of the peer group; the adult identifies with a particular profession or political party. Identification operates largely on a nonconscious or preconscious level.

Cultural identity is one of social identity [4], which consists of identity constructs such as ethnicity, gender, race and sexual orientation [5]. In other words, ethnic identity is a part of cultural identity. Each ethnic group retains aspects of their original ethnic culture [2]. Original ethnic culture includes primary ideologies, interrelated beliefs and values [2] which may be inherited from generation to generation.

Diverse classrooms consist of multicultural students who have different cultural identities. Ferguson et al. [6] claim that cultural identities also contribute to one's overall sense of self and belonging. Note that ethnic identity is a part of cultural identity, and ethnic identity is also defined as "a sense of belonging based on one's ancestry, cultural heritage, values, traditions, rituals, and often language and religion" [7].

This definition of ethnic identity implies that the ethnic identity or cultural identity is closely linked to a sense of belonging.

On the other hand, a sense of belonging may be defined as, "the subjective feeling of deep connection with social groups, physical places, and individual and collective experiences" [8].

Other definition of sense of belonging shows different aspect of sense of belonging. For example, "opposite of loneliness, social isolation, or feelings of disconnection" [8].

It is also reported that many people struggle to feel a sense of belonging [8] in recent years. For example, in the USA, 63% of men and 58% of women reported feeling lonely.

Previous research claims that a sense of belonging is important for students' academic engagement [9] and sense of students' competence [10] in educational context. Furrer and Skinner's [9] study demonstrates that students who perceived the sense of belonging to their teacher were associated with engagement in classroom activities. Pittman and Richmond's [10] study showed that students who felt more belonging to their university experienced more competence in their scholastic pursuit.

As for the relationship between identification and a sense of belonging, despite that belonging and identification have occasionally been lumped together in definition and/or measurement [11], they are often positively correlated with one another [12]. What this means in an educational context is that if students feel a lack of identification, they may also feel a lack of sense of belonging or vice versa.

With regard to how identification and a sense of belonging relate, different views exist on whether a sense of belonging encompasses identification [10] or vice versa [13]. Contrary to Finn's claim [13], Pittman and Richmond [10] assert that "belonging . . . goes beyond just identification . . . but includes individual perception of fitting in and belonging with to others" [11], which implies that a sense of belonging encompasses identification. To contrast, Finn [13] asserts that identification can be seen as an internal state with two components, "belonging" and "valuing". This implies that not only a sense of belonging relates to identification but also that identification encompasses a sense of belonging. Although different views exist among researchers, there seems to be an agreement that a sense of belonging and identification are closely related.

To understand how a diverse classroom affects a sense of belonging in Japanese language learning classrooms, the next

section considers a sense of belonging and the influences of individualist and collectivist as it is claimed that individuals who live in collectivist societies have a stronger sense of belonging to their own group [14] and a sense of belonging seems to be considered differently in the individualist and collectivist countries.

Students bring their individualist/collectivist cultural way of thinking, students' preferences and expectations of language teaching and students' cultural way of thinking to the Japanese language classrooms, which may not necessarily match with those of the teachers. This mismatch means not sharing the common culture, which may affect students' preferences for teachers' pedagogic approaches directly and a sense of belonging indirectly.

2.2. A sense of belonging in the individualist culture

A sense of belonging is viewed differently from individualist and collectivist societies. In individualist culture, a sense of belonging seems to be focused on a specific group. Research on specific groups such as students' drug use, minority students [12], students with severe disabilities [15], special needs school students [16] and mental health [17] is likely to be conducted in individualist countries. That may be why a sense of belonging is emphasised in these specific groups in individualist cultures. It is also worth noting that "contact may be especially important for people who are members of marginalised groups who must cope with negative stereotypes about their group's ability" [12] as it explains why the majority of a sense of belonging research may be focused on minority groups [18] in individualist societies. It may be possible to say that a sense of belonging is not encouraged to all members of the society in individualist societies. Therefore, teachers do not encourage a sense of belonging to all students as they encourage independence.

