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FINNISH, JAPANESE AND TURKISH PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS' INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE

*The Impact of Pre-Service Teachers' Culture, Personal
Experiences, and Education*

INTRODUCTION

Diversity, as everywhere, poses challenges to Finnish, Japanese and Turkish educational systems, which are fairly different from each other in both cultural and educational aspects. There is no doubt that issues of diversity may be one of the biggest challenges to education and teacher education today (Delpit, 1995; Nieto, 2006). In spite of the growing number of immigrant students in schools all over the world, research evidence shows that teachers usually lack the information, skills and sometimes motivation necessary to cope successfully in culturally heterogeneous classes (e.g. Taylor and Sobel, 2001). However, teachers' intercultural competence is one of the most important factors that facilitate quality education for all students.

Cultures of socialization are very effective conditioners of one's mind. Thus teachers' personal beliefs have developed very early – often before education. Consequently, many prejudices established in childhood (Tajfel, 1981) are quite resistant to change. Teachers' own identities play an important role in their professional practices, and teacher education has often failed to sufficiently motivate students to examine their own histories, self-concepts and attitudes or ideas about diversity (Cochran-Smith, 2003). This preliminary study investigates Finnish, Japanese and Turkish pre-service teachers' intercultural competence and its relationship to their culture, experiences, and personal and professional identity.

PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY

Teachers' professional identity is rather a complex concept. The personal, professional, and cultural elements of a teacher's identity are interconnected and continually reconstructed through historical, cultural, sociological, and psychological influences (Cooper & Olson, 1996). Not only do teacher training and teaching experience shape a teacher's professional identity but also the personal and professional identities developed through one's life's processes, as teachers interact, have social and work experiences, and learn how their identities help to shape their professional identity (Beijard, Verloop, & Verment, 2000). In this respect, identity is a moving intersection

of inner and outer forces. Past events and experiences in the personal life of teachers, such as early childhood experiences, significant others, and teacher role models, are intimately linked to their professional role (e.g. Goodson & Hargreaves, 1996). Together they form a personal cognitive interpretation framework for the professional conduct of teachers (Kelchtermans, 1994; Beijaard et al., 2004). When discussing multicultural encounters at school, teachers should become more conscious of their own positions and how their life experiences may influence a given situation. Thus intercultural professionalism would require teachers to be willing to reflect upon any conflicts they have encountered and consider how their ideas, likes, dislikes, and fears affect their interpretations of their students (e.g. Li & Li, 2005; Talib, 2005).

Cultural Concepts of Self and Identity

The concepts of self and identity are often used interchangeably in the literature on teacher education (Day et al. 2006). On one hand, identity can be defined as who or what someone is, the various meanings people attach to themselves, or the meanings attributed by others (Beijaard, 1995, p. 282). Identity affects the self as identity is also the publicly presented self. According to Markus & Kitayama (1991, 1998), individual and collective culture has a great effect on the individual's concept of the self. They theorize that in Western cultures, such as in Finland, individuals tend to be independent and self-contained. Their inner attributes are the most significant in regulating behaviour (Markus & Kitayama, 1998). On the other hand, there are societies in which people feel that they are more connected and less differentiated from others. Such an "interdependent self" is found, for example, in Japan, China, South America and, in this case, also Turkey. Cultural heritage and personal frameworks are transferred and reinforced through institutions such as the family, the school, and society.

People shape their emotional experiences within their culture, through their upbringing and in their relationships with the people around them (e.g. Nias, 1996). In collectivist cultures, childrearing emphasizes conformity, obedience, security, and reliability whereas in individualist cultures, childrearing emphasizes independence, exploration, and self-reliance (Triandis, 2001). In a global and mediated world, however, the identities are more fluid than fixed. Young people have more repertoires available to shape their identities than ever before. However, they can create their identities from the options made available by their culture and social environment (Appiah, 1994).

Self-Esteem and Self-Enhancement

People evaluate their own self-worth (self-esteem) as to what extent they view themselves being good, competent and decent. Kelchtermans (2007) sees that teachers' professional identities consist of five inter-related parts: self-image, self-esteem, job-motivation, task perception, and future perspective. In our paper we

are looking at pre-service teachers' self-esteem, which could be understood as the evolution of the professional self in interaction with others.

