Extracting "Culture" from Japanese Student Samples in Cross-Cultural Communication Research

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Abstract

Studies using Japanese student samples have often failed to achieve the results predicted in hypotheses. This study shall conduct a review of such studies, and offer explanations as to why student samples have been unreliable. A discussion of the explanatory factors will be raised, as well as their implications toward research tactics. Finally, a model for the extraction of 'Japanese-likeness' from student samples is proposed.

Keywords: student samples, sampling bias, Japanese culture, cross-cultural research

Overview

Much of the literature in the area of intercultural communication has involved comparisons of communication styles across cultures, thus, it may be more appropriate to classify these as studies in cross-cultural communication. While investigating cultural differences is their prime goal, many of these studies have relied on university student samples, which may not be adequately representative of their respective cultures. Gudykunst, Yang and Nishida (1987), after failing to achieve the exepected results in their study of self-monitoring, have suggested that students may constitute a universal co-culture that transcends cultural boundaries, i.e., being very similar across cultures. On the other hand, studies such as the one by Bond and Forgas (1984) on person perception, have found that students do differ across cultures. Whatever the case, the use of student samples seems to be elusive, especially in the case of cross-cultural research, where multiple sources of confounding are possible. The validity of cross-cultural comparisons based on students, thus, should be questioned and scrutinized.

While very little cross-cultural research can be found on cross-generational differences in communication styles, as opposed to differences in values (e.g. Barclay & Sharp, 1982; Halyal & Mallappa, 1986; Meeus, de Goede & Kox, 1992), there has been some literature suggesting such communication style differences in Japan (Nakane, 1970; Miyanaga, 1988, 1991). Because the complexity of interpersonal communication styles differs across cultures, some being

more implicit in styles than others, and emphasizing context to a higher degree, it would seem that some cultures would show larger distinction in communication styles across age groups. Hall's (1976) distinction between high and low context cultures serves to illustrate this point. According to Hall, "A high context communication message is one in which most of the information is either in the physical context or internalized in the person, while very little is in the coded, explicit part of the message. A low context communication is just the opposite, i.e., the mass of information is vested in the explicit code" (p.79). Therefore, in cultures which value explicit and precise means of communication, i.e., low context cultures, so as far as age is indicative of social status (student versus working), relatively less age-related differences can be expected, due to the straightforward nature and generalizability across situations of social norms and rules. In a study in England, a low context culture, McPhail (1967) claimed that skilled behavioral solutions to social problems are largely attained between the ages 12 through 17. In the United States, another low context culture, Clark and Delia (1976) found that by the ages 14 to 15, children have mastered the bulk of persuasive abilities.

High context cultures, on the other hand, have much more implicit and intricate rules for communication, so it would seem that people in these cultures require greater social experience in order to understand the demands of the communication context (Argyle, 1992). In these cultures, age and the amount of social participation would play more important roles. The Japanese culture, being greatly context dependent, can be conceived of as an example of such culture. In particular, the Japanese tendency to distinguish interpersonal behavior on the basis of relationship poses a challenge to the socialization process from adolescence to adulthood. Mann, Mitsui, Beswick and Harmoni (1994) argue that, "in Japan, social rules are not absolute or universal but are person and situation related" (p.142). According to Iwata (1980), Japanese distinguish their behavior depending on the type of relationship, which are categorized into three types: strangers, acquaintances, and close relationships. The primary reference group for close relationships would appear to be the family or a group of close friends for youths, while for working adults, it would consist of the company work group. Put in another way, youths are familiar with more or less equal relationships, and are yet to experience the complicated, ritualistic, vertical relationships in the workplace, which are much more intense than any vertical relationships they have amongst themselves. According to Nakane (1970), the workplace relationships compose the primary in-group for Japanese adults. Such a view constitutes what Triandis (1988) calls "basic collectivism," in which one ingroup exerts a great deal of influence on the individual. The initiation of the student into the working world is by no means a simple one, as Nakane

notes, "The acquisition of these extremely delicate ways of conducting personal relations requires considerable social training" (p.128). This implies that students are yet to become socialized into the most important ingroup of their lives, an ingroup which, perhaps, is more complicated and demanding than any other they have so far experienced, and one in which the core cultural values of the Japanese are preserved and more strictly observed.

The issue of representativeness of student samples, then, seems to be especially important when dealing with high context cultures like Japan. While it can be argued that students as a whole constitute a universal co-culture which spans across cultures, or that students are different from the rest of the adult population in any culture, this paper will assume that the extent of the difference in behavior between non-student adults and students vary with culture, and that this variation is especially salient in the Japanese culture. This is not to say that Japanese students do not display what is known as *nihonjin-rashisa*, or "Japanese-likeness," but that they display the popular assumptions regarding Japanese patterns of behavior in a limited context, and that extraction of such cultural patterns must be conducted strategically. This paper will examine cross-cultural research into communication and communication-related topics which involve Japanese university student samples, looking for inconsistencies between predictions based on the cultural assumptions of the Japanese, and the actual results of such studies. Thus, the purpose of this paper is to critique sampling, discussing possible reasons as to why such sampling maybe invalid, and to provide a model by which the "Japanese" in Japanese student samples can be extracted.

Problems in the Use of Student Samples as Representatives of Japanese

One glance at a literature list in cross-cultural communication would reveal an abundance of comparative studies between Americans and Japanese. Since Benedict's (1946) time, the sharp contrast between the two cultures seems to have been intriguing to American researchers. This contrast becomes even more convincing when the two cultures are located on Hofstede's (1980) indices of cultural variability, which place the two at a fair distance apart on dimensions of uncertainty avoidance, individualism, and masculinity. It seems, therefore, that they have a great deal of dissimilarity in communication behavior, given the gap in cultural tendencies.

However, studies in cross-cultural communication and related areas have not always been successful in achieving results depicting such differences. One possible explanation for this is that the data on which Hofstede's (1980) indices were based was gathered from employees of a huge multinational corporation. The sample was composed of mature, working adults, who were, especially with respect to Japanese, supposedly socially

experienced, given that they have had rich experiences with the complexities of hierarchical and horizontal work relationships. Because the data on which researchers formulate their cultural predictions are based on this sample, it is often the case that studies using university student samples fail to achieve results coherent with such expectations.

While Western researchers assume that university students are adults, being representative of the adult population, the same assumption should not be made with Japanese students. According to Bakke and Bakke (1971), "the Japanese student has not been prepared by his culture for thinking of himself as a free and autonomous individual" (p.260), and, "Japanese students ... [have] difficulties in realizing themselves as near adults and of coming of age" (p.175). It may well be that the assumption of university students as full-fledged representatives of the adult population is an imposed etic (Berry, 1989), and may not be a valid assumption in some cultures, like Japan. Various cross-cultural communication studies on Japanese, conducted mainly by Western researchers, under the assumption that adult behavior is being reflected, show the elusiveness of Japanese student samples. It would be appropriate, then, before such studies are reviewed, to note just what differences in communication behaviors between Japanese students and older adults do exist.

Aside from scholarly stipulations, very little empirical work has been done to explore age differences in communication behaviors in Japan. However, one area in which some age comparison can be found is that of social skills studies. Three studies in particular have implemented age differences as a measure of external criterion validity of scales, based on the assumption that social skills are acquired through social experience.

Kikuchi (1988) constructed a single factor scale, measuring culturally universal social skills. This scale did not focus on the particularities of Japanese culture, as its items are exemplified by, "I can effectively introduce myself to a stranger," and "I can effectively calm an angry person." Kikuchi found that professional subjects (teachers) scored higher than students. Furthermore, Horike (1993) constructed a social skill scale based on *hito-atari-no--yosa*, or affability, which is a culture-specific construct of Japanese interpersonal competence. Significant age effects were found for factors of Conformity, Care, Self-Effacement, Sensibility, Impression Management, Stability, and Chumminess, with the general tendency being for factor scores to increase gradually from the teens to over fifty years in age. In particular, Self-Effacement, Conformity, Stability, and Chumminess showed almost perfect progression of scores by age group. Finally, Takai and Ota (1994) composed a culture-specific, Japanese interpersonal competence scale, and noted main effects for age on factors of Perceptive Ability, Self-Restraint, Hierarchical Relationship Management, and Interpersonal Sensitivity. They, too, grouped subjects by tens of years, and found much the

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same general tendency as Horike, in that competent behaviors were exhibited increasingly by age from the teens to the 60's. This study also looked at the comparison of students versus non-students, regardless of age, including working people, housewives, and job trainees. While age was not controlled for, indication that experience in the social milieu outside of the campus sphere was attained, as non-students outperformed students in factors of Self-Restraint, Hierarchical Relationship Management, and Interpersonal Sensitivity. On the contrary, students were higher in Tolerance for Ambiguity, perhaps owing to cognitive flexibility that comes along with younger minds. Overall, the three social skills studies indicate that, at least for Japanese, an increase in age is accompanied by an increase in interpersonal communication abilities, particularly those relevant to core cultural behaviors.