2.3. A sense of belonging in the collectivist culture

On the other hand, a sense of belonging is experienced by all members of the society in collectivist countries and more familiar concept to the collectivist where group concept is embedded and applied consistently in the social structures of family, schools and workplaces. A sense of belonging is also strongly encouraged in schools, family, society and workplaces. Using an example of a collectivist country, Japan, an educational policy and pedagogy before globalisation may show the characteristics of collectivist cultures as Japanese educational policy may illuminate any collectivist educational values that the Japanese government expects of their Japanese citizens. The Japanese government set out an educational policy which emphasised a group concept. In that policy, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology [19] mentions a sense of belonging as follows:

> A sense of belonging, a consciousness of belonging, feeling of unity, and consciousness of unity among the members [19].

In short, "sense of belonging" is "feeling of unity" for the Japanese.

Educational policy and pedagogy also show how Japan has changed after globalisation. According to Yamanaka and Suzuki [20], from 1990 to 2020, the Japanese educational pedagogy had changed from "rote learning" to "independent mindset". Independence is an "aspect of individualism" [2] and also the pedagogical tradition of the West whose famous philosopher was Socrates in the fifth century BC. In contrast, the Eastern or collectivist cultural value is originated from Confucius in the sixth century. To foster dependent relationship in the collectivist culture, students' independence of thought is discouraged [21]. These two philosophers may explain the difference in teachers' pedagogic approaches to language teaching.

3. Research Methodology

3.1. Research design

This study uses a mixed design. The majority of data used were qualitative, but a few quantitative data were also included. The main investigation of this study is on students' perception of cultural identities using the following variables: origin, birth place/country, where they were educated, their hometowns, their mother tongues, their values and their first names.

3.2. Participants

A total of 22 students consists of 21 University of Sussex undergraduate students and 1 University of Southampton postgraduate student. Figure 1 shows gender distribution, and Figure 2 shows the breakdown of students by language level.

Figure 1
The gender of participants who studied Japanese at the University of Sussex and University of Southampton

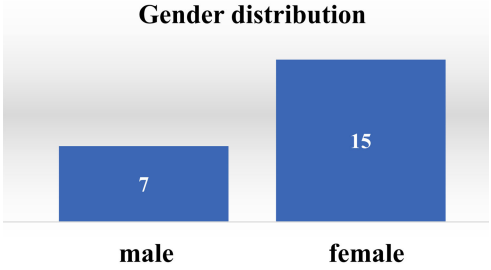
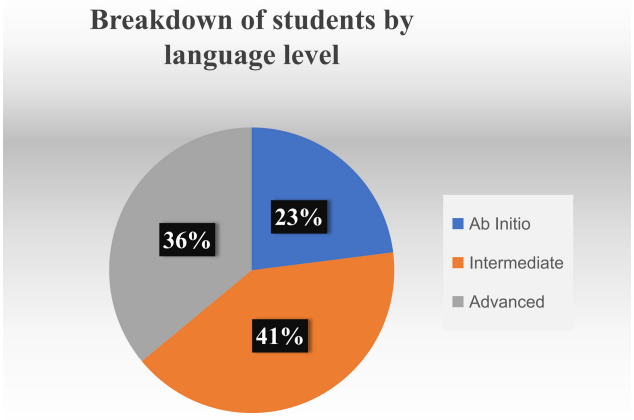


Figure 2
The details of participants who studied Japanese at the University of Sussex



Japanese language through an Institution-Wide Language Programme (IWLP) at British universities between 2012/13 and 2022/23 academic year.

The majority of 22 students have studied Japanese between 1 and 3 years. The University of Southampton student was an advanced Japanese language speaker.

The participants were conveniently accessible to the researcher, that is, convenient sampling. The participants are students who studied Japanese at the University of Sussex and the University of Southampton when the researcher taught Japanese at these universities. However, this method may create a limitation to this research as the sample may be biased and not representative of the real world [22]. This, therefore, limits the generalisability of the obtained results.

The University of Sussex offers three levels of Japanese: ab initio, intermediate and advanced. Ab initio is for complete Japanese beginners. Students study Japanese for 4 hours per week for 11 weeks for autumn and spring terms. IWLP allows non-language major undergraduate students to study languages on accredited or non-accredited basis. The University of Southampton offered Japanese 1 and Japanese 2, and students studied Japanese for 2 hours a week for a semester.

The nationalities of the students and their parents are summarised in Table 1.

