

The Identity of Children of Japanese-Filipino Marriages in Oita, Japan

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This paper examines the identity of children of Japanese-Filipino marriages from the perspectives of children, their parents, and their homeroom teachers. Eight family cases were involved in the study. Thirty-two informants were interviewed face-to-face. Results indicate that the children viewed themselves as being either Japanese or “half”. The fathers and the homeroom teachers viewed the children as being Japanese due to their Japanese physical attributes, their proficiency in the Japanese language, and their being born and raised in Japan. The Filipino mothers viewed their children as having a “mixed” cultural background, although it was evident that the children were not adept to the Filipino culture in general or the language in particular. Overall, the children exhibited an identity closely associated with being Japanese. These results suggest that the stereotype that children of intercultural marriages necessarily reflect the cultural values and behaviors of both their parents needs to be reconsidered. Second, the very effectiveness of the terms “intercultural”, “cross-cultural”, and “bicultural” are problematized.

本稿は、日本人とフィリピン人の結婚における子供たちのアイデンティティをその子供本人、両親、担任教師の視点を通して検証する。8家族が当研究に関与し、32人にインタビューを行った。その結果、子供たちは自分を日本人もしくは「ハーフ」と認識していることが明らかとなった。その一方、父親と担任教師は、子供たちの身体特徴、日本語能力、日本で生まれ育った生い立ちなどから、子供たちを「日本人」と捉えている。また、フィリピン人の母親たちは、子供達がフィリピンの文化全般、特に言語に精通していないにもかかわらず、自分の子供が「混合した」文化背景を所有していると考えている。これらのデータから、概して子供たちは「日本人」性に深く関与するアイデンティティを具現していると言える。この結果より、投稿では重要な2つの問題点を提起する。まず1つは、異文化間で生まれる子供たちは、必ず両親の両方の文化的価値と行動を反映するという固定観念の見直し。2つ目は、intercultural (異文化)、cross-cultural (異文化)、bicultural (二文化) という用語の有効性である。

Introduction

Intercultural marriage is a growing global phenomenon. By definition, the term refers to the union of two persons from diverse cultures (Crippen and Brew, 2007, p.107). In anthropological terminology, an intercultural union is an exogamous marriage. Such marriages involve the

meeting of two people from different cultural contexts. Various scholars have referred to intermarriage as being either cross-cultural (Constable, 2005), mixed (Barbara, 1989), transnational (Yea, 2005), interracial (Norment, 1985), or international (Ohara-Hirano, 2000). In Japan, intermarriage is commonly referred to as *kokusai kekkon* (i.e. international marriage).

Kokusai kekkon in Japan has a long-standing history. Leupp (2003) notes that Japanese started to intermarry with Europeans during the 1500s. In terms of Japanese-Filipino marriages, a few cases spanning the early 1900s (Leupp, 2003) to the immediate postwar period have been documented (Zulueta, 2004). However, Japanese-Filipino marriages reached a peak in the 1970s, when Japan started recruiting Filipinos to address a growing labor shortage. From 1989 to 2009, 108,245 cases of Japanese-Filipino marriages were reported by the Commission on Filipinos Overseas (CFO, 2009).

There are several issues that couples in intermarriages may encounter owing to cultural differences. One issue concerns the identity socialization of their children. Identity has been defined as “the way we understand ourselves in relation to others and our social environment. Our identities are constructed through a reflexive process involving interaction between our self and others in our environment” (Rockquemore and Laszloffy, 2005, p.4). From this, it can be assumed that our relationships within our families and school systems shape our understandings of ourselves.¹

The ways in which children of intercultural families develop their identity is complex. Popular discourse maintains that children of intermarriage will develop a bicultural identity owing to their “transcultural” family environment. Being intercultural or “transcultural” as Crippen and Brew (2007, p. 107) put it, is to experience “the new family culture that is created when the cultures of two people from different backgrounds [have] intersected to form a new culture.”

To emphasize the ‘transculturality’ or ‘interculturality’ of children of intermarriage, several social labels have been constructed. Among these are “bicultural” (Soto, 2008), “biethnic” (Oikawa and Yoshida, 2007), “biracial” (Oikawa and Yoshida, 2007; Rockquemore and Laszloffy, 2005), “cross-cultural” (Sekiguchi, 2008), and “multi-racial” (Nakazawa, 2003). Such social descriptors are used to indicate belief that children of transcultural families will most probably experience a dual or multicultural upbringing. This circumstance results in bicultural identity construction.

