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COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVES ON STUDENT EXPERIENCES: INSIGHTS FROM JAPAN, CHINA, AND USA

Abstract:

Amidst the complex interplay of global power dynamics, geopolitical tensions, and the emergence of global crises, there has been a heightened scrutiny of the academic landscape within higher education institutions. Particularly, attention has been directed toward students, widely recognized as the heart of higher education (Oldac et al., 2023). The perceived improvement in the learning environment is intricately associated with enhanced academic performance (Lizzio et al., 2002), heightened satisfaction (Conrad et al., 2022), as well as increased engagement and attachment (Pasion et al., 2020) among students. Nevertheless, the convergence of these global forces, national policies, and institutional endeavors has inevitably engendered diverse learning environments over time, significantly shaping students' experiences.

Given the perceived decline in research productivity in Japan, this study endeavors to provide empirical evidence to Japanese higher education institutions. It seeks to comprehend the dynamics of higher education in Japan through an international comparative lens, juxtaposing Japan's academic environment with that of American and Chinese SERU member universities. The study utilizes quantitative datasets from an international survey titled "Student Experiences in Research Universities (SERU)," conducted recently in 2022 and 2023. A focused investigation into college students' perceptions at micro-individual levels (e.g., advising and guidance from supervisors), meso-program levels (e.g., affiliated majors or departments), and macro-university levels (e.g., university climate and support) was conducted.

Situated within an international framework, this study endeavors to enrich the shared comprehension of the Japanese academic environment and offer practical recommendations, aimed at nurturing a more favorable higher education landscape in Japan. These efforts are directed towards fostering an improved academic milieu, enhancing learning outcomes for students, and elevating the overall academic performance of Japan's higher education sector.

Keywords:

Student Experiences; Comparative Perspectives; International Survey