



# Religious Identity Negotiation in Japanese-Indonesian Intermarriage

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## ABSTRACT

This research is qualitative research using a life story approach. The informants of this study were seven Indonesian Muslim women and one Christian who married a Japanese man living in Japan. The study analyzes how religious identity is negotiated in the marriages of Japanese men and Indonesian women. The previous research informants were three Indonesian women who married Japanese people in Indonesia. The prior research indicates that all Japanese husbands follow the religion of their Indonesian wives. This study finds that all Japanese husbands, before marriage, follow the religion of their Indonesian wives. Still, after marriage, some continue to follow the informant's religion, while others return to their previous religion. Seven informants kept their religion, but one person converted to the religion of a Japanese husband. Two informants entered marriages with different religions. One informant who did not want to follow her husband's religion had a severe conflict because of the intervention of the informant's mother-in-law. Husbands generally do not question the religion of their wives, but disputes arise in cases where Japanese husbands adhere to a particular religion. The Indonesian wife's family and several Japanese husband's families also intervened in the religious negotiations. The religious change of Japanese men before marriage is initially more of a consideration for the smooth running of the marriage process. Research on intermarriages between Indonesians and Japanese is minimal. Research like this needs to be done because the number of intermarriages is increasing. This research brings valuable knowledge to prospective Indonesian and Japanese intermarriages.

**Keywords:** Indonesian Wife, Intermarriage, Religious Negotiation, Religion

## 1. Introduction

With the development of technology, cultural exchange, communication, and information transfer have become more accessible. As a result, cultural contact with people from different countries became more accessible, and intermarriages became more common. Information and communication technology development has enabled humans to interact with humans in other parts of the world. Watado (2010) said that according to United Nations statistics for 2009, the number of people living far from their place of birth reached 214 million people. Nishitani (2022) notes that the movement of people across national borders has increased dramatically due to globalization, and the number of immigrants has increased significantly worldwide. Globalization and the resulting increase in mobility are now thought to improve interactions between people of diverse cultures. In countries that accept immigrants, the number of people with diverse ethnic, religious, and cultural backgrounds is increasing. Intermarriage continues to increase along with the development of information technology. Intermarriages generally have differences in religion, language, and culture. However, with the rapid progress of globalization, intermarriages are inevitable, and clashes between two cultural identities are unavoidable, just like clashes between ethnic customs and other traditions in marriage. Especially in interfaith marriages, there must be many conflicts between partners or families.

Intermarriages between Japanese and Indonesians are very interesting. One of the reasons is that the Japanese and Indonesians have very different backgrounds and views on religion. Indonesia is a multi-ethnic country that recognizes many religions. One aspect of the diversity of the Indonesian nation is the diversity of religions and beliefs held by its inhabitants. Currently, the government acknowledges six religions in Indonesia: Islam, Christianity, Catholicism, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Confucianism. In addition to the six religions recognized by the state, the government also stipulates the existence of religious beliefs. Indonesia,

the country with the largest Muslim population in the world, is not a country with Islam as the state religion but a country with the ideology of Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution. Religion is vital in Indonesian society and deeply rooted in the community. On the other hand, in Japan, religion and belief are left to the individual; religious education is not very important, Muslims are very few, and the number of places of worship, such as mosques and churches, is minimal.

The dominant religions and beliefs in Japan are Buddhism and Shinto, but Christianity also influences the customs of Japanese society. Japanese society has daily mixed religions, such as Buddhist rituals for Christian funerals and weddings. So, Christianity is also integrated into the traditions of Japanese culture. According to the results of preliminary interviews (Mutou, 1979; Voluntary Symposium), in building the identity of Japanese youth, the area of "religion" is not so important. "Values" are added as an alternative area of religion. According to the Survey, approximately 10-20% of people belong to a religious group or have beliefs (International Social Survey Program 2008; Ishii 2007; Institute of Japanese Studies, Kokugakuin University, 2017). According to Hosie (2018), only about 30% of Japanese consider "religion" significant, and this figure drops to around 10% among the younger generation.

