

# English Abstracts

# The Transformation of Distance Universities in Japan and the Future of Quality Assurance: An Imminent Crisis

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In recent years, enrollment at distance universities in Japan has been on the rise, with a particularly sharp increase among young people within two years of high school graduation. Factors behind this trend include growing awareness of online classes, a shift in perceptions of distance education due to the proliferation and expansion of distance high schools, young people's desire for time flexibility and self-actualization, and the lower cost of tuition and transportation. However, the relaxation of requirements for on-campus sessions and the advancement of online classes are diluting the spatiality previously established by distance universities and the relationships built on report submissions and feedback. On the other hand, efforts are being made to compensate for this through enhanced learning support and the active introduction of extracurricular activities.

This paper organizes these new trends in distance universities in Japan and examines the quality assurance required of them.

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# The Establishment Background and Educational Practices of ZEN University: Initiatives of a Fully Online University

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This paper reports on the background and educational practices of ZEN University, a fully online institution launched in 2025. Drawing from work on doctoral career issues and multisector collaboration at Kyushu University, this article addressed the expansion of educational opportunities via digital initiatives. ZEN University emerged from the “media revolution” and in response to persistent disparities in Japan’s higher education enrollment concerning geography, economy, gender, and academic fit. Online universities mitigate these challenges by reducing financial burdens, equalizing access, providing flexibility, and offering diverse specialized courses. ZEN University’s Faculty of Social Informatics, for example, employs a hybrid model of on-demand and interactive learning that is supported by (full-time) class coaches and academic/career advisors, and teaching assistants. Its institutional strengths include scale efficiency, face-to-face interaction through extracurriculars, and protected research time for faculty. Regional, corporate, and international partnerships further promote practical learning. The inaugural cohort—primarily young students nationwide—cited a lack of a transportation and affordable tuition as primary enrollment factors. ZEN University represents a new academic model for rectifying these educational inequalities and fostering lifelong learning capabilities.

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President, ZEN University

# The Current State of Japanese Correspondence High Schools and Issues of Students' University Choices: Focusing on the Organization of Key Issues Concerning High School-University Connections

UCHIDA Yasuhiro

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This study analyzed and organized the key issues surrounding the university choices of Japanese correspondence high school graduates while outlining their expansion based on government statistics and previous research. The analysis revealed that correspondence high schools—particularly private institutions—have seen a rising proportion of teenage students. This trend stems from increases to linear progression to higher education among students graduating from junior high schools and non-linear progression among students transferring between high schools. One contributing factor to this simultaneous growth is the expanding demand for the wide-area correspondence high schools and correspondence education cooperative facilities, reflecting the unique learning format of Japanese correspondence high schools. The results also highlight a growing tendency toward enrolling in university after graduation, particularly among private school graduates, though this situation varied significantly by prefecture. Therefore, this study further examined the connection between Japanese correspondence high schools and universities from institutional, practical, and research perspectives, indicating the importance of survey design to accurately capture the actual university enrollment patterns of correspondence high school graduates.

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# Interactive Learning in a Nonface-to-Face Cyberspace: Evidence from Peer Assessment among Approximately 1,300 Participants

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This paper presents an educational practice for a large-scale, on-demand, online course of approximately 1,300 students. It introduces a report grading method that combines mutual peer evaluation with grader assessment using a learning management system. This approach leverages the inherent flexibility of time and place in on-demand instruction. By integrating the capability for students to view and evaluate assignments across temporal and spatial boundaries, this method offers a fair evaluation method for a large student body. It simultaneously fosters interactive and reciprocal learning. Such outcomes are typically extremely challenging in conventional face-to-face lectures. Although delivered on-demand, the course promotes dialogic, active, and bidirectional learning comparable to—or even surpassing—classroom-based instruction. Accordingly, this paper positions such practice as “instruction in non-face-to-face cyberspace,” contrasting it with the physical classroom environment. This conceptual framework offers a new approach for online education.

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# Structural Marginalization of English Faculty at a Music College: Professional Recognition through Abbott's System of Professions

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This autoethnographic study draws on the author's experience as a full-time English faculty member at a music college to explore how the professionalism of English instructors is constrained and reproduced through the interplay between institutional structures and organizational culture. Employing Abbott's (1988) *System of Professions* as the theoretical framework, the study analyzes field notes and institutional documents collected between 1999 and 2025.

The analysis reveals that English faculty tend to be situated within a structure of marginalization shaped by three interrelated factors: institutional conditions that obscure the boundaries of their professional domain, the destabilization of jurisdiction resulting from limited participation in institutional decision-making, and a prevailing "performance-first" cultural ethos. These dynamics hinder the recognition of English faculty's professional expertise and contribute to reduced job satisfaction and emotional exhaustion, undermining overall faculty well-being.

By elucidating these institutional and cultural mechanisms, the paper examines how professional recognition, job satisfaction, and well-being are constructed and reproduced through their interrelationship. It additionally reconceptualizes English education as an interdisciplinary domain connected to music education and identifies two key institutional reforms for enhancing professional recognition and restoring well-being: diversifying faculty evaluation and strengthening the structural foundations that support cross-disciplinary collaboration.

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# Institutional Mobility Intentions and Job Satisfaction of Model Minority University Faculties in the United States

KATO Maki

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This study examined the retention intentions and job satisfaction of Asian Female Foreign Faculty (AFFF) at US universities. Motivated by the disproportionate presence of women among Japanese faculty who earn terminal degrees abroad, it investigated the factors influencing AFFFs' potential returns to Japan. Using COACHE data from 2012–2020, the analysis showed that AFFFs reported lower satisfaction with professional and personal faculty interactions than White US faculty and lower professional interaction satisfaction than Asian male foreign faculty. Their retention intentions were uncertain, which is a common pattern among foreign faculty. Retention was linked to institutional adjustment factors like departmental belonging, mirroring trends observed in other demographic groups. Overall, AFFFs experienced low interaction satisfaction and weak belonging amid uncertain career prospects, conditions that may contribute to increased mobility despite not being unique to this group. The findings also suggest that the relationship between job satisfaction and retention intentions varies by attributes like race or nationality: White US faculty showed high satisfaction but weak retention intentions, whereas Asian foreign faculty showed lower satisfaction and uncertain retention intentions.

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# Job Satisfaction and Organizational Adaptation among Non-Tenure-track Faculty: Organizational Support and Interpersonal Relationships in US Universities

MATSUMOTO Miyuki

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This study investigated how organizational support and interpersonal relationships in the workplace influence the job satisfaction of non-tenure-track (NTT) faculty in US universities, specifically focusing on the mediating role of organizational adaptation. Utilizing data from the Collaborative on Academic Careers in Higher Education, the study employed structural equation modeling and multi-group analysis to examine these dynamics across different tenure statuses. The results indicate that both organizational support and rich interpersonal relationships significantly enhanced organizational adaptation, which in turn contributed to increased job satisfaction among NTT. Notably, NTT faculty perceived institutional support to be equal to or higher than those of tenured and tenure-track faculty, and the impact of such support on organizational adaptation was most pronounced for the NTT group. This suggests that the provision of institutional and physical resources is particularly vital for fostering a sense of belonging and adaptation among NTT faculty. Conversely, the influence of interpersonal relationships on organizational adaptation was greater among tenured faculty. Finally, the effect of organizational adaptation on job satisfaction was more substantial for NTT and tenure-track faculty compared to their tenured counterparts. These findings underscore the necessity of implementing multilayered support systems tailored to the specific needs of faculty members based on their employment status.

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# The Significance and Future of Teaching Portfolios as FD Programs and Their Derivative Tools

KURITA Kayoko

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The teaching portfolio has become widely established in the United States and Europe as a material for evaluating educational achievements, whereas in Japan it is still in the process of gaining wider acceptance. In the Japanese context, teaching portfolios are used less as formal evaluation instruments and more as tools to support educational improvement through reflection.