Table 1 includes students' and parents' origin information as this study involves students' cultural identification or, more specifically, ethnic identification. A membership in an ethnic group is determined by a descent relationship. Five participants in Table 1 are indicated by *. These cases are what they call "half" or "quarter", for example, if a student's parents are Japanese and British, then this student is half Japanese and half British. Another example is a student with British origin whose grandmother is Malaysian. He identifies himself "I'm quarter". The majority of students take into consideration of the nationalities of their parents and grandparents.

It should be noted that although some students have a membership to the origin he/she claims in Table 1, holding the passport may not mean that they show typical cultural characteristics who satisfy the membership rule.

Table 1
Students' and their parents' origins, and the number of students

Origins	No. of students
Spanish and English (parents are both Spanish)	1
Brazil and German* (parents are Brazil and German)	1
British (parents are both British)	9 (includes one student* whose grandmother is Malaysian)
British–Ghanaian (parents are both Ghanaian)	1
British–Dutch* (parents are Dutch and German)	1
Bulgarian (parents are both Bulgarian)	1
British–Syrian (parents are both Syrian)	1
Japanese (parents are both Chinese)	1
Chinese (parents are both Chinese)	1
British–Japanese* (parents are Japanese and British)	1
Hong Kong (Chinese)	1
American (parents are both American)	1
Swiss (parents are both Swiss)	1
Taiwanese* (parents are Taiwanese and Japanese)	1
Total	22

3.3. Research questions

This paper intends to address the following two main RQs. RQ1 has four sub-questions.

1) RQ1. What are the characteristics of the students who learn Japanese in a British university?
   Sub-question 1: Do students' hometown countries match with students' nationalities?
   Sub-question 2: How influential are students' parent's values to the students?
   Sub-question 3: How do the students determine their hometowns if one or both of the students' parents are non-British?
   Sub-question 4: Do students feel culturally fit with Britain or the origin where one or both of their parents are from?
2) RQ2. Can we automatically assume that the places where students were born and brought up are students' hometowns?

All RQs are investigated by questionnaires and interviews.

The researcher created questions on these possible variables. However, the researcher's chosen questions and variables may have limited students' answers. Furthermore, there is always a danger that students may not provide honest answers to the questionnaires. Therefore, semi-structured interviews were also used to gain information related to students' life experience and background.

3.4. Validity

The use of convenient sampling in this study may not represent all other Japanese language classes at British universities or worldwide in terms of the sample cohort of students. External replication could be considered a threat to external validity. Evaluating replication, this research focuses on the cultural identity characteristics of students who studied Japanese in a British university with diverse educational and life background. It is difficult to confer any generalised findings from this study.

3.5. Ethical issues

Students' names were not required in the data in this study. When analysing data, students' nationalities were used. In the process of collection and analysis, nobody other than the researcher had access to the data. Small-scale research including this study is vulnerable to this threat. However, identifying individuals was unnecessary for this study, and no information about each individual was identified. Therefore, the students' confidentiality was protected in this study. This study did not need university ethics committee approval as it is a very small sample size research which did not involve any sensitive or vulnerable participants but involved anonymous educational survey and interview procedures.

3.6. Data collection

The cultural identity characteristics of the students in this study were investigated by questionnaires and interviews. Questionnaires were used to elicit beliefs, opinions and past experiences from students [2]. Interviews were also used as it involves direct contact with participants that allow the researcher to clarify questions.

The questionnaire, which is the main data of this study, was administered and collected during the class on 2 May 2023 at the University of Sussex. When the questionnaire was administered in class, the researcher was also present in class to make sure to answer any questions from the students who were unsure of the clarity of any questions. This ensured the validity and reliability of questionnaires. The questionnaire had 17 questions (Appendix) and was constructed specifically to ask on the following questions: students' origin, where they were born, where they were raised, their hometown, languages they speak, their value and their first names.

The format of questions was open-ended questions.

Interviews were conducted to ask one postgraduate student at the University of Southampton and one undergraduate student at the University of Sussex on their cultural identity and their educational and life background. A semi-structured interview was chosen for both students as it allowed for flexibility in the follow-up questions based on the participants' responses. These two students were chosen as they seemed to have a strong cultural identity. The questions of interviews were mainly focused on their education, life experiences and background. However, the researcher hoped that students would expand to discuss anything beyond the questions. One-to-one interviews with a postgraduate student at the University of Southampton were documented on 31 June 2012. This interview was held in-person for about an hour. Another interview was held online with an undergraduate student at the University of Sussex and recorded on 31 March 2021. This interview lasted about 30 min.

