Navigating Psychological Frontiers: A Comparative Literature Review of Mental Health Challenges Among International Students in Japan and Erasmus+ Countries

Hoang-Nam Tran, Tokushima University, Japan

The Kyoto Conference on Arts, Media & Culture 2025
Official Conference Proceedings

Abstract

The rapid internationalization of higher education has increased global student mobility, bringing both academic opportunities and challenges. Among these, mental health concerns such as anxiety, depression, and cultural adjustment difficulties are increasingly reported by international students during their time abroad. Japan and the Erasmus+ countries, comprising key European higher education destinations, offer different sociocultural, linguistic, and institutional environments for students. Despite growing scholarly interest, comparative research on how these regional contexts shape the mental health outcomes of international students remains limited. This literature review synthesizes existing research on the mental health challenges faced by international students in Japan and Erasmus+ countries. Focusing on key themes such as acculturative stress, language barriers, academic pressure, social integration, and access to mental health services, the paper highlights both shared difficulties and context-specific patterns. By drawing cross-regional comparisons, this review contributes to a deeper understanding of how educational and sociocultural systems influence student well-being and points to implications for policy and institutional support systems.

Keywords: international students, mental health, acculturative stress, Japan, Erasmus+

iafor
The International Academic Forum
www.iafor.org

Introduction

The internationalization of higher education has accelerated dramatically in the 21st century, reshaping the academic, cultural, and demographic landscapes of universities worldwide. The pursuit of global competencies, intercultural exposure, and internationally recognized qualifications has fueled a sharp rise in international student mobility. According to UNESCO (UIS, 2025), over 6.4 million students were enrolled in tertiary-level education outside their home countries in 2022, a substantial increase from just 2 million in 2000. Asia remains the largest sending region, while Europe and North America continue to be the dominant destinations. However, countries like Japan are emerging as major hosts, challenging Western-centric models and offering alternative higher education experiences in culturally distinct contexts.

Japan has strategically positioned itself to become a regional hub for international education. The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) launched the Global 30 Project in 2009 and the Top Global University Project in 2014, both of which aim to internationalize Japanese higher education and enhance its global competitiveness (Ota, 2018; Yonezawa et al., 2009). As of May 2023, Japan hosted 231,146 international students, with the top three countries of origin being China (44.0%), Vietnam (24.5%), and Nepal (8.1%) (JASSO, 2025). Despite these numbers, international students in Japan frequently encounter linguistic, cultural, and institutional barriers, including a lack of English-language mental health services, a low tolerance for cultural deviation, and limited intercultural programming (Curle et al., 2023; Nakano et al., 2023). These challenges have prompted increasing concern about the psychological well-being of international students navigating Japan's rigid and homogenous academic culture.

In contrast, European Erasmus countries offer a model of regional integration that has become synonymous with interculturalism and mobility. The Erasmus Programme, established in 1987 and now operating under the broader Erasmus+ framework (since 2014), is the European Union's flagship initiative for education, training, youth, and sport. It supports both short-term and long-term mobility, enabling students to study or intern in another European country while receiving academic credit toward their home degrees. As of 2023, the Erasmus+ program had facilitated mobility for over 13 million participants, including more than 1.3 million higher education students between 2014 and 2020 alone (EC, 2025).

Participation in Erasmus+ is not limited to EU countries; it includes 33 programme countries (EU-27, Iceland, Liechtenstein, North Macedonia, Norway, Serbia, and Turkey) and numerous partner countries across the globe. In 2022 alone, Erasmus+ funded over 71,000 higher education mobility projects, including student and staff exchanges, with a budget of more than €3.9 billion, emphasizing both academic quality and inclusive access (EC, 2025). Unlike Japan's inward-focused internationalization, the Erasmus+ approach is rooted in multilateralism, co-funded institutional partnerships, and transnational student support systems like the Erasmus Student Network (ESN), which operates in over 40 countries to provide cultural, academic, and social integration.