For most people, "religion" is someone else's, and it is said that it is nothing more than "other people's business" that has nothing to do with them. Nippon Research surveyed 1,362 Japanese and 1,004 Indonesians about their views on religion. The survey results show that the views of Indonesians and Japanese Indonesians are very different. For example, when asked how important religion is in their lives, only 6.4% of Japanese say religion is significant, while 97.7% of Indonesians think it is essential. According to Kurasawa (2013), the number of Muslims in Japan has reached 100,000 and will continue to grow. However, he pointed out the general public's lack of awareness about Muslims living in Japan. In addition, recent survey results report that society has a negative image of Islam and is reluctant to associate with Muslims when interacting with the Muslim community (Tenda & Okago, 2011; Kurasawa, 2013). Based on previous research, Japanese and Indonesians have different values, religious situations, and backgrounds, and Japanese and Indonesians have different opinions and perceptions about religion. It is estimated that few Japanese people are actively involved in religion.

Research on how Indonesian wives with different religious backgrounds and Japanese husbands in negotiating religion is very interesting and not much has been done. In terms of role identity, (Miller, 2003) argues that the presence of other people to express conflicting identities (teacher x student, husband x wife), which is the premise of identity negotiation, is essential. Social differences are expressed in various ways. He pointed out that differences were confirmed depending on what religion people believed in and what they ate. According to Takahashi (2013), not only are many foreigners arriving in modern Japan, but various "religions" are also arriving along with the flow of these people. However, he points out that research on a religion involving recently-come-to-Japan foreigners, or "immigrants," is lacking. As Kai & Sugimura (2014) stated, no systematic educational research has been reported targeting Muslims in Japan.

Kurasawa (2013) shows that awareness of Muslims living in Japan, in general, is lacking. Many problems foreign wives face, such as differences in values and customs, lack of knowledge about the structure and condition of Japanese society, alienation from their home country, and lack of understanding of religion by those around them. Intermarriages between Japanese and Indonesians and religious negotiations in intermarriages have yet to be studied much. Identity negotiation is significant in overcoming religious differences when Indonesians marry Japanese. The primary informants of this study are Muslims with different religious backgrounds from Japanese society, so the study results are considered valuable. From the background above, this study analyzes the negotiation of religious identity between Indonesian wives and Japanese husbands. Little research has been done on the spiritual aspects of Intermarriage between Indonesians and Japanese. The previous research informants were three Indonesian women who married Japanese people in Indonesia. This study adds the number of informants, and the area of the research informants is also different from previous research, namely the informants living in Japan. This study is hoped to be considered when negotiating religious identity in Intermarriage, especially interfaith couples in Indonesia and Japan.

## 2. Literature Review

Many Japanese Muslims change their religions after marriage. At the end of 2019, the estimated number of Japanese Muslims was 9,008, and the Muslim population living in Japan was said to be 186,656 foreign Muslims. Shimada (2008) argues that religion is important in discussing immigrant acculturation and cultural assimilation in society. Yoshimi (2009) surveyed 40 Filipino wives married to Japanese men living in Murasaki, a rural area in northern Japan. Umeda analyzes from an anthropological perspective the early adaptation of Filipino wives to new environments, religious practices, and social activities, the difficulties they face, and the religious differences between Filipino wives and Japanese families. In the case of a Filipino-

Japanese female couple, religious differences between the couple were not an issue before marriage. In his research, Umeda found no cases of Filipino wives converting to the religion of Japanese husbands or Japanese husbands converting to the religion of Filipino wives. However, the case of a Filipino woman and a Japanese man couple shows that religious differences between the couple become a problem after several years of marriage. Japanese families want Filipino women to accept their religion gradually, most Filipino women accompany Japanese families on visits to ancestral graves, but no Filipino wife admits to being involved with the Japanese family religion.

Analyzes pairs of Filipino women and Japanese men in Yamagata. Filipino women find it difficult to pray in church on Christmas, and in many cases, they cannot attend church. However, many Filipino women have not cared about church and worship since coming to Japan. Igarashi (2014) analyzes Indonesian and Japanese couples in Japan from an ethnographic perspective. Igarashi found that the parents and relatives of the couple were concerned about the religious differences between the couple before marriage, and many people was against the couple getting married. The solution to this problem is to convert one partner to the other partner's religion. However, most Japanese and Turkish couples do not consider cultural and religious differences at the start of their marriage. Their focus is compatibility, so differences do not appear early in the marriage. The main problems in an international Turkish-Japanese marriage are the relationship with the mother-in-law and cultural differences. Religion is not a big issue in marriage. A Turkish-Japanese couple gives freedom to their child in matters of religion. Rochmaniyah (2018) analyzes cultural fluidity and identity negotiation in intermarriages through interviews with three pairs of Indonesian wives and Japanese husbands living in Indonesia. The study results show that all Indonesian wives dominate religious affairs in their families. The identity of the whole family is deeply rooted in Islamic tradition. To be accepted by Indonesian wives and their families, all Japanese husbands have converted to Islam, the religion of Indonesian wives, and have followed Islamic teachings.