3.7. Data analysis

Analysing questionnaires and interview involved noting patterns and themes, seeing plausibility, counting and clustering, contrasting and comparison [23]. Data analysis involved two stages. The first stage involved transforming the obtained questionnaires and interview results into a descriptive account. The questionnaires and interview were categorised into hometown, language background, value and first names and were presented in the results.

The second stage was involved with an interpretative process, the comprehension of the themes, creating links between themes and linking them to available literature, which is used in the Discussion section. In the process of data analysis, three stages in coding data were employed [24], organising the code, linking them and identifying the keywords in the students' origin, hometown, mother language, language they speak, educational background, where they previously lived, first names, values and their parents' origin and ethnicity. All variables (origin, hometown, mother language, language they speak, educational background, where they previously lived, first names, values and their parents' origin and ethnicity) were also taken into consideration at this stage.

4. Findings

4.1. Hometown

Seven keywords emerged as the reasons for students to consider their hometown: (1) "where they were born", (2) "where they grew up/raised/brought up", (3) "where most of the time spent/memories were", (4) "parents/loved ones", (5) "friends", (6) "comfortable and happy" and (7) "language". While Cambridge Dictionary defines hometown as "the town or city that a person is from, especially the one in which they were born and lived while they were young", the researcher has separated the keywords (1) "born" and (2) "grow up/raised/brought up" as separate variables due to some students' mismatch between the places where they were born and grew up, that is, born in the Philippines but grew up in the UK.

1) The number of students who chose hometown for the reason "the place they were born" was 7 out of 21 students. The majority of students did not match where they were born and raised (e.g. one student was born in Mexico, received education in Spain from 1 to 8 ½ years and then educated in the UK until present). However, one Chinese student chose China as hometown for the reason that her parents were born in China.
2) The number of students who chose hometown for the reason "the place they grew up/raised" was 6 out of 21 students. The total number of students who chose hometown for the reason either "the place they were born" or "the place they grew up/raised" was 13 out of 21 students.
3) The number of students who chose hometown for the reason "where most of the time spent/memories were" was 11 out of 18 students.
4) The number of students who chose "family/loved one/parents" as the reason was 4 out of 21 students.
5) The number of students who chose hometown for the reason "friends" was 1 out of 21 students.
6) The number of students who chose hometown for the reason "comfortable and happy" was 1 out of 21 students. "Comfortable and happy" may be an important factor as the student who received her education in Ghana for 9 years also included "comfortable".

Human love exists in any place regardless of cultural differences and generations and how love is/was expressed in the culture and generation is different. When people feel love and warmth, wherever they live (whether their land of birth or not), with or without cultural differences, with or without generation gap, people seem to feel comfortable and happy. These students' answers imply a sense of belonging.

7) The number of students who chose hometown for the reason "language" was 1 out of 21 students.

This student could speak three languages (Japanese, Chinese and English), and her country of citizenship was Japan. However, both of her parents are Chinese and her mother tongue is Chinese. She was born and brought up in China, and then she received education in the UK. This indicates a close link between hometown and language (mother tongue and most fluent language they speak).

Nearly all students were able to answer their hometown. Seven students answered one reason from reasons (1) to (7) for their choice of their hometown, while 11 students combined reasons from (1) to (7) for their choice of their hometown. It is possible to summarise that one or more elements of keywords (1)–(7) made students determine their hometowns.

However, one British student answered that "I don't have hometown. I feel that I do not fit in to the place" although "I have never left the UK". This means that he does not feel a sense of belonging to the town or UK where he currently lives. This is a significant point to note in this study as it indicates a link between identification and a sense of belonging. This student's comment

of "never left the UK" and "I would like to move to Japan and become a citizen in the future" may demonstrate that he feels more sense of belonging to Japanese language and Japanese society.