Crucially, the Erasmus model embeds support mechanisms at both the institutional and community level, including pre-departure orientation, intercultural training, language support, and peer mentorship. Studies have consistently found that students who participate in Erasmus+ programs report higher levels of intercultural competence, employability, and psychological resilience (Resch & Amorim, 2021; Wächter & Maiworm, 2014). These

benefits are closely linked to structured support and culturally inclusive campus environments, particularly in countries like Finland, Germany, and the Netherlands, where institutions proactively cater to international students' academic and emotional needs.

By contrast, despite its policy efforts, Japan's internationalization remains constrained by a monolingual public sphere, low student-faculty interaction, and pervasive mental health stigma. The structural differences between Japan and Erasmus countries thus present a compelling basis for comparative analysis, especially regarding how institutional and sociocultural factors mediate international students' psychological well-being.

This paper aims to conduct a comparative literature review to evaluate the mental health challenges faced by international students in Japan and in Erasmus countries, focusing on five key domains: acculturation stress, language barriers, academic workload, social support, and access to mental health services. By analyzing the structural, cultural, and pedagogical factors that shape student experience in both contexts, this study seeks to identify best practices, persistent gaps, and actionable strategies for improving the global learning environment.

Methodology

This study employs a comparative literature review methodology, analyzing peer-reviewed articles published in English from 2005 to 2023. Data were collected from academic databases including PubMed, PsycINFO, ERIC, and Google Scholar. Keywords used included "international students," "mental health," "Japan," "Erasmus," "acculturation stress," and "student support." Studies included if they specifically addressed mental health outcomes and contributing factors among international students in the targeted regions. Priority was given to empirical studies, meta-analyses, and reviews with significant sample sizes and methodological rigor.

Findings and Discussion

Acculturation Stress

International students in both Japan and Erasmus countries experience significant levels of acculturation stress, though its intensity and specific manifestations vary considerably depending on the sociocultural and institutional context (Smith & Khawaja, 2011). In Japan, international students often face challenges stemming from the country's rigid societal norms, strong emphasis on group harmony, and high-context communication style, which collectively create a culturally homogeneous environment that can be difficult to penetrate (Nakano et al., 2023; Zhang & Steele, 2012). The absence of explicit communication and reliance on indirect expressions frequently result in misunderstandings and social withdrawal, particularly among students from low-context cultures who are unfamiliar with Japan's unspoken rules of interaction (Nakano et al., 2023). This situation is compounded by limited institutional support for intercultural awareness and intercultural skill-building, which inhibits students' ability to meaningfully integrate into academic and social settings (Zhang & Steele, 2012).

These pressures can contribute to psychological distress, including feelings of alienation, cultural fatigue, and identity confusion, as international students attempt to reconcile their own cultural values with those of the host society (Smith & Khawaja, 2011). In contrast,

many Erasmus countries, particularly in Western and Northern Europe, promote multiculturalism and intercultural competencies through proactive educational policies and inclusive practices. These nations tend to acknowledge the diversity of their student populations and incorporate strategies to foster intercultural dialogue and adjustment (Byram et al., 2002).

For instance, in countries such as Sweden and Finland, structured intercultural training sessions, orientation programs, and peer mentoring are commonly provided as part of institutional onboarding. These initiatives are designed not only to reduce adjustment-related stress but also to develop intercultural competence as a core student learning outcome (Deardorff & Arasaratnam-Smith, 2017). Scandinavian institutions, in particular, adopt a holistic view of internationalization, encouraging faculty and staff to create adaptive learning environments where cultural difference is acknowledged, discussed, and leveraged as a learning asset. Consequently, international students in these contexts are better equipped to manage cultural differences, develop resilience, and experience fewer barriers to integration.

