Research article

# Situating Daisaku Ikeda's essential elements of global citizenship within contemporary scholarship: a qualitative meta-synthesis

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## Abstract

This article reports on meta-synthesis research that examined contemporary scholarship on global citizenship for the purpose of identifying a possible alignment with Daisaku Ikeda's views on global citizenship. Thirty relatively contemporary scholarly articles on the subject matter were examined using a qualitative meta-synthesis methodology. Ikeda's speech entitled 'Thoughts on education for global citizenship', delivered over 25 years ago at Columbia University's Teachers College, USA, contains his most frequently cited ideas on the salient conditions required for global citizenship. As Ikeda is a thoughtful and prolific author on the subject of global citizenship, there is merit in exploring the alignment of his ideas about this concept with those articulated in contemporary scholarship. Conducting a meta-synthesis through the lens of Ikeda's essential elements of global

citizenship has helped to identify potentially useful contributions to the global citizenship discourse. This article highlights salient common themes of global citizenship uncovered through the meta-synthesis research, as well as providing an alternative definition of global citizenship gleaned from the findings.

**Keywords** meta-synthesis; Daisaku Ikeda; global citizenship; Buddhism

# Introduction

Qualitative meta-synthesis is the process of scrutinising the findings of published qualitative studies in order to advance understanding of a specific area of interest (Salter et al., 2008). This article reports on qualitative meta-synthesis research that examined how Daisaku Ikeda's conceptualisation of global citizenship aligns with contemporary scholarly literature published on related subject matter.

A leading Buddhist philosopher, peacebuilder and educator, Ikeda does not conduct formal research or publish in academic journals, although he writes copiously on countless subjects related to advancing the human condition on an individual and societal level. For over six decades, Ikeda has engaged in numerous dialogues (many published) with leading intellectuals and dignitaries around the world in fields associated with peace, culture and education (Soka Gakkai, 2020a). His peace proposals, published annually and submitted to the United Nations since 1983, consistently highlight pressing global issues facing humanity, such as building a culture of peace, highlighting the significant role and contributions of women, reforming and promoting the United Nations and underscoring humanistic values as the foundation of our civilisation (Chowdhury, 2014).

A prominent theme appearing in Ikeda's vast corpus of essays, speeches and dialogues is that of global citizenship and global citizenship education. His seminal speech entitled 'Thoughts on education for global citizenship' (Ikeda, 2021), and delivered over 25 years ago at Columbia University's Teachers College, USA, contains his most frequently cited ideas on the salient conditions of global citizenship. The three essential elements espoused by Ikeda (2021: 6) are:

1. the wisdom to perceive the interconnectedness of all life
2. the courage not to fear or deny difference, but to respect and strive to understand people of different cultures and to grow from encounters with them
3. the compassion to maintain an imaginative empathy that reaches beyond one's immediate surroundings and extends to those suffering in distant places.

Ikeda's triad of interrelated values that characterise the fundamental aspects of global citizenship are repeatedly referenced by individuals engaged with researching, teaching or studying *Soka* (value-creating) education and/or Ikeda's philosophy of education. However, as Ikeda does not typically author contributions to scholarly journals, his ideas tend not to be referenced in the broad academic literature on global citizenship. As he is a thoughtful and prolific author on the subject of global citizenship, there is merit in exploring the alignment of his ideas about the concept with those articulated in contemporary scholarship.

In this article, we offer some salient common themes of global citizenship uncovered through meta-synthesis research of contemporary scholarly works that focus on this subject matter, and at the same time we explore a possible alignment of these themes with Ikeda's views on global citizenship. In our research we started by identifying Ikeda's (2021) most frequently cited ideas about global citizenship. We then examined and thematically analysed a selected group of articles to determine if these representations from the global citizenship literature were reflective of Ikeda's ideas. Subsequent to this meta-synthesis, an alternative definition of global citizenship is offered to enhance understanding and discourse on this topic.

# Conceptualisations of global citizenship in the academic literature

The plethora of scholarship related to the notion of global citizenship has produced many interrelated and, at times, contested interpretations of the concept (Roman, 2003). To wit, global citizenship has been variously described as an appreciation for human interconnectedness, an ability to see the world as others see it, a respect for cultural diversity, a commitment to rights and justice for humans, non-human animals and the environment and a sensitivity and obligation to take action for those who suffer around the world (Ikeda, 2021; Noddings, 2005; Nussbaum, 1997; Pallas, 2012; Schattle, 2008). Reysen and Katzarska-Miller (2013: 860) define global citizenship as 'awareness, caring, and embracing cultural diversity while promoting social justice and sustainability, coupled with a sense of responsibility to act.' Although Pallas (2012) argues that global citizenship is largely an appropriation by global elites in the absence of standards of moral accountability, Schattle (2008: 159) contends that 'Global citizenship has become much more than an abstract and seemingly elusive ideal espoused mainly by intellectuals and visionaries, and now takes on considerable significance in our world.'

The significance of promoting a global citizenship ethic to address the multiplicity of global issues in the current age has been clearly articulated in the academic literature. The increasingly pluralistic nature of societies worldwide demands a more progressive understanding of, and appreciation for, cultural diversity (Clifford and Montgomery, 2014; Hendershot and Sperandio, 2009; Karlberg, 2008; Snider et al., 2013). Hendershot and Sperandio (2009) surveyed students from their university's Global Citizenship Program for their perceptions of what it means to be a global citizen. Themes such as open-mindedness and acceptance of other cultures, as well as being tolerant and non-judgemental, were prominent student responses.

Global citizenship has also been identified as the recognition of global interconnectedness and shared bonds among human beings and with the environment (Ikeda, 2021; Khoo, 2011; Noddings, 2005; Sperandio et al., 2010). Schattle's (2008: 39) study of 157 individuals who self-identified as global citizens suggests that responsible global citizenship emphasizes 'both moral accountability and solidarity toward all life on the planet'. In advocating for a 'new humanism', Bokova (2010: 5) stresses that 'An accomplished human being is one who recognizes coexistence and equality with all others, however far away, and who strives to find a way to live with them.' Relatedly, Noddings (2005: 11) believes that global citizens 'consider the effects of life in one locality on the lives and wellbeing of distant others', and Nussbaum (1997: 10) contends that an essential criterion for the cultivation of one's humanity is to appreciate that 'human beings [are] bound to all other human beings by ties of recognition and concern'.

Additionally, global citizenship has been linked to an increased awareness of, and belief in, social justice and respect for human rights (Burgess et al., 2014; Gibson et al., 2008; Martin et al., 2012; Osler and Starkey, 2003). Gibson et al. (2008: 17) note that global citizenship entails responsibilities that 'require an attitude of respect for the rights of others and actions that are just for all', while Karlberg (2008) believes that global citizenship can play a significant role in creating a more peaceful and just society.

Other scholars have reported on prosocial global citizenship practices such as altruism, empathy and caring for the welfare of others outside one's own cultural group (Brunell, 2013; Ikeda, 2021; Noddings, 2005; Nussbaum, 1997; Reysen and Katzarska-Miller, 2013), as well as taking responsibility for the global impact of one's actions (Gibson et al., 2008; Obelleiro, 2012; Reysen and Katzarska-Miller, 2013; Snider et al., 2013). Brunell (2013) contends that global citizenship education fosters a sense of moral responsibility for global issues and for those who suffer under the weight of these challenges. An important aspect of this felt responsibility is the development of a sense of empowerment to engage in activities to improve the lives of others most affected by global problems. Ikeda (2021: 7) reflects on an essential element of global citizenship as 'the compassion to maintain an imaginative empathy that reaches beyond one's immediate surroundings and extends to those suffering in distant places.' Similarly, Nussbaum (2002: 300) writes: 'The moral imagination can often become lazy, according sympathy to the near and the familiar, but refusing it to people who look different. Enlisting students' sympathy for distant lives is thus a way of training, so to speak, the muscles of the imagination.'

The literature finally notes that critical self-reflection, knowledge and awareness of self in relation to others are important characteristics of global citizenship (Clifford and Montgomery, 2014; Hendershot and Sperandio, 2009; Nussbaum, 1997). Nussbaum (2007: 38), for example, comments on 'the capacity for Socratic self-criticism and critical thought about one's own traditions' as a crucial element for engaged

citizenship in a pluralistic, democratic and globalised world. Lilley et al. (2015: 4) conducted interviews with 26 higher education experts from Australia and the European Union for the purpose of exploring how universities address ethical thinking and global citizenship. By analysing themes from the interviews, the authors developed the profile for a 'global citizen mindset', which includes transformative thinking, imagining other perspectives, reflexivity in questioning assumptions, thinking as the *other* and engaging in critical and ethical thinking.

To summarise the various interpretations of global citizenship most prominently articulated in the academic literature, we find that the concept is most typically understood as an orientation towards an appreciation for the worldwide interconnection of human beings, a respect for cultural diversity and human rights, a commitment to global social justice, a sensitivity to the suffering of people around the world, an ability to see the world as others see it and a felt duty to take responsibility for one's own actions and on behalf of others.

On a final note, it is important to acknowledge that understandings of global citizenship in the academic literature often mirror those of cosmopolitanism, so much so that both constructs are often interchanged with near equivalent meaning (Arnot, 2009; Gibson et al., 2008; Khoo, 2011; Osler and Starkey, 2003; So et al., 2014). Pichler (2009: 705) asserts that most conventional notions of cosmopolitanism tend to include traits typically associated with global citizenship, such as 'world-openness, global awareness, loyalty to humankind and recognition of the other', while similarly Appiah (2006) contends that cosmopolitanism can be viewed as two intricately connected notions – a responsibility or obligation to unrelated others and the respect for human life in all its diversity. So et al. (2014: 2) find a clear resonance between the two perspectives of global citizenship and cosmopolitanism: 'Although the term "cosmopolitanism" carries various connotations, it usually indicates that all humans have equal value, and should not be discriminated against on the basis of race or nationality – that is, all humans should be treated equally as global citizens.'
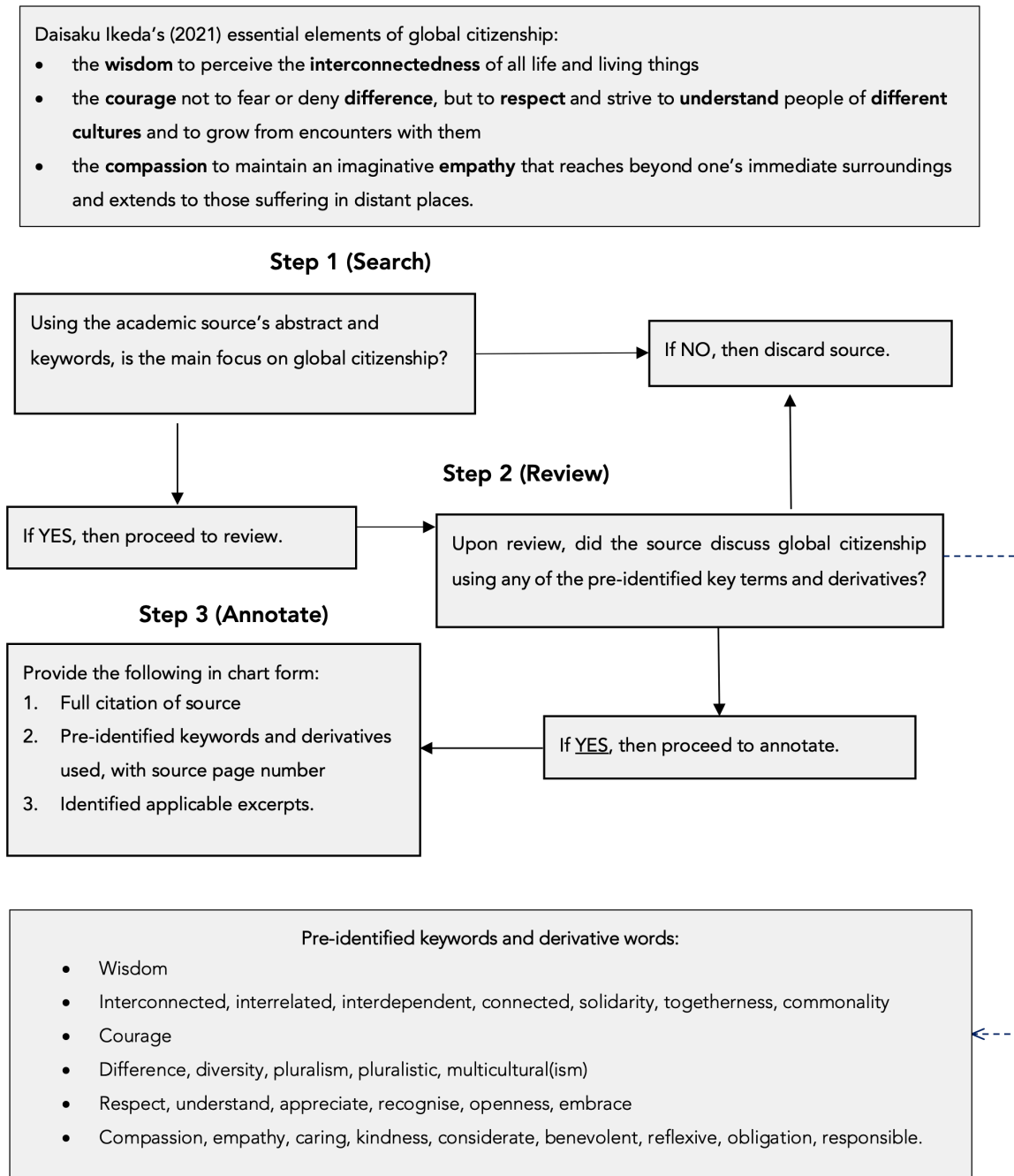
As with global citizenship, the literature provides ample support for cosmopolitanism as an orientation that promotes human rights, global justice, environmental sustainability, cultural diversity and democracy (BBC News, 2016; Lu, 2000; Pichler, 2009; Smith, 2007). Given this close affinity between global citizenship and cosmopolitanism, both terms are used in this article, as elucidated in the following section on the research methodology of the study.

# Research methodology

The authors of this article conduct research on global citizenship that often references Ikeda's ideas on the subject. Previous research, for example, has explored Ikeda's influence on university students' and faculty members' understanding and perception of global citizenship, as well as their personal affinity with the concept. A meta-synthesis research methodology was used for the purpose of coalescing existing literature and 'transcending the findings of a collection of qualitative studies' (Finlayson and Dixon, 2008: 65). This method was chosen for its value in summarising multiple studies in interpreting varying contexts, as well as adding a level of interpretation for developing new original insights into the subject matter (Lachal et al., 2017). Levitt (2018) notes that when conducting qualitative meta-analysis, one needs to carefully consider the use of unpublished research, adding that only using published research is a helpful technique for quality control.

To initiate the research, a systematic literature search was conducted within the ProQuest, ERIC, EBSCO, and Google Scholar databases. The key terms *global citizenship*, *world citizenship* and *cosmopolitanism* were used in the search and combined with 27 pre-identified keywords and derivative words from Ikeda's aforementioned three essential elements of global citizenship. Keywords are those used verbatim from Ikeda's text (for example, *interconnected*, *compassion*), while derivative words are largely synonyms of the keywords (for example, *interrelated*, *caring*). Using these search terms, a total of 37 articles were identified during the literature search process conducted between April and May 2021. See Figure 1 for an overview of the process used for searching, reviewing and annotating the academic sources in the meta-synthesis.

**Figure 1. Academic source selection decision tree**.

Daisaku Ikeda's (2021) essential elements of global citizenship:
- the **wisdom** to perceive the **interconnectedness** of all life and living things
- the **courage** not to fear or deny **difference**, but to **respect** and strive to **understand** people of **different cultures** and to grow from encounters with them
- the **compassion** to maintain an imaginative **empathy** that reaches beyond one's immediate surroundings and extends to those suffering in distant places.

**Step 1 (Search)**

Using the academic source's abstract and keywords, is the main focus on global citizenship?

If NO, then discard source.

If YES, then proceed to review.

**Step 2 (Review)**

Upon review, did the source discuss global citizenship using any of the pre-identified key terms and derivatives?

**Step 3 (Annotate)**

Provide the following in chart form:
1. Full citation of source
2. Pre-identified keywords and derivatives used, with source page number
3. Identified applicable excerpts.

If YES, then proceed to annotate.

Pre-identified keywords and derivative words:
- Wisdom
- Interconnected, interrelated, interdependent, connected, solidarity, togetherness, commonality
- Courage
- Difference, diversity, pluralism, pluralistic, multicultural(ism)
- Respect, understand, appreciate, recognise, openness, embrace
- Compassion, empathy, caring, kindness, considerate, benevolent, reflexive, obligation, responsible.

After a review of the abstracts and keywords from the 37 source articles, 7 of the articles were discarded from the study, either because global citizenship was not their main focus or because the article did not contain any of the pre-identified keywords or derivative words. The remaining 30 articles' publication dates spanned a period of 18 years from 2004 to 2021. The median publication date of all 30 articles was 2018, with 15 of the articles (50 per cent) published within the three years prior to the search date (2021), and 20 articles (67 per cent) published within five years of the search date, indicating a relatively strong collection of contemporary scholarship available for meta-synthesis. Of parenthetical note, all 30 articles were published well after the date (1996) that Ikeda (2021) delivered his speech 'Thoughts on education for global citizenship'. See Table 1 for the complete list of articles used in the meta-synthesis.

## Table 1. Articles used for meta-synthesis

| Author(s) | Date | Title |
|---|---|---|
| Anggono et al. | 2018 | 'Diversity, unity, and global citizenship education: A case study in community outreach program in Indonesia' |
| Aydin and Cinkaya | 2018 | 'Global citizenship education and diversity (GCEDS): A measure of students' attitudes related to social studies program in higher education' |
| Bahkru and Rogers | 2016 | 'Global citizenship as a feminist pedagogical tool' |
| Belda-Miquel et al. | 2015 | 'Informal learning for citizenship building in shared struggles for rights: Cases of political solidarity between Colombian and Spanish organisations' |
| Brown and Morgan | 2008 | 'A culture of peace via global citizenship education' |
| Bruce et al. | 2018 | 'Preservice teachers' views of global citizenship and implications for GC education' |
| Brueck and Grant | 2011 | 'The Obama administration's federal educational policy: Intersectionality, citizenship, and flourishing' |
| Brysk | 2020 | 'Engaged Buddhism as human rights ethos: The constructivist quest for cosmopolitanism' |
| Caruana | 2014 | 'Re-thinking global citizenship in higher education: From cosmopolitanism and international mobility to cosmopolitanisation, resilience and resilient thinking' |
| Edwards et al. | 2020 | 'Achieving and monitoring education for sustainable development and global citizenship: A systematic review of the literature' |
| García | 2007 | 'Immigrants, immigration, broader contexts, and public policy disconnects' |
| Goulah | 2020 | 'Daisaku Ikeda and the Soka movement for global citizenship' |
| Grimwood | 2018 | 'Producing global citizens? How New Zealand universities implement the concept of global citizenship' |
| Hartman et al. | 2020 | 'Coloniality-decoloniality and critical global citizenship: Identity, belonging, and education abroad' |
| Høy-Petersen and Woodward | 2018 | 'Working with difference: Cognitive schemas, ethical cosmopolitanism and negotiating cultural diversity' |
| Jooste and Heleta | 2017 | 'Global citizenship versus globally competent graduates' |
| Kurasawa | 2004 | 'A cosmopolitanism from below: Alternative globalization and the creation of a solidarity without bounds' |
| Mitchell | 2007 | 'Geographies of identity: The intimate cosmopolitan' |
| Mokuria and Wandix-White | 2020 | 'Care and value-creating education put into action in Brazil: A narrative inquiry' |
| Nasser et al. | 2019 | 'Reconceptualizing education transformation in Muslim societies: The human development approach' |
| Pichler | 2009 | '"Down-to-earth" cosmopolitanism' |
| Ramírez | 2013 | 'Learning abroad or just going abroad? International education in opposite sides of the border' |
| Rotabi | 2006 | 'Ethical guidelines for study abroad: Can we transform ugly Americans into engaged global citizens?' |
| Sarker and Shearer | 2013 | 'Developing literacy skills for global citizenship: Exploring personal culture and mining cultural gems from classroom experts' |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Sherman | 2016 | 'Preparing social workers for global gaze: Locating global citizenship within social work curricula' |
| Spires et al. | 2018 | 'Educational cosmopolitanism and collaborative inquiry with Chinese and US teachers' |
| Tichnor-Wagner et al. | 2016 | 'Expanding approaches to teaching for diversity and social justice in K-12 education: Fostering global citizenship across the content areas' |
| Vandeyar | 2021 | 'Pedagogy of compassion: Negotiating the contours of global citizenship' |
| Williams | 2020 | 'Daisaku Ikeda's philosophy of value creating global citizenship education and Africana humanism: Africa as the continent of the 21st century' |
| Woods | 2018 | 'Precarious rural cosmopolitanism: Negotiating globalization, migration and diversity in Irish small towns' |

After a scrutinised review of the articles, three additional new derivative terms were added to the word list due to their frequency of usage in multiple articles, bringing the keywords and derivatives to a total of 30. The 30 articles selected were subsequently subjected to an analytic and synthesis process through data extraction and interpretation that included in sequence: annotating the source articles, identifying and cataloguing the pre-identified keywords and derivatives, coding the pre-identified keywords and derivatives, analysing the data through the quantification of keyword/derivative word frequency usage, carrying out a qualitative thematic analysis of the extracted data and, finally, interpreting the findings.

## Findings

Frequency counts of the keywords and their derivatives were obtained for the number of times any of the 30 words appeared in the 30 articles as well as the number of articles in which any of the 30 words appeared. As authors often make multiple references within an article to salient terms germane to their topic of study, it was felt that the most accurate reflection of the word frequency counts pertained to the number of individual articles in which each specific word appeared. After assigning derivative words to their respective associated keyword synonyms (for example, the derivatives *interrelated*, *interdependent* and *connected* were combined with the keyword *interconnected*), a total of 26 words were established for analytical purposes. Table 2 shows the word frequency counts for all 26 words appearing in the 30 source documents. All 30 articles contained at least one keyword or derivative word, and only 2 of the 26 words (*kindness* and *considerate*) were not found in any of the documents. Of the 24 words found in the source documents, 12 appeared in less than 17 per cent of the documents, 8 appeared in roughly 23 per cent to 37 per cent of the documents and 4 of the words appeared in 57 per cent to 73 per cent of the documents.

Of particular note was a clear discrepancy in word frequency counts when analysing articles that cited Ikeda's speech 'Thoughts on education for global citizenship' (17 per cent of all sourced articles) and those articles that did not cite Ikeda at all (83 per cent of all sourced articles). While the raw number of Ikeda-citing sources is limited in comparison to the non-Ikeda-citing sources, there are relative differences in word frequency usage that stand out.

Table 3 shows a comparison between the top word frequency usage (above 50 per cent) in non-Ikeda-citing versus Ikeda-citing sources. The term *interconnected* (and its derivatives) was the only term that appeared within the top four ranked frequencies of keywords found within articles that both cited and did not cite Ikeda. Other keywords, such as *difference* (and its derivatives), *understanding* and *respect*, ranked very high in terms of usage frequency in articles that did not cite Ikeda, but ranked much lower in Ikeda-citing sources. For example, *difference* was mentioned in 80 per cent of the non-Ikeda-citing sources, but significantly less frequently (40 per cent) in the Ikeda-citing sources. Meanwhile, certain keywords expressed in Ikeda's speech were much more frequently used in Ikeda-citing sources than non-Ikeda-citing sources. For example, the three key terms *wisdom*, *courage* and *compassion*, which articulate the essence of Ikeda's views on global citizenship, were used in at least

three (and in one case four) of the five Ikeda-citing documents; however, *compassion* was used in only four (16 per cent) of the non-Ikeda-citing sources, while *courage* and *wisdom* were used in one (4 per cent) and none (0 per cent) of the non-Ikeda-citing sources, respectively. These discrepant findings will be addressed in the discussion section of this article.

**Table 2. Frequency counts of keywords and derivatives**

| Keyword and derivatives | Usage frequency in all documents | Usage frequency (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Difference, different, diversity, diverse | 22 | 73.3 |
| Understanding | 18 | 60.0 |
| Interconnected, connected, interrelated, interdependent | 18 | 60.0 |
| Respect | 17 | 56.7 |
| Solidarity | 11 | 36.7 |
| Openness | 10 | 33.3 |
| Empathy | 10 | 33.3 |
| Appreciate | 9 | 30.0 |
| Responsible | 9 | 30.0 |
| Compassion | 8 | 26.7 |
| Belonging | 8 | 26.7 |
| Multicultural(ism) | 7 | 23.3 |
| Interact | 5 | 16.7 |
| Courage | 4 | 13.3 |
| Wisdom | 3 | 10.0 |
| Embrace | 3 | 10.0 |
| Commonality | 3 | 10.0 |
| Caring | 3 | 10.0 |
| Obligation | 3 | 10.0 |
| Dialogue | 2 | 6.7 |
| Reflexive | 2 | 6.7 |
| Recognise | 2 | 6.7 |
| Togetherness | 2 | 6.7 |
| Benevolent | 1 | 3.3 |
| Kindness | 0 | 0.0 |
| Considerate | 0 | 0.0 |
| **Total analysed documents** | **30** | **100** |

A thematic analysis of the data was conducted to examine the context in which the keywords and their derivatives were articulated in the source documents, particularly with a view to determining how the various perspectives upon global citizenship might align with Ikeda's. The aim of this exercise was twofold: to synthesise the various authors' perspectives into salient themes that described global

citizenship for the purpose of comparing and contrasting them with Ikeda's position; and to coalesce these themes into a shared understanding of global citizenship.

**Table 3. Highest frequency counts (above 50 per cent) of keywords and derivatives (non-Ikeda-citing versus Ikeda-citing sources)**

| Keyword and derivatives | Usage frequency (with % of total) in all non-Ikeda-citing documents (N = 25) | Usage frequency (with % of total) in all Ikeda-citing documents (N = 5) |
|---|---|---|
| Difference, different, diversity, diverse | 20 (80) | 2 (40) |
| Understanding | 16 (64) | 2 (40) |
| Respect | 15 (60) | 2 (40) |
| Interconnected, connected, interrelated, interdependent | 14 (56) | 4 (80) |
| Empathy | 7 (28) | 3 (60) |
| Compassion | 4 (16) | 4 (80) |
| Courage | 1 (4) | 3 (60) |
| Wisdom | 0 (0) | 3 (60) |

Given the significant discrepancy in word frequency usage among the sourced articles, as seen in Table 2, a decision was made to conduct the thematic analysis only on those keywords and derivatives that scored above 50 per cent in usage frequency among all 30 documents. This resulted in analysing four keywords and derivatives that reflected the most commonly articulated understandings of global citizenship from our sourced documents. The keywords subjected to thematic analysis, therefore, were: *difference* (and its derivatives), *understanding*, *interconnected* (and its derivatives) and *respect*. The following are the four themes derived from the analysis. See Table 4 for a comparative chart identifying all four themes.

**Table 4. Themes developed from the highest usage of keywords and their derivatives**

| Keyword (derivative) | Rank (% usage *) | Meta-synthesis theme |
|---|---|---|
| Difference (diverse) | 1 (73) | A commitment to embrace and value alterity. |
| Understand | 2 (60) | An understanding and appreciation of shared similarities and differences within pluralistic societies. |
| Interconnected (interrelated, interdependent) | 3 (60) | An awareness of local and global socio-economic–political-cultural interconnectedness. |
| Respect | 4 (57) | A disposition for open-mindedness and respect for others' values, beliefs and perspectives. |

*Note:* * Percentage of usage from all sources (N = 30).

## Theme 1: A commitment to embrace and value alterity

This theme was developed from the term *difference* and its derivative *diverse*. This facet of global citizenship was the most frequently expressed in the sourced articles, with just over 73 per cent of all

articles conceptualising global citizenship in terms of how it relates to, for example, understanding, being open to, or accepting, others who are different from ourself. As a critical aspect of understanding global citizenship, difference and diversity were typically expressed in terms of embracing cultural diversity or feeling obligated to recognise those who practice unfamiliar values, customs, traditions or faiths. The following provide examples of how difference and alterity are expressed in terms of global citizenship:

> Diversity and engagement with cultural difference are important skills for advancing knowledge societies. (Bruce et al., 2018: 28)

> [Global citizenship] … intrinsically values concepts like alterity, difference, and diversity. (Hartman et al., 2020: 43)

> The cosmopolitan ethic is defined by acknowledgement of obligations to others beyond ties of citizenship or kin, and a recognition of the value of particular human lives, in all their diversity and difference. (Høy-Petersen and Woodward, 2018: 657)

Ikeda's (2021: 6) articulation of the term *difference* aligns with the collective understanding of this term in the global citizenship literature, as he believes that a global citizen should possess 'the courage not to fear or deny difference, but to respect and strive to understand people of different cultures'. Moreover, he uniquely elaborates an additional condition, which is that respecting and understanding difference should subsequently lead one 'to grow from encounters with them [people of different cultures]' (Ikeda, 2021: 6). This is a significant amplification of the concepts of difference and diversity, as the promotion of one's personal growth through experiences with alterity is not commonly articulated in the global citizenship literature. It is also worth mentioning that use of the word *courage* is quite specific to Ikeda's understanding of global citizenship, as only one non-Ikeda-citing article used this word in any associative way with global citizenship.

## Theme 2: An understanding and appreciation of shared similarities and differences within pluralistic societies

This theme was developed from the term *understanding*, which in the global citizenship literature reflects more than simple comprehension or knowledge acquisition, but rather signals a new or different way of looking at things or engaging with the world. Arguably, it is through experiences within multiple cultural contexts that one develops a global citizen perspective for understanding and appreciating the interconnectedness of both humankind's common and dissimilar intercultural attributes. The passages below are representative of how the literature views exposure to intercultural experiences. They clearly resonate with Ikeda's (2021: 6) aforementioned perspective, that is, 'to respect and strive to understand people of different cultures', thereby emphasising the notion that, for global citizens, intercultural understanding is not merely an exercise in acquiring knowledge, but rather a uniquely personal transformation that is a by-product of one's quotidian encounters in a multicultural society:

> Encounters with other cultures can bring new understanding, shifting mind-sets, building positive self-image, reducing risk factors and thereby opening up new opportunities and worldviews. (Caruana, 2014: 13)

> Education for global citizenship would involve learning about other cultures and gaining an increased understanding of global interconnectedness. (Ramírez, 2013: 2)

> Educators must be able to … teach all of their students to understand, appreciate, and respect similarities and differences across various racial, ethnic, and religious groups within a pluralist society. (Tichnor-Wagner et al., 2016: 3)

## Theme 3: An awareness of local and global socio-economic–political-cultural interconnectedness

This theme was developed from the term *interconnected* and its derivatives *interrelated* and *interdependent*. The concept of interconnection is perhaps the most widely recognised term associated

with global citizenship. In the literature, it is often used in conjunction with the historical socio-economic process referred to as *globalisation*, for example, when Held (2010: 29) refers to globalisation as: 'the widening, intensifying, speeding up and growing impact of worldwide interconnectedness.' As seen from the excerpts below, taken from our study's source documents, the idea of interconnection, interdependence or interrelatedness is widely viewed as a critical aspect of global citizenship and global citizenship education.

Ikeda (2021: 6) sees the human experience of interconnectedness as a pivotal aspect of global citizenry, as he believes it is essential that global citizens possess 'the wisdom to perceive the interconnectedness of all life', which is not necessarily limited to human life, but rather the interdependence of all living things on this planet. It should be noted that, similar to Ikeda's application of the word *courage*, employing the term *wisdom* is uniquely found in Ikeda's perspective on global citizenship, as none of the 25 non-Ikeda-citing articles mention *wisdom* in reference to global citizenship.

> Global citizens understand themselves as globally connected to distant people and issues. (Grimwood, 2018: 102)

> [Global citizenship] highlights the interdependency in political, economic, social and cultural along with interconnectedness between the local, the national and the global. (Anggono et al., 2018: 5)

> Students should learn about the ways in which people in their community, nation and region are increasingly interdependent with other people around the world and are connected to the economic, political, cultural, environmental and technological changes taking place across the planet. (Aydin and Cinkaya, 2018: 223)

> Teachers need to ... teach the interconnectedness of economic, political, and cultural systems, and teach students to understand and respect multiple perspectives. (Tichnor-Wagner et al., 2016: 5)

## Theme 4: A disposition for open-mindedness and respect for others' values, beliefs and perspectives

This theme evolved from the term *respect* and it is a more nuanced extension of Themes 1 and 2, which also signal global citizenship as a concept that recognises the benefits that an appreciation of diversity and difference bring to the human experience. The term *respect* was frequently articulated in the global citizenship literature analysed for this study and it resonates with Ikeda's view of global citizenship as respecting people whose culture is different to our own. Numerous articles from our search emphasised the notion that being *open to* or *open-minded* was a necessary requisite for respecting others' values, beliefs and viewpoints:

> The aim of global citizenship education is to provide young people with the ability to develop their identities, participate actively in society and interact with others within the framework of respect. (Aydin and Cinkaya, 2018: 223)

> Respect, tolerance and responsibility for the human community characterize cosmopolitanism in this moral sense. (Pichler, 2009: 707)

> Global citizenship would require students to learn to respect others, communicate and collaborate in ways that are not only instrumentally effective, but also consistent with others' cultural norms and expectations. (Ramírez, 2013: 9)

In summary, the meta-synthesis of the literature produced four salient themes that characterise global citizenship, most of which align with Ikeda's understanding of the concept. The next section will further elaborate upon these connections, as well as how several of Ikeda's views on global citizenship are shown to be uniquely his own.

# Discussion

This section expands upon the noteworthy findings from this research and discusses implications for future study, particularly in areas where they contribute to the contemporary discourse on global citizenship, as well as providing some new and unique perspectives on the concept gleaned from the meta-synthesis.

The first point of notation relates to the commonalities shared within academic scholarship and Ikeda's interpretation of global citizenship. The global themes which emerged from the research are largely connected by two key and commonly featured understandings of global citizenship, namely, interconnectedness and valuing difference.

Themes 1, 2 and 4 are rooted in the idea that valuing *difference* or *diversity* is a critical feature of global citizenship. The term *difference* and its derivatives formed the development of Theme 1 and were largely explored in the context of cultural difference and recognition of the attributes, practices and values that create societal distinctions. The centrality to global citizenship of valuing diversity is extended in Theme 2, which emphasises the impact that knowledge and understanding have on recognising difference. In this context, understanding is not explored in terms of knowledge acquisition, but rather in terms of the impact that perspective taking and openness has on the ability to understand and appreciate others. In a similar vein, Theme 3, which centres on respect, signifies the effect that recognition and understanding has on the human experience. In other words, respect is the translation of knowledge to personal action through openness, engagement and realising what can be gained by immersing oneself in the realities of others.

Collectively, these three themes, and the terms from which they emerged, reinforce the noteworthiness of valuing alterity in the context of global citizenship and reflect commonly referenced qualities of a global citizen in the literature, such as respecting and valuing diversity, taking personal responsibility and rejecting social injustice (Oxfam, 2015). Additionally, these qualities align with global consciousness, which is a key element of global citizenship that centres on having an awareness of others' perspectives and applying such awareness to contribute positively to the world (Schippling, 2020). The importance of difference or diversity to global citizenship is illuminated by the way in which the terms *understanding* and *respect*, and their corresponding themes, contribute to, and are an extension of, one another, which relates to what Ikeda (2010: 115) refers to as 'harmonious coexistence'. The interplay between the terms *difference*, *understanding* and *respect* align with what is required to achieve 'harmonious coexistence', which is not merely to coexist, but to interact and make meaning of one's interconnectedness. For Ikeda, harmonious coexistence is a process whereby citizens actively engage with one another to create value 'for oneself and others in each moment and in every interaction with everyone and everything' (Goulah, 2021: xvi). This idea challenges the passive acceptance of difference, understanding and respect, and emphasises the active role of citizens in terms of engagement with others and the centrality of personal responsibility.

Ikeda's view of global citizenship is not limited to simply tolerating difference, but emphasises the notion of taking individual responsibility to achieve personal and societal growth. According to Ikeda, taking individual responsibility means recognising the infinite connections between self and others by embracing and learning from difference, rather than fearing it. In Ikeda's (2021) view, this responsibility involves acts of personal transformation by embracing opportunities for self-development through our daily interactions with others. This aligns with the notion that global citizens are individually responsible and aware of their role as world citizens (Oxfam, 2015). Additionally, Ikeda's (2021) belief that enhancing one's own life contributes to the well-being of others aligns with the meaning of global consciousness, as individual growth can lead to improved societal well-being.

As with the term *difference*, comparable emphasis in the literature is placed on *interconnectedness*, as evidenced by Theme 3. To be aware of interconnectedness in its many forms is to embrace difference and diversity by actively pursuing opportunities for shared and meaningful relationships between self and others. This premise is fundamental to global citizenship, as such recognition promotes a respectful and collaborative process whereby experiences are shared and common goals are realised (Scott and Cnaan, 2020). With respect to education, there is a consensus among scholars that global citizenship education should inspire interconnectedness (King de Ramirez, 2021), as recognising the interdependency of citizens is key to citizenship education (Aydin and Cinkaya, 2018). The value of interconnectedness is centrally located in Ikeda's account of global citizenship, as interconnectedness and the pursuit of imaginative empathy are articulated in his essential elements of global citizenship.

Our research identifies a complementary relationship between interconnectedness and difference. Interconnectedness cannot be realised without an appreciation for alterity and acknowledgement of difference cannot be embraced without interconnectedness, as both are required to identify what Ikeda (2010: 113) refers to as 'the infinite extent of our relations' and what it means to realise a 'mutually supportive life'. The similarities identified between the accounts of global citizenship by Ikeda and in the academic literature add greater emphasis to those aspects of global citizenship which are inherently fundamental (that is, interconnectedness and difference).

While the congruency between the understandings of Ikeda and in contemporary scholarship are noteworthy, of equal interest are those aspects that are unique to Ikeda's interpretation. The terms *wisdom*, *courage* and *compassion*, which play a critical role in Ikeda's articulation of global citizenship, were shown to have a stronger presence in the Ikeda-citing sources than non-Ikeda-citing sources. This troika of personal attributes, often mentioned by Ikeda, is derived from the Buddhist philosophy to which he adheres and its relationship to global citizenship (Ikeda, 2021). According to Buddhist philosophy, wisdom encourages the practice of connecting with all forms of life, compassion enables citizens to find commonalities in difference and courage motivates these efforts and ensures that citizens find the good in any person (Ikeda, 2021). This perspective uniquely frames citizenship in terms of personal transformation and growth. It frames the connection between Buddhism and global citizenship in terms of the wisdom, courage and compassion that is inherent in the Buddhist concept of bodhisattva, which, according to Ikeda (2010: 114), is a 'modern exemplar of the global citizen'. According to the Soka Soka Gakkai (2020b), 'The bodhisattva's practice is one of ardent commitment to self-development while also seeking to ease the suffering of others and bring happiness and benefit to them.'

Conceptualising global citizenship through a Buddhist lens adds a humanistic perspective that looks at global citizenship as more of a way of life than a skill to be taught. Morais and Ogden (2011) posit that while social responsibility, global competence and civic engagement are fundamental dimensions of global citizenship, the operationalisation of social responsibility remains unclear. As social responsibility concerns individual empathy, responsibility and the pursuit of global justice, the values of wisdom, courage and compassion might present a pathway to strengthening individual responsibility and personal transformation. As such, this added perspective provides an opportunity to further explore discourse with respect to the relationship between Buddhist philosophy and global citizenship.

## Conclusion

This research explored aspects of Daisaku Ikeda's understanding of global citizenship that resonate with the conceptualisation of the term in contemporary scholarship. Thirty relatively contemporary scholarly articles were examined using a qualitative meta-synthesis methodology. By conducting this meta-synthesis through the lens of Ikeda's essential elements of global citizenship, potentially useful contributions to the global citizenship discourse have been identified.

While the terms *difference*, *understanding* and *respect* were each reflected in 40 per cent of the Ikeda-citing sources, they all had a significantly stronger representation in the non-Ikeda-citing sources. In contrast, *interconnectedness* was referenced in 80 per cent of the Ikeda-citing sources, but less frequently (in 56 per cent) of the non-Ikeda-citing sources. These findings suggest certain discrepancies between the characterisations of global citizenship in the literature and by Ikeda; however, they also highlight shared concepts that are commonly attributed to global citizenship. Among all the identified keywords (and their derivatives) explored in this study, the terms *difference*, *understanding*, *respect* and *interconnected* had the strongest collective presence in the literature examined. Furthermore, the findings suggest a consensus or mutual understanding of fundamental terms that appear to express a shared conceptualisation of global citizenship within the contemporary academic literature, and to a certain extent, align with Ikeda's view.

Additionally, this research identifies a unique conceptualisation of global citizenship from the perspective of Ikeda. Specifically, the terms *wisdom*, *courage* and *compassion* were frequently used in the Ikeda-citing sources, and they had a very limited presence in the non-Ikeda-citing sources. We suggest that the rootedness of *wisdom*, *courage* and *compassion* in Ikeda's conceptualisation derive from Buddhist teachings that demonstrate the inherent connection between Buddhist philosophy and global citizenship. Ikeda views 'religious spirit' as being essential for global citizenship (Goulah, 2020), which suggests a unique opportunity to expand this perspective for building upon the evolving discourse

concerning the essential qualities of a global citizen, as well as for educational practices specific to global citizenship.

There are some limitations of the research to be noted. Chief among them are the restriction of the literature search to English-language scholarship, and the relative paucity of Ikeda-citing sources in the meta-synthesis. While the language issue was intentional due to the limitations of the researchers' linguistic comprehension skills beyond English, further meta-synthesis using non-English-language publications could be an area for further study. In addition, future inclusion of the growing research on Soka and Ikeda studies would be a useful supplement to this initial research. While the research maintained a systematic approach to meta-synthesis methodology, it is also acknowledged that there may be contextual limitations to this study. Specifically, qualitative meta-synthesis tends to lose the descriptions that validate details of the original studies (Hammer et al., 2009). Notwithstanding this limitation, the study's carefully formulated, structured and consistent approach to extraction and examination of key terms and concepts provides reassurance that the data used to develop the study's themes illuminate new ideas and findings that are important to the field of global citizenship. Finally, it is acknowledged that within the 30 articles used for the meta-synthesis, some important typologies or understandings of global citizenship may not have been captured in the research. This is to be expected in a study using a fraction of the published literature produced about the subject matter. With the ongoing expansion of global citizenship research (Pais and Costa, 2020), it would be useful to locate Ikeda's understanding of global citizenship more extensively within the broader literature, both as a uniquely theoretical and as a practical blueprint for further study.

This research has provided an opportunity to examine and synthesise contemporary scholarship in global citizenship, and its many descriptions of the term. While several functional definitions of global citizenship currently exist, largely sharing common terminologies and concepts, we offer an alternative definition through this study's thematic development, in the hope that this contribution is helpful in further elucidating the critical components of global citizenship. To this end, we define a global citizen as someone who embraces alterity, is open-minded and respectful of diverse values and beliefs, and appreciates the interrelatedness of local and global shared similarities and differences.

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