Cultural difference in self-esteem and self-enhancement has been the subject of a great deal of research and controversy (Brown, 2008; Brown et al., 2009; Heine, 2003; Muramoto, 2003). According to research (e.g. Heine, Lehman, Markus and Kitayama, 1999) self-enhancement is not a universal and absolute feature of the human psyche but a tendency among individuals from an independent cultural context. Muramoto (2003) also claims that in a collective society, such as Japan, individuals use an indirect self-enhancement process in which in-group members mutually protect and enhance each other's self-esteem. In other words, they enhance their self-esteem through the eyes of others, because the mutual interdependent relationship is dominant. Modesty, one of the guiding cultural norms among Japanese, affects behaviour and thinking. The Japanese tend to take a negative view of those who regard themselves in too high esteem (Brown, 2008).

INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE

The term intercultural competence is associated with global, international or multicultural education and culturally relevant or responsive education (Banks & Banks, 2004; Gay, 2000). Hammer, Bennett and Wiseman (2003) define the term "intercultural sensitivity" as one's ability to notice and experience cultural differences whereas the term "intercultural competence" refers to the cognitive and behavioural skills that an individual uses when dealing with cultural differences. Educators need a more complex understanding of intercultural interactions and skills to negotiate between cultures, as well as engaging in debates on identity, identity politics, transitional societies, and globalization (Coulby, 2006). In this respect, teachers' intercultural competence can be understood as an enlarged understanding of oneself and different realities as well as a critical approach to their work (Talib, 2005).

Usually, teachers or pre-service teachers from the mainstream culture never have to question or criticize their positionality. According to Merryfield (2000) most teachers of colour have a dual consciousness due to having experienced discrimination and the status of being an outsider, whereas only those White middle-class teachers who have lived outside their country are effective at teaching for diversity. Living in another culture does not automatically make a person intercultural. In the cultural learning process the authentic relationships are important for teachers to learn from each other (Allport, 1979; Hosoya and Talib, 2010).

Bennett & Bennett (2004, pp.147–165) have developed a theory which explains the cognitive development that people go through when living in different cultural environments. In the ethnocentric stage of the intercultural process (there are levels of denial, defence and minimisation) people experience their own culture as central to their reality. At the denial level, people are ignorant, indifferent to or neglectful of cultural differences. At the defence level, people evaluate differences negatively.

At the minimisation level, people recognise cultural differences superficially. In the ethno relative stage, (acceptance, adaptation and integration levels) people experience their own culture in the context of other cultures. People develop from recognizing and appreciating cultural differences in order to be able to employ alternative ways of thinking and frames of references and, finally, people internalize more than one cultural worldview into their own. After reaching this stage, such individuals have the greatest flexibility in solving intercultural conflict and are open to complex realities (Endicott, Bock, and Narvaez, 2003).

TEACHING CULTURES IN FINLAND, JAPAN AND TURKEY

In Japan and Finland teachers enjoy high respect among the general public. In Turkey this has not been the case. Because of the low socio-economic status, heavy workload, lack of opportunities to improve professional knowledge and lack of job security of teachers, highly qualified students in Turkey do not usually prefer the teaching profession. (Sahin and Deniz, 2006). However, changes in the Turkish economy have created an increasing need for qualified teachers. There are ten departments in Faculties of Education that train teachers for primary, secondary and high schools. These departments train teachers for different subject areas and class levels. Only graduates who have finished four-year programs other than that from the Faculties of Education can apply for post-graduate teacher education programs.

In Finland, large numbers of applicants and the great popularity of teaching make it possible to provide enough competent teachers for schools. Primary and secondary teachers graduate from a five-year Master's degree program. The popularity of teaching also means that those who apply for teacher education are highly motivated. Finnish teachers are vested with a considerable degree of decision-making authority as concerns school policy, management and the choice of textbooks. On the other hand, in Japan teachers have many more students in their classes and much less independence in teaching matters than in Finland.