Judging from the findings of the above social skills related studies, it appears that age is an important factor in determining communication skills for Japanese, whether the components of skills are universal or culture specific. These findings support Argyle's (1992) assumption that communication skills are acquired through social experience, which may be gained through matters such as aging, work experience, and participation in organizational activities. Such evidence suggests Japanese student samples may not be representative specimens of their culture, though cross-cultural researchers assume they are adequate. A review of cross-cultural communication related studies involving Japanese student samples was conducted, and it was discovered that a surprisingly large number of studies had reported results inconsistent with the culturally stereotypical patterns of Japanese behavior. Table 1 lists some of these studies, although this list is non-exhaustive by far. In five of the nine studies, no difference between Japanese and American samples were found, although cultural assumptions would suggest otherwise. Furthermore, in five studies, results show an inverted pattern from what should be expected, i.e. Japanese fit more with American cultural assumptions than Americans, or vice versa. Each of these studies will be discussed, as well as the explanatory frameworks on which their discrepant findings can be rationalized.

Table 1. Studies in Cross-Cultural Communication with Discrepancies in Japanese Cultural Assumptions and Actual Results

Study	Variable Studied	Discrepant Result	Possible Source of Discrepancy
Bond, Nakazato, Shiraishi (1975)	person perception dimensional structure	Jp=Am	social experience
Gudykunst, Yang & Nishida (1987)	self-monitoring	Jp<Am	social experience, relational context inadequately specified
Gudykunst & Nishida (1984)	nonverbal affiliativeness	Jp>Am	relational context inadequately specified
Gudykunst & Nishida (1986)	personalization and synchronicity of ingroup relationships	Jp<Am	relational context inadequately specified
Steil & Hillman (1993)	direct influence strategies	Jp=Am=Kor	relational conetxt inadequately specified
Gudykunst, Matsumoto, Ting-Toomey,Nishida, Kim & Heyman (1996)	inference ability indirectness use of silence in comm. preciseness, openness, dramatic comm.	Jp<Am, Aus Jp=Am Jp<Am, Aus Jp>Aus	relational context inadequately specified
Frager (1970)	group conformity	Jp<Am	relational context inadequately specified
Westaby (1995)	social facilitation	Jp=Am	relational context inadequately specified
Leung & Iwawaki (1988)	individualistic decision in distributive behav.	Jp=Am, Jp, Am>Kor	societal change, generation gap

Note: Jp - Japanese, Am - Americans, Kor - Koreans, Aus - Australians

Discrepancies Between Expectations and Results in Cross-Cultural Communication Studies

Various incidences of results betraying popular assumptions of Japanese culture can be seen, particularly when contrasted to the American culture. These studies seem to depict some of the negative consequences incurred from bias inherent in the use of students as

representatives of Japanese. Of course, there are many other studies not included here, in which the Japanese student sample exhibit results consistent with cultural assumptions, but the number of studies collected attest to the fact that student samples are indeed difficult to predict. Some of the possible causes for the discrepant findings are outlined in the table, but a more elaborate discussion of each of these will follow. Explanatory frameworks will be proposed, and these include lack of social experience, changes in society, students as a culture, and specifying context in items. These frameworks will be interpreted from the perspective of social identity theory, which serves to integrate the tenets found in the frameworks.

Social Experience

In an intrapersonal communication study, Bond, Nakazato and Shiraishi (1975) compared Japanese and American student samples on Norman's (1963) dimensions of person perception. Factor analysis of person perception revealed that factor structures in both cultures were nearly identical, showing high coefficients of congruence across all dimensions. Incidentally, they compared factor structures of Philippine data, and the coefficients of congruence showed the same type of discrepancy with the Japanese data as with the American data, further giving evidence of the similarity between the latter two. In lieu of huge differences in interpersonal values between Japanese and Americans (Gordon, & Kikuchi, 1981), such congruence in the way person perception is structured is unexpected. While Bond et al. make the claim that most of the person perception dimensions are universal across modernized cultures, such generalization to an entire population using student samples is highly questionable. The unexpected finding can be explained alternatively in terms of lack of social experience of the students in the more traditional interpersonal relationships found in the working world of Japanese. In an age comparison of person perception, Kikuchi (1978) compared male university students with male teachers on their evaluation of two Japanese prototypes based on traditionally ideal personality traits, that of *giri-gatai-hito* (one who is sensitive to his／her obligations) and *ninjo-ni-atsui-hito* (one who is characterized by a warm character), using the same interpersonal values scale as Bond et al. did. Kikuchi's goal was to probe for differences in images between the two prototypes, to see if there would be any distinction between them, and to probe for differences between the two age groups on their perception of such a distinction. Kikuchi discovered students and teachers differed in their perception of the distinction of the two prototypes on two of six dimensions. His results suggest that some differences exist between age groups on person perception. Because the superficiality of the Japanese-likeness of relationships experienced by students, it is possible that in Bond et al.'s study, a pattern of person perception more reflective of Japanese values

was not seen. Older adults, with their extensive experience in traditional and culturally rich relationships within the work organization, would most likely have a different perception pattern.

It cannot be said that students entirely lack social experience, as they have accumulated experience over their albeit short life-span, but this experience may differ in quality as compared to the their cohorts who have entered the working world. As mentioned earlier, Nakane (1970) asserted that the primary ingroup for the Japanese is the company work group. In such work relationships, one must be tactful in managing vertically structured relationships, and will be required to form *oybun–kobun* relationships with senior colleagues. Nakane (1970) describes these relationships as resembling a father-child relationship, in the context of a work setting. She notes, "The *oybun–kobun* relationship comes into being through one's occupational training and activities, and carries social and personal implications, appearing symbolically at the critical moments in a man's life" (p.45). Another way of conceiving this relationship is that of a master-apprentice relationship. The communication style between the *oybun* and *kobun* is vertical, and intricate rules regarding the use of *keigo*, or honorifics, the expression of opinions, and the timing and context of informal conversation must be learned by the *kobun*. The *oybun* is a trusted advisor of off-the-job, personal matters of the *kobun*, and may even arrange his/her marriage.

For students, however, there is little that comes near the verticality of the *oybun–kobun* relationship, which encompass much of the traditional, culturally stereotypical behaviors of Japanese. Students do form *senpai–kohai* relationships which, like the *oybun–kobun* relationship, are based on seniority, but in no way are they as strictly vertical. *Senpai–kohai* relationships are senior-junior student relationships which are most closely observed in extra-curricular clubs (Rohlen, 1983). While a *kohai* would use honorifics toward the *senpai*, just as the *kobun* would to the *oybun*, communication is less formal. The *senpai–kohai* relationship is not a master-apprentice relationship as is *oybun–kobun*, and can be described as an elder-younger brother relationship (Sugiyama–Lebra, 1976). Because the age difference between *senpai* and *kohai* is not extensive, the junior is more at her/his leisure to express her/his opinions, and need not conform as strictly to the senior as in an *oybun–kobun* relationship.

Another aspect of the work relationship which students may have trouble conceiving, and is important to Japanese communication behavior, is *tsukiai*, which often entails the practice of sharing drinks with the work group. *Tsukiai* can be defined as obligatory relationships (Atsumi, 1979). Participation in after-work trips to the pub are expected of group members, as these occasions provide a casual atmosphere in which workers can

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personally relate to each other, and engage in informal communication, through which even criticism or expression of opinions against superiors is permitted. The importance of *tsukiai* in Japanese relationships cannot be emphasized enough. According to Miyanaga (1991), however, "Today, it is less common that Japanese university or college students are aware of the social functions of drinking. Yet the same students, after becoming company men, are expected to master the ritual" (p.91). *Tsukiai* is one of the many complicated interpersonal traditions that students must become familiar with in order to become "full-fledged" Japanese. Socialization as a member within an organization is required before a youngster can realize the significance of conforming to the group, regardless of his/her desires.