This paper explores the identity construction of children of Japanese-Filipino marriages residing in Japan. It contributes to the existing literature on children’s identities in the intercultural family context by incorporating the voices of children, their parents and their homeroom teachers. The research therefore provides a micro perspective (home and school contexts) in understanding identity socialization among children of intermarriage. This is done through an examination of the narratives of children, their parents, and their homeroom teachers.

In addition, most studies on the identity of children of intermarriages (including Japanese-Filipino marriages) have typically only involved adolescents as research participants. In contrast, this paper includes the voices of younger subjects. There remains a dearth of studies involving the children as participants, leading Birbeck and Drummond (2007, p. 21) to observe that “children’s voices have not often found their way into research.” This study attempts to fill that gap in the existing literature.

In summary, this paper investigates how a group of children of Japanese-Filipino marriages perceive themselves in terms of their identity. Almonte-Acosta (2008, p.19) has

referred to such identity perception is as *ethnic preference*. This paper also describes how parents and homeroom teachers viewed the children's identity. To provide a theoretical and conceptual backdrop, a literature review of theories on identity formation, Filipinos in Japan, and children of transcultural families in Japan is presented. Following the literature review is the presentation of the research methodology, the cases, cross-case results, a discussion, and conclusion.

Theoretical Underpinnings

Identity is an important issue for children of intercultural marriages (Almonte-Acosta, 2008). Parents play a major role in shaping a child's self-perception and identity. In her study on ethnic identity among "Filipino-Japanese" children, Almonte-Acosta (2008, p.19) claims that "generally, parents have influence in the choice of children's ethnic preference." She further maintains that mothers are particularly important in cultural and identity formation, given their greater availability for interaction.

There are different theories regarding the perception, construction, or preference of one's identity. According to Rockquemore and Laszloffy (2005), there are three ways in which a child may develop his/her identity. These are singular identity (associating oneself with the identity of one parent), blended identity (associating oneself with the identity of both parents), and transcendent identity (associating oneself with the identity of neither of the parents). The way the child develops his/her identity and the way others validate or reject such identity shape his/her school experiences (Rockquemore and Laszloffy 2005, pp. 6-13).

Oikawa and Yoshida (2007, p. 644) offer a three-tiered typology that describe how "bi-ethnic" children may look at themselves. First is the "unique me" type, whereby an individual prefers to construct a distinct identity rather than being associated with either of their parents' ethnic origins. Then there is the "bi-ethnic" type, whereby the individual exhibits a positive outlook toward having two ethnic origins, and treats it as an advantage. Finally, the "Just let me be Japanese" type seeks to be considered and treated as being Japanese, and not be regarded as different. Obviously, in cases involving children of Japanese-Filipino marriages, there is variation regarding the way they look at themselves, and this is supported in the findings of previous studies. Significantly, adolescents in Almonte-Acosta's study (2008) were found to view themselves as being Japanese.

Children of intercultural marriages may face difficulties in coming to terms with their dual heritages. Anderson (1999b, p. 14) states that, "as culturally in between, children are not just passive recipients of competing cultures, not just unconscious consumers of competing socializing techniques, but are agents engaging with those cultural models of childhood from which they make their own pragmatic and hybridized choices." Within intermarried families, parental practices obviously influence the cultural identity(ies) the child will choose to belong to (Driessen, 2000). One important question regarding this is "What happens when children associate themselves with the dominant culture?"

Children of Transcultural Families in Japan

There are different social labels attached to children in this circumstance. They are referred to as "*haafu*" (Oikawa and Yoshida, 2007), "*daburi*" (Kamada, 2006), and "*ainoko*" (meaning

“children of mixture” but translated as “half-breed”) (Otani, 2009). Some children of intercultural marriages consider the term “*haafu*” as derogatory, while others have “tolerated and ignored, assumed and ascribed, accepted and attested” it (Greer, 2005). Greer, as a caveat, notes that although some individuals consider themselves “half,” this does not authorize other people to call them such. In the Philippines, the term “half” is commonly used to refer to individuals born from intermarriage.

In response to the negative reaction of the term “*haafu*”, some scholars have suggested using the term “*daburu*”. This word indicates that children of intercultural marriages “fully belong to two groups, and that they have twice as much culture as monoethnic and monoracial people... It calls to mind the image of children that come from stable and intact families, with access to two different worlds and groups of people” (Otani, 2009, pp. 5-6). Kamada (2006, p.102) similarly maintains that the word is “empowering.”