In Japan an open certificate system allows students to consider whether or not they wish to become teachers in a secondary school. These students do not need to major in education whereas primary school teachers must major in education at a university. The guiding sentiment among Japanese teachers is effectiveness: teachers must be able to make the students learn and gain the required competences. Most teachers tend to teach in a traditional manner and depend on well-rehearsed ways of teaching, and they are not very eager to try out new ways of teaching.

Interestingly, in all three countries teachers share similar tendencies towards conservative and somewhat authoritarian ways of teaching, even though it is not emphasised in Finnish and Turkish teacher education institutes (Yoshida, 2005; Simola, 2005; Sahin and Deniz, 2006).

METHOD

Participants

The participants consisted of teacher education students: 162 (M: 22, F: 140) from Finland, 192 (M: 65, F: 122, not known: 5) from Japan, and 162 (M: 29, F: 133) from Turkey. The students were in their first, second or third year of teacher education.

Procedure

There were 92 items based on different theories. They were classified into 3 dimensions A) intercultural sensitivity and experience of differences (25 questions), B) pre-service teachers' personal and professional identity (42 questions), and C) critical and intercultural education and reflection (25 questions). These were further divided into specific areas. The first group of questions inquired about (A1) ethno-centric stage (denial, defence and minimization); and (A2) ethno-relative stage (acceptance, adaptation and integration). The second group of questions inquired about (B1) self-conception and self-esteem, (B2) discipline-oriented and conservative attitude, and (B3) inter-relational attitude (social relationships at school). The last group of questions inquired about (C1) attitude with mission awareness (the teacher's personal collegial reflection) and (C2) socially responsible attitude (critical pedagogy). There were also 28 questions dealing with background variables. The questionnaire of the study was presented to the students in Japanese, Finnish, Turkish, and English to ensure that the translations would be as accurate as possible. The questions were randomly ordered on the questionnaire sheet. Respondents were asked to rate items concerning their attitudes and beliefs across a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

A comparative descriptive method was used in this study. We attempt to analyse different perspectives of pre-service teachers' intercultural competences in three different countries and the relationship to their culture, experiences, and personal and professional identity.

Measures and Analysis

All the data were analysed using SPSS Version 14. First, descriptive statistics (means and standard deviations) were calculated and analysed. Cronbach's alpha (a measure of item coherence) for selected items was calculated to see if an acceptable alpha was obtained for the chosen items. Cronbach's alpha for the total data was .825 after eliminating non-significant variables. The statistical dependence between the background variables and the scores on the scales was examined using one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA). Pearson correlations were also computed among the dimensions. The results of the qualitative study exhibited factor loadings between .72 and .88. The reliability of the scales afforded an alpha of .82.

RESULTS

Part I. General Comparison

In this research there are three components of intercultural competence; intercultural sensitiveness and experiences of differences, appropriate personal and professional identity, and sufficient critical international education and teacher reflection. The three dimensions are divided into 7 sets of areas. Each item is shown in the table below (Table 1).

Intercultural competence is the sum of these attitudes. All of mean scores show significant differences among pre-service teachers in Finland, Japan, and Turkey.

Table 1. Intercultural competence among pre-service teachers

	<i>Finland</i>	<i>Japan</i>	<i>Turkey</i>
A1. Ethnocentric attitude	2.29***	2.67***	3.51***
A2. Ethno-relative attitude	3.76***	3.47***	3.70***
B1. Self-esteem	3.88***	3.12***	3.30***
B2. Conservative and discipline-oriented attitude	3.63***	3.60***	3.25***
B3. Inter-relational attitude	4.38***	3.82***	4.25***
C1. Mission awareness	4.41***	4.01***	4.20***
C2. Social responsibility	3.97***	3.65***	4.13***

*** $p < .001$, ** = .001, * $p < .050$

Although it is difficult to determine which group of pre-service teachers has the highest intercultural competence, our observation suggests that Finnish pre-service teachers have the highest intercultural competence, while the Japanese group seems to have the lowest score on such competence.