Table 1

Acculturation Stress

Aspect	Japan	Erasmus Countries
Cultural Environment	Homogeneous society with rigid social norms and high-context communication (Nakano et al., 2023; Zhang & Steele, 2012).	Multicultural and diversity-friendly environments that embrace interculturalism (Byram et al., 2002).
Communication Style	Indirect, implicit, and reliant on unspoken rules; difficult for students from low-context cultures to decode (Nakano et al., 2023).	More direct communication and greater tolerance for intercultural communication variations.
Challenges Faced by International Students	Feelings of alienation, cultural fatigue, social withdrawal, and identity confusion due to lack of integration (Smith & Khawaja, 2011).	Fewer cultural adjustment issues due to active efforts in promoting inclusion and intercultural understanding.
Institutional Support	Limited emphasis on intercultural competence or structured integration programs (Zhang & Steele, 2012).	Strong emphasis on intercultural orientation, peer mentoring, and inclusive pedagogy (Deardorff & Arasaratnam-Smith, 2017).
Intercultural Training	Scarce or informal; often relies on students' own adaptation strategies.	Formal, well-designed programs that aim to foster intercultural competencies and reduce adjustment stress (Deardorff & Arasaratnam-Smith, 2017).
Outcomes for Students	Higher levels of acculturation stress; limited sense of belonging and institutional attachment.	Greater resilience, sense of community, and intercultural awareness leading to lower stress levels.

Language Barriers

Language barriers remain a significant impediment to academic success and emotional well-being for international students, particularly in monolingual environments like Japan. It has been observed that English-medium instruction (EMI) in Japan stems from a blend of national, institutional, and individual motivations, while also raising critical concerns around

"academic imperialism" and the dual dynamics of "internationalization at home" versus "abroad" (Shimauchi, 2018). Despite the expansion of EMI degree programs in recent years, the dominant use of Japanese in administrative services, healthcare systems, and everyday social interactions creates a persistent communication gap (Curle et al., 2023; Zhang & Steele, 2012). Students who lack advanced Japanese proficiency often experience difficulties accessing mental health resources, attending academic advising sessions, or even participating in extracurricular activities, which exacerbates feelings of isolation and stress (Ota, 2018). Furthermore, Japanese universities tend to emphasize assimilation into local culture rather than bilingual accommodation, limiting the extent to which students can engage meaningfully without full language immersion (Yonezawa et al., 2009).

In stark contrast, many Erasmus countries—particularly in Western and Northern Europe—have institutional frameworks that actively accommodate linguistic diversity. Germany, the Netherlands, and Finland, for example, have significantly expanded EMI and offer multilingual support services across campus. Germany's "Studentenwerk" system, a nationwide network of student service centers, provides international students with psychological counseling, legal and financial advisory services, and daily-life assistance in English (DAAD, 2023; Wikipedia, n.d.-b). University orientation programs, academic workshops, and even healthcare communications are routinely provided in English, ensuring accessibility irrespective of local language proficiency (DAAD, 2023; Wächter & Maiworm, 2014). Dutch and Finnish universities likewise provide comprehensive bilingual support in academic and student life contexts, often reinforced by intercultural communication training for faculty (Wächter & Maiworm, 2014).

These efforts collectively reduce the psychological toll of linguistic exclusion and foster greater academic integration and social participation. While Japan continues to make incremental progress in internationalizing its campuses, the structural dependence on Japanese-language proficiency remains a major hurdle that distinguishes it sharply from more linguistically inclusive Erasmus nations.

Table 2

Language Barriers

Aspect	Japan	Erasmus Countries
Dominant Language in Society	Japanese; limited use of English in daily life and services (ICEF Monitor, 2015).	English widely accepted in academic and urban settings; strong support for bilingualism (Wächter & Maiworm, 2014).
Availability of English-Taught Programs	Growing number, but still limited outside STEM and elite universities.	Widespread across disciplines; often a central part of internationalization strategy (DAAD, 2023).
Access to Support Services (Mental Health, Academic, Healthcare)	Difficulties accessing services due to language requirements (Ota, 2018; Zhang & Steele, 2012).	Multilingual services in mental health, administration, and academics (DAAD, 2023).
Institutional Attitudes toward Language Diversity	Focus on assimilation into Japanese culture; limited bilingual infrastructure (Yonezawa et al., 2009).	Language inclusivity prioritized in institutional policies and practices.
Support Structures for Language Challenges	Minimal bilingual counseling or multilingual onboarding.	Structured support via Studentenwerk (Germany), intercultural training, and orientation in English.