Children of Japanese-Filipino marriages are referred to informally as “Japinoy” (Almonte-Acosta, 2008). Formally, they are either called “Japanese-Filipino” (Nuqui, 2008) or “Filipino-Japanese” children (Almonte-Acosta, 2008). Among all registered intermarriages in Japan between 1995 and 2009, Japanese-Filipino marriages had the greatest number of registered live births with 33,210 cases, followed by Japanese-Chinese unions with 25,370 cases, and the Japanese-Korean couples with 19,294 cases. Interestingly, of these, the combination of Japanese husband/Filipino wife ranked first in terms of the most number of births (33,210) during this period (see Table 1).

Table 1: Live births involving Japanese fathers and foreign wives in Japan.

Country of Origin of Wives	1995	2000	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	TOTAL
Philippines	5488	4705	4441	4998	5140	4623	3815	33210
China	2244	3040	3478	3925	4271	4203	4209	25370
Korea	3519	3345	2583	2593	2530	2439	2285	19294
Thailand	851	736	509	512	507	446	427	3988
Brazil	406	397	217	256	268	249	235	2028
U.S.A.	178	142	122	130	141	124	116	953
Peru	105	85	92	99	98	84	93	656
U.K.	55	51	47	51	53	62	45	364

Data Source: Vital Statistics of Japan, 2009a (see Table 4-32)

Method

Data for this paper were culled from the author’s dissertation on the educational outcomes of children of Japanese-Filipino marriages in Oita, Japan. The said dissertation made use of the multiple case (8 cases) study design to make comparisons. The eight cases each involved a “Japanese-Filipino” child spanning the ages 10 (fourth grade elementary school) to 12 (first year of Junior high school.). Four of the participants were boys, and four were girls. All children in this collective case study had a Filipino mother and a Japanese father. The children, their parents,

and their homeroom teachers were interviewed between March and November of 2010. In all, 32 interviews were conducted. The interviews with the Filipino mothers were conducted in Tagalog, Cebuano, or English. Those with the children, their fathers, and their homeroom teachers were conducted in Japanese.

The children-informants were chosen through convenient and referral sampling using a specified set of criteria. These were that a) the child must be Japanese and must have been born and raised in Japan, b) the child must be enrolled in a public elementary school at the commencement of the study, c) the child must be in fourth grade at least, and d) the child must live together with his/her mother and father. These criteria were set to ensure uniformity among the participants in terms of their personal background.

The Cases

This section presents the stories of eight children of Japanese-Filipino marriages in Oita Prefecture, Japan. Names indicated are pseudonyms to maintain confidentiality and the anonymity of the children informants.

Case 1. Yuichiro

Yuichiro, a twelve-year-old first year junior high school student, is an only son and the younger of two siblings. He speaks Japanese and has a limited command of English. Yuichiro's mother (49 years old) is ten years older than his father. Yuichiro has reportedly never thought about his identity in relation to having a Filipino mother. Whenever his classmates ask about his identity, however, he reportedly says that he affirms his being "half." Yuichiro's parents view him as being both Japanese and bicultural. His mother also thought of him as being half. She states: "...sometimes I really tell my son's classmates about his identity because he tells me not to kiss or hug him when he is in front of them. He told me Japanese kids do not do that. I told him I am Filipino and he is half"

On the contrary, Yuichiro's father treats him as being Japanese, saying, "What can I say? But if I am to look at him, I don't treat him differently. His appearance is Japanese. I don't feel any difference. By just looking at him, he is really Japanese." Yuichiro's teacher deemed him as being Japanese. He said, "I think he is Japanese. His face, the language he speaks, the way he values important things, and the kind of people around him, I don't see any difference in him. He is like a normal Japanese."

Case 2. Shino

Shino, a twelve-year-old grade six student, is the eldest of two siblings. She is the daughter of a former Filipino singer and a Japanese salary man. She reportedly considers herself Japanese and she has not thought about her being 'half'. According to her, "I don't think about it, I am like any Japanese." Shino's mother views her as being both Filipino and Japanese. She explains:

Yes I talk with her sometimes; for example, if she is doing something, showing attitude in the Japanese style, sometimes I reprimand her, I tell her, you are... She replies 'I am Japanese.' She really fights for it, that she is Japanese. I tell her, 'No, you have Filipino blood.'