Takeshita (1998) quantitatively analyzes marriage tolerance levels between foreign husbands and Japanese wives. The analysis results show that the level of opposition to the marriage of the wife's parents is higher in Asian husbands than in Western husbands. In addition, there is a correlation between the husband's parents' rejection of the marriage and the husband's religion and place of origin. Yoshida (2016) considers ethnic relations and harmonious coexistence through Intermarriage between Japanese and Indonesians from an anthropological perspective. Yoshida analyzes how couples overcome cultural differences and find harmony by maintaining their ethnicity daily. The first problem is adapting Japanese women's lives to Indonesian society. She said one of her immediate problems is learning the Indonesian language quickly and learning her husband's ethnic and religious practices. Japanese women are involved in their husband's ethnic customs and religion. Japanese husbands follow their wives' religious practices to have a harmonious family life. Most convert to Islam when they marry but are not deeply religious.

Yoshida (2010) interviewed 9 Japanese men who met Indonesian women while living in Indonesia through work, marriage, and living in Indonesia. Many Japanese men say that before coming to Indonesia to work, only a few people knew about or were interested in Indonesia. Therefore, after marriage, they study and consider the differences between Japan and Indonesia, such as language, religion, ethnicity, etc. When Japanese men marry and live, they must clarify their religion, but little worship even after marriage and conversion. Most Japanese men know that religion is not just a belief but also a custom. Yoshida said that in Indonesia, when Japanese men marry, convert to Islam, and become Muslims, some people join in worship and fast; however, for the Japanese to think that Muslim rules, such as bans on pork and alcohol and fasting, are too strict.

Conducted a study of 20 women who had Intermarriage about religion. Their nationalities are British, American, Turkish, Cypriot, Austrian, French, Iranian, Spanish, and Russian. Their husbands come from 12 nationalities: British, American, French, Cypriot, Turkish, Iranian, Jordanian, Sudanese, Indian, Iraqi, Egyptian, and Liberian. Most informants stated that religion was not necessary to them. The previous research above shows that intermarriage couples carry out many negotiations in their marriage, especially regarding religious differences. It becomes clear that intermarriage couples in every country have different opinions and concepts regarding religious differences. Negotiations are carried out both before marriage and after marriage.

### 3. Method

This research is qualitative, and we used the life story method to achieve our research objectives. This is because the life story method is considered the most suitable for this study because of previous research methods. According to Sakurai (2002) the life story method is a biography that compiles an individual's life and events. The procedure follows the life story method of Koji (2008). After the interview, the recorded data will be transcribed. Then print it out and have the informant read it. Editing takes place after the informant

approves the document. Once the essential parts of the interview have been extracted, the analysis begins. The languages used in the interview are Indonesian, Javanese, and Japanese. The informants of this study (Table 1 and Table 2) are eight Indonesian wives who are married to Japanese people and live in Japan.

Table 1. Informant.

No	Informant	Age	Birthplace	Educational	Profession	Country of Encounter	Years in Japan
1	A	32	Lampung	Junior High School	Housewife	Indonesia	3
2	AS	42	Bandung	University	Housewife	Indonesia	14
3	DE	40	Semarang	University	Employee	Japan	16
4	DI	35	East Java	High School	Part-Time Job	Japan	13
5	E	42	Yogyakarta	University	Teacher	Indonesia	13
6	F	33	Klaten	University	Employee	Indonesia	3
7	H	40	Semarang	University	Part-Time Job	Facebook	9
8	S	37	Semarang	Graduate	Housewife	Japan	12

Table 2. Informant's Family.