It is clear that students are inexperienced in the practices that contain some of the core features of Japanese culture. As Nakane (1970) has remarked, extensive social learning and training is necessary to gear fresh college graduates toward managing these work relationships. According to this perspective, students may be short of having important features of Japanese cultural assumptions, and researchers may not succeed in tapping the characteristics they want from this population. They are protected within ingroups of family, friends and classmates, which carry with them a particular communication norm, unlike what awaits them upon entering the working world. Indeed, social experience may be a potent explanatory framework in understanding some of the discrepancies found in some studies reviewed, but the potential for extracting the culturally stereotypical traits through the *senpai-kohai* context, even in its diluted form, still is worthy of note.

Changes in Society

It is often claimed that the onset of modernity results in increased individualistic attitudes of the people in society (Clammer, 1995; Jansen, 1965; Tsurumi, 1970). With this perspective, inconsistent findings of the studies in question would be due to the fact that they had based their predictions on outdated tenets of "Japanology," which were formulated before the sudden surge of economic affluency in the late seventies. This perspective would suggest that "Japanese-likeness" is approaching extinction, as subsequent generations refuse to assume these characteristics. One study in particular seems to lender itself suitable for explanation based on this framework.

Although not a communication study per se, Leung and Iwawaki (1988) conducted a study on perception of distributive behavior, based on a framework of cultural variability similar to ones used in many communication studies. Subjects were given stimulus episodes involving two co-workers, presented as either friends or strangers, collaborating on the completion of some project, upon which they would receive some type of reward. The episode described the reward allocation on either an equity or an equality basis, and subjects

ere asked about how fair the allocation was. The level of individualism–collectivism was assessed for each subject. They expected to find differences based on this scale between Americans, Japanese, and Korean students, given that the former are individualistic and the latter two collectivistic. However, their measurement revealed that their Japanese student sample was just as individualistic as their American counterparts, while Korean students showed higher levels of collectivism relative to the other two groups. Leung and Iwawaki attributed the inconsistency between their findings and cultural stereotypes to sampling bias, noting that younger generations in Japan were becoming more individualistic, and that the university environment in Japan was conducive of individualistic attitudes. They also suggested that the society itself, not just the students, was becoming more and more individualistic. Incidentally, the Korean sample was more consistent with the collectivistic expectations, which suggests that such social change, if it indeed exists, is more pronounced in the Japanese culture than in its neighboring Korean culture.

Following Leung and Iwawaki, it would seem that with societal change as an explanatory framework, the inconsistencies in predictions and results using the student samples are attributable not so much to the students themselves, but to the whole society. In other words, what is reflected in the students may be changes in the society itself, and the student samples are only reflecting a pattern found in the entire population. Societal modernization is often cited as a cause for increased individualistic attitudes (Jansen, 1965; Tsurumi, 1970; Clammer, 1995). Such a view would posit that the Japanese no longer fit in with the traditional, popular cultural stereotypes afforded them by Benedict and other war decade "Japanologists," and that they have increasingly converged with Western culture in terms of interpersonal values and behavior. Support for this framework can be seen in the National Census reports, compiled every five years by the National Institute of Statistical Mathematics.

Iwao (1990) interpreted the Census data in terms of changing attitudes in Japanese society. While she admits that, "People's attitudes can differ according to the issue of focus, and their attitudes toward the same issue may differ according to their sex and age" (p.41), she notes that "a number of tendencies once cited as distinguishing characteristics of Japanese people actually appear to have reversed themselves" (p.41). Iwao attributes the cause of the attitudinal change to rapid economic development during the 1960's and 1970's, and Japan's establishment of itself as an economic power in the 1980's. During the period of development, Japanese society was motivated to catch up to the Western partners, and the people's prime concern in life was material affluence. In more recent times, their concern in life have shifted to spiritual fulfillment, as affluence has been attained. Iwao explains, "As

they became accustomed to affluence, however, they gradually gained the self-assurance to make choices and take action independently, rather than simply trying to 'keep up with the Suzukis' ..... Individual taste has become the major reference for choice, in place of duty, obligation, or conformity" (p.43). Furthermore, she notes that the traditional Japanese ethic of patience and perseverance has been replaced by the expectation of instant gratification, as time-saving devices and services has become widespread. Iwao argues that these changes all point to increasing individualism within Japanese society.

Certainly, it would not seem plausible that such change has diffused throughout all age groups, but the important point is that it suggests that it is not only the university student age group which experiences this change. In order to examine the validity of this explanatory framework a trend study across time is required. Of course, as Iwao (1990) has mentioned, changes may be contingent upon the particular communication behavior in question, and should not be over-generalized to the entire behavioral repertoire.

Students as a Culture

This explanatory framework could just as well be applied to all the studies listed. The notion of students as a culture implies that students and older adults are distinct in their communication style, and should thus be treated as different populations. There are two ways in which students as a culture can be viewed. First, Gudykunst, Yang and Nishida (1987), in explaining unexpected results from their Japanese student sample, suggested that students worldwide may form a universal, common co-culture that transcends national boundaries. Similarly, Leung and Iwawaki (1988), in accounting for their unexpected results, speculated that the process of modernization has resulted in cultures converging by adopting similar values, and that such convergence has begun with the younger generation. Second, an alternate view was also offered by Leung and Iwawaki, who posited that students, rather than being a universal culture, compose a co-culture within their respective cultures, having a greater degree of individualistic values which are induced by the university environment. In either case, students are distinguished from the older adult population, and such distinction appears to be particularly salient with the Japanese, given the number of incidences in which they betray expectations.

While the idea of a universal co-culture can explain studies in which no differences are seen between cultural groups, it does not suffice in cases which do show differences. Of course, this is not to rule out the possibility that restricted to particular communication phenomena, cultures do converge. The position taken in this paper is that Japanese students indeed have the culturally stereotypical qualities, but to a lesser degree than working adults. While it is safe to say that "generation gaps" exist in any culture, it could be assumed that

its nature and extent would vary with culture, and that all youths are not alike, by virtue of the cultural specificity of the socialization process. Studies on generational differences have revealed mixed results across cultures. For example, an American study by Barclay and Sharp (1982), using the Rokeach Value Survey, revealed little differences in values between female adolescents and their mothers. They attributed what little difference they found to the extent of life experience had by the mothers relative to their daughters, and not to the age difference. Similarly, Hamid and Wyllie (1980) found that youths in New Zealand experienced little intergenerational conflict with their parents, suggesting that the value gaps between the two generations were not significant. Furthermore, Reddy (1983) found that American youths and adults did not differ in their attitudes toward authoritarianism in metropolitan areas, but did differ in urban and rural areas, indicating that the extent of generation gaps may differ even within a single culture. Halyal and Mallappa (1986), found that in their survey of attitudes toward modernity in India, university students differed substantially from their parents, especially toward socio-cultural modernity, health modernity, and political modernity. Likewise, in India, Agrawal (1984) found that intergenerational value differences due to rapid modernization was a cause for management problems within organizations.

While the above studies looked at generation gaps within a single culture, one cross-cultural study worthy of note is cited in Shimahara (1979). The Japanese government conducted a cross-cultural comparison of the attitudes of youths in 11 nations. According to the Sorifu's (Office of the Prime Minister) Survey of Youth (1972), about a third of the Japanese youths surveyed reported that human nature was essentially evil, compared to less than one fifth in each of the French, American, British, Swiss, and German samples. This contradicts what Benedict (1946) claimed in her classical study, which was, "Human nature in Japan, they say, is naturally good and to be trusted" (p.191). Furthermore, the survey showed near 70% of the Japanese sample favoring close associations with friends, compared to near 45% for Americans, 36% for British, and 12% for the French. Such differences between Japanese and Western youths negate the students as a universal co-culture argument. Japanese students, therefore, are distinct, at least relative to students of advanced Western nations in the above survey, in that they have strong distrust of strangers and outgroup members, while having an equally strong need for affiliation with ingroup members. Of course, societal changes in Japan since the time of the over-twenty-year-old survey may nullify any such claims in the present day situation. Assuming, however, that there still is substance to the differences, the implications of such distinction in relationships between others is substantive toward communication behavior. Their avoidance of outgroup

and preference for intimate relationships suggest that Japanese students are relatively inexperienced in dealing with outgroup members, thus their communication effectiveness may be skewed toward the ingroup. The large gaps between cultural groups on such characteristics which may affect communication behavior indicates that Japanese students are different from students of other cultures, further calling into the likelihood of the students as a universal co-culture.