Outcomes for International Students	Language-related isolation and academic stress remain high.	Better integration, reduced stress, and stronger engagement with campus life.

Academic Workload and Expectations

Academic pressure constitutes a key source of psychological distress among international students, particularly in education systems where norms and pedagogical styles differ significantly from those in their home countries. In Japan, traditional educational structures often emphasize rote memorization, high-stakes examinations, and deference to authority, all of which contribute to a hierarchical student-teacher dynamic that can feel alienating to international students (Ota, 2018; Yonezawa et al., 2009). This model tends to privilege passive learning, where classroom engagement and open discussion are limited. As a result, students from other learning systems may find themselves struggling to adapt to academic expectations that appear rigid and impersonal (Rakhshandehroo, 2017, 2018).

Moreover, support for academic adjustment in Japan is often underdeveloped. Many universities lack structured academic mentoring programs in English, and international students may be reluctant to approach professors due to perceived status differentials and communication barriers (Yonezawa et al., 2009). The emphasis on uniform academic standards, without proportional flexibility or support mechanisms, leads to heightened stress, academic disengagement, and in some cases, mental health deterioration (Ota, 2018).

By contrast, Erasmus countries—especially Finland, the Netherlands, and Germany—have adopted student-centered pedagogy that emphasizes autonomy, critical thinking, and adaptability. Project-based learning, continuous assessment, and seminar-style classes dominate in many of these institutions, fostering a more participatory and inclusive academic atmosphere (Wächter & Maiworm, 2014). In Finnish universities, students are frequently invited to co-design parts of their curriculum, reflecting a decentralized and collaborative approach to higher education. Finnish higher-education policy encourages curriculum internationalization, enabling students to shape content and learning pathways that reflect their backgrounds and interests. The culture of collaborative learning, where teamwork, peer support, and collective problem-solving are core classroom practices, fosters an environment in which students are empowered to challenge academic norms through respectful discourse (Honkimäki et al., 2024). These inclusive educational models recognize and value students' diverse educational histories, aiming to bridge gaps through personalized instruction and faculty accessibility, anchored in Finland’s emphasis on autonomy among educators and learners (Lavonen, 2020).

In addition, institutions in Erasmus countries often provide structured academic integration programs, such as workshops on academic writing, research methods, and classroom culture, which equip international students with tools to navigate their new academic systems successfully (DAAD, 2023). This flexible and responsive academic model not only reduces psychological strain but also enhances student confidence and satisfaction, especially among those who come from non-European education systems.

Table 3
Academic Workload and Expectations

Aspect	Japan	Erasmus Countries
Teaching Style and Pedagogy	Rote memorization and lecture-heavy; limited interactive or critical thinking tasks (Ota, 2018).	Student-centered learning; emphasis on critical thinking, discussion, and autonomy (Wächter & Maiworm, 2014).
Student-Teacher Relationship	Hierarchical and formal; students often hesitant to approach professors (Yonezawa et al., 2014).	More egalitarian and accessible; professors often approachable and supportive.
Assessment and Learning Models	High-stakes exams dominate; limited use of project-based or continuous assessment (ICEF Monitor, 2015).	Use of project-based, seminar-style classes, and continuous assessment (DAAD, 2020).
Support for Academic Adjustment	Few structured mentoring or academic writing support programs in English.	Dedicated academic workshops, writing support, and orientation programs.
Flexibility in Curriculum	Low curriculum flexibility; strong emphasis on uniform academic standards.	Flexible curriculum structures, including student-designed components (Wächter & Maiworm, 2014).
Impact on Mental Health	High academic stress and reduced engagement, particularly among students from Western systems.	Lower academic stress due to supportive, inclusive, and adaptive academic environments.