The passage below is from a student who has received education in two places (Taiwan and the UK) and she explains the reason for not choosing her hometown:

> My father is Japanese, and my mother is Taiwanese. I was born and brought up in Taipei. I received Japanese education until 6 years old and I was told to speak Japanese in the house. In elementary and junior high school, I attended a local school in Taiwan to practise my Chinese language. We visited our Japanese relative's house during every summer vacation, and I also went to local elementary school. After graduating junior high school, I went to a boarding school in the UK to study English. After that, I studied pharmacology at the University of Southampton and also studied marketing at the same University for my post graduate degree. I am currently studying interpreting. The reason why I don't decide my hometown is maybe from my complicated background and respect for the places where I was born and brought up.

The following student who had 9 years of education in Ghana also shared similar views:

> I'm British-Ghanaian and citizenship in both countries but I don't always feel like I belong to either because of several reasons. I like to think of myself as a cultural transient who doesn't really belong anywhere.

The majority of the students who hold dual citizenship decide both countries of their nationalities as their hometowns (Spain and Leeds) for being Spanish and English and Tokyo and Brighton for British–Japanese. However, some students chose one hometown (Switzerland for Brazil–German and the UK for British–Ghanaian).

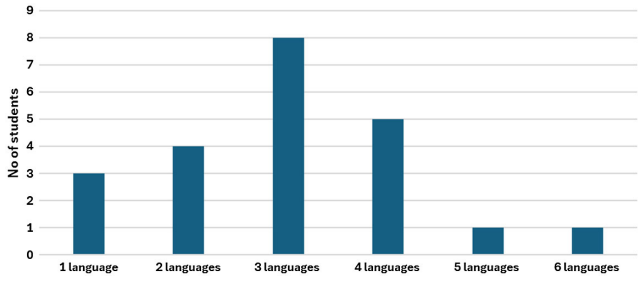
To summarise, hometown indicates students' identification and commitment. Students' hometown is students' important identification and is closely related to the sense of belonging.

4.2. Language background

Figure 3 shows the result of the number of languages which students speak including English.

The most multilingual student is able to speak six languages. One-third of students claim that they can speak three languages. Those who claim to be able to speak more than three languages are more than two-thirds (14 students out of 21) students. The result shows that all students except for three British students were either bilingual or multilingual. It should be noted that all students were not language major students in this study, and they all had their own major and studied Japanese as IWLP context. It is possible to say that the majority of students are experienced language learners who speak multiple languages after globalisation. The students who study Japanese may be novice in learning Japanese language, but they are native or very fluent speakers of other languages.

Figure 3
The number of languages they speak and number of students



4.3. Values

Values also relate to individualist versus collectivist culture as students tend to internalise their parents' values reflecting their parents who came from the collectivist culture. Students' values are either positively or negatively affected by one or both of their parents. This section first focuses on collectivist culture, followed by a mixture of two cultures, that is, collectivist and individualist culture and individualist culture.

4.3.1. Collectivist culture: Both parents are Chinese case

1) Type 1: Highly completely

A Chinese student who was born in the UK but raised in Hong Kong whose parents are both Chinese believes, "Almost all, if not 80% as I was born and raised in HK until 18 years old".

Another Chinese student considered herself 15% Portuguese, 70% Chinese, 10% British, 5% Japanese and Korean. As she received her education from 1 to 15 years old in China and also educated in Portugal between 16 and 18 years old, studying Japanese and Korean for 3 years, she answered, "Almost everything like 80%". It seems that for some students, the language that they learned was part of their identity.

4.3.2. Mixture of two cultures

These cases are as follows: (1) students have dual nationalities; (2) British students, but one of their parents is non-British or has a non-British grandmother; (3) students were born in the UK, but their parents were immigrated to the UK; and (4) students were British, but both parents are non-British and immigrated to the UK.

1) Type 1: Highly completely to parents' values

A British student, whose grandmother is Malaysian feels that he is 75% British and 25% Malaysian, wrote, "I have very similar values to my parents and I value that highly".

A British–Syrian student whose parents are Syrian–British also wrote, "A lot".

2) Type 2: Highly, but not everything

A Bulgarian student who was born and educated in Bulgaria for 15 years and has Bulgarian parents answered, "I might be 90% Bulgarian and other 10% from other Balkan countries, but more likely I am 100% Bulgarian", and that, "It is highly affected by my parents and country, but not fully".

A British student, who has both Filipino parents but lives and is educated in the UK from 2 years old to present answered that she is 50% Filipino and 50% British, answered, "I internalise a lot and hold these values to this day. However, as I have been living here in the UK, I disagree some with both Philippines and England, but majority England".