The second student culture view is that of co-culturehood within the larger culture. For Japanese students, this view seems to have stronger explanatory power. Common sense would attest that young Japanese have increased in their tendency to deny traditional communication patterns, especially with respect to communication with their seniors and elders. Miyanaga (1991) asserts that contemporary young adults, while being aware of traditional rules for communication, are defiant toward interaction rituals, and prefer to be open and straightforward. Miyanaga refers to the use of *honne*, one's real intentions, and *tatemae*, submission to moral obligations. In intial interactions, one must show *enryo*, or reservation, by withholding true intentions, and emphasizing *tatemae*, but youngsters are apt to jump right into the relationship with their *honne*, which elicits negative reaction on the part of the other, especially if they are of an older generation who still honor traditional patterns of behavior. According to Miyanaga, "Today's youths are problematic not because they do not expose their honest feelings to their superiors but that their expressions themselves are atypical. They are reluctant to enter into the traditionally crucial interaction rituals. By rejecting custom, they ignore the socially established methods that make it easier to overcome initial difficulties and accelerate the slow beginnings of a developing relationship" (p.90). Miyanaga's comments are very similar to Iwao and Triandis (1993) speculation that young Japanese are becoming increasingly demanding of immediate gratification. Rather than taking the necessary steps to maintain face by following rules within a relationship, youngsters impatiently resort to the use of informal, casual communication style, which would appear to be a show of disrespect toward older others.

Miyanaga (1988), however, gives evidence that such defiance toward tradition on the part of youth is a temporary state, one which they outgrow as they become adults. She cites a series of surveys conducted by Nihonjin Kenkyukai (1974), which looked at the attitude toward two central traits of Japanese culture, *giri* and *ninjo*. The survey was of a cohort design, gathering data every five years over a ten year period (1963 to 1973) from independent samples, for a total of three times. The youngest age group surveyed each time was the 20 to 24 year old group, and according to the survey report, they were labeled "half-Japanese" because of their indifferent attitude toward the two important concepts of

their culture. However, in succeeding surveys, the subsequent cohort samples, i.e. 25–29 year olds in 1968 and 30–34 year olds in 1973, showed a greater adherence to tradition. In other words, the "half-Japanese-ness" of the early 20's group appears to wear off as this group ages, while their subsequent 20 to 24 year old counterparts show the same degree of "half Japanese-ness." Miyanaga reports that a follow up survey in 1983 showed that no overall change in this pattern of attitudes toward *giri* and *ninjo* had occurred in the twenty year period since 1963.

Nakane (1970) gives further support for the idea that non-traditional student attitudes and behavior are a temporary state, and not any indication of changes in society. She claims, "in these 'modern' days, the younger generation tends to infringe the rules of order. But it is interesting to note that young people soon begin to follow the traditional order once they are employed, as they gradually realize the social cost that such infringement involves" (p.34). Such a view seems to reinforce the social experience framework elaborated on previously, but the difference would be that with the social experience framework, students are conceived of lacking the necessary knowledge and skills to behave like stereotypical Japanese, whereas the student co-culture perspective entails both an awareness of traditional behavior and an intentional non-compliance. Both of these frameworks can be converged and interpreted through social identity theory, which integrates the various perspectives so far discussed.

Definition of Context in Items

While other explanatory frameworks provide reasonably viable rationale for the inconsistency in expectations and results in the studies, perhaps the most powerful framework is that of strategic research design. By research design, what is meant is specifying the context within the items of a questionnaire, or within the experimental setting. People of high context cultures tend to distinguish their behavior greatly depending on situational factors (Hall, 1976), therefore, specifying who the other is, for example, in an interaction episode, might yield differing results as compared to leaving it up to the subject to imagine who the other might be.

Studies in cross-cultural communication and related fields have relied heavily on the back-translation technique (Brislin, 1970) for assurance of cultural equivalence, but such a single measure is just one factor amongst many others which need to be considered (see Hui & Triandis, 1986). In particular, with Japanese student samples, more than just back-translation is needed to tap the cultural traits inherent within them. Methods must be devised strategically so that the observation of culturally unique characteristics can be accurately achieved. The majority of the studies listed in Table 1 seem to have failed in

specifying context, but given that Japan is a high context culture, it is necessary to take it into account. Before discussing the problems inherent in such studies, the successful extraction of cultural patterns in two studies which did take context into account will be reviewed.

Nomura and Barnlund (1983) looked at interpersonal criticism within different relational contexts, i.e. parents, close friends, acquaintances, and strangers. They further varied the situational context of criticism, providing episodes dealing with personal injury, failure to fulfill expectations, and disagreement. Both situational and relational variations in context yielded important between-culture differences, and they attributed their success in obtaining differences to, "clarification of the factors that regulate choices among these culturally sanctioned forms of behavior. Contextual variables obviously intervene to regulate the specific form of criticism prompted by specific situations and specific associates" (p. 16). With regard to American and Japanese differences regarding the importance of context, they remark, "each culture regulates [critical] behavior by different out-of-awareness contextual criteria: in one (Americans) the form of criticism is influenced more by the nature of the provocation, and in the other (Japanese) more by the nature of the relationship with one's communicative partner" (p. 16). Specification of the target other, then, is crucial to the Japanese sample, while specifying the situation is important for the American sample. Japanese, then, as Yoneyama (1983) put it, have multiple faces, the face in operation depending on who the other in the interaction is.

Another study which took context into consideration was Cousins' (1989) cross-cultural comparison of self-concept. In this study, Cousins used a context specified version and a non-specified, ordinary version of the Twenty Statements Test in his comparison of Japanese and American students. He presumed that there would be differences in self-concept depending on individualism-collectivism, and predicted, "Individualistic premises -- portraying the person as a situation-free, discrete agent -- induce a search for transcontextual regularities of behavior. Sociocentric premises -- locating selfhood in human relatedness and mutuality -- direct attention to concrete, social contexts, where such mutuality is experienced" (pp. 125-126). Indeed, with the ordinary version, Japanese students were most likely to mention their social role, institutional membership, or social status, while American students mentioned some form of attribute of themselves. In the contextualized version, however, Japanese were inclined to make statements of pure attributes, while Americans only differed slightly between versions. Cousins interpreted the show of individuality by the Japanese students in the latter condition as, "individuality expressed within, rather than beyond, the provinces of social context" (p. 130). Even though this study is not one which

deals with communication per se, it does have implications to communication research in that self-concept is an important driving factor in communication behavior.

Given the success of the above two studies in extracting the culturally expected responses from their samples, studies which were not likewise successful will be reviewed, raising issues in the implication of context specificity as a possible source of confounding.

First, in a study to test the viability of uncertainty reduction theory (URT) across cultures, Gudykunst and Nishida (1984) found that the Japanese sample showed greater nonverbal affiliative expressiveness than the American sample. Gudykunst, and Nishida assumed that this pattern was due to the emphasis placed on nonverbal communication by the Japanese, but previous studies have shown the Japanese tendency to avoid nonverbal expressiveness (Friesen, 1972; Watson, 1970), and that such expressiveness is not desirable (Wada, 1991). In support of this, Rohlen (1983) refers to an early 1970's survey of high school students which reported that a greater percentage of students were engaged in a romantic relationship than those who have had experience at kissing. While this illustration is based on data which is outdated, supporting perhaps only a dated cultural stereotype, Gudykunst and Nishida's suppositions should not be left unquestioned, and closer scrutiny at their "bogus stranger" approach is warranted. In this method, subjects were asked how they would behave should they be introduced to a stranger by a friend, with no specific mention of the age or relative status of the stranger, thus without information on the relational context, which Nomura and Barnlund (1981) deemed so important to Japanese.

In another URT study, Gudykunst, Yang and Nishida (1987) used American, Japanese, and Korean student samples to examine the self-monitoring and self-consciousness processes within initial encounters. One hypothesis assumed that people of individualistic cultures should show higher self-monitoring than those of collectivistic cultures, and the results did confirm this prediction. Although it was supported, their hypothesis leaves room for questioning. Their rationalization for predicting individualists to be higher in self-monitoring, was that individualists focus more on the self, attempting to be a prototypical person in a given situation. They argued that collectivists would place more emphasis on the relationship with the other, and consequently, less attention is paid to the self. A counter-argument to their hypothesis can be made, following Snyder's (1974) conceptualization of self-monitoring as, "self-observation and self-control guided by situational cues to social appropriateness" (p. 526). Social appropriateness requires concern for the other, and the center of attention appears to be shared between the performance of the self and the situation at hand, including considerations for the other. Furthermore, Snyder (1987) notes, "Low self-monitors, ... value congruence between who they are and what they do. Unlike their high self-monitoring

counterparts, low self-monitors are not so concerned with constantly assessing the social climate around them. Their behavior is quite consistent: They typically express what they really think and feel, even if doing so means sailing against the prevailing winds of their social environments" (p. 5). Such a description seems to be the exact opposite of the Japanese stereotype, thus the Japanese would be more characteristic of high self-monitors. Furthermore, while Gudykunst et al. (1987) discount the importance of self-monitoring for collectivists relative to individualists, Horike (1993), and Takai and Ota (1994) constructed Japanese social skill scales, and both studies discovered that self-monitoring correlated strongly positive with Japanese interpersonal competence, suggesting that self-monitoring is a crucial facet of interpersonal communication in Japan. The rationale behind Gudykunst et al.'s hypothesis seems questionable.

The results found in Gudykunst et al. (1987) above can be explained in a variety of ways. One is that self-monitoring is an interpersonal skill to be acquired beyond life as a student, which makes reference to the social experience framework. Another is that the scale items were not context specific enough for the students to accurately report their self-monitoring behavior. According to Cousins (1989), Japanese are not accustomed to isolating the self from the situational and relational context, and need a specific frame of reference in order to evaluate their behavioral tendencies.

In yet another study, Gudykunst and Nishida (1986) looked at perceptions of communication behavior associated with relationship terms between Japanese and American student samples. One of their hypotheses was that the Japanese, being collectivists, would perceive ingroup relationships as more personalized and synchronized, but the results did not show this. While they provided a context by which student subjects can have a frame of reference with which to respond, Gudykunst and Nishida operationalized 'classmate' as the ingroup, but their expectations were founded on studies describing older adults and their work group. They justify their use of classmate by arguing that strong, lifelong ties, as attested by the importance of class reunions, which are held frequently and faithfully attended in Japan are evidence that they are indeed as tight knit as the work group ingroup. However, a counter-argument would be that Japanese university students are more likely to regard their extra-curricular clubs and teams as their primary ingroup, rather than their classmates (Rohlen, 1983). At the university level, an entering class has its students diffused over the class schedule, as they typically are free to choose their own courses offered in different time slots, rather than spend their time with the same students course after course, as they do in high school. Classmates, therefore, are of a different nature than what Gudykunst and Nishida supposed, which was more typical of high school level

classmates. Perhaps personalized and synchronized communication can be better seen in tightly knit, club relationships, than in casual, superficial, individualistic relationships with classmates. Furthermore, classmates are assumed to be students of equal standing with regard to year level. Clubs, on the other hand, are composed of students of different status, which are important in deciding communication behavior. Gudykunst and Nishida did not specify status differences within the relational context, i.e. *senpai* or *kohai*, described earlier with reference to social experience. Even amongst close friends, the student would distinguish their behavior depending on whether they are *senpai*, *douki* (same year of entry) or *kohai*. Nakane (1970) describes the strict hierarchical relationships and member dedication in such clubs: "In a student mountaineering club.....it is the students of a junior class who carry a heavier load while climbing, pitch the tent and prepare the evening meal under the surveillance of the senior students, who may sit smoking. When the preparations are over it is the senior students who take the meal first, served by junior students" (p.34). It is here within the university clubs that behaviors most expected of Japanese are found. In horizontal relationships amongst classmates, such traditional behaviors are not expected, and are not observed. Likewise, toward outgroup members, Japanese students would not allot any effort toward observing strict hierarchical rituals (Hamaguchi, 1977).

Steil and Hillman (1993) investigated preference for direct versus indirect influence strategies across the American, the Japanese, and the Korean cultures, using student samples. Their expectation was that Japanese and Koreans would be more indirect, while Americans would be more direct. Results showed little support for this preconception, as the Japanese and Koreans preferred strategies that were just as direct as the Americans. Since the study was exploratory in nature, Steil, and Hillman elaborated little on the reasons why the expected pattern did not arise, but perhaps the lack of relational context regarding with whom such strategies were to be used could have confounded the results, for not just the Japanese, but for Koreans as well. In responding to their questionnaire items, the frame of reference for these subjects in evaluating their influence strategies might have been equals in their ingroup, or what Iwata (1980) refers to as *ki-no-okenai-kankei*, which could be translated as intimate relationships in which formality is the least of worries. While the element of *enryo*, or display of politeness and restrained behavior, operates at less intimate relationships and in vertical relationships, with *ki-no-okenai-kankei*, no such self-restraint and considerateness is needed, allowing for free expression of opinions and views. If Steil and Hillman had observed a working adult sample, their frame of reference might have been an ingroup consisting of work relationships, relationships in which the degree of formality and level of intimacy is not the same as *ki-no-okenai-kankei* in students. Thus, such carefree

communication styles would not be possible, as greater attention to maintaining mutual face would be required, and as a result, a more subtle influence strategy would have been apparent in the working adult data.

Similar remarks can be made toward a study by Gudykunst, Matsumoto, Ting-Toomey, Nishida, Kim and Heyman (1996), who looked at cultural differences in communication style. They hypothesized, that their American and Australian samples would show communication styles typical of individualists, and their Japanese and Korean samples would be typical of collectivists. Whereas their literature review hinted that the collective communication styles consist of Ability to Infer, Indirectness, and Use of Silence, and individualistic styles consist of Dramatic Communication, Openness, and Preciseness, the Japanese sample turned out to be more characteristic of an individualistic culture. Their Japanese sample was significantly lower than both individualistic cultures (Americans and Australians) on their Ability to Infer, equal to or lower than the individualists on Indirectness, lower than the individualists on Use of Silence, and equal to Australians on both Preciseness, Openness, and Dramatic Communication. While the Japanese sample betrayed the popular assumption of having an implicit, subtle style of communication, the Korean sample was much more in adherence to the collectivistic style, suggesting that Japanese students may have more in common with Western students than with their Asian neighbors. Once again, in this case, perhaps Japanese subjects were responding based on their behavior with the *kino-okenai-kankei*, rather than with groups which require the culturally stereotypical behaviors to be strictly observed. It is interesting to note, however, that in the Steil and Hillman (1993) study, the Japanese and Koreans commonly betrayed expectations, whereas in Gudykunst et al.'s case, it was only the Japanese who were inconsistent with cultural stereotypes. Perhaps the communication styles in question here were different from what Steil and Hillman were investigating, i.e. influence strategies.

In a small group communication study, Frager (1970) conducted a replication of Asch's (1956) experiment on group pressure and conformity on Japanese university students. Based on the assumption that Japanese are less individualistic within the group, and disliking of any situation in which they "stick out like a nail," he predicted his Japanese student subjects to show high conformity. However, the results indicated that over one-third of the subjects showed anti-conformity responses; this ratio being higher than Asch's American sample. In looking at traditional attitudes and values of his subjects, Frager noticed that students with greater respect toward tradition tended to conform more. He concluded that the postwar generation is unlike that of popular beliefs regarding Japanese and their group conformity. Such a conclusion might have been premature, however, as in yet another Asch type study,

Matsuda (1985) was able to achieve results which were more consistent with cultural expectations, even though he utilized students in his sample. In his experiment, Matsuda added a cohesiveness condition. Subjects were lead to believe that the others in the group were of varied levels of intimacy (classmates, acquaintance, stranger). The inclusion of the relational context defining the "others" in the group put light upon the reason why Matsuda was successful and Frager was not in achieving expected results. In another small group study, which has implications of communication content, Westaby (1995) examined the effect of the presence of others on the productivity and quality of work on a simple task. Using Japanese and American students as subjects, he predicted that there would be an interaction between group presence and culture on productivity and quality, but such an effect was not attained. Westaby hypothesized that social facilitation would more likely have an effect on Japanese subjects, basing his argument on individualism-collectivism, i.e. Japanese, as collectivists, would have group norms demanding higher individual performance on a group task, and would demand personal goals to be sacrificed for group goals. In short, his sample of Japanese students turned out to be as individualistic as his American subjects. While Westaby hinted at the unrepresentativeness of his Japanese student sample, this study seems to be affected more by the experimental controls. Westaby used zero-history groups, i.e. the two other people in the group were strangers to the subject, thus they were outgroup members. Social facilitation could be greatly dependent on the relational nature of the others in a group.

From the review of above studies, the specification of a context appears to be important. The question now becomes what type of context? This would depend on the nature of the phenomenon to be observed. Earlier, it was explained that Japanese communication styles vary greatly depending on intimacy and status differences in a relationship. It is important to specify both of these factors, as they are the key to extracting whatever cultural stereotypes can be expected to be seen from students.

Integrating the Explanatory Frameworks

Students in not just Japan, but in any culture, for that matter, may perceive themselves as composing a social group which is distinct from others, and one which is allotted special status. One cross-cultural study on social identity revealed the likelihood that Japanese students are particularly susceptible to perceive themselves differently from other social groups. Iwao and Triandis (1993) conducted a study on auto- and heterostereotypes of socially favored behavior, in which Japanese and American student subjects were given certain episodes in which they were to rank order a number of possible responses, based on social and personal desirability, from the perspective of their own culture, as well as that of

the other culture. Results showed that there was a greater degree of correspondence between auto- and heterostereotypes of the two samples than expected. Japanese subjects chose personally desirable responses similar to the American subjects, and selected autostereotypical responses similar to what the Americans thought would be typical of Japanese (heterostereotype). Iwao and Triandis attributed such similarity to increasing individualistic attitudes amongst Japanese on the whole, and to sampling bias due to the use of Japanese students, who seemed to be referring to the more traditional, older generation responses as a standard for Japanese-likeness. Suggestion is made here of a self-categorization process (Turner, 1985) in which students perceive themselves differently from older generations. In contrast, they found that American students distinguished less between their personal responses and the typical American response, implying that such cross-generational distinction is more characteristic of Japanese student samples, at least in terms of autostereotypes. What is suggested here is that Japanese students may not identify themselves as "typical" Japanese, and thus, they may tend to diverge from the cultural norm. Japanese students, thus, seem to view themselves differently from the mainstream adult culture.

Given the suggestions from the Iwao and Triandis study, it seems viable that the above explanatory frameworks can be somewhat integrated by social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), along with its offsprings, self-categorization theory (Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher & Wetherell, 1987), and communication accommodation theory (Giles, Mulac, Bradac & Johnson, 1987). According to Hogg and Abrams (1988), social identity theory "explores the psychological processes involved in translating social categories into human groups" (p.17). Social category refers to the identification of certain categories of people. University students, for instance, would form a social category, and along with it are certain characteristics people believe all students have, or stereotypes. When students perceive themselves as being a member of their social category, they take the pleasure of acting according to these strereotypes. Students will engage in social comparison, comparing themselves to other social categories, such as high school students, housewives, and *salarymen* (businesspersons). They will hold stereotypes of these other social categories, and have stereotypes of themselves. When their social identity with the category of student is salient, "self will be perceived in terms of ingroup stereotypes, where stereotyping can be considered to operate in terms of evaluative status, prestige, emotional experiences, needs, goals, behavioral and attitudinal norms and personality or behavioral traits. Thus, self-categorization leads to stereotypical self-perception and depersonalization, and adherence to and expression of ingroup normative behaviour" (Turner et al., 1987, p. 101-102). In

interacting with other social groups, the consequence of self-categorization becomes apparent, in that students will act as prototypical members of their group. Such behavior may entail the use of divergent communication tactics to emphasize difference in group memberships. With respect to this, Giles and Coupland (1991) remark, "By diverging and emphasizing one's own social (and sometimes idiosyncratic) communication style, members of an ingroup may accentuate differences between themselves and outgroup members along salient and valued dimension of their group identity" (p. 80). The outgroup member may perceive such behavior to be grossly against social expectations, thus leading to perceptions by older adults of student behavior as being 'problematic' (Miyanaga, 1991). Each of these tenets of social identity theory will be discussed in the following.

First, the social category of university student in Japan carries with it an elite status in many ways (Seki, 1994). Students are perceived as intelligent individuals, who endured the hardship of the university admissions selection process, which is notoriously strict. Even from their elementary school days, many Japanese youth gear themselves up toward imminent examinations, the first for some occurring at the middle school level, and for most at the high school and post-secondary levels, not to mention examinations required for any type of job placement as well. According to Woronoff (1981), "The whole purpose of the nine, twelve or more years of study is to pass the entrance examination of the university of one's choice" (p.114). Becoming a student, thus, has a special meaning. The earnest efforts of a student has paid off as he/she has become a victor in a battle to secure admissions to a university. Students, therefore, had been deprived of enjoying a full social life through the high school years, and maybe even more, as many students spend years repeating exams until they are accepted to an institution of their choice. They are ready to receive what they had been deprived of, which is freedom to enjoy social and personal life. According to Bakke and Bakke (1971), "The image of the student in Japan presupposes that he is a free person for the time being relative to other inhabitants of the land and relative to his own status before and after his student days" (p. 258).

Second, social comparison is required to distinguish the university student category from other categories. In comparison to age adjacent social groups of high school students and young *shakaijin*, or company employees, the university student's disposition of having ample freedom becomes eminent. Students occupy a temporal position between "examination hell" and the over fifty-hour work week, and with their freedom, they become predisposed toward leisure. Because they are aware that their freedom is only temporary, they optimize the opportunity to enjoy themselves. This brings about occasional negative images from other sectors of society, a society which places so much emphasis on hard work and diligence.

Students are sometimes referred to as 'moratorium' persons (Bakke & Bakke, 1971; Nishihira, 1994), which imply individuals who refuse to take on adult roles even though they are of a responsible age. However, most of society is tolerant of their hedonistic ways. Hidaka (1984) notes, "It seems that adults in general -- like students before them -- regard university life as a kind of stay of execution. People encourage students to enjoy student life" (p.112). The same leniency can be seen in the academia, as Woronoff (1981) observes, "[Universities in Japan] more or less automatically pass their students....[because] social constraints put the administration, and faculty, in a position where they feel obliged to permit graduation of students (supported by their parents) who worked so hard to get into college, even if they slacked off considerably thereafter" (p.125). Tanaka (1994) has suggested that whereas the moratorium period for American students has been during high school years, that for Japanese students is during their four-year residence in college, hinting of a lapse in the developmental stage between the two student groups. It would seem that American youths have had a head start into adulthood. Society, thus, seems to formulate an image of the student as one who is exempt from many of the responsibilities levied to other social groups. Students can see through social comparison that they are treated specially, and that they are exempt from many of the social conventions of the cultures.

Third, once their social group is distinguished, students will form stereotypes of their own group, and other groups. The salience of the group membership of students is obvious, in that despite little age differences, the social expectations of students relative to same age working groups, and age-adjacent social categories of high school students and *salarymen* are diverse. A process of self-stereotyping occurs, then, in which students will "take on characteristics they believe (rightly or wrongly) to be prototypical of the social group to which they themselves belong" (Giles & Coupland, 1991, p. 169). This self-stereotyping is also known as autostereotyping, and as Iwao and Triandis (1993) found, for Japanese students, it is different from the stereotype they have of the prototypical Japanese. In review, their evaluation of the personal favorability of response options toward the stimulus episodes closely resembled that of American students, while being clearly distinct from what they perceived to be typically Japanese. Interestingly, the American students did not distinguish so much between their personal responses and what they thought would be typical of Americans, indicating that they do not distinguish themselves as much from the rest of their culture. It is evident that Japanese students perceive themselves as being atypical of other Japanese, and perhaps, more Western, i.e. individualistic.