No	Informant	Years of Marriage	Residence	Japanese Husband				Children
				Age	Educational Background	Profession	Birthplace	Age (Years)
1	A	4	Hiroshima	48	High School	Self Employed	Hiroshima	3
2	AS	15	Osaka	57	University	Employee	Osaka	5 & 5
3	DE	16	Hiroshima	42	University	Employee	Hiroshima	11 & 6
4	DI	13	Hiroshima	47	University	Employee	Hiroshima	7
5	E	14	Tokyo	44	University	Employee	Tokyo	10
6	F	3	Yamanashi	32	University	Teacher	Yamanashi	-
7	H	9	Hamamatsu	37	University	Part-Time Job	Hamamatsu	4
8	S	8	Nara	38	Graduate	Employee	Nara	6 & 2

The following is an explanation of Table 1 and Table 2.

1. A

Thirty-two years old from Lampung (Javanese). She lives in Hiroshima. She graduated from junior high school, a housewife. Her husband is 48 years old, part-time, and her son (is one year old). She met her husband in Hiroshima. She has been married for four years.

2. AS

Forty-two years old from West Java (Sundanese). She lives in Osaka, graduated from college, and is a housewife. Her husband is 57 years old and a company employee. Her twins are five years old. She met her husband in Bandung, Indonesia. She has been married for fifteen years.

3. DE

Forty years from Central Java (Javanese). She lives in Hiroshima. She is a college graduate company employee. Her husband is 42 years old, a company employee, the son is 11 years old, and the daughter is six. She met her husband in Hiroshima. She has been married for 16 years.

4. DI

Thirty-five years old from East Java (Javanese). She lives in Hiroshima. She graduated from high school, a part-time worker. Her husband is 47 years old (a company employee), and her daughter (is seven years old). She met her husband in Jakarta. She has been married for 13 years.

5. E

Forty-two years old from Yogyakarta (Javanese). She lives in Tokyo. She graduated from university as an

Indonesian teacher. Her husband is 44 years old and a company employee. The son is ten years old. She met her husband in Yogyakarta. She has been married for 14 years.

6. F

Thirty-three years old from Central Java (Javanese). She lived in Yamanashi and graduated as a university company employee. Her husband is 32 years senior Japanese lecturer. She met in Semarang, Indonesia. She has been married for three years.

7. H

Forty years old from Central Java (Javanese). She lives in Hamamatsu, graduated from college, and works part-time. Her husband is 37 years old and a part-time worker. Her daughter is four years old. She met her husband on SNS. She has been married for nine years.

8. S

Thirty-seven years old from Central Java, Indonesia (Javanese). She lives in Nara and is a graduated university housewife. Her husband is 38 years old and a company employee. She has a son who is six years old. She met her husband in Osaka. She has been married for eight years.

## 4. Result and Discussion

### 4.1. Result

The main problem that often arises in intermarriages is the negotiation of identity. Identity is the awareness that an individual can feel inner identity and continuity and that others will recognize it (Erikson, 1959; Kai & Sugimura, 2014). Nishitani (2022) argues that identity is not only determined by nationality but shown by various factors such as ethnicity, gender, language, religion, customs, and hobbies. Ting-Toomey (2015) states that identity in Identity Negotiation Theory (INT) includes culture, ethnicity, religion, social class, gender, sexual orientation, professional, and family/relational. Negotiation in Identity Negotiation Theory (INT) refers to exchanging verbal and non-verbal messages between two or more communicators. Swan states that identity negotiators must work with their partners by respecting the identities they negotiate and offer. Cultural, linguistic, and religious differences are among the most frequently occurring aspects in shaping identity negotiations in intermarriage couples. These aspects are closely related to each other's acceptance and rejection. Indonesians and Japanese have different conceptions of religion. Religion is an essential consideration for Indonesians when deciding whether to marry. Therefore, it is conceivable that negotiation of religious identities in Japanese-Indonesian marriages takes place. Parents and relatives are often concerned about religious differences between couples before marriage in intermarriages, and many people oppose Intermarriage. In the case of Indonesian and Japanese couples, there are cases where religious differences between couples cause many problems not only before marriage but also after marriage. The families of Indonesian wives are very concerned about their marriage partners' different religions, as they fear that Indonesian wives will find it difficult to practice their religion after marriage. The following Figure 1 is the framework of religious identity negotiation between Indonesian and Japanese intermarriage couples.