This paper reviews the teaching portfolio and its derivative tools from the perspective of faculty development, with a particular focus on their function as structured reflection tools for educational improvement. By tracing the origins, purposes, and basic structure of the teaching portfolio, the paper clarifies how reflective practice is embedded in its design. It then comparatively examines related formats—namely the TP Chart, the Teaching Statement, and the Academic Portfolio and its worksheet-based form, the AP Chart—highlighting differences in scope, depth of reflection, required time, and suitability for various faculty development contexts. Drawing on adult learning theory and established models of reflection proposed by Schön, Kolb, and Korthagen as a conceptual backdrop, the paper discusses how these tools can be appropriately selected and implemented according to institutional goals and participants' needs, and considers their potential for sustainable and meaningful use in Japanese higher education.

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# Deliberations on the Aims and Characteristics of Higher Education During the Transition to Massification: The Categorization of Universities by Curriculum

TOMURA Osamu

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This study examines how the 1971 report of the Central Council for Education positioned the aims and characteristics of Japanese universities during the massification of higher education. The study focuses on the “Basic Concept for the Reform of Higher Education,” analyzing its approach to university categorization and educational curricula.

The post-war university system, while upholding ideals of academic research, professional training, and civic development, faced challenges in fully realizing these goals. Consequently, Japanese higher education confronted the dual pressures of massification and increasing specialization.

The 26th Special Committee considered categorizing universities and establishing new curricula, including Integrated Professional Education and Specialized Professional Education. Ultimately, the committee abandoned the initial plan for university categorization, instead proposing a system based on differentiated curriculum patterns.

This shift reflected an effort to fundamentally re-evaluate curricula and transition from a traditional elite university model to a new mass-based higher education system. It also prompted critical reflection on how academics themselves perceived the purpose and nature of university education.

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# Why Do Japanese University Students Study Abroad?: Local Logics Underlying the Value of Global Mobility

KOBAYASHI Genki

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This study examines how Japanese university students construct the meaning of their study-abroad experiences in relation to their aspirations for occupational achievement amid the globalization of the economy and education. We conducted qualitative interviews with students planning to study abroad and analyzed the norms and values underpinning their motivations, drawing on the conceptual distinction between instrumental orientations (studying abroad as a means to career success) and consummatory orientations (studying abroad as an end in itself). Three key findings emerged. First, students cited the acquisition of English proficiency, broader perspectives, and active intercultural communication as instrumental motivations, whereas a sense of adventure and the desire to immerse themselves in English-speaking environments reflected consummatory motivations. Second, the growing prevalence of studying abroad has prompted students to differentiate their own experiences as meaningful, leading them to place greater value on longer-term stays and experiences that contribute to personal growth. Third, an instrumental orientation mediated by self-growth was observed: students framed their study-abroad experiences as evidence of personal development, which in turn served as a pathway to occupational achievement. These findings highlight a local logic in which study-abroad experiences are not treated as direct proof of evidence of globally transferable competencies. Rather, they function as an indirect narrative demonstrating self-development and growth-oriented qualities that are valued by Japanese domestic firms.

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# The Impact of the Growth of English-Medium Instruction (EMI) in Non-Anglophone Countries on International Student Mobility: A Quantitative Comparison of Japan, China, and South Korea

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In recent years, English-Medium Instruction (EMI) programs have surged in popularity worldwide in non-Anglophone countries. In Japan, EMI study abroad opportunities in non-Anglophone countries are emerging as a new option in addition to traditional destinations in English-speaking countries. However, while previous studies on EMI have addressed practical, institutional, and policy-related challenges, they have often assumed a natural link between the growth of English-Taught Programs (ETPs) and increased international student mobility, without critically examining the connection.

This study investigates the relationship between the number of ETPs and the number of outbound international students from Japan, using China and South Korea as comparative cases. It also analyzes the characteristics of degree programs, including doctoral programs, offered by ETPs in non-Anglophone countries that host large numbers of students from these three East Asian countries.