It is likely that the special status allotted to the students has formulated their interpersonal behavior style. As Miyanaga (1988, 1991) explained, Japanese youths are

generally indifferent toward cultural norms, often to the extent of appearing disrespectful. Some aspects of these norms, they intentionally ignore, while others, they have yet to learn. As members of the social category of university students, students may feel that they should be exempt from adhering to cultural expectations, perhaps because they will eventually be forced to do so when they enter the workforce. As Hidaka (1984) put it, they may feel they have earned a 'stay of execution' before they should assume strict adult roles. Since much of their life is characterized around their freedom, they may resent the cumbersome and binding interpersonal customs, like *on, giri, enryo,* and distinction of *honne* and *tatemae*. Such characteristics entail emotional attachment and interdependence toward others, requiring extensive facework to maintain such relationships. Yoneyama (1983) discusses extensively the propensity for Japanese youths to slight cultural norms. He asserts that rapid technological advances and the ability of the youth to keep up to them, coupled with the inability of older adults to adapt, give the youth a sense of confidence. For example, in today's society, the ability to operate a computer is crucial to one's success, and it is more often than not, that the younger generation is better equipped to deal with computers. In terms of social identity theory, social comparison with the adult group with respect to such ability heightens the identity with their social group.

However, this is not to say that Japanese students ignore cultural norms, particularly within their ingroup. Within their ingroups, they can be seen to abide by social rules regarding hierarchical relationships. According to Nakane (1970), "The young Japanese ... is never free of the seniority system. In schools there is a very distinct senior-junior ranking among students, which is observed particularly strictly among those who form sports clubs" (p.34). Because they are not positioned in an intricate social network of workplace relationships and business colleagues, much of their interpersonal communication is of an equal status, carefree, horizontal nature, except for that between *senpai* and *kohai*. Furthermore, such *senpai-kohai* rituals are observed most strictly within the ingroup, and not so much with the outgroup. As do most of the Japanese people, students are likely to distinguish their behavior between ingroup and outgroup members (Nakane, 1970; Hamaguchi, 1977). Yoneyama (1983) states, "Japanese, like Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, have two faces. One is the face for *nakama*, while the other is for *seken=tanin*" (translated, p.31). *Nakama* is used to refer to ingroup, whereas *seken*, or *tanin* refers to strangers, or outgroup. Yoneyama tags the adjectives 'maximal' and 'minimal' to describe differences in behavior between ingroup and outgroup, in that within *nakama*, one is very conscious of social conventions, keeping promises, meeting expectations, and the like, 'maximizing' adherence to social rules, while with *tanin*, only the 'minimum' level of etiquette is

observed. Applying the above argument to students, it can be conceived that students are especially inclined to maximize their adherence to hierarchical norms within the ingroup, while minimizing such to the bare essentials within the outgroup.

One study which suggests such ingroup–outgroup distinction within hierarchical relationship behaviors of students is Takai and Tanaka's (1993) exploratory study for identifying behavioral norms of Japanese students. Open-ended questionnaire items were devised to probe for differences in prescribed behavior in certain contexts, varied by situation and interaction target. Multiple responses were allowed for each item, thus it can be said that the greater the number of responses for an item, the more important the social context is for the students. Also, content analysis was conducted to categorize responses into particular themes. Results showed a huge gap in the number and nature of prescribed behaviors toward the students' *senpai* relative to their professor. The number of do's and don'ts regarding the *senpai* totaled 153, compared to only 94 for professors. Likewise, the content of the prescribed behaviors showed a gap between targets. Whereas 36 responses mentioned using *keigo* (respectful form of language) toward the *senpai*, only 29 responses did likewise toward the professor. Responses mentioning showing respect tallied in at 18 responses each for *senpai* and professor. The difference in the number of responses suggests students think ingroup relationships with *senpai* are more important than outgroup relationships with professors. The content analysis showed that students allocate as much, if not more, import to the social rituals with their *senpai* than with their professor, although universal convention would place the latter in a position much more worthy of respect relative to the former, who in essence is just another student. Takai and Tanaka's study illustrates Yoneyama's (1983) idea of maximum care toward ingroup and minimal etiquette toward outgroup. In other words, status differences are more salient in ingroups than outgroups, and students are more likely to be motivated to abide by such prescribed cultural behaviors within ingroups. The implications of this propensity is obvious, and will be discussed later.

Fourth, because students see their social group to be special, and perhaps superior, they desire to accentuate the distinctness in their communication behaviors with outgroup members, so they may opt to communicate with adults and other outgroups in a divergent manner (Giles & Coupland, 1991). "Convergence" and "divergence" are intergroup communication strategies proposed in communication accommodation theory (Giles et al., 1987). Convergence refers to communicative strategies intended on reducing the psychological distance between an individual and his/her interaction partner, thus aimed towards gaining his/her approval. Divergence is just the opposite, intended to emphasize

differences between interactants. The divergent tactics toward outgroups could be motivated not only by their desire to accentuate their membership in their ingroup, but as psychological reactance toward societal pressures to conform to mainstream behavior (Brehm, 1966). Thus, by tapping into non-ingroup contexts, the researcher runs the risk of gathering data on a communication style which does not resemble anything typical of what is presented in the Japanology literature.

The implications of the above explanation, based on social identity theory, is of import toward strategic designs in cross-cultural communication research using Japanese student samples. By no means is it correct to assume that Japanese students do not have Japanese qualities. The issue is how to extract such qualities so that cross-cultural comparisons will reflect their cultural stereotypes.

Relational Contexts for Cultural Extraction

Given the above arguments, it is apparent that context is a very important determinant of whether or not hypotheses based on Japanese cultural stereotypes will be adeqately tested using a student sample. Strategic planning is necessary to extract the cultural traits of students, and this entails providing them with a frame of reference in which they are behaving as Japanese are thought to behave. A scheme can be formulated to provide a guideline by which this can be achieved. Figure 1 shows this scheme, composed of different levels of relational contexts.

When student subjects are to reflect upon their communication behavior, it is necessary to provide them with a specific relational context, or interaction target. The first level of this context is the ingroup/outgroup distinction, just discussed along with social identity. The second level is that of intimacy, and the third level is that of status differences. First, with intimacy, interaction targets can be divided into four groups, based on Midooka's (1990) distinction, which incorporates Iwata (1980) and Yoneyama (1983) cited earlier. With this distinction, the ingroup consists of *kino-okenai-kankei* and *nakama*, while the outgroup consists of *najimino-tanin* and *muen-no-kankei*. In review, *kino-okenai-kankei* consists of very intimate, equal status relationships in which communication is causal, open, and direct. Examples of such relationships are best friends, family, close relatives, childhood buddies, and dating relationships. In these relationships, differences in age or seniority are superceded by intimacy, and no hierarchical rituals are heeded, thus the traits that a cross-cultural researcher may be seeking cannot be expected.
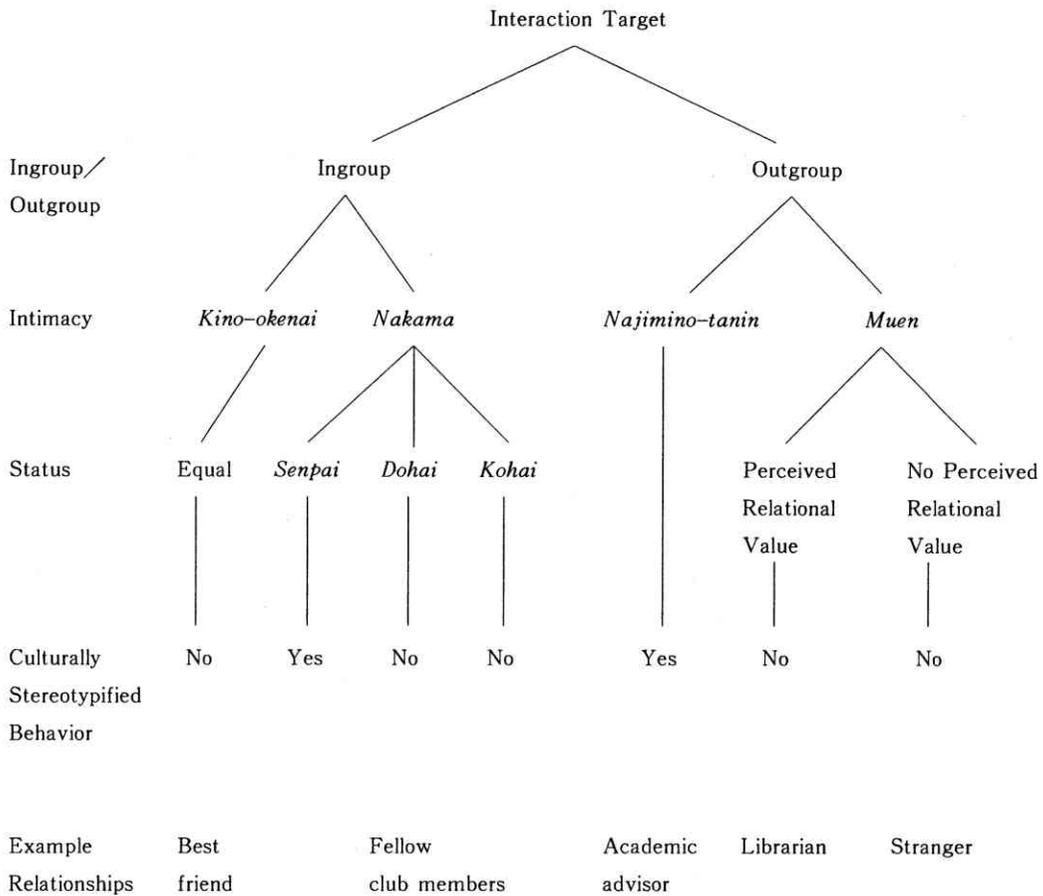
Interaction Target