3) Type 3: Highly in a certain area

Brazil–German student who believes that she is 50% Brazil and 50% German answered, "I really internalise their views on helping people and choosing jobs that help people some way".

A British student who was born in Mongolia and educated in the UK since 8 years old and lives with Mongolian parents also wrote, "I try to keep their good parts".

A Spanish and British student whose parents are both Spanish and feels that he is more Spanish than English and answered, "I internalise how they treat other people, but I differ on specific things or opinions".

A British student who has a British father and a Japanese mother wrote, "Depends on context- where I am who I am with", and wrote, "I try to take away with both of my parents' kind nature".

The specific area where students seem to share among these students is parents' positive personality ("how to treat other people", "kind", "helping people", etc.,).

This student's comment "Depends on context- where I am who I am with" is an honest opinion. She is British but does not consider herself 100% British. Yet, she has never left the UK, but she has a work experience in a Japanese company for 1 year during university. She wrote, "After work experience in Japan, I belong to Japan".

4) Type 4: Highly, but mixture of both

Swiss student who answered 100% Swiss commented, "Highly I think, politically similar but I notice that my attitude to life is quite the mixture between the both of them".

5) Type 5: Highly, but develop my own

A British–Ghanaian student whose parents are both Ghanaian was born and educated in the UK until 8 years old and also received education in Ghana between 8 and 17 years old. She considers herself 70% Ghanaian and 30% British, and she answered, "I've internalised a lot of their values but I develop a lot of my own".

4.3.3. Individualist culture: Both parents are British

1) Type 1: Highly completely to their parents' values

A British student who was born and raised by both British parents considers herself 100% British and answered that she internalised her parent's values "Quite a lot. They are very open minded which his good. But I don't want to believe in something just because they do, but we do have very similar beliefs".

2) Type 2: A certain extent but develop my own

A British student whose parents are both British believes that she is 100% British, and she answered that she internalises her parent's value "to a certain extent, however I am also shaped by my environment".

3) Type 3: Do not align with parents' values

A British student who was born and raised by both British parents and has never left UK believes that he does not believe that he is 100% British, and he answered, "They are very conservative and I generally do not consider myself aligned with their values".

The majority of students who have never left their land of birth consider themselves 100% of the origin of their living place. When one of students' parents or grandparents is non-British, some students did not consider themselves as 100% British. If students' place of birth were not the UK, some students did not consider themselves 100% British. Some students also seem to take consideration of the country they were educated as influencing factors for their identity and their view. However, students who were born and educated in the UK by British parents and have never left the UK do not necessarily mean that they would feel that they are 100% British as one British student claims that he is not 100% British and that he does not belong to the UK and wishes to move to live in Japan. To summarise, value is often influenced by students' parents, where they were born and where they were educated. Students' value also relates to the sense of belonging.

4.4. First name

The majority of students seem to know the origin of their given names (two students answered they did not know the origin of their given names). 72% of the students had more than two first or middle names. 6 out of 21 students had 1 given name. 12 out of 21 students had 2 given names. 1 out of 21 students had 3 given names. 2 out of 21 students had 4 given names.

Six students did not write any comments regarding their given name questions. While five students did not question their first name and were happily accepted, saying, "I didn't choose my name. My parents did". However, a Spanish–British student who has two given names wrote:

> It made me feel more comfortable to be addressed by this name which is less absolutely foreign, A and by friends or colleagues by a name that feels more authentic to my identity, B.

A British–Ghanaian student who has four given names wrote:

> I chose my current given name so I could reinvent myself and have a little more control of my identity.

Two students (Mongolian and Swiss) both of whom have two names chose their name as it sounds nice and for easy pronunciation.

A British–Syrian student and a Bulgarian student have two given names and wrote:

> My middle name is my father's name because in Islam, children should carry their father's name. (a British–Syrian student)

> Given name is my father's name but modified. (a Bulgarian student)

One student's middle name is her great grandmother's first name, and one student's first name is given by his brother after his two friends.

The Hong Kong student wrote as follows:

> In HK, there's a trend where people refer to each other only in their English names rather than Chinese. Maybe it has to do with our colonial history with the British?

