

Cross-cultural understanding in Japanese schools: Results from Online Experiments on Students

Yuriko Kameyama¹, Nasumi Shimada²

¹Keio University, Japan

²Shinshu University, Japan

Abstract

The number of students with foreign roots in Japan is increasing as globalization progresses. In 2023, about 3.3 million foreign residents are registered (Ministry of Justice) and about 2% of children were born to “at least one parent who is a foreigner” (Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare 2023). Consequently, one or more students in a 35-student-class are from families with foreign backgrounds. In schools, they often have problems adapting to school life. Such problems include difficulty with culture, language, learning style, friendship, tracking, dropouts and factors related to their own families’ and/or Japan’s less adoptable attitudes to cross-culture. This study focuses on the awareness and attitude of foreign students in Japan by highlighting challenges with cross-cultural acceptance. It was conducted via a questionnaire survey and a remote economic experiment based on the types of students with foreign roots and the degree of experience with foreign cultures and/or environments.

The participants in this experiment were junior/high school students and university students. Our experiment was conducted as an individual decision-making process with a fictitious partner (speaking Japanese or another foreign language). The results showed that there was no difference depending on whether the other spoke a foreign language or Japanese. However, individual background from the survey will allow us to quantify the characteristics of each group (e.g., overseas experience). We will analyze the data and contribute to building a policy foundation for creating more diverse and inclusive schools.

Keywords: cross-cultural acceptance, experiments on children, foreign language, multicultural coexistence, students with foreign roots