Likewise, Shino's father also reportedly thinks of her as being Japanese and Filipino. He said, "When you say 'half', you have two countries and so I think their thinking is different from ordinary children. They can go back and forth to the Philippines. They have a wider perspective...." Shino's teacher reportedly views her as being like any other Japanese, and did not seem to make any great distinction between her and the other children.

Case 3. Taisei

Taisei is eleven years old and is in sixth grade. He is the eldest of two siblings. When asked how it feels to have a Japanese father and a Filipino mother, Taisei replied that he does not think anything special of it. One difficulty he experienced, which he attributed to having a Filipino mother, was language. According to him, "When I went to the Philippines when I was in first grade, I forgot how to speak Japanese and I didn't understand what my father was saying." Taisei also mentioned that his mother is unable to teach him Kanji. He, acknowledged, however, that he has a different background and that he understands some Filipino culture. Taisei's mother reportedly attempts to teach her son that he is 'half.' Taisei's father acknowledged his son's Filipino background but considered him to be Japanese. Taisei's teacher also saw him as being Japanese. His teacher said: "I think of him as Japanese... Even before I met his mother, I thought Taisei was pure Japanese. I think of him as an ordinary Japanese because he can speak the Oita dialect."

Case 4. Mika

Mika, eleven years old, is a fifth grade student. She has an elder sister, who is already in high school. Mika's mother and father are both English teachers. Mika considers herself as being Japanese. Mika's mother reported that she teaches her children Filipino culture, but that felt that they are still more Japanese than Filipino. She had this to say: "Even at home I think they are Filipinos. But when they are outside, it's like they've lost their being Filipino...."

Mika's father stated that he believed his daughters to be "bicultural". He also thought that his kids were naturally Japanese. This suggests that parents sometimes hold multiple, fluid, and at times conflicting views about their children's identities. He further expressed: "I never thought like that, they are growing up naturally, like Japanese. I am worried about my wife—maybe she might feel unhappy for them to grow up like that, just like other Japanese, with no Philippine culture. I do not know what she's feeling." When asked to comment about how Mika is perceived, her teacher said that she was no different from the other Japanese students. The teacher explained: "She has lived in Japan and is able to speak Japanese; therefore I have never thought that she was from a foreign country."

Case 5. Taka

Ten-year-old Taka is a fifth grade student. He plays softball and badminton. He is the older of two siblings. Taka acknowledged that he has heard of the term "*half*" and considered himself as being so, but reportedly does not think there is any great difference in being 'half' or Japanese. Taka's mother's view of her son's mixed heritage is interesting. She states, "Yes, I told him the truth, I told him I am Filipino and his father is Japanese but that he was Japanese because he was born here." Taka's father reportedly views his son not as being 'half' but as being Japanese. Taka's teacher reportedly treated him in the same way as the other students in his class. The

teacher stated that Taka's ability to speak Japanese meant that his acceptance in the school was largely unproblematic.

Case 6. Sachika

Sachika is a ten-year-old fourth grade student. She is the third and only girl among four siblings. When she was asked the question "What do you think about being half?" Sachika replied: "I prefer to be Japanese." Sachika's mother perceived that she is 70% Japanese and 30% Filipino, stating that that no matter how hard she tried to transmit her Filipino culture to Sachika, her efforts were largely in vein because of the fact that the family resided in Japan. Nevertheless, Sachika's mother did feel that she had been able to introduce her children to Filipino cuisine. Sachika's father perceived her daughter as being Japanese, as did her teacher. She said: "I see her as Japanese; I forgot that she has a multicultural identity. She also has a name Sachika, and it is written in Kanji so I really forgot that she is 'half'. She also looks Japanese. But your question reminded me that she has a different background." Her teacher also observed that Sachika's classmates treated her as a typical Japanese student.

Case 7. Toshi

Toshi is a ten-year-old fourth grade student. He was born in the United States. He is the only son and the youngest of three siblings. Toshi considers himself to be "half" by virtue of having a Filipino mother. He states bluntly: "My father is Japanese and my mother is Filipino. That is why." Curiously, Toshi's father perceived his son as displaying Japanese, Filipino and American characteristics, stating that he believed his son would develop a global mindset. Although his parents consider Toshi to be "half", his father considered him to be more Japanese, due to his physical appearance. According to his teacher, Toshi does not require special attention due to his mother's background. Interestingly, like several of the other teachers in this study, Toshi's teacher felt that his fluency in Japanese was critical to him being accepted as a Japanese. His teacher said, "From the first time I met him, he spoke and wrote Japanese and so I have never felt any difference between him and the other students."

