

University Support Services, Intercultural Communication, and Languages Barriers: A Comparative Study of two Japanese Universities

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Abstract. The movement to push Japanese education into an age of internationalization came to realization in 1982 with the formation of the Nakasone Government. The ambitious 1983 target of bringing 100,000 foreign students to Japan was finally achieved in 2003 under Prime Minister Nakasone's original "International Student 100,000 Plan". Since that time, The Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) has focused its effort on internationalizing its universities by developing an educational system called the Global 30 Project (G30), a plan which is meant to attract 300,000 foreign students by 2020. The G30 Project and similar policies aim to transform Japan into an international education hub. Although these policies seem theoretically sound and viable, the intended outcome of internationalizing Japanese universities is sometimes not achieved. The policies that have shaped the internationalization of Japanese universities are based on increasing the number of foreign students on campus to internationalize the institution, culture and curriculum.

Data presented in this paper is based on surveys involving 46 respondents conducted at two large (one national, one private), prestigious universities in Japan.

This comparative study focuses on university support services, language, and intercultural communication and issues that affect international students on a daily basis. Analyses from the surveys indicate differences in how international students feel towards their respective universities in terms of support services and intercultural communication opportunities. Findings of this exploratory report will be used for a more comprehensive look into the internationalization of Japanese universities.