



Personality changes after conversion among Japanese Muslims: Preliminary findings

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Introduction

Growing number of native Japanese becoming Muslim. Whether individual Japanese Muslim realize that there could be some subtle changes they did not realize within themselves – did their personality and character change?

Objectives

To examine whether there are perceived personality changes before and after becoming Muslim among Japanese Muslim converts (reverts).

Method

Qualitative, Interview & short questionnaire (Big Five mini marker) – pre and post conversion

Respondents

15 Japanese Muslims in Tokyo Metropolitan Areas
Participation was voluntary but they get paid (Yen5,000-10,000).

No	Respondent	Gender	Age	Year of conversion	Notes
1	Res 1	F	21	2015	Single
2	Res 2	F	59	2001	Married, 2 children, hajj 2013
3	Res 3	F	47	2000	Married, 2 children, muslim through marriage
4	Res 4	M	33	2010	Married

Interview

1. Do you think that your personality and character has changed **AFTER** becoming Muslim?

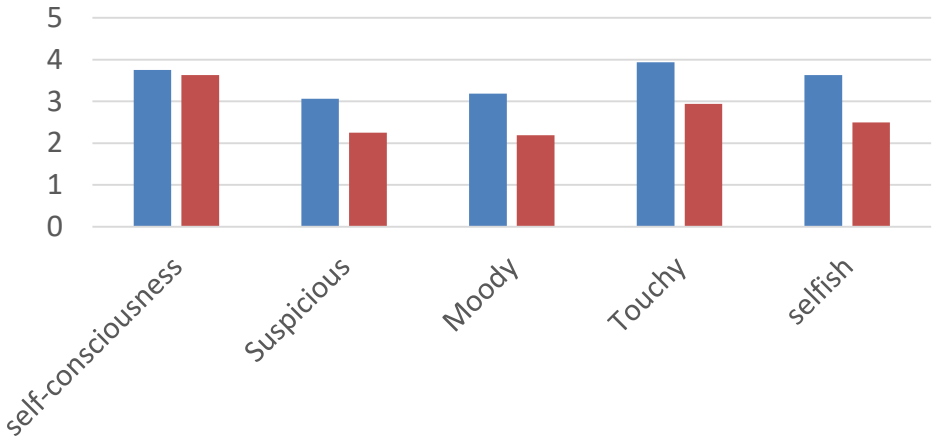
No	Responses
1	I always feel that ALLAH sees us if we do good things. I tried to do the best for other people and I now do not feel envy towards others. It think I can now accept my own personality.
2	Changed. Becomes slightly better
3	Yes, better now.
4	Frankly, I did not change a lot in term of character but of course I believe that I now became a better person. For example, after becoming Muslim, I made an effort to be good with my parents even though they don't accept Islam.

2. What specific aspect of Islam that might have influence your personality and character change?

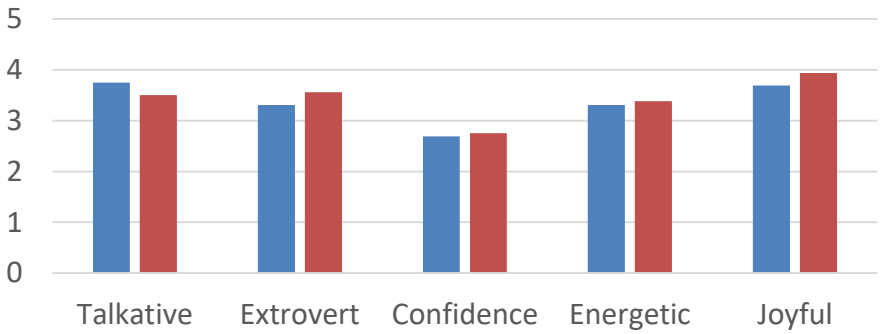
No	Responses
1	<i>Solat</i> (daily prayer) is very important to allow me to be a calm person. Also by reading the Quran especially the short surahs, make me feel peaceful, calm and tranquillity
2	After divorced, I stayed alone. I always remember ALLAH. During that time I felt so close to ALLAH
3	Fasting and performing sujud in <i>solat</i> (prayer)
4	In my personal opinion, religious rituals like <i>solat</i> , fasting did not affect a lot in my personality and character, but 'iman' (faith) changed me a lot