Ingroup/ Outgroup		Ingroup			Outgroup		

Intimacy	*Kino–okenai*	*Nakama*		*Najimino–tanin*	*Muen*	

Status	Equal	*Senpai*	*Dohai*	*Kohai*		Perceived Relational Value	No Perceived Relational Value

Culturally Stereotypified Behavior	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No

Example Relationships	Best friend	Fellow club members		Academic advisor	Librarian	Stranger

Figure 1. Scheme for Extracting Culturally Stereotypical Traits from Student Samples

Nakama, on the other hand, are intimate, yet not so much as to override status differences. As was mentioned already, here, maximum care must be taken to observe interpersonal rituals (Yoneyama, 1983). This ingroup can be differentiated along the status dimension of seniority and age, into *senpai, dohai,* and *kohai,* or senior, equal and junior, respectively. As has already been mentioned, communication behavior toward the *senpai* is characterized by adherence to formality and ritualistic customs, thus it is in such relational contexts that culturally stereotypified behavior can be seen. In contrast, communication with *dohai* and *kohai* is casual, but with a little more *enryo* than with *kino–okenai–kankei.* Examples of these relationships include fellow club members, co-workers, classmates,

Najimino–tanin refers to a less intimate, acquaintance relationship, characterized more as an outgroup than an ingroup. While being tanin, as had been described already, communication behaviors toward this group would differ greatly depending on the perceived value of the relationship. If there is a moral expectation within such a relationship (Iwata,

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1980), or if the relationship poses a threat to one's public face, or *sekentei* (Inoue, 1985), one is careful to observe formality and interpersonal rituals. With regard to this non-intimate, but acquaintance relationship, Yoneyama (1983) contends that age, gender, status, and roles play an important role in determining attitude and behavioral mode. *Enryo* is shown to a greater degree than with the *nakama*, as the latitude of acceptance for crude behavior is not as large due to weaker intimacy ties (Yoneyama, 1983). However, if the relationship is perceived as having little such value, communication can be anticipated to be very impersonal and mechanical, but short of being impolite, as one's face is at stake through acquaintanceship. Examples of the former for students would include professors, and neighbors, while the latter might include neighborhood store clerks, and the postal delivery person. In terms of students, cultural extraction is most likely in relationships with their academic advisor, or with some non-intimate *senpai* with potential for some benefit.

Finally, *muen-no-kankei* indicates a purely outgroup, stranger relationship, referred also as *aka-no-tanin*. According to Midooka (1991), "Japanese interact with [*muen-no-kankei*] others in an indifferent manner...often...quite impolitely" (p. 481). No *enryo* or any form of considerate behavior need be shown here, as Hamaguchi (1977) likens the treatment of such others as non-human objects. Likewise, Nakane (1970) states, with respect to such an outgroup, "The consciousness of "them" and "us" is strengthened and aggravated to the point that extreme contrasts in human relations can develop in the same society, and anyone outside "our" people ceases to be considered human" (p.21). Cross-cultural researchers who are interested in extracting cultural stereotypes would not be interested in these relationships, whether they are using student samples or not. However, it is much within the Japanese culture to behave individualistically toward these interaction targets, so it is not to say that these relationships are unimportant. They merely are not suited as contexts for meeting the needs of researchers who base their hypotheses on popular stereotypes of Japanese behavior.

Thus, from the above, it would appear that cross-cultural researchers should seek to tap into the behaviors of Japanese students toward the *senpai* in the *nakama* network, or toward relational targets perceived to be valuable within the *najimino-tanin* network. This is not to say that the same intensity of cultural traits can be alloted even in these relationships, by virtue of the social experience framework, nor is it to say that other relational contexts are completely void of Japanese cultural characteristics. For example, it seems reasonable to assume that aspects of Japanese behavior, such as collectivistic tendencies, *amae*, conformity, and self-sacrifice for group interests can also be found in horizontal relationships. These relationships, however, allot more freedom for acting individualistically, without

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offending the other. As Nakane (1970) located the essence of Japanese culture in the *oybun–kobun* relationship, it is in the vertical, primary ingroup relationships that Japanese–likeness is accentuated. In Triandis' (1988) terms, Japaneses students are characterized by "basic collectivism," in that one ingroup exerts the bulk of influence on their behavior. That ingroup is most likely that of athletic or social clubs, in which so many students are active participants. Tanaka (1994) reports on a survey which compared values of Japanese and American students, and notes that 66.5% of the former are actively engaged in club activities, relative to only 36.5% of the latter. Furthermore, Tanaka notes that at his institution, 48.5% of the students believed such extracurricular activities were just as important, if not more important than academic activities.

What is implied here, then, is that any study involving Japanese students must specify the frame of reference for their response, by setting up the context based on the intimacy and status distance of relationships. Making reference to their primary ingroup, which in most cases, would be the extracurricular social circles, would aid in providing a setting in which students can imagine themselves behaving in a manner more coherent to popular stereotypes of the Japanese. Furthermore, extracting cultural patterns would be most effective when behavior within hierarchical relationships are tapped.

Conclusion

It can be argued that students are different from working adults in any culture, not just Japan. However, the number of studies which have failed to achieve results consistent with cultural assumptions is evidence that there must be some confounding element within Japanese student samples. The purpose of this paper was to inquire into why such confounding may occur, and to suggest a means by which these problems may be overcome.

One argument that was raised is that students lack the social experience that is required for them to be full–fledged members of the culture. Another was that society was undergoing rapid change, and the students are a new breed. Yet another was that they are in a moratorium state, in which they are granted a stay of execution before being placed into the strenuous workplace, and that they perceived themselves as atypical of the rest of the population, thus seeing little need to comply with cultural norms.

Whatever explanatory framework is used to rationalize for inconsistent findings, it is hard to conceive the Japanese student as not having any cultural characteristics. It would seem a matter of extracting these characteristics out of them, by providing them with a frame of reference that is inducive of such behavior. Cross–cultural communication research involving Japanese student samples, thus, should be aware of the importance of context. Researchers need to have better understanding of the nature of Japanese students, and they must adapt

their methods to be sensitive toward their propensities. Future studies involving Japanese student samples should strategically design their methods so as to capture the Japanese-like features of these samples by specifying context through intimacy and status differences. The arguments raised in this paper warrant empirical investigations. Inquiries into cross-generational differences, ingroup-outgroup differences, hierarchical differences, self-categorization processes, and the like, should be conducted to put more light onto ways in which precise and valid data can be attained from these Japanese student samples.

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