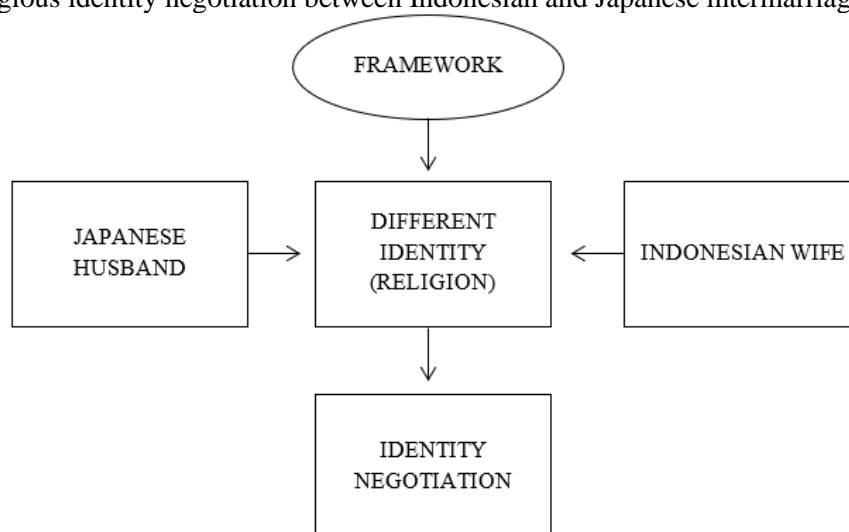


Figure 1. Framework of Religious Identity Negotiation.

The husbands of informants F, H, and S have strong religious beliefs. Seven informants are Muslim, and one informant is Christian. Before marriage, five husbands were non-religious informants, one was a Soka

Gakkai adherent, and two were Buddhist informants. After marriage, seven informants still adhered to their religion, but one person converted to the informant's husband's religion. Because the two informants' husbands returned to their original religion and the informants did not want to follow their husband's religion, these two informants underwent interfaith marriages. Therefore, the informant's five husbands still adhere to the informant's religion, namely Islam. The following Table 3 is a table regarding the religion of the informant, husband, and children.

Table 3. Informant and Family Religion.

No	Informan	Wedding Ceremony Indonesian	Wife Religion	Japanese Husband Religion	Children
1	A	Islam	Before Marriage: Islam After Marriage: Islam	Before Marriage: No Religion After Marriage: Islam	Islam
2	AS	Islam	Before Marriage: Islam After Marriage: Islam	Before Marriage: No Religion After Marriage: Islam	Islam
3	DE	Islam	Before Marriage: Islam After Marriage: Islam	Before Marriage: No Religion After Marriage: Islam	Islam
4	DI	Islam	Before Marriage: Islam After Marriage: Islam	Before Marriage: No Religion After Marriage: Islam	Islam
5	E	Islam	Before Marriage: Islam After Marriage: Islam	Before Marriage: No Religion After Marriage: Islam	Islam
6	F	Islam	Before Marriage: Islam After Marriage: Soka Gakkai	Before Marriage: Soka Gakkai After Marriage: Soka Gakkai	-
7	H	Islam	Before Marriage: Islam After	Before Marriage: Buddhism After	Islam

			Marriage: Islam	Marriage: Buddhism	
8	S	Christian	Before Marriage: Christianity	Before Marriage: Buddhism	Islam
			After Marriage: Christianity	After Marriage: Buddhism	

Religion is an essential identity for Indonesian people. Therefore, when getting married, there is negotiation before marriage. Most informants have the principle not to marry people of different religions. Most informants have the principle that children must follow the informant's religion. The informant unilaterally decided the child's religion. After marriage, most Japanese husbands do not question their child's choice of religion. All of the informant's marriages were held in Indonesia and were carried out according to the informant's religion. Interfaith marriage is prohibited by law in Indonesia. The solution to interfaith marriage is for one partner to change religion to another partner. Therefore, all husbands of informants changed religions to the religion of the informant's wife so that the marriage process ran smoothly and was recognized by the state. Following previous research, all informants agreed to accept the informant's religion before marriage.