Social Support Networks

Social integration plays a crucial role in protecting international students from psychological distress, with multiple studies affirming its positive association with mental well-being and academic adjustment. In Japan, however, international students often face considerable obstacles when trying to form meaningful social relationships. Language barriers, hierarchical social norms, and limited cross-cultural competencies among local students hinder both casual and sustained interaction (Ota, 2018; Zhang & Steele, 2012). Many international students report difficulty engaging not only with Japanese peers but also with fellow international students, as the lack of institutional infrastructure for social facilitation such as multilingual student lounges, intercultural events, or international dormitories, contributes to fragmentation and loneliness (Yonezawa et al., 2009).

Moreover, Japanese universities typically do not prioritize structured social integration initiatives. Student clubs, while abundant, often operate exclusively in Japanese and may be resistant to non-native speakers, making them difficult to access. Without proactive social programming or peer connection strategies, students are left to navigate cultural adaptation alone, which can amplify acculturative stress and reduce their sense of belonging (Curle et al., 2023).

In contrast, Erasmus programs and European institutions have embedded social integration as a central objective of internationalization. From the outset, students are welcomed through orientation weeks, social mixers, and buddy programs that match incoming internationals with local students (Wächter & Maiworm, 2014). Institutions such as those in Germany offer peer mentorship and intercultural dialogue programs supported by the DAAD (Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst), which aim to create inclusive academic communities where cultural differences are seen as assets rather than obstacles (DAAD, 2023). These programs

not only foster friendship and support networks but also reinforce academic success and psychological resilience.

In the Netherlands and Scandinavia, intercultural events, student-led clubs, and multicultural dormitories are strategically promoted to ensure regular social contact among diverse student cohorts. A study covering six European countries found that institutionally organized intercultural encounters, especially those embedded in the curriculum, effectively foster social networks with both local and international peers (Resch & Amorim, 2021). Student associations like the Erasmus Student Network (ESN), active across 38 countries with over 15,000 local volunteers, offer regular social mixers, buddy programs, and cultural trips alongside academic exchange (Wikipedia, n.d.-a). At universities such as Maastricht and Amsterdam, multicultural study associations (e.g. UCMSA Universalis) empower students to take leadership roles in organizing debates, events, and social activities, helping build a robust, multicultural community through peer-driven initiatives (Beelen, 2007; Wikipedia, n.d.-c).

Additionally, multilingual communication channels and accessible student services, including mental health counseling in English, contribute to an inclusive and welcoming campus climate (DAAD, 2023). For instance, Finnish universities are known for offering psychological support services in multiple languages, alongside online mental health tools, ensuring accessibility for all students regardless of linguistic background (Honkimäki et al., 2024; Lavonen, 2020).

These networks are reinforced by multilingual communication channels, accessible mental health professionals, and active student affairs offices, all of which contribute to a supportive and welcoming environment. As a result, international students in Erasmus countries are significantly more likely to report high levels of social satisfaction and lower levels of psychological distress linked to social exclusion.

Table 4

Social Support Networks

Aspect	Japan	Erasmus Countries
Opportunities for Social Integration	Limited opportunities; few intercultural or English-speaking clubs (Yonezawa et al., 2009).	Frequent orientation events, intercultural mixers, and student-led social activities (Wächter & Maiworm, 2014).
Barriers to Social Connection	Language barriers, rigid social norms, and limited intercultural competence (Ota, 2018; Zhang & Steele, 2012).	Low language barriers in student life due to bilingual communication and cultural openness.
Institutional Social Programming	Few formal programs or events promoting social integration (ICEF Monitor, 2015).	Well-structured integration programs supported by institutions and national bodies like DAAD (DAAD, 2020).
Peer Support Structures	Peer mentoring rare; social support often informal and fragmented.	Peer mentorship, buddy systems, and international student support offices widely available.
Cultural Inclusivity in Student Life	Student clubs operate mainly in Japanese; not easily accessible to international students.	High inclusivity with multilingual events, dormitories, and mental health access.
Impact on Well-being	Increased isolation and acculturative stress; reduced sense of belonging.	Improved social satisfaction, academic adjustment, and psychological resilience.