To conclude first name, given names are membership of a family, school and society both explicitly and implicitly, which implies a close link to the concept of a sense of belonging.

5. Discussion

5.1. Hometown

Students chose hometown for various reasons including "where most of the time spent/memories were", "parents/loved ones" and "friends". These answers may indicate students' "identity as nexus of multi membership where we define who we are by the ways we reconcile our various forms of identity into one identity" [25].

Some students chose their hometown for the reason "where most of the time spent/memories". This may be due to students' globalised educational and life background and experiences. This definition also agrees with Elahi et al.'s [26] definition of

hometown, that is, the town or city where participants had spent "the majority of your life".

One student was born in Washington DC, USA, studied in Austria for 1 year, Zimbabwe for 4 years and Switzerland for 12 years but currently studies at this British university. This student chose Switzerland as her hometown and wrote, "I know it the best and I spent the longest time there".

Another student had also globalised educational background—this student was born in the UK and educated in the UK until 8 years old, then received 9 years of junior high school and high school education in Ghana, but currently study at this British university. This student chose the UK as her hometown and wrote:

> I was born in England and a lot of my formative memories were spent here. In Ghana, I was comfortable, but I was also an immigrant.

Bertjan et al. [27] claim that people are likely to have very little commitment to or identification with a group to which they have just been assigned. If they move to a new town, they do not feel a high level of identity to the town. This is the case where students spend less time in the land of birth. Deciding their hometown is not easy task for these students as they need to look back their life to decide which place is "the longest time" they spent in their life.

In contrast to the above two students, the length of their residence in the place does not matter for some students. One student answered, "I was born and raised in Hong Kong until 18, but country wise, I prefer UK over China".

Students' hometown may also be influenced by their individualist or collectivist culture. A Chinese student who chose China as her hometown as "her parents were born in China" may show collectivist cultural influence. This aligns with "feeling of unity, and consciousness of unity among the members" [19]. A sense of "unity" which this student felt with her mother is a collectivist influence rather than individualist.

Hometown has also a hometown identity. Chen et al. [28] define hometown identity as migrants being influenced by the living and behavioural habits of their hometowns, while hometown identity may be defined as the psychological process by which individuals construct meaning and seek belonging based on a specific local culture [29].

Generally, if students display a high level of hometown identity, they feel homogeneity and integrity to their hometown of the origin/people, or vice versa. However, students' hometown identity may be displayed by the individual's internal emotional attachment and attitude [30] to their hometown.

An answer from a British student, who was born and brought up in the UK, raised by British parents and has never left the UK, is very alarming. This student answered that "I do not have a hometown. I do not culturally fit with the UK. I would like to move to Japan and become a citizen in the future". We cannot assume that students who were born and brought up in the UK by British parents feel sense of belonging and identification to the UK. It is important to listen to students' voices.

5.2. The first name

The finding shows that some students seem to have deeply thought and chosen their first names and their identity very carefully. A Spanish–British student who has two given names wrote:

> It made me feel more comfortable to be addressed by this name which is less absolutely foreign, A and by friends or colleagues by a name that feels more authentic to my identity, B.

A British–Ghanaian student who has four given names wrote:

> I chose my current given name so I could reinvent myself and have a little more control of my identity.

Given names are not just given entities, but it involves personal identity, which is not static but a process. Perhaps, the first name may be considered similar to how people look (including hair colour and tattoo), dress and speak, and people are free to change their first names they may no longer be the same person. The individual can renegotiate his or her identity and within the meaning of his or her name at any given point in time. For example, if an individual who is half Japanese and American has been using his/her Japanese first name but she/he suddenly changed the given name to English first name, this implies the change of identity or sense of belonging from Japan to America. This individual explicitly let others to know the change of his/her identity. The first names are not static.

Some students have more than one name. A British–Syrian student and a Bulgarian student have two given names, and they answered that their given names have social and cultural meanings within their parents' countries as follows:

> My middle name is my father's name because in Islam, children should carry their father's name. (a British–Syrian student)

> Given name is my father's name but modified. (a Bulgarian student)

The above students' responses seem to coincide with one of three purposes of first names proposed by Bagby and Sigalov [31], that is, students' first names represent their parents' social, cultural or historical meanings.