When we look at the association of variables, some of these attitudes show correlations and the trend is slightly different in the three countries. According to our analysis, among Finnish pre-service teachers those who have a high ethnocentric attitude tend to have a high inter-relational attitude. Those who have a high ethno-relative attitude tend to have a high conservative and inter-relational attitude or vice versa among Finnish pre-service teachers. Among Japanese cohorts, those who have high self-esteem and high inter-relational attitudes tend to have high ethno-relative attitudes. These two attitudes should be emphasized in education so that they can have an ethno-relative attitude in Japan. Regarding Turkish cohorts, interestingly there is a correlation between an ethnocentric and an ethno-relative attitude; those who are ethnocentric are also ethno-relative. This trend will be further examined more precisely. Those who are inter-relational can be both ethnocentric and ethno-

relative, but an ethno-relative tendency is stronger. Those who have high self-esteem and those with a more conservative attitude also tend to have an ethno-relative attitude or vice versa. High self-esteem is correlated with a conservative attitude and inter-relational attitude. The association is stronger between self-esteem and inter-relational attitude.

Among all of the above, the ethno-relative attitude may be the one core value that includes intercultural competence. Let us consider that self-esteem, conservative attitude, and inter-relational attitude are independent variables that predict an ethno-relative attitude; pre-service teachers among the three countries show different characteristics predicting an ethno-relative attitude.

The data also show that there are some significant correlations among the expected independent variables (B1, B2, and B3). In the case of Finnish pre-service teachers, there is a strong correlation (.615) among these independent variables, and these explain .379 of the ethno-relative attitude of Finnish pre-service teachers. Our statistical model indicates that self-esteem does not affect the ethno-relative attitude significantly. However, a conservative attitude and inter-relational attitude have a significant effect on the ethno-relative attitude among Finnish pre-service teachers. In the case of Japanese pre-service teachers, the data show that there is a strong correlation (.631) among the independent variables and these explain .398 of the ethno-relative attitude. According to the data, the model indicates that all variables—self-esteem, conservative attitude, and inter-relational attitude—have a significant effect in explaining the ethno-relative attitude, and inter-relational attitude has the strongest effect in shaping the ethno-relative attitude. Among Turkish cohorts, there is a strong correlation (.701) among the independent variables (B1, B2, B3) and these explain .492 of the ethno-relative attitude. The model indicates that a conservative attitude does not affect the ethno-relative attitude significantly. However, self-esteem and inter-relational attitude do have a significant effect on the ethno-relative attitude.

We expected that personal and professional identity, including self-esteem, conservative attitude, and inter-relational attitude, would have an impact on the intercultural competence of pre-service teachers. However, as far as we can see the relationship is partial and depends on where the pre-service teachers are studying. This may mean that pre-service teachers' cultural and social background or the content of teacher education influence their attitude more so than these independent variables.

Part II. Descriptive Comparison

A. Intercultural sensitivities and experiences of differences

A1. Ethnocentric attitude. According to [Table 1](#), Turkish students have the highest ethnocentric attitude among pre-service teachers in the three countries ($M=3.51$). They show the highest scores in all of the 6 items that show differences. They have

a strong anti-immigration attitude. The following three items are highest among Turkish pre-service teachers, and both Finnish and Japanese students have similar low means. The possible reason for this attitude among Turkish pre-service teachers is that they accept many immigrants from Arabic, African, and east European countries.

The data shows that Turkish pre-service teachers have the highest ethnocentric attitude among the three countries studied. Although Turkey has a more diversified society than Finland and Japan, the environment does not necessarily decrease the ethnocentric attitude detected in this study. The respondents of this questionnaire were university students who had had access to higher education, and hence they might attribute their success to their efforts and hard work. Consequently they may loathe those who do not seem to try by all means to climb up the social ladder. The fact there is high economic disparity and consequently in the access to education in both Turkey and Japan, according to OECD research, this might have an impact on peoples' attitudes in these two countries. Turkey is 29th in the Gini index among 30 OECD member countries in mid 2000s, and Japan is 20th, whereas Finland is 7th. This shows that Turkey and Japan have more income inequality than does Finland. The access to higher education is usually in accordance with this tendency.