Case 8. Yuka

Yuka, a ten-year-old fourth grader, is the youngest child of two. She is the only daughter. Interestingly, Yuka identified as being Japanese, but also stated that she was 'half' because her mother told her so. Yuka's mother considered Yuka to be "half" but Japanese. Yuka's mother expressed the belief that her daughter was bicultural due to her influence. Her father considered Yuka to be more Japanese. He explained: "Well if you look at her appearance, she is like a normal Japanese. But sometimes, some people view her as being 'half'." Yuka's teacher considers her to be Japanese. According to her, Yuka "doesn't have any problems with the Japanese language....Her face not dissimilar from other students, so the fact that she has a foreign parent is unrecognizable until you see her name."

Cross-case Results and Discussion

The results suggest that the children in this study may have developed a stronger identification with their Japanese heritage than their Filipino heritage despite their knowledge of

being half or of having a Filipino mother. Following Rockquemore and Laszloffy's (2005) typology, it is possible that the children could develop a singular identity—that is, they identify only with their father's culture. Although three children acknowledged that they were often thought of as being half, they still thought of themselves as being Japanese. In fact, Mika, Taka, and Taisei labeled themselves as "half", but did not report any perceived differences in them being 'half' or mainstream Japanese. Other children explicitly stated that they viewed themselves as Japanese.

The results also indicate that the children were viewed by their fathers as Japanese. In fact, most of the fathers said that their children were Japanese. Two of the fathers strongly emphasized that their children were Japanese, and based this assessment on their physical characteristics.

Some of the mother participants reported trying to transmit both cultures to their children, while others tended to emphasize the teaching of Filipino culture. Some parents their belief that their children were "half". Other mothers perceived their children to be both "half" and Japanese. As an example, Taka's mother said that her son Taka was Japanese. In one conversation between her and Taka, she explained to him that his identity was Japanese. She told him that although she is Filipino, she considered Taka to be Japanese. Mika's mother also considered her daughter to be Japanese as she was born and educated in Japan. She added that as much as she tried to inculcate Filipino values and behaviors in her daughter, Mika tended to forget these norms once she was outside the home.

The teachers all perceived the children to be Japanese. This shared belief was based on the fact that the children had a good command of Japanese, their Japanese appearance, and their having been born and raised in Japan.

The author of this article originally hypothesized that children of intercultural marriages perceive themselves to be, and are perceived by others to be "bicultural", owing to the transcultural family environments in which they were raised. However, this was not born out in the interview data. The single (Rockquemore and Laszloffy, 2005) and "let me be Japanese" (Oikawa and Yoshida, 2007) identity that the children seem to be developing contests the assumption that children of intercultural marriages will manifest cultural identities and behavioral patterns of both of their parents' cultures.

Despite the Filipino mothers' efforts to share with and transmit their Filipino culture, their children did not seem to display what might be considered typical Filipino patterns of social behavior. One mother confessed her regrets for not being able to teach her children the Filipino language. Interestingly, one of the mothers expressed regret for the fact that she could not adequately teach her son about Japanese culture.

It was evident in the results that the children did not look at themselves as being bicultural. In general, the children in this study displayed minimal competency and knowledge of their mothers' culture. They were not able to speak Filipino or share what they know about their mother's culture. Although they were conscious that they are "half" (which is a construct based on their biological make-up—that is, of having a Japanese and a Filipino parent), the children appeared to be developing as a sense of themselves as Japanese. This implies that the term "half" is not synonymous with "biculturalism."

One factor that may explain the identity construction of the children as being associated with being Japanese is their limited exposure to the Filipino language. Speaking a language is in itself an act of identifying oneself with a particular identity (Jackson, 2008, p.341). Thus, "identity

is a product rather than a source of linguistic practices” (Bucholtz and Hall, 2005, p. 585). Because the children did not learn or were not taught the Filipino language, they may have been less likely to identify themselves as being of Filipino heritage. It could also be possible that the children were not ‘interested’ in the Filipino language, as it is not as privileged as the international language of English. Ironically, children in this study were sometimes reportedly perceived by their classmates to be good speakers of English because of having a foreign mother.

Second, the children’s lack of familiarity and identification with their mother’s culture may also be attributed to the lack of opportunities to frequently visit their mothers’ homelands. The exception to this observation was the case of Taisei, who had visited the Philippines significantly more often than the other children. In addition, despite the mothers’ efforts to teach their children, this did not significantly impact the way the children perceive their identity. This perhaps contradicts the standing notion that mothers may have a strong influence on their children’s identity construction (Almonte-Acosta, 2008).