Conversion is the result of negotiations between the spouse and his family. Some of these negotiations went smoothly, while others encountered difficulties. There was a case where the informant's parents-in-law wanted the informant's husband to marry into an interfaith marriage. The informant's parents-in-law did not want their children to follow the informant's religion. This happened to the informant's DE, F, and S. Therefore, the informant's husband did not involve his parents in the negotiation process to avoid conflict. The informant's husband changed religion without knowing the informant's husband's parents. The five of the informant's husbands had no religion, so when the informant asked to change religions as a condition for marriage, they agreed. The negotiations went well. Six of the informant's husbands converted to Islam in Indonesia and one in Japan. The husbands of informants F, H, and S have strong religious beliefs. After marriage, they returned to their original religion. All the informant's husbands hoped that accepting the religion of their Indonesian wife would make the marriage process easier and acceptable to the informant's family.

The F informant's husband agreed to convert to Islam before marriage. He practised the Shahada at the Jami Islamiyah Mosque in Tokyo, but after marriage, he returned to her former religion, Soka Gakkai Buddhism. Even though she wore the hijab before marriage, F informant changed to Soka Gakkai after living in Japan for a year. Conversion to Soka Gakkai resulted from negotiations with her husband, the informant's family, and in-laws. The F informant was raised by a Muslim grandmother with strong Javanese beliefs named kejawen. F Informant reads the Soka Gakkai holy book twice a day and attends worship services once a month. She lives his life as a member of the Soka Gakkai. When asked why he left his previous religion, namely Islam, F informant states:

*“Awalnya suami nanya-nanya tentang islam, saya malu, ga percaya diri, Dia ternyata lebih fukai tentang agama. Terus saya rundingan ke keluarga Indonesia. Ibu saya mengijinkan saya pindah agama tetapi harus menikah secara islam. Proses syahadatnya, suami pergike masjid Jami tanpa sepengetahuan orang tua. Mungkin kalau dari awal agama saya kuat, saya minta suami ikut islam.”* (At first my husband asked me about Islam, I was embarrassed, not confident. He turned out to be stronger in his religion. Then I had discussions with families in Indonesia. My mother allowed me to change religions but had to marry according to Islam. In the process of shahada, the husband went to the Jami Mosque without the knowledge of his parents. Maybe if from the start my religion was strong, I would ask my husband to join Islam.

In addition to the reasons above, F informant's husband and in-laws are devout Soka Gakkai adherents, attending meetings once a week and reading the scriptures daily. F informant's parents allowed him to change religion, but the marriage process had to be Islamic. When I asked why her parents allowed F informant to change religion, F informant answered:

*“Agama ibu tidak kuat. Sekarang saja sedang belajar Iqro.”* (Mother's religion is not strong. Just now my mother is learning Iqro)

This is an interesting case. Previous studies have revealed that Indonesian wives dominate their choice of religion.

DE informant's in-laws, like F informant's in-laws, are devout Soka Gakkai adherents, but DE informant

does not follow her husband's family religion. Initially, her husband's parents opposed the DE informant's marriage. As a result of negotiations with the DE informant's husband and her husband's family, the husband's family wanted DE informant to convert to Soka Gakkai. However, DE informant and DE informant's parents insisted that her husband converts to Islam, and DE finally agreed to the DE informant's request, as written below.

*“Mertua saya mengatakan saya harus pindah agama ke Soka Gakkai, tetapi keluarga saya mengatakan saya harus menikah menurut Islam. Jadi saya mengatakan kepadanya bahwa jika Tuhan mengizinkan kami, kami mungkin akan menikah, jika tidak, kami tidak akan menikah. Saya juga tidak ingin memaksanya. Kemudian suami masuk Islam tanpa memberitahu orang tuanya.”* (My in-laws said I should convert to Soka Gakkai, but my family said I should marry according to Islam. Therefore, I told my husband that if God allows us maybe we can get married, otherwise we won't. I don't want to force him either. Then the husband converted to Islam without telling his parents).

The DE informant's in-laws are loyal Soka Gakkai adherents, but the DE informant's husband is not a Soka Gakkai adherent. This is the difference between a DE informant and an F informant. Even after marriage, the DE informant's husband is still a Muslim.