The results indicate no direct correlation between the increase in ETPs and the number of international students from Japan, China, and South Korea. This suggests that the expansion of ETPs alone does not significantly influence students' study abroad decisions, which are likely shaped by multiple interrelated factors. Moreover, the content and structure of ETPs vary considerably across countries and regions.

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# A Study of Faculty Establishment at Prestigious Private Universities in Japan: Based on the Faculty Procurement Methods for Faculties Established since 2004

MIZUNO Yusuke

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This study examines faculty establishment patterns at prestigious private universities in Japan, namely, Keio University, Chuo University, Hosei University, Meiji University, Rikkyo University, Waseda University, Doshisha University, Ritsumeikan University, Kansai University, and Kwansai Gakuin University, since 2004.

This study grouped 51 faculties into five categories based on the faculty procurement methods. Category 1 includes faculties established through the reorganization of existing faculties, category 2 through resources of foreign language education and research organizations or junior colleges, category 3 through resources of existing faculties as the core, category 4 through the merging of faculty members from multiple faculties within the university, and category 5 through the acquisition of new resources outside the university.

This study then analyzed the characteristics of faculty establishment per category. Findings showed that the education and research fields of the examined faculties are influenced by the faculty procurement method of each category. Furthermore, the analysis suggested that whether or not the faculty establishment has an expansion effect is partially related to the categories and is also influenced by each university's management context.

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# Internationalizing University Selection and Career Guidance: Cases from Japanese High Schools Sending Students Abroad

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OTA Kazusa\*\*  
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This study investigated the current practices of Japanese high school career guidance for overseas university enrolment through the perceptions of the teachers involved. Semi-structured interviews were conducted from October 2024 to January 2025 at eight schools—mainly in the Tokyo metropolitan area—that send significant numbers of students to overseas universities. Many participating schools were emerging academic institutions with large populations of returnee students, with up to forty students per school enrolling abroad. Students enrolling in overseas universities were perceived as diverse in both motivation and academic achievement, demonstrating value orientations and learning preferences that were distinct from those pursuing domestic pathways. Their parents were described as having comparatively strong international backgrounds. Career guidance was designed to broaden students' options and emphasized respect for their autonomous decision-making. Meanwhile, students, parents, and some private school personnel demonstrated higher awareness of global university rankings. The introduction of overseas-oriented guidance was generally attributed to student demand and initially driven by educators' sense of mission, which subsequently contributed to enhancing the schools' reputations.

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# Designing a Curriculum to Develop Competencies: Examining the Effectiveness of PEPA

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To investigate curriculum design effective in developing competencies, we conducted interviews with graduates of a dental education program structured around Pivotal Embedded Performance Assessment (PEPA) in Key Courses. Our analysis examined the relationship between graduates' attainment of the program's educational goals—specifically problem-solving and dental clinical abilities—and the variations in their narratives.

Graduates who were assessed as having successfully developed the targeted competencies demonstrated the ability to integrate, apply, and externalize the knowledge and skills acquired through lectures and practical training in key courses. They also engaged in deliberate relearning of areas where knowledge or skills were initially insufficient, guided by outcomes of their activities. Moreover, they perceived multiple key courses as opportunities to leverage feedback obtained from diverse interactions, including those with faculty, and engaged in iterative, reflective learning. In essence, these graduates understood the underlying design of the curriculum and intentionally leveraged it to enhance their learning.

Analysis of these students' experienced curriculum suggests that cultivating competencies is most effective when a program: (1) establishes a sequence of key courses designed to scaffold learning, (2) implements performance assessments that require demonstration of higher-order, integrated abilities, and (3) provides structured feedback to promote reflection and self-directed learning.

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# The Meaning Attributed to University Location and the Process of Establishment and Development: A Comparative Analysis of Three Universities in Chiba Prefecture

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This paper analyzes the locational behavior of universities by focusing on the process of location selection and the circumstances under which universities carry out behaviors such as founding, relocating, and settling in specific regions. It additionally explores compares these locational behaviors depending on the meanings universities attach to the region in which they are located.

