

# Managing Cultural Identities

Cultural Identity Styles and Intercultural Effectiveness: A Study of Indian and Filipino New Zealanders



In this study we investigated the temporal relationship between Cultural Identity Styles and Intercultural Effectiveness in Indian and Filipino New Zealanders. One hundred and sixty-eight (64% female) Filipino New Zealanders and 120 Indian New Zealanders (56% female) initially participated in the research. The average ages of the Filipino and Indian participants were 44 and 47 years, respectively.

## Main research findings

## RESEARCH

‘The relationship between intercultural abilities and cultural identity styles: A longitudinal cross-lagged analysis’

by Dr Ágnes Szabó and Professor Colleen Ward (2020)

Published in *International Journal of Psychology*, 55(3) (2020) 465-471.

## Background

First-generation immigrants and their second-generation children often face challenges in reconciling the differences between their heritage culture and the culture of their new homeland. In addition to navigating differences in values and behaviours, immigrants must also consider how they define themselves in terms of their ethnic and national cultures. Cultural Identity Styles refer to the cognitive and behavioural strategies that these multicultural individuals use for problem-solving and decision-making while constructing, revising, and maintaining their ethnic and national cultural identities. There are two basic styles that multicultural individuals use to balance or integrate their cultural identities. The first is the Hybrid Identity Style, which involves selecting desirable elements of two or more cultures and blending them together in a novel way; the second is the Alternating Identity Style, which involves changing cultural identities depending on the circumstances or context. Both styles are accessible to and used often by multicultural individuals.

The research involved a survey, completed twice with an average interval of 36 days; the survey included demographic information along with measures of Intercultural Effectiveness, the Hybrid Identity Style and the Alternating Identity Style. Of the original sample ( $N = 268$ ), 205 respondents completed both surveys. Attrition analysis indicated that there were no significant differences in intercultural effectiveness or cultural identity styles between those who remained in the study versus those who dropped out.

Using a cross-lagged analysis, the findings showed Intercultural Effectiveness predicted greater use of the Hybrid Style and less use of the Alternating Style over time. In contrast, neither cultural identity style had a significant effect on intercultural effectiveness.

## Relevance of findings to New Zealand

In January 2024 India and the Philippines were the top two sending countries for immigrants to New Zealand. Our findings highlight the importance of intercultural effectiveness and demonstrate that effective intercultural competence plays a significant role in how adults from these backgrounds manage and express their cultural identities.