Mean changes

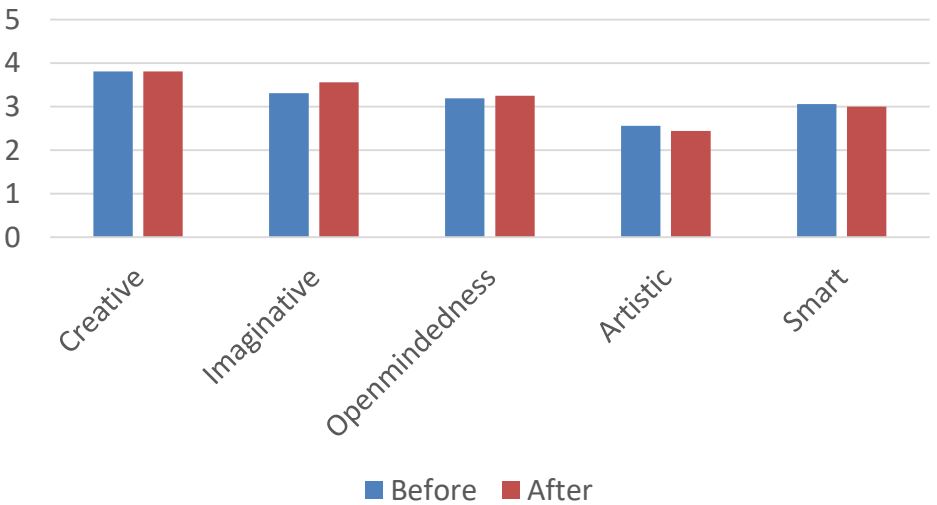
Neuroticism



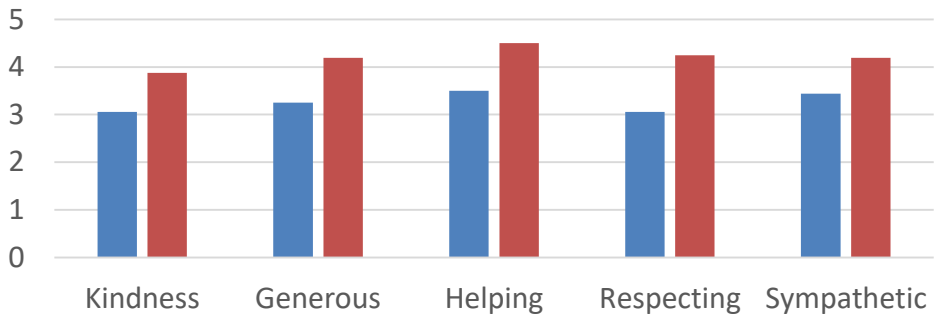
Extraversion



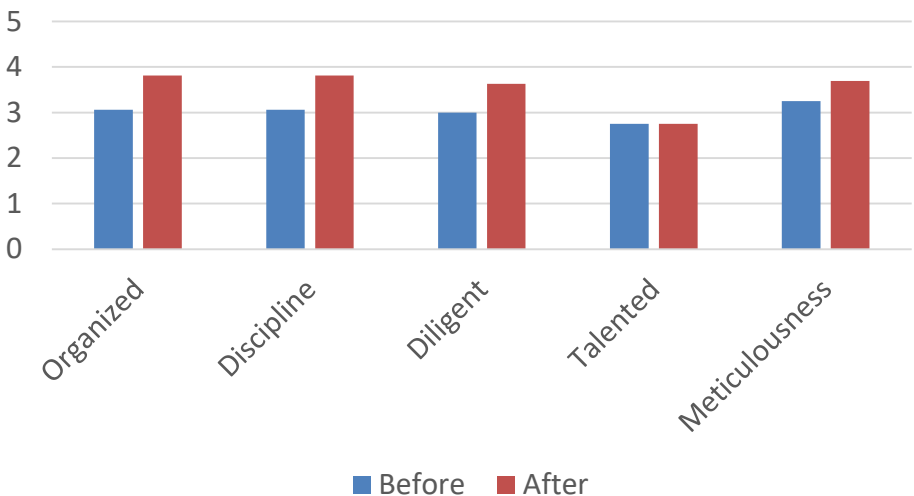
Openness to Experience



Agreeableness



Conscientiousness



CONCLUSION

- Most of the respondents reported that the personality changed but that changes were not a sudden change
- The changes take place during a considerably long period of time
- Previous life history, earlier parental teaching and long lasting cultural tradition environment combined with new religious obligation to influence the personality development of a person
- Specific Islamic religious rituals or obligations like reading al-Quran, *solat* (daily prayer). Remembrance of ALLAH and fasting were considered as possible causes of the changes
- Existing and previous learning experiences, cultural norms and even religious practices of the previous belief and adopted new Islam play important roles in moulding the personality of new Japanese Muslims