Mental Health Services

Access to mental health support services is a critical determinant of international student well-being, yet availability and effectiveness vary significantly across national contexts. In Japan, mental health remains highly stigmatized, both culturally and institutionally. This stigma, rooted in societal norms surrounding endurance and emotional privacy, discourages many students from seeking help even when services are technically available (Ota, 2018; Yonezawa et al., 2009). Compounding the issue is a severe shortage of English-speaking counselors, especially outside major metropolitan areas. Many university counseling centers operate predominantly in Japanese, and are often understaffed or underfunded, limiting their capacity to address the needs of diverse student populations (Rakhshandehroo, 2018).

Moreover, mental health support in Japanese universities is generally reactive rather than preventive, with limited emphasis on psychological education, early intervention, or structured coping programs (Nakano et al., 2023). Students often report uncertainty about where or how to access psychological resources, and those who do seek help face communication difficulties and fear of being perceived as weak or culturally incompatible.

In contrast, Erasmus countries have made significant strides in establishing comprehensive and accessible mental health systems tailored to international students. In Finland, for example, universities partner with organizations like FSHS (Finnish Student Health Service) to deliver multilingual mental health services, including therapy, stress management workshops, and burnout prevention seminars, all of which are embedded within the academic calendar (Honkimäki et al., 2024; Lavonen, 2020). These services are often free or heavily subsidized and available both in-person and via digital platforms. Similarly, in Germany, DAAD-supported universities offer psychological counseling in English and run mental health awareness campaigns that aim to destigmatize help-seeking behavior and normalize emotional support services (DAAD, 2023).

In the UK, institutions are legally required to provide reasonable mental health accommodations under the Equality Act, and many universities have created international student-specific wellness programs, including drop-in hours, peer support circles, and online self-help modules (Pury & Dicks, 2020). These systemic efforts not only improve access but also foster a proactive mental health culture, allowing students to engage with well-being resources before issues escalate.

Table 5
Mental Health Services

Aspect	Japan	Erasmus Countries
Cultural Attitudes Toward Mental Health	High stigma; mental health often seen as a private matter or personal weakness (Ota, 2018).	Progressive attitudes; mental health is openly discussed and normalized (DAAD, 2023; Universities UK, 2020).
Availability of English-Speaking Counselors	Very limited; most university counselors speak only Japanese (ICEF Monitor, 2015).	Commonly available; therapy and counseling offered in English (Hyppönen et al., 2019).
Structure of Mental Health Services	Understaffed, decentralized services; limited visibility and outreach (Yonezawa et al., 2009).	Comprehensive and structured support systems; often tied to student health services.

Proactive vs Reactive Support	Largely reactive; minimal psychological education or early intervention (Nakano et al., 2023).	Proactive approach with awareness campaigns, workshops, and stress prevention (DAAD, 2023).
Integration into Academic Life	Seldom embedded in academic schedules or student orientation programs.	Regular workshops and wellness events integrated into academic calendars (Hyppönen et al., 2019).
Examples of Good Practice	Few national frameworks; access varies significantly by university and region.	Finland's FSHS services; UK's Stepchange framework; DAAD peer support initiatives in Germany.

Conclusion

This comparative analysis highlights the challenges that international students face in adapting to host institutions, with particular attention to the divergent experiences in Japan and Erasmus countries. Across all five domains—acculturation stress, language proficiency, academic expectations, social support structures, and mental health services—the findings consistently reveal more inclusive and responsive practices in Erasmