OUKA
The University of Osaka
Institutional Knowledge Archive

Title	A Mixed-Method Sequential Explanatory Study of English-Speaking Graduate International Students' On-Campus Satisfaction at Japanese Leading Universities
Author(s)	Rakhshandehroo, Mahboubeh
Citation	大阪大学, 2019, 博士論文
Version Type	
URL	https://hdl.handle.net/11094/72475
rights	
Note	やむを得ない事由があると学位審査研究科が承認したため、全文に代えてその内容の要約を公開しています。全文のご利用をご希望の場合は、大阪大学の博士論文についてをご参照ください。

The University of Osaka Institutional Knowledge Archive : OUKA

https://ir.library.osaka-u.ac.jp/

The University of Osaka

Form 3

Abstract of Thesis

Name （Rakhshandehroo Mahboubeh）	
Title	A Mixed-Method Sequential Explanatory Study of English-Speaking Graduate International Students' On-Campus Satisfaction at Japanese Leading Universities (日本のリーディング大学において英語で勉強している大学院留学生の満足に関する混合研究法説明的順次スタディ)

Abstract of Thesis

One of the Japanese government's main initiatives for internationalization of higher education (IoHE) at home is increasing the number of international students. English-medium programs/courses are being increasingly offered to promote student recruitment and to internationalize the on-campus atmosphere. Nevertheless, the government has been criticized for focusing on the number of English programs/courses and the number of international students, without paying sufficient attention to providing adequate support for students from diverse backgrounds, especially for those who come to Japan with little Japanese proficiency, who are also likely to be second language (L2) speakers of English, as well as coming with little knowledge regarding Japan's culture.

The expansion of English-Medium Instruction (EMI) in Japan has resulted in a few, but a rapidly growing number of studies looking at undergraduate level; however, little has been conducted at the graduate level. This study presents an explanatory investigation of the on-campus university support environment of graduate international students who are studying primarily in English-medium. It provides a case study of two leading Japanese universities with different funding bases (one national and the other private). Qualitative data from in-depth interviews of full-degree English-taught programs (ETPs) organizers, EMI/ETPs support office staff and professors, and qualitative and quantitative data from an online questionnaire with follow up in-depth interviews of English-speaking graduate international students were collected.

The study participants reported challenging areas, however, the majority of the student study participants were satisfied with the overall university support. This was mainly resulted due to informal support from international student support office staff, EMI/ETPs professors/supervisors and student tutors. Nevertheless, structural challenges (formal support) were reported as the main challenging area, particularly related to the administrative infrastructure (largely monolingual, complicated, requires lots of paperwork), especially in social sciences and humanities, where a shortage of experienced bilingual EMI/ETPs staff and professors were reported.

The support provided for the students varied greatly, based on resources, laboratory and departmental settings. In engineering and sciences, a greater systematization of support was highlighted such as providing sufficient bilingual announcements, emails, seminars, and classes. However, in social science and humanities, there was a greater tendency to rely on international student support office staff, student tutors and/or supervisors to look after international students. Many of these graduate students came prepared to study entirely in English, and most came with a low level of Japanese proficiency. Many had busy schedules especially in engineering and science fields, that the majority study, which requires long hours of research experiments. Therefore, they had limited opportunities for improving their Japanese language during their stay in Japan, thus, they were potentially in need of more English language support including bilingual information, announcements, and classes.

In order to provide a better support network for the English-speaking graduate international students, the following recommendation areas –which are largely in line with the pre-existing literature – were identified by the study participants: 1) Providing more bilingual (English and Japanese), and more flexible (in terms of bureaucracy) administrative infrastructure (forms, announcements, information) 2) Providing sufficient information to students before and after arrival 3) Enhancing the quality and quantity of on-campus Japanese

language learning classes 3) Providing more opportunities for Japanese students to interact with international students including intercultural seminars and workshops with the two-sided approach that considers the needs of both domestic and international students 4) Hiring more international staff who speak fluent English and have international experiences, especially in humanities and social sciences 5) Providing more English classes/seminars.

Although the scope of this dissertation was limited to two leading universities, the implications go beyond this case study. The results are expected to help reduce challenges faced by all stakeholders and enhance the learning environment for English-speaking graduate international students in Japanese universities. With the Japanese government's continuous efforts to increase the number of international students and to expand EMI/ETPs, more quantitative research would be needed to explore the specific needs of different groups of students in order to provide specific support for them, and to contribute to building a better profile for the Japanese HEIs in the competitive rankings.

様式 7

論文審査の結果の要旨及び担当者

氏　　名　（Mahboubeh Rakhshandehroo）			
		（職）	氏　　名
論文審査担当者	主 査	教授	山本　ベバリーアン
	副 査	教授	中道　正之
	副 査	教授	Scott North

論文審査の結果の要旨

Title: **A Mixed-Method Sequential Explanatory Study of English-Speaking Graduate International Students' On-Campus Satisfaction at Japanese Leading Universities**

This study builds on the growing body of literature focusing on the expansion of English medium instruction (EMI) in Japanese universities. It fits within the research field of the internationalization of higher education and makes a contribution by investigating the satisfaction and support needs of post-graduate students studying in the English medium in two Japanese universities, one a National University Corporation (NUC) and the other a private university foundation.