For Chinese students, they use English first names for a certain purpose. A Chinese student answered, "My friends call me in English", and the following Hong Kong student's answer for using English first name in Hong Kong reminds of Eberhard [32] who claims that English names allow for more intimacy:

> In HK, there's a trend where people refer to each other only in their English names rather than Chinese. Maybe it has to do with our colonial history with the British?

Watzlawik et al. [33] claimed that many Hongkongers try to facilitate the communication with Westerners and among themselves, by adopting Western-style English names (borrowed identities).

6. Conclusion, Limitations, and Future Studies

The main findings showed a close link between students' identification and sense of belonging, which is in line with the results from other previous research and the literature.

The number of students who matched their hometown and origin was less than those who did not match. This result shows that we may not be able to assume the places where the students were born and brought up as their hometown. Some students explicitly or implicitly expressed their lack of sense of belonging.

Students determined their hometown taking consideration of the longest time where students have lived, where family lives and where they were educated. Some students also take consideration of the ethnicity of their grandparents.

With regard to internalising parents' values, the majority of the students had some positive or negative influences from either or both of their parents' values. Some students claimed that they developed their own values, acknowledging some influence from their parents. Some students assert that their value does not align with their parents'.

Lastly, with regard to the main limitations of this study, the small sample size is the main limitation of this study. Small-size participants limit the generalisability of the conclusions drawn from the results. Nonetheless, these results provide information for a specific sample population. For future study, similar studies using large samples with longitudinal design would be interesting to compare with the findings of this study.

Recommendations

This recommendation is specific to Japanese language teaching practitioners who teach Japanese in the individualist educational culture as all students who study Japanese in Japan and immerse themselves in collectivist culture will feel and experience a sense of belonging in education and society. The recommendation focuses on how Japanese language teaching practitioners can support students' lack of sense of belonging, especially for those who were born and brought up in an individualist place. A sense of belonging is a very important concept, not only relating to students' identity, but it also is conducive to students' motivation [34].

In 2019/2020 academic year, an undergraduate student, who suffered from mental health issues and studied abroad at a Japanese university in 2018/2019 academic year, told the researcher that his mental health issue recovered while studying in Japan, but his mental health issue returned after coming back to Sussex University. A sense of belonging is not considered important in individualist educational culture, and it may be very difficult to institute a sense of belonging in the individualist educational culture.

Japanese language classrooms in individualist educational culture may be considered different from other European language learning classrooms as students are able to experience Japanese collectivist educational culture. Japanese language practitioners unconsciously create Japanese collectivist educational culture in the individualism educational culture and expose non-Japanese student opportunities to collectivist educational practices, educational expectations and values. The majority of students who study Japanese find Japanese culture very different and may be willing to learn about Japanese culture. If students find Japanese language teaching practitioners and classrooms warm, supportive and autonomous, students may feel a sense of belonging to the Japanese class, the Japanese and Japan. Although students' sense of belonging may not be to a place where they were born and brought up, some students have never experienced a sense of belonging in their entire life. In this respect, Japanese language teaching practitioners may help these students to provide what some students long for.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares that she has no conflicts of interest to this work.

Data Availability Statement

The data that support the findings of this study are openly available at the University of Sussex Research Data Repository which is powered by Figshare.

Author Contribution Statement

Junko Winch: Conceptualization, Methodology, Software, Validation, Formal analysis, Investigation, Resources, Data curation, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing, Visualization, Supervision, Project administration.

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Appendix

Questionnaire

1. What are your parents' nationalities?
2. What is your origin?
3. Do you consider yourself 100% of your origin?
4. If you do not consider 100% and if you could have more than one origin, what ratio do you consider yourself of your chosen origin (e.g. 50% Japanese and 50% British)?
5. What is your mother tongue?
6. What languages do you speak?
7. Where were you born?
8. Where did you receive your elementary (under 13 years old), junior high school (13–15 years old) and high school (16–18 years old) education?
9. How many countries have you lived in, for how long and when?
10. Where do you consider your hometown and origin?
11. Why do you choose the hometown and origin?
12. Please describe your background.
13. In what respect and how much do you internalise some of your parents' ethics, morals and values?
14. Which place do you find yourself culturally fit into (or belong to)?
15. How many given names do you have?
16. From what language does your current given name originate?
17. If you have more than one given name, why did you choose it?