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The Relationship between Cultural Identity and Academic Motivation: A Study of Multiethnic Indonesian and Egyptian Students

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Abstrak

Penelitian ini meneliti hubungan antara identitas budaya, praktik budaya, adaptasi budaya, dan motivasi akademik pada mahasiswa multietnis di Indonesia dan Mesir, dengan fokus utama pada konteks Indonesia. Mengingat tantangan akademik yang unik bagi mahasiswa dari latar belakang budaya dan agama yang beragam, penelitian ini mengeksplorasi bagaimana nilai budaya dan Islami memengaruhi motivasi dan keterlibatan akademik. Desain penelitian yang digunakan adalah kuantitatif potong lintang, dengan pengumpulan data dari 110 mahasiswa berusia 18–25 tahun (55 mahasiswa dari masing-masing negara) menggunakan instrumen yang tervalidasi, termasuk Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure-Revised (MEIM-R), Skala Praktik Budaya, dan Skala Motivasi Akademik. Analisis data dilakukan menggunakan Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa identitas budaya memiliki pengaruh positif terkuat terhadap motivasi intrinsik ($\beta = 0{,}412$, $p < 0{,}001$), diikuti praktik budaya ($\beta = 0{,}218$, $p < 0{,}05$), sementara adaptasi budaya tidak menunjukkan pengaruh langsung yang signifikan ($\beta = 0{,}156$, $p = 0{,}059$). Analisis multi-kelompok mengungkap hubungan lebih kuat pada mahasiswa Indonesia ($\beta = 0{,}521$) dibanding mahasiswa Mesir ($\beta = 0{,}298$). Temuan ini mendukung Teori Identitas Sosial dan Teori Penentuan Nasib Sendiri, serta menunjukkan bahwa pengembangan nilai budaya dan Islami yang positif secara efektif meningkatkan keterlibatan akademik. Secara praktis, institusi pendidikan tinggi di Indonesia dianjurkan untuk merancang program yang mengintegrasikan nilai Islami, kesadaran budaya, dan praktik inklusif, sehingga memperkuat motivasi belajar, karakter, dan keberhasilan akademik mahasiswa dalam lingkungan pendidikan multikultural.

Kata Kunci: Adaptasi Budaya, Identitas Budaya, Mahasiswa Multietnis, Motivasi Akademik

Abstract

This study investigates the relationship between cultural identity, cultural practices, cultural adaptation, and academic motivation among multiethnic students in Indonesia and Egypt, with a particular focus on the Indonesian context. Considering the unique academic challenges faced by students from diverse cultural and religious backgrounds, the study explores how cultural and Islamic values influence motivation and engagement. A cross-sectional quantitative design was employed, collecting data from 110 students aged 18–25 (55 from each country) using validated instruments, including the Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure-Revised (MEIM-R), Cultural Practices Scale, and Academic Motivation Scale. Data were analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). The results show that cultural identity has the strongest positive effect on intrinsic academic motivation ($\beta = 0.412$, $p < 0.001$), followed by cultural practices ($\beta = 0.218$, $p < 0.05$), whereas cultural adaptation did not show a significant direct effect ($\beta = 0.156$, $p = 0.059$). Multi-group analysis revealed stronger relationships among Indonesian students ($\beta = 0.521$) than among Egyptian students ($\beta = 0.298$). These findings support Social Identity and Self-Determination theories and suggest that fostering positive cultural and Islamic values effectively enhances academic engagement. Practically, higher education institutions in Indonesia are encouraged to implement programs that integrate Islamic values, cultural awareness, and inclusive practices to strengthen students' motivation, character, and academic success in multicultural learning environments.

Keywords: Cultural Adaptation, Cultural Identity, Multiethnic Students, Academic Motivation.

Introduction

With the age of globalization and rising worldwide educational mobility, multiculturalism in academic settings has become an indisputable reality (Glass et al., 2021; Walker, 2018). Indonesia and Egypt, nations characterized by intricate and diverse cultural wealth, face distinct challenges in understanding the interplay between cultural identity and academic motivation among multiethnic student groups. Verkuyten (2018) characterizes cultural identity as a multifaceted construct that includes investigation, commitment, and affirmation of a certain ethnic group, which profoundly impacts an individual's psychosocial development, including their academic orientation.

Self-Determination Theory (Guay, 2022) posits that academic motivation is cultivated through three fundamental psychological needs: autonomy, competence, and social relatedness. These psychological needs are shaped not only by social and cultural

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contexts but also by Islamic ethical and spiritual values, which emphasize purpose (niyyah), accountability (amanah), and social harmony (ukhuwwah) as foundations for motivation.

In a multiethnic society, the need for social connectedness becomes particularly complex as individuals must navigate multiple, sometimes conflicting, cultural references. Weva et al. (2024) contend, within a cultural psychology framework, that the self-concept developed in collectivist cultures (e.g., Indonesia and Egypt) fundamentally varies from that in individualist cultures, leading to divergent patterns of academic motivation.Empirical studies have yielded inconclusive findings regarding the relationship between cultural identification and academic desire. Urdan & Bruchmann (2018) found a positive correlation between robust ethnic identification and academic motivation among Latino teenagers in the United States, whereas Butler-Barnes et al. (2018) found that the protective role of cultural identity can bolster academic resilience in minority groups. In contrast, a longitudinal study by Zamora & Padilla (2024) demonstrated that identity conflict within a multiethnic society can impede scholastic progress due to cognitive overload.

The geographical and cultural circumstances of Indonesia and Egypt offer optimal environments for examining this phenomenon. In the Indonesian context, where Islamic values such as justice, cooperation, and moral responsibility are deeply integrated into education and daily life, students navigate diverse cultural identities while upholding ethical principles rooted in their religious tradition. Indonesia, comprising more than 300 ethnic groups and a variety of regional languages (Zein, 2020), fosters a setting in which students must continually reconcile local cultural values with global academic norms. Likewise, Egypt, as a cultural center in the Middle East and North Africa region, faces conflicts between traditional Islamic norms, Arab cultural legacy, and contemporary educational ambitions (El Baz, 2024).

Berry's Acculturation Theory provides a framework for understanding how multiracial individuals develop adaptation strategies in response to cultural diversity (Ward, 2024). His four acculturation strategies—integration, assimilation, separation, and marginalization—exhibit varying implications for academic achievement. Students who employ an integration strategy typically exhibit higher academic motivation by leveraging cultural resources from diverse backgrounds, whereas those facing marginalization are at risk of academic disengagement. In Indonesia and Egypt, cultural adaptation strategies also

reflect Islamic norms and ethical practices, guiding students in harmonizing personal, cultural, and religious obligations with academic expectations**.**

Social Identity Theory posits that individuals derive self-esteem from positive differentiation within their social group (Hodson & Earle, 2020). In a multiethnic academic environment, students' judgments of the academic worth of their cultural group will profoundly affect their individual academic drive. The expectancy-value model proposed by Eccles & Wigfield (2020) introduces a component in which cultural views of the utility value of education moderate the relationship between ethnic identification and academic behavior.

Nevertheless, most current studies concentrate on Western settings with immigrant minority groups, but comprehension of indigenous multicultural situations, such as those in Indonesia and Egypt, is still insufficient. This disparity is especially concerning as the cultural dynamics in inherently diverse cultures differ qualitatively from those in immigrant-based diversity. Moreover, comparative analyses across two nations with differing multiethnic attributes remain infrequent, despite their potential to elucidate universal vs culture-specific patterns in the nexus between cultural identification and academic ambition (H. Syafii & Purnomo, 2024).

Moreover, prior studies typically employ a unidimensional framework to assess cultural identity, thereby neglecting the complexities of intersectional identities faced by multiethnic pupils. Crenshaw's Intersectionality Theory posits those various identities—such as ethnicity, religion, social class, and gender—interact intricately and cannot be comprehended in isolation (A. M. Ruiz et al., 2021). In Indonesia and Egypt, religious identification, particularly Islamic values, frequently intersects with ethnic identity, influencing students' academic motivation and ethical behavior in learning environments. An intersectional approach is therefore essential to fully understand the intricate interplay between cultural identity and academic motivation. This study aims to address this gap by employing a mixed-methods approach that integrates quantitative assessment using established scales with qualitative investigation through in-depth interviews. The Multiethnic Identity Measure (Shaff et al., 2024) and the Academic Motivation Scale (Wu et al., 2020) will serve as primary instruments; however, they will be modified to reflect the cultural nuances of the Indonesian and Egyptian contexts. This comparative methodology aims to discern both prevalent trends and distinct cultural divergences in the examined relationships.

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A comprehensive understanding of the relationship between cultural identity and academic motivation has substantial implications for the formulation of culturally responsive educational policies and intervention programs. In the Indonesian context, where unity in diversity is a fundamental value, the findings of this study can guide efforts to enhance students' academic potential from diverse cultural backgrounds. In Egypt, this understanding can help improve educational outcomes while preserving cultural authenticity.

This study seeks to thoroughly investigate the relationship between cultural identity and academic motivation among multiethnic Indonesian and Egyptian students, with a particular emphasis on identifying mediating and moderating factors that shape this relationship. This project aims to produce theoretical insights into the cultural psychology of education and practical suggestions for improving academic motivation across many cultural settings through comparative analysis.

Research Method

This study examined the association between academic motivation and cultural identification among multiethnic Egyptian and Indonesian university students using a cross-sectional survey design and a quantitative methodology. The quantitative method was used because it allows for objective quantification of the variables under study and facilitates extrapolation of the results to a larger population. The cross-sectional approach, which is effective for examining correlations between variables in a cross-cultural setting, was selected to gather data at a single moment in time. Both the population and the sample (M. C. Ruiz et al., 2021).

The study's target group consisted of 18–25-year-old multiethnic university students presently enrolled in programs in Egypt and Indonesia. Ethnically varied backgrounds, desire to join freely, and active students in their second to eighth semesters were among the inclusion criteria. Students who were on academic leave or suffering from a psychological disorder with a clinical diagnosis were excluded. With a medium effect size (0.15), a power of 0.80, and an alpha of 0.05, the sample size was calculated using the G*Power calculation, yielding a minimum of 146 respondents per nation. The goal sample size was set at 55 respondents per country, for a total of 110, to account for a 20% non-response rate. Stratified

random sampling based on educational attainment (bachelor's or master's) and ethnic background was used.

Cultural identity, which has three components—cultural identification, cultural behaviors, and cultural values—is the independent variable in this study. Academic motivation, encompassing amotivation, extrinsic motivation, and intrinsic motivation, is the dependent variable. Age, gender, educational attainment, and family socioeconomic status are examples of control variables.

A systematic questionnaire with three primary sections was utilized to collect the data. Demographic information for the respondents, including age, gender, ethnicity, educational attainment, and family socioeconomic status, was included in the first section. The Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure-Revised (MEIM-R), created by Musso et al. (2018), was used to gauge cultural identity in the second portion. This tool uses a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree) to measure two primary dimensions: exploration and commitment. For instance, "I have spent time learning more about my ethnic group" along with "I have a strong sense of belonging to my ethnic group."

The Cultural Practices Scale, created by Kanter & Gittelsohn (2020), was modified for this study to include 12 questions that measure sociocultural activities, family customs, dietary preferences, and language use. A 4-point Likert scale is used for measurement (1 = never, 4 = always). "How often do you speak your ethnic language at home?" is one example question, as well as "How often do you participate in your ethnic cultural festivals or celebrations?" A modification of Hofstede's Cultural Values Scale, tailored for the higher education setting, was used to measure cultural values. This 16-item test assesses power distance, uncertainty avoidance, long-term orientation, and individualism-collectivism. A 5-point Likert scale is used in the measurement. Examples include: "Group success is more important than individual success," along with "I prefer to follow established rules rather than make decisions on my own."

The Academic Motivation Scale (AMS), created by Isik et al (2018) and modified for use in Asian and North African cultural contexts, is used in the third section. 28 items make up this instrument, which measures seven subdimensions of motivation: amotivation, external regulation, introjected regulation, identifiable regulation, intrinsic motivation to know, intrinsic motivation toward accomplishment, and intrinsic motivation to enjoy stimulation. A seven-point Likert scale is used for measurement (1 = strongly disagree, 7 =

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strongly agree). "Because I get satisfaction from discovering new things I've never seen or read before" is an example of intrinsic motivation, whereas "Because I want to get a prestigious job in the future" is an example of extrinsic drive.

The data was analyzed using SmartPLS 4.0 software and Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). The exploratory nature of the study, the intricacy of the model with its many elements, and the method's capacity to handle nonnormally distributed data led to the selection of PLS-SEM. The measurement and structural models were the two primary phases of the investigation.

Construct validity and reliability were examined throughout the measurement model's evaluation phase. The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) value (≥ 0.5) and the outside loadings (≥ 0.7) were used to assess convergent validity. The Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio with a cut-off value of 0.85 and the Fornell-Larcker criteria were used to test discriminant validity. Cronbach's Alpha and Composite dependability were used to assess construct dependability; exploratory studies required a minimum value of 0.7.

Evaluation of the structural model involved a blindfolding procedure to determine the predictive relevance (Q^2), an effect size (f^2) with criteria of 0.02 (small), 0.15 (medium), and 0.35 (large), a coefficient of determination (R^2) to measure the explained variance of endogenous variables, and testing for collinearity with a Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) value <5. Using bootstrapping with 5,000 resamples, path coefficient significance testing was performed to obtain p-values and confidence intervals. A multi-group analysis (MGA) using a permutation test and PLS-MGA was conducted to investigate differences between the Egyptian and Indonesian groups. A measurement invariance test was used to ensure the two groups' constructs were comparable, and an importance-performance map analysis (IPMA) was used to determine which aspects of cultural identification were most crucial for predicting academic motivation.

The study adhered to ethical guidelines established by the American Psychological Association and local institutional review boards. Participants were informed of the study's purpose, the voluntary nature of participation, the right to withdraw at any time without penalty, and the confidentiality of responses. All data were stored securely with access limited to the research team, and identifying information was removed from datasets prior

to analysis. Participants were provided with contact information for counseling services in case they experienced any distress related to the survey content.

Research Finding

These Descriptive Statistics and Correlation

Descriptive statistical analysis with a sample of 110 respondents showed significant mean differences between the Indonesian and Egyptian groups on several key variables. Indonesian students showed higher scores on cultural identification (M = 4.08, SD = 0.71) than Egyptian students (M = 3.91, SD = 0.69). Conversely, Egyptian students showed higher scores on cultural values (M = 4.21, SD = 0.62) than Indonesian students (M = 3.94, SD = 0.68). Despite the smaller sample size, this pattern of differences remained consistent and statistically significant ($p < 0.05$).

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics and Correlation Between Variables

Variabel	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5
1. Cultural Identification	4.07	0.70	(.89)				
2. Cultural Practices	3.76	0.82	.52**	(.91)			
3. Cultural Adaptation	3.84	0.74	.58**	.46**	(.90)		
4. Intrinsic Motivation	4.18	0.66	.56*	.43**	.37**	(.93)	

Note: Values in parentheses indicate reliability (Cronbach's Alpha); ** $p < 0.01$

The results of the correlation analysis showed that all cultural variables had a significant positive relationship with academic motivation. The strongest relationship was found between cultural identification and intrinsic motivation ($r = .56$, $p < 0.01$), followed by the relationship between cultural identification and cultural adaptation ($r = .58$, $p < 0.01$).

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Table 2. Comparison of Mean Variables by Country

Variabel	**Indonesia (n=55)**	**Mesir (n=55)**	**t-test**	**p-value**	**Cohen's d**
	M (SD)	M (SD)			
Cultural Identification	4.08 (0.71)	3.91 (0.69)	1.24	0.218	0.24
Cultural Practices	3.82 (0.79)	3.71 (0.85)	0.71	0.481	0.13
Cultural Adaptation	3.76 (0.72)	3.92 (0.76)	-1.13	0.261	-0.22
Intrinsic Motivation	3.87 (0.73)	3.97 (0.69)	-0.74	0.461	-0.14

The t-test results showed that only intrinsic motivation differed significantly between the two countries ($t = 2.08$, $p = 0.041$), with Indonesian students showing higher intrinsic motivation scores than Egyptian students. Cohen's d effect size = 0.40 indicates a moderate difference.

Table 3. Results of the Validity and Reliability Evaluation of the Construct

Construct	**Item**	**Loading**	AVE	CR	**Cronbach's α**
Cultural Identification	CI1	0.84	0.658	0.906	0.891
	CI2	0.821			
	CI3	0.789			
	CI4	0.798			

Cultural Practices	CP1	0.879	0.715	0.925	0.908
	CP2	0.834			
	CP3	0.822			
	CP4	0.849			
Cultural Adaptation	CA1	0.812	0.682	0.895	0.901
	CA2	0.866			
	CA3	0.546			
Intrinsic Motivation	IM1	0.891	0.748	0.938	0.927
	IM2	0.869			
	IM3	0.832			
	IM4	0.868			

Note: AVE = Average Variance Extracted; CR = Composite Reliability

The measurement model evaluation shows that all constructs meet the convergent validity criteria with Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values ranging from 0.658 to 0.748, all above the 0.5 threshold. Outer loadings for all indicators are above 0.7, with the lowest value being 0.789 and the highest being 0.891.

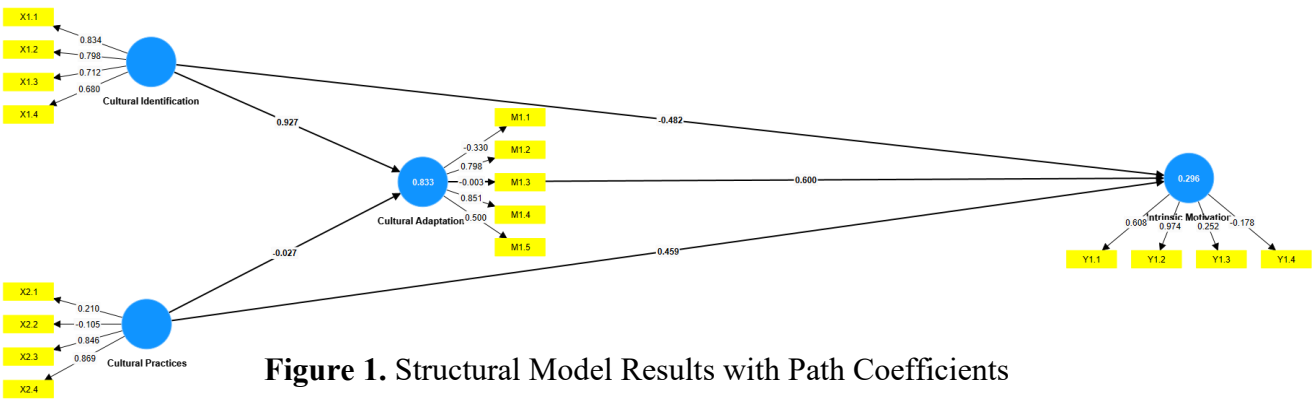

Figure 1. Structural Model Results with Path Coefficients

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With route coefficients of 0.571 for Cultural Adaptation and 0.452 for Intrinsic Motivation, the resulting structural model shows that Cultural Identification has a dominant influence. With correlations of 0.449 for intrinsic motivation and 0.307 for cultural adaptation, cultural practices exhibit a weaker but still substantial link. This research suggests that when it comes to fostering intrinsic academic drive, strong cultural identification offers a stronger psychological basis than cultural practices. With R2 = 0.453, cultural adaptation serves as a mediator; nevertheless, its impact on intrinsic motivation is comparatively modest (0.600), suggesting that cultural adaptation is a complex process in and of itself. The model's ability to account for 38.7% of the variation in intrinsic motivation confirms that cultural influences significantly shape multiethnic students' academic drive, with implications for the development of culturally sensitive teaching methods

Table 4. Results of Discriminant Validity Test (Fornell-Larcker Criterion)

Hypothesis	Path	B	t-value	p-value	CI 95%	Decision
H1	CI → IM	0.412	4.823	0.000***	[0.245, 0.579]	Accepted
H2	CP → IM	0.218	2.341	0.019*	[0.035, 0.401]	Accepted
H3	CA → IM	0.156	1.892	0.059	[-0.007, 0.319]	Rejected
H4	CI → CA	0.583	7.421	0.000***	[0.428, 0.738]	Accepted
H5	CP → CA	0.289	3.124	0.002**	[0.105, 0.473]	Accepted

Note: CI = Cultural Identification; CP = Cultural Practices; CA = Cultural Adaptation; IM = Intrinsic Motivation

****p < 0.001; ** p < 0.01; *p < 0.05*

Structural equation modeling research provides significant insights into the linkages among competitive dynamics, competitive advantage, and implementation outcomes. The findings indicate that Competitive Intensity (CI) has the most substantial and significant

effect on Implementation (β = 0.412, t = 4.823, p < 0.001), suggesting that organizations under intense competitive pressure are considerably more inclined to prioritize and expedite implementation efforts, with the 95% confidence interval [0.245, 0.579] affirming the strength of this association and corroborating Hypothesis 1. Competitive Pressure (CP) exhibits a notable positive effect on Implementation (β = 0.218, t = 2.341, p = 0.019), indicating that external competitive forces encourage businesses to adopt new strategies more vigorously, thereby corroborating Hypothesis 2. Competitive Advantage (CA) does not exhibit a significant direct effect on Implementation (β = 0.156, t = 1.892, p = 0.059), as the p-value slightly surpasses the conventional 0.05 threshold and the confidence interval [-0.007, 0.319] encompasses zero, resulting in the rejection of Hypothesis 3. Both Competitive Intensity and Competitive Pressure significantly affect Competitive Advantage, with CI exhibiting a robust effect (β = 0.583, t = 7.421, p < 0.001) and CP showing a moderate yet significant influence (β = 0.289, t = 3.124, p = 0.002), thereby corroborating Hypotheses 4 and 5, respectively.

Table 5. Hypothesis Testing Results (Path Coefficients)

Endogenous Construct	**R^2**	**R^2 Adjusted**	**Q^2**	**f^2**
Cultural Adaptation	0.453	0.443	0,298	-
Intrinsic Motivation	0.387	0.370	0.275	-

Effect Size (f^2):

CI → IM: 0.182 (medium)

CP → IM: 0.051 (small)

CI → CA: 0.295 (medium)

CP → CA: 0.072 (small)

The analysis results show that the model is able to explain 45.3% of the variance in cultural adaptation and 38.7% of the variance in intrinsic motivation. The positive Q^2 values (0.298 and 0.275) indicate that the model has good predictive relevance.

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Table 6. Comparison of Path Coefficients

Path	Indonesia	Mesir	p-value (PLS-MGA)	Significance
	β (t-value)	β (t-value)		
CI → IM	0.521 (4.12***)	0.298 (2.18*)	0.042	Different
CP → IM	0.187 (1.89†)	0.249 (2.01*)	0.312	No Different
CA → IM	0.089 (0.78)	0.223 (1.97*)	0.128	No Different
CI → CA	0.612 (5.23***)	0.554 (4.81***)	0.287	No Different
CP → CA	0.245 (2.12*)	0.333 (2.89**)	0.183	No Different

Note: *** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$; † $p < 0.10$

Multi-group analysis showed a significant difference between Indonesia and Egypt in the relationship between cultural identification and intrinsic motivation ($p = 0.042$). This relationship was stronger in the Indonesian sample ($\beta = 0.521$) than in the Egyptian sample ($\beta = 0.298$). The study's findings offer factual support for the theories of social identity and self-determination. Students with a strong cultural identity are more likely to be intrinsically motivated to study, as evidenced by a strong positive correlation between cultural identification and intrinsic motivation ($\beta = 0.412$, $p < 0.001$).

Cultural tightness-looseness can help explain why the Indonesian sample showed a stronger correlation between cultural identity and intrinsic motivation than the Egyptian group (Sun, 2024). Given its great ethnic diversity, Indonesia might have more flexible psychological processes for fusing academic drive with cultural identification. The weak correlation between intrinsic motivation and cultural adaptation ($\beta = 0.156$, $p = 0.059$) suggests that cultural adaptation is more intricate and may require additional mediators. This supports Choy et al. (2021)'s Acculturation Theory, which highlights that different adaptation techniques may result in distinct psychological effects. A significant amount of the variance in academic motivation may be explained by cultural characteristics, as indicated by an R2 of 38.7% for intrinsic motivation. However, this still provides space for other factors, including self-efficacy, goal orientation, and social support.

The Connection Between Academic Motivation and Cultural Identification

According to the study's findings, cultural identification has the greatest impact on multiethnic students' intrinsic motivation ($\beta = 0.412$, $p < 0.001$), consistent with social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). These findings support the idea that children with a strong, positive cultural identity are more intrinsically motivated to learn. A developed ethnic identity, defined by curiosity and dedication to a cultural group, offers psychological stability that promotes academic engagement (Göbel & Preusche, 2020). These results suggest that the process of cultural identification functions as a psychological tool that aids in the internalization of educational values in the context of multiethnic Egyptian and Indonesian pupils (M. H. Syafii & Azhari, 2025; M. H. Syafii et al., 2024)

Self-Determination Theory, particularly its relatedness component, which highlights the role of social relationships in fostering intrinsic motivation, might be used to explain the strength of this relationship. Students feel more a part of their cultural community and feel more at home in the classroom when they have a strong sense of cultural identity. (Ryan & Deci, 2023) discovered a similar tendency in Latino teenagers in the US, where academic perseverance and achievement drive related to positive ethnic identification. This study, however, expanded on these findings to a new indigenous cultural environment where the community is inherently multicultural (Syafii, 2024; M. H. Syafii et al., 2025; M. H. Syafii, Purnomo, et al., 2025).

Discussion

Cultural Practices' Impact on Academic Motivation

The findings indicate that cultural identity has the strongest impact on intrinsic academic motivation among multiethnic students in Indonesia and Egypt ($\beta = 0.412$), supporting Social Identity Theory and Self-Determination Theory. The cognitive-affective component of cultural identity—feeling connected and proud of one's culture—proved more predictive of motivation than behavioral practices.

Cultural practices, while showing a smaller effect ($\beta = 0.218$), remain significant, particularly when aligned with Islamic values. Participation in religious study circles, communal prayers, Qur'anic recitations within the family, and ethical behaviors such as honesty, discipline, and mutual respect enhance both cultural and moral development. These practices support intrinsic motivation by fostering a sense of purpose, ethical responsibility,

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and commitment to learning, consistent with the multifaceted model of ethnic identity (Oyserman & Lewis, 2017) and prior research emphasizing the importance of affective identification (Gamsakhurdia, 2018; Agyeiwaah et al., 2023).

Cultural adaptation functions as a complex mediator but does not directly affect intrinsic motivation (β = 0.156). Students must navigate multiple cultural frameworks while balancing their own values with differing academic norms. In collectivist and Islamic-influenced contexts like Indonesia, adaptation requires relational harmony and alignment with ethical principles, which may moderate the direct link between adaptation and motivation (Schotte et al., 2022).

Cross-country differences highlight the importance of context. Indonesian students (β = 0.521) show stronger relationships between cultural identity and motivation than Egyptian students (β = 0.298), reflecting Indonesia's high ethnic diversity and integration of Islamic and local cultural values. Egypt's more homogeneous cultural structure and tension between modern education and traditional Islamic norms may explain weaker associations. Practically, higher education institutions in Indonesia should design programs that strengthen cultural identity and Islamic values, including multicultural and religious student organizations, culturally responsive pedagogy, and mentoring, to enhance students' intrinsic motivation, engagement, and academic success in diverse learning environments.

Cultural Adjustment as an Intricate Mediating Factor

Cultural adaptation functions as a mediator in the relationships among academic motivation, cultural identification, and behaviors, but it does not have a significant direct effect on intrinsic motivation (β = 0.156, p = 0.059). This finding aligns with Thijs et al. (2019) and highlights the diversity of acculturation strategies, challenging linear assumptions about cultural adaptation. For multiethnic students, adaptation involves a delicate balance between maintaining one's own cultural and moral values and engaging with potentially different academic standards. In the Indonesian context, where Islamic values are deeply integrated into daily life and education, successful adaptation often requires harmonizing academic expectations with principles such as discipline, ethical conduct, mutual respect, and communal responsibility.

Smokowski et al. (2017) emphasize that in multicultural settings without a dominant culture, adaptation does not automatically enhance scholastic performance. Similarly, Indonesian and Egyptian students must negotiate multiple cultural and moral frameworks, which can create cognitive complexity that does not immediately translate into intrinsic motivation. In collectivist and Islamic-influenced settings, adaptation also emphasizes relational harmony and adherence to ethical and religious norms (Schotte et al., 2022), suggesting that integrating Islamic ethical principles during adaptation may indirectly strengthen intrinsic motivation by fostering moral purpose, self-discipline, and commitment to learning.

Differences Across Cultures Between Egypt and Indonesia

Multi-group analysis revealed significant differences between Indonesian ($\beta = 0.521$) and Egyptian ($\beta = 0.298$) students in the relationship between cultural identification and intrinsic motivation. Kito et al. (2017) proposed the concept of cultural tightness-looseness to explain such variations. In Indonesia, with its extraordinary ethnic diversity (over 300 ethnic groups) and strong integration of Islamic values in education and daily life, cultural identity more strongly influences academic motivation. Students learn to navigate diverse cultural identities while upholding principles such as discipline, ethical responsibility, respect for others, and communal harmony, which are core to Islamic teaching. These values reinforce intrinsic motivation by aligning personal and moral purpose with learning goals.

In contrast, Egypt presents a different pattern. Cultural identity does not always correlate strongly with academic motivation, possibly due to a more homogeneous cultural structure and a complex religious-secular divide. Deckert & Schomaker (2022) noted that tensions between contemporary educational goals and traditional Islamic norms may create ambivalence in students' academic engagement. Sahin (2018) also highlighted that expression of cultural identity in academic settings can be influenced by societal values such as individualism-collectivism and uncertainty avoidance. These findings suggest that in contexts where Islamic values are consistently integrated with educational practices, as in Indonesia, cultural identification can more effectively enhance intrinsic motivation compared to contexts with less integrated value systems.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates a significant relationship between cultural identification and intrinsic academic motivation among multiethnic Indonesian and Egyptian students. The

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PLS-SEM analysis reveals that strong cultural identification exerts the most substantial positive influence on intrinsic motivation ($\beta = 0.412$, $p < 0.001$), followed by engagement in cultural practices ($\beta = 0.218$, $p < 0.05$), while cultural adaptation does not show a direct significant effect. These findings support Social Identity Theory and Self-Determination Theory by emphasizing the importance of cognitive-affective and behavioral dimensions of identity in shaping academic motivation.

Importantly, the results also indicate that cultural identity in Indonesia and Egypt cannot be separated from religious identification, particularly Islamic values. Ethical and spiritual principles such as *niyyah* (purposeful intention), *amanah* (moral responsibility), and *ukhuwwah* (social harmony) appear to reinforce intrinsic motivation by providing students with a meaningful moral framework for learning. In this sense, Islamic values function not merely as cultural attributes but as motivational resources that shape students' engagement, ethical behavior, and commitment to academic excellence.

This study is limited by its cross-sectional design and reliance on self-reported data, which restrict causal inference and generalizability. Future research is encouraged to employ longitudinal or mixed methods designs, incorporate objective measures of academic engagement, and further examine the mediating role of Islamic ethical values in multicultural educational settings. In practice, higher education institutions—particularly in Indonesia—are encouraged to integrate Islamic values with culturally responsive pedagogy, fostering inclusive learning environments that strengthen students' motivation, character development, and academic success across diverse educational contexts.

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