In the case of S informant, S informant's husband, and in-laws are devout Buddhists. Before marriage, S informant's husband converted to Christianity and married a Christian, but after marriage, S informant's husband reverted to Buddhism. The informant's husband, S informant no longer supports his wife's religion after they live with their parents. S informant's children also became Buddhists because the informant's husband and parents-in-law taught the teachings of Buddhism to the S informant's children. This differs from previous research results in that the informant's child adheres to the religion of his Indonesian wife. The following is the statement of the S informant:

*“Setelah suami saya kembali ke agama Budha, anak-anak saya juga menjadi pemeluk agama Budha. Suami dan mertua mendidik anak-anak ajaran Budha.”* (After my husband returned to Buddhism, my children also became Buddhists. My husband and parents-in-law educate their children on Buddhism)

On the other hand, in the case of H informant, as a result of negotiations between H informant and her husband, they agreed to follow their respective religions in marriage. However, for the smooth running of the pre-marriage process, informant H informant's husband agreed to marry in the Islamic way and become a Muslim. Therefore, H informant's husband returned to his original religion after marriage. The H informant did not ask her husband to convert to Islam. The following is the statement of the H informant:

*“Saya menikah secara islam di Indonesia, saya tidak peduli dengan perbedaan agama. Saya pikir agama adalah hal yang pribadi. Suami saya beragama Budha, tapi saya pikir dia tidak beragama, yaa seperti kebanyakan orang Jepang.”* (I married in Islam in Indonesia. I don't care about religious differences. I think religion is a personal thing. My husband is Buddhist, but I don't think he is religious, yeah like most Japanese people).

Interfaith marriages are prohibited in Indonesia, and procedures for international marriages are not easy, so to expedite the marriage process, all Japanese husbands follow the religion of their Indonesian wives. As a result of the negotiation process between the Indonesian wife and the Japanese husband, the Japanese husband can understand this problem. The informant's husband was able to accept explanations during the negotiation process. All informants stated that conversion was the most appropriate solution. Most of the informants believed that their husbands had no religion. All informants did not understand the difference between Buddhism and Shinto. This indicates that most informants were uninterested in their husband's religion or beliefs. Of the eight informants, only informants F and H attempted to understand their husbands' and families' religion or beliefs. Indonesian Muslim and Christian wives tried to persuade Japanese men to follow their religion during the negotiation process. Most of the husbands agreed and remained Muslim until now, and only 2 Japanese husbands returned to their original religion. The seven informants still defended their religion, and 1 person converted or followed the religion of his Japanese husband.

Interfaith couples in Indonesia usually do three ways: seeking a court decision, marrying according to their religion, and marrying abroad. In this study, it was known that all Indonesian wife couples and Japanese husbands chose to convert to the religion of their Indonesian wives. Not only Muslim subjects but also Christian subjects also do the same. Article 44 of the Presidential Decree of the Republic of Indonesia of 1991 concerning the Compilation of Islamic Law prohibits interfaith marriages. MUI also issued a fatwa prohibiting interfaith marriage through Decree Number 4/MUNAS VII/MUI/8/2005. In the fatwa of the 28th Muktamar in Yogyakarta at the end of November 1989, Nahdatul Ulama (NU) emphasized that marriage between people



of different religions is illegal in Indonesia (<https://www.republika.co.id>, n.d.). Article 2 of the Marriage Law states that interfaith marriages abroad are valid. The contents of the article are as follows:

*(Marriage is legal if it is carried out according to the law according to each religion and belief. All marriages are registered according to the prevailing laws and regulations.)*

Interfaith marriages are prohibited and can be said to be incompatible with Islamic teachings. It is also tricky for fellow Indonesians of different religions to get married, and it is not uncommon for them to cancel their marriages because of this problem. Attempts by interfaith couples to legalize their marriages in court often fail. Conversely, following Article 56 of the Marriage Law, interfaith marriages between Indonesian citizens and foreigners abroad can be legalized and recorded at the Civil Registry Office. Article 56 Paragraph 1 of the Marriage Law regulates the following:

*“Perkawinan yang dilangsungkan di luar Indonesia antara dua orang warga negara Indonesia atau seorang warga negara Indonesia dengan warga negara Asing adalah sah bilamana dilakukan menurut hukum yang berlaku di negara dimana perkawinan itu dilangsungkan dan bagi warga negara Indonesia tidak melanggar ketentuan-ketentuan Undang-undang ini.”* (<https://www.dpr.go.id>) (A marriage held outside Indonesia between two Indonesian citizens or an Indonesian citizen and a foreigner is valid if it is carried out according to the law in force in the country where the marriage took place and for Indonesian citizens it does not violate the provisions of this law).