Chiba Prefecture, a prefecture adjacent to Tokyo that has been strongly influenced by university location policies, was selected as the subject with multiple universities available for case studies to clarify universities' autonomy in location behavior. These universities were from diverse locational backgrounds within Chiba Prefecture, including suburban, urban, local, nonlocal. Their founding process and subsequent location behaviors exhibited diverse patterns, but three overall commonalities became evident.

First, the person who led in a location action held that position for a long period of time. Second, the location behaviors were not limited to the universities themselves but were carried out throughout their respective related educational institutions, including affiliated junior and senior high schools. Third, the behaviors were carried out based on the subjective decisions of founders and managing authorities with no direct involvement from external entities such as prefectural or municipal governments.

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# Correlation between Female Students' Gender-related Career Education and Their Interest in Gender Issues and Work-Life Balance Awareness

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This study examined the relationship between female students' participation in such education in high school and university, and their interest in gender issues, support for work-family balance, and desire for dual-income households, from the perspective of career support grounded in social justice, while focusing on the educational stage (high school/university). First, among current university students, approximately 30% had taken gender-related career education, with more women participating and a higher proportion taking the courses at the university level. Second, those who took gender-related career education in high school were significantly more likely to take it in university. Third, taking gender-related career education in both high school and university showed a significant positive correlation with interest in gender issues and being in favor of showing balancing work and family life. Taking it only in university showed a significant positive correlation with interest in gender issues and the desire for dual-income households. Conversely, while those who took it only in high school showed a significant positive correlation before controlling for variables, no significant difference remained after controlling for variables, including interest in gender issues or work-family balance awareness. Furthermore, while interest in gender issues mediated the relationship between taking courses in both high school and university and support for balancing work and family, no similar mediating effect was observed for the desire for dual-income households. These results indicate that interest, normative awareness, and career preferences are linked to gender-related career education through different pathways and at different educational stages.

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# Graduate-initiated Voluntary Seminars in Professional Graduate Schools: Educational Significance and Learning Outcomes

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This study examined the outcomes and challenges of graduate-initiated voluntary seminars for continuing education among alumni of professional graduate schools in education, based on views from those who organized and participated in these seminars. To this end, a group interview was conducted with four graduate organizers, and the data was analysed using the Qualitative Integration Method, also known as the KJ Method. The self-organized seminars were found to be valuable learning opportunities for graduates, who often face limited chances for continued learning after completing their programs. These seminars served as a catalyst for sustaining and habitualizing learning. Furthermore, by learning with current students, graduates gained opportunities for growth through two-way engagement. The collaborative involvement of multiple members in the operations expanded the potential of the community and enriched mutual learning. Although the ambiguity of the seminars' framework posed operational challenges, embracing this ambiguity as a characteristic of the learning community was essential for establishing a community of practice.

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# Job Satisfaction and Loyalty among University Administrative Staff: Relationships with Psychological Safety and Desirable Work Behaviors

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This study explored ways to enhance university administrative staff's job fulfillment and intention to remain, focusing on two constructs: psychological safety and internal customer orientation. It examined the reliability of these scales and clarified their relationships with a collaborative workplace climate, the work behaviors of university staff, job satisfaction, and loyalty. Using on a nationwide survey of university administrative staff in Japan, researchers conducted factor analyses and structural equation modeling. The results showed high reliability for the scales of psychological safety, learning behaviors, job satisfaction, and loyalty, whereas the scales for internal customer orientation and collaborative workplace required reconsideration. The fourteen items capturing proactive work behaviors exhibited a three-factor structure of task, cognitive, and relational dimensions. Psychological safety was found to positively influence internal customer orientation, the three dimensions of proactive work behaviors, and learning behaviors. It also had significant direct effects on job satisfaction and loyalty. In contrast, direct paths from desirable behaviors to attitudinal outcomes (job satisfaction, loyalty) were not significant. The findings thus underscore the foundational importance of psychological safety for job satisfaction and loyalty among university administrative staff.

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