The introduction of the Global 30 Project (Global 30 Project - Establishing University Network for Internationalization, *sic*.) in 2009 resulted in the creation of a number of English Taught Programs (ETPS) at undergraduate level in universities that previously had little experience in this area. This stimulated considerable scholarly research interest focusing on policy creation, program implementation and educational outcomes, the latter especially regards internationalization criteria both for EMI students and the wider host campus. The policy of using EMI as a tool for internationalization has continued with the Top Global University project, launched in 2014 and still on-going. This project involves a large number of universities and has been a catalyst for a dramatic expansion in EMI and ETPs at graduate level.

To date, the experiences and particular needs of graduate students studying in the English medium has not received as much attention as undergraduate students. As such, this doctoral research fills a gap in the literature and is timely.

This study had three primary objectives: 1) To clarify the consequences of different models of support for international students studying in the English medium in Japanese universities; 2) To identify good practices on campus regards support as well challenges; 3) To draw up recommendations for effective support of EMI graduate students studying at Japanese universities. In order to realize these objectives, three research questions drove the research; 1) How are students studying in the English medium at graduate level at Japanese universities being supported? 2) What, if any, are the associations between student's backgrounds and their on-campus satisfaction and/or dissatisfaction? 3) How can these students best be supported on campus?

The study was exploratory employing a qualitatively driven mixed-method sequential study design. Data was collected from two case study universities – both top research universities, and as mentioned one a NUC and the other private. An on-line survey was conducted targeting graduate students studying primarily in the English medium at the two case study universities with the aim of gaining an overview of student experiences. The second phase involved in-depth semi-structured interviews with some survey participants, but also academic staff teaching or supervising in the English medium and international office support staff. The design of the research was appropriate given the objectives of the study, but the case study approach limits the generalizability of the findings. The volume of data collected was sufficient to address the research questions, although the interviews with non-student stakeholders were limited.

Given earlier literature on student taking EMI/ETP related course, the results were somewhat predictable, but give us a better insight into the graduate international student

experience. It was found that universities administrative procedures and practices created challenges for students studying in English as most were not able to independently comply with requirements and needed support from supervisors and/or peers. There were also complaints that the study environment was primarily monolingual, Japanese, rather than bilingual, Japanese and English, as had been expected by most. There was disappointment that fellow students in labs were often not able or willing to speak in English or help with the development of the students' Japanese proficiency. The students reported being highly reliant on supervisors and student tutors assigned to support them. Drawing on Ishikawa's work (211), this was identified as a paternalistic model and barrier to student independence. This was contrasted with a global competitiveness model where an environment is created where the student has autonomy. Perhaps, surprisingly, however, given earlier studies of undergraduates, students at both case study universities were largely satisfied with their experience and many were motivated to stay on in Japan in the future. This is an interesting result and deserves further exploration.

Overall the thesis was of a high standard. While the writing was polished, the Committee felt that further editing would have made it an easier read. The literature review was comprehensive, demonstrating a wide and deep knowledge of the research on the internationalization of higher education in Japan. There were many clear, polished tables and figures that presents all the data you would want to see regards the internationalization of higher education in Japan. At more than 70 pages in length, it will probably be much read by new students to the field, but it was quite demanding of those of us with less time. The research design chapter was (perhaps overly) verbose, going into considerable detail about why the chosen methods were appropriate for the study. Both chapters would have been easier to read if more focused. We do not actually get to the findings until page 117. While considerable space was given to introducing theoretical and methodological models, they were not all used when it

came to discussing results.

The reporting of the findings was competent. The handling and presentation of data was of a high standard. It was felt that the interview transcripts focused perhaps too much on negative comments given that the survey findings had found a surprisingly high level of student satisfaction. If the aim of the interviews was to better understanding the findings in the surveys, then focusing on reasons for satisfaction would have made more sense.

The discussion chapter expanded on each of the main study findings to place them within the context of existing literature on the topic. It also elaborated on practical recommendations drawn from the findings to improve on-campus support. Given cuts in university funding, this is something of a wish list. This notwithstanding, the expansion of EMI/ETPS in Japanese universities means that the insights from this research could be drawn on as a resource for those involved in program policy and implementation.

The study set out to achieve three objectives. The Committee felt that all three objectives were met, but that the second research question did not receive sufficient focus. Research question two asked how student satisfaction was mediated by background factors, but the examination was rather superficial. Following this further would be a good topic for future research. The contribution of this study is largely practical. The value of the research is confirmed by one journal publication derived from the literature review and two peer reviewed publications generated from the results.