Therefore, another strategy used to legalize interfaith marriage is to marry in a country where religious differences are not an issue in marriage. Therefore, interfaith couples who marry abroad are recognized as legal even if they violate the provisions of Article 2 of the Marriage Law. However, the provision discriminates against interfaith couples seeking marriage in Indonesia. The government should improve the marriage law in Indonesia so there is no contradiction.

#### 4.2. Discussion

Previous studies show that interfaith marriages often make the parents and relatives of the spouses worry about religious differences. One solution to this problem is to change one partner's religion to the other's religion. According to (Yoshimi, 2009), for Filipino wives and Japanese husbands, during the marriage process and after the wedding, neither the Japanese husband nor the Filipino wife converted. The results of Yoshida (2016) show that Japanese husbands follow the Indonesian wife's religion for Indonesian wife couples and husbands living in Indonesia. This is the same as the results of Rochmaniyah (2018), which shows that for all Japanese husbands and Indonesian wife couples living in Indonesia, all Japanese husbands follow their wife's religion. The results of this study differ from previous studies in that negotiations between spouses and families indicate that before marriage, all Japanese husbands follow the religion of their Indonesian wives. After marriage, most Japanese husbands still want to follow their wife's religion. However, some Indonesian wives convert to their Japanese husband's religion, and some choose to practice their respective religions in marriage.

It was found that even though before marriage, all Japanese men followed the beliefs of Indonesian women, after marriage, there would be a change in the beliefs of both Indonesian women and Japanese men. Changes in religion after marriage will cause new problems but can also solve the informant's household problems. The change of religion from Japanese men to Indonesian women was initially more a consideration for the smooth running of the marriage process because Indonesia does not allow interfaith marriages. Therefore, new problems will arise after marriage when Japanese men are inconsistent with the religious teachings of Indonesian women and Indonesian women, or each partner's families cannot accept this. Religion is related to customs and culture. Religious differences will also affect differences in habits, customs, and others. Indonesian women must consider these religious differences when they marry Japanese people, and vice versa.

#### 5. Conclusion

Before marriage, differences in views about religion became one of the obstacles to the marriage of Indonesian women and Japanese men. The wedding procession followed the informant's religion, and all the informant's husbands embraced the informant's religion. After marriage, most informant husbands could accept the Indonesian wife's religion, but one informant followed her husband's religion, and two informants underwent marriages with different religions. The informant's husband moved to the informant's religion before marriage due to Indonesian marriage law, which does not allow interfaith marriages, and at the request of the informant and the informant's family. Indonesian families demand that Japanese husbands follow the informant's religion, but there are families of Japanese husbands who also want informants to follow the religion of their Japanese husbands. Informant H, who married with different religions, did not experience any

problems in marriage in terms of religion, but one other informant (S) experienced significant conflicts with her in-laws because of religious differences after marriage. Informants who adhere to their husband's religion do not experience religious conflict after marriage, either with their husbands or their family. Acceptance of religion, the religious rituals of Japanese husbands influence whether there is conflict in marriage.

This qualitative research focuses on analyzing religious negotiations from the wife's perspective. It would be more interesting if there were more informants. Therefore, further research is needed to increase the number of informants. In addition, because the informants are young couples, the children are still under 12 years. Therefore, further research is still needed involving informants who have children over 12 years or need to add variations in the age of the informant's children. With the increase in informants' number and age variations, new phenomena related to religious issues in intermarriages can be found. Research on religious issues in intermarriage couples between Indonesians and Japanese has not been widely conducted. Therefore, quantitative analysis or research or quantitative and qualitative analysis is needed. There is very little research using the life story method in Indonesia and analysis on intermarriages of Indonesians and foreigners, especially with Japanese people. Research like this needs to be done.

Hopefully, this research can be used as material for consideration for intermarried couples or those who will make intermarriages, mainly Indonesian and Japanese couples, in dealing with differences in religious views.

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