Third, the Japanese-Filipino children in this study had physical features or characteristics that made them virtually indistinguishable from other Japanese children. Because of this, they were viewed by their fathers and their homeroom teachers as being Japanese. The strong association of children with the outside world of home also had a strong influence on their views about themselves. At school, they were treated as Japanese. Moreover, the limited exposure of children to the Filipino culture partly explains their weak association with their mother’s culture.

Fourth, it could also be possible that since the children were already being socialized at school, their views of themselves was already being influenced by the manner in which they were relating with their teachers and classmates. This might be of particular significance in the context of Japanese education, which places great emphasis on egalitarianism. The egalitarian philosophy of education, in fact, has hindered multiculturalism from developing swiftly in the Japanese classroom. Okano and Tsuchiya (1999, p. 113) maintain that Japanese teachers involved in their study tended to dissimulate the “ethnic” background of their Korean students, and treated them like any other Japanese counterparts. Thus, in order to belong, the children may have ignored their being bicultural in order to blend in with the mainstream (Okano, 2011). This perhaps might also be true of children of intercultural marriages in Japanese public schools.

These results then raise two important points. First, they enable us to rethink the stereotype that children of intercultural marriages necessarily reflect the cultural values and behaviors of both of their parents. Second, they prompt us to question the very effectiveness of the terms “intercultural”, “cross-cultural”, and “bicultural”. The denotative meaning of being born to parents with different cultural backgrounds is often clouded by the rather erroneous connotation of such children exhibiting a so-called mixed cultural identity.

Conclusion

The children in this study seemed to develop a ‘single’ rather than a ‘bicultural’ identity. Although they were aware of their mother’s Filipino cultural background, the children’s responses seemed to indicate that they associated themselves more with Japanese culture, consciously or otherwise. Although some acknowledged their being ‘half’, the children’s notion of such concept is rather biological. In other words, they thought of themselves as ‘half’ due to the fact that they had a Filipino mother and a Japanese father. Some children were also

ambivalent about their identity. But their responses during the interviews showed behavioral and cognitive manifestations of what might be perceived to be Japanese.

These results then indicate that having parents of different cultural backgrounds may not necessarily result in the bicultural identity of children. This calls for a more critical and careful use of labels. While children are “bicultural” owing to their parents having different cultural backgrounds, they are not necessarily bicultural in the sense that they automatically manifest both an identity and a behavioral repertoire that reflect both their parents’ cultures.

In view of the findings in this study, the researcher recommends a review of the concepts and terms used to refer to children of intercultural marriages. The use of labels referring to children of intercultural marriages (such as “half”, “bicultural”, and “biracial”) must be clarified in future research. While children of intermarriage may be considered as being “half” due to their having parents from two cultures, they may see themselves as having a distinct identity separate from or similar to those in the mainstream culture.

Also, there seems to be ambiguity with regard to the use of the terms “Japanese-Filipino” and “Filipino-Japanese.” Nuqui (2008) uses “Japanese-Filipino” while Almonte-Acosta (2008) uses “Filipino-Japanese”. It is with this background that the researcher recommends a review among scholars of when to use what label. It would be logical to use any label, depending on the spatial context. For example, if one talks about children in Japan, the label “Japanese-Filipino” may be more appropriate. If one talks about children in the Philippines, then perhaps “Filipino-Japanese” might be more fitting.

This paper demonstrated how some children of Japanese-Filipino marriages in Japan view their identity relative to having a Japanese father and a Filipino mother. It also considers how they are perceived by their parents and their teachers. Although, this paper has attempted to provide some explanations with regard to children’s identity construction, its focus is really to inform readers about perceptions of identity. As a limitation, this paper did not really examine in detail the various factors that may influence children’s identity whether at home or in school. These factors may include power dynamics in the family, educational attainment of parents, parenting, and the Japanese educational system.

The researcher acknowledges that children of this study may be too young to be able to consciously reflect upon their identity. However, he has also observed the agentic capacity of children to reflect on their experiences, including those related to their identity construction. Moreover, the researcher believes that the idea or concept of self may change over time. It is then recommended that the identity construction of the children involved in this study be investigated again in the future. This would provide the opportunity to examine whether or not there is a shift in terms of how they view their identity.

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