A2. Ethno-relative attitude. There are 13 items in this group, and the following 4 show significant differences among pre-service teachers in the three countries. One item, "I cannot tolerate insecure situations". Should be marked low in order to be ethno-relative. After reversing this item, the mean scores for ethno-relative attitude is highest among Finnish students; second highest among Turkish students, and lowest among Japanese students (Finnish $M=3.76$, Turkish $M=3.70$, Japanese $M=3.46$), and these are significantly different (Table 1). Highly educated people are usually open to change and can look at things objectively, with multiple viewpoints. This is the case of Turkish pre-service teachers. However, we see some inconsistent tendencies among them since they also show the highest means on ethnocentric attitude. This is probably because they have conflicting values inside themselves. They are idealistic to some extent as regards those students who will lead society in the future but, in contrast, they might not be able to accept those who do not try hard or who do not share the same values as they do. When the percentage of those who advance to higher education is limited, privileged people might show such a tendency.

In a homogeneous country like Japan, people's life styles are quite similar and it is hard for people to accept different behaviour and ways of living. People in such a highly context cultural have an invisible code about how to behave or react, and it is not easy for newcomers to become members of the society. Although some have knowledge that people are equal and that we need to get along with those with different backgrounds, they tend to be prejudiced against such people, especially when they do not have personal contacts with them.

Finland is also a homogeneous country, but, being a member of the EU, people have more chances to meet and associate with those from different cultural backgrounds including business workers, students, and immigrants. With such experiences and individualistic characteristics of society, it is easier for them to accept the differences.

B. Pre-service teachers' personal and professional identity

B1. Self-conception and Self-esteem. Self-esteem influences whether a person can accept differences in a positive way without being defensive. There are 12 items that are related to self-esteem. According to [Table 1](#), Finnish pre-service teachers have the highest mean ($M= 3.88$), followed by the Turkish ($M=3.30$) and Japanese ($M=3.12$) ones, and these differences are considered to be significantly different.

The data show that Japanese pre-service teachers are more pessimistic about the future and tend to worry a lot. This might be due to their low self-esteem. Japanese pre-service teachers constantly show low scores on items related to self-esteem. In Japanese school education, students are often told to recognize their weak points and get rid of them. Such reflection is emphasized on a daily basis. They may unconsciously feel that they are constantly being forced to change themselves and, therefore, they cling to the way they are. They seem to be afraid of changing the way they are. Since they are used to being told what to do, they seem to feel more comfortable when they get definite answers. Moreover, they need to pass a competitive teacher appointment exam in each district if they wish to be a teacher. There are still many unknown factors they need to worry about with respect to their future careers.

By contrast, Finnish pre-service teachers tend to have higher self-esteem, partly because they have already overcome a highly competitive entrance exam in order to major in education. They study hard before getting to university and are fairly sure about getting a teaching job in the future. Therefore, it is natural for them to feel self-confident.

Turkish pre-service teachers do not seem to challenge new things, although they do want to attain something. They scored high on the item "I am always the last person to try out the new things." and "I always want to be the first in everything." This suggests that there is competition within their society and therefore that they tend to consider it better not to trust anyone. There is high competition in order to become a teacher, as is also the case in Japan. Students must pass the national entrance examination to enter an education college. After they have completed their program, they need to pass another national competitive examination.

B2. Discipline-oriented and Conservative Attitude. According to [Table 1](#), contrary to our expectation Finnish pre-service teachers have the highest mean on this item ($M=3.63$), followed by their Japanese ($M=3.60$), and Turkish ($M=3.24$) counterparts. Turkish pre-service teachers show the least conservative attitude among the three groups. There are 15 items that are related to conservatism and a discipline-oriented

attitude. Seven items point to significant differences among pre-service teachers in the three countries. The items “People are born equal” and “I think women should be as liberal as men”; need to be reversed to be considered conservative, and so too the item “I tend to be critical about many things in my society.”

As far as conservatism is concerned, in the questions dealing with the characteristics of a collective society, Japanese students understandably score high. In a collective society, human relationships are considered to be important (Hofstede, 2009). Authoritarian attitudes within families are often associated with a sense of caring and hence physical punishment among families is often justified. On the other hand, in an individual society people tend to value rules highly to maintain order (Markus & Kitayama, 1998). There is an item such as “I get upset when someone breaks the rules” demonstrates such characteristics. Both Turkish and Finnish pre-service teachers score higher on this item than their Japanese cohorts. There is one item “most of time I get upset when someone does things differently,” for which Turkish students score much higher than the other two. It seems that Turkish students have more definite values. The low score among the Japanese students on this item may indicate “indifference to others” among Japanese youth. The low score among Japanese students on the item “people are born equal,” actually reflects how Japanese youth feels about society today. Obviously, the disparity in wealth in Japanese society has recently become prominent, and this society seems to be reproduced. Japanese youth do not feel they are enjoying equality in society. Considering the fact that there is inequality of income in Turkey, the higher score among Turkish students is different from what we expected. In a society with the characteristics of unequal distribution of wealth, it is expected that people will try to avoid risk and become conservative. In fact, Japanese students score high on the question dealing with conservatism. As mentioned before, it is rare to encounter refugees in Japanese society, and, it is quite difficult to feel empathy towards them. In Turkey, the number of refugees from neighbouring countries is increasing. Finnish students may no longer feel sympathy for refugees because they have seen that refugees are doing relatively well thanks to Finnish social welfare. The fact that Turkish students want strong leaders might come from the admiration for the founder of the Republic of Turkey. Turkish pre-service teachers (mostly women) also consider that “women should be as liberated (see above) as men.” On the other hand, Japanese cohorts do not consider such an idea; instead, they might consider it better to take share in each gender role.

In terms of conservatism in teaching, Finnish and Turkish pre-service teachers seem to value responsibility in the profession and tend to accept authoritarian attitudes in pursuing their duties as teachers. On the other hand, Japanese teachers are losing their say in schools. Some parents with higher education no longer respect teachers. Authoritarian attitudes may offer a target of attack from such parents and, instead of teaching teachers are struggling to keep peace with their students in classroom.

Japanese pre-service teachers' less authoritarian attitudes might come from such a background.

B3. Inter-relational attitude (social relationships at school). According to [Table 1](#), Finnish pre-service teachers have the highest score on inter-relational attitude ($M=4.38$), followed by Turkish ($M=4.25$), and Japanese (3.60) students. There are 15 items dealing with this attitude and 4 of them show a significant difference among the three countries. Finnish pre-service teachers value communication and mutual relationship the most.

Evidently, Japanese pre-service teachers have weaker communication skills because they do not speak many foreign languages, and they also self-report that they are not good at expressing themselves. Finns are eager to learn and use foreign languages. Although Finns are considered to be shy, Finnish students are open to meeting new people, and female students, in particular, are more open than males. Japanese people are reluctant to show their feelings and emotions; they are expected to stay calm in any situation. Likewise, Finnish pre-service teachers expect students to increase their communication skills for intercultural awareness and understanding. Surprisingly, they scored lower on the question "students are allowed to express their views about the topic being taught." This may be because Finnish teachers attempt to maintain the order in the classroom and discourage free discussion. In contrast, Japanese teachers might prefer a more casual and informal class setting, as compared to the past. Turkish pre-service teachers also have a liberal attitude, like their Japanese cohorts.

As far as teacher-student relationships are concerned, Finnish pre-service teachers value respect and equality, but at the same time they draw a clear line between their private life and occupational lives. Turkish cohorts follow a similar trend. In contrast, Japanese teachers are usually expected to devote themselves to education at every moment. Dedicated teachers are considered to be good teachers.

Turkish pre-service teachers have an attitude that lies somewhere between those of the Finnish and Japanese cohorts.

C. Critical Intercultural Education and Teacher Reflection

C1. Attitude with mission awareness (personal collegial reflection). [Table 1](#) shows that Finnish pre-service teachers show the highest attitude with mission awareness ($M=4.42$), followed by their Turkish (4.20), and Japanese counterparts (4.01), and the values are significantly different among the three countries. There are 12 items that deal with attitude with mission awareness, and only one item reveals significant differences among pre-service teachers in the three countries.

The overall tendency of Finnish pre-service teachers is evident. It appears that pre-service teachers in Finland are eager to be better teachers. They consider it a necessary reflection of themselves as individuals and as professionals. They seem to

understand that being a better teacher does not only mean accumulating knowledge about the subject they are going to teach; it includes controlling their emotions, acquiring extensive knowledge of the world and society, and using appropriate methods. Turkish pre-service teachers have a tendency similar to that of the Finnish cohorts, but they give less consideration to the students' background. Japanese pre-service teachers encourage students to find their strong points and emphasize academic success less. It seems they have given up on improving their students' academic ability. They might consider it difficult to fill in the gap of abilities among students while recognizing the fact that academic success does not guarantee a better life. It seems that in Japan there is a more emotional tie between teachers and students, and such a tie is more important than learning to be a good teacher and using critical thinking.

C2. Socially responsible attitude (critical pedagogy). This set of items on a socially responsible attitude is a basis for critical pedagogy. It may be seen that Turkish pre-service teachers consider the need to be agents of reform in society and that they need to act as models in society. Knowing that there is inequality in society and that there is a limit of what schools can do, they attempt to make efforts to improve their students' lives through school education. Finnish pre-service teachers also have a similar attitude to their Turkish cohorts, but they are more realistic. They recognize that they have their own limitations as teachers and that that chances in life are not necessarily the same for all students. They know that they have prejudices, and they do recognize that they need to be aware of these in order to be good teachers. Here again, "equality" seems to be important among Finnish pre-service teachers. However, they are not too idealistic about educational attainment. They know that everybody does not necessarily have a fair chance at succeeding in school. They are aware of the variance in ability and seem to accept the diverse reality in society. Finnish pre-service teachers, who encounter more immigrants more often than their Japanese cohorts, feel the necessity to deal with cultures issues in the classroom. In Turkey, ethnic minorities and refugees exist, but it does not seem that the teaching of different cultures is as important as in Finland.

Turkish and Japanese pre-service teachers consider that students' social/ethnic backgrounds have an effect on their academic success, and this score is much higher among Turkish pre-service teachers. This again demonstrates that they recognize "inequality" in their societies.

CONCLUSIONS

We have compared the intercultural competence among pre-service teachers in 3 different countries, Finland, Japan and Turkey. The social and cultural characteristics of these countries are different. Finland emphasizes equality in the society, and public expenditure on education is much higher than in Japan and Turkey. Finnish people are aware of the reality that they need to accept immigrants and educate them to be

good members of society. The characteristics of Japanese society are still collective and homogeneous, although there is a slight tendency toward diversity. Turkey is highly developed among Muslim countries, but economic and social disparity is as severe as in the case of Japan. Pre-service teachers in these countries show a significant difference in all 7 elements of intercultural competence.

In this chapter we have attempted to examine the impact of pre-service teachers' personal and professional identity (self-esteem, conservative attitude, inter-relational attitude) on their intercultural competence. However, we have found that personal and professional identities only partially influence intercultural competence, and the patterns of impact are different in all three countries. This means that culture and social environment have an impact on pre-service teachers' intercultural competence. Inter-relational attitude has a significant impact on Finnish pre-service teachers' ethno-relative attitudes. Even when they are conservative and discipline-oriented, they tend to have an ethno-relative attitude. In the case of Japanese cohorts, those with an inter-relational attitude tend to have a higher ethno-relative attitude and higher self-esteem or vice versa. Turkish cohorts show complex associations among the variables; they tend to have a higher ethno-relative attitude when they have higher self-esteem, a higher inter-relational attitude, and a higher conservative and discipline-oriented attitude. Upon considering a good teacher education program for coping with diversity, these findings are helpful. Interaction with people from different backgrounds will be an essential experience for those who are hoping to be teachers, together with communications skills, including those in foreign languages. This is especially important among Japanese pre-service teachers. Increasing the opportunity to enhance their self-esteem is also helpful both in Japan and Turkey. We need more in-depth investigations to determine the mechanism of impact of their culture, experiences, and personal and professional identity on pre-service teachers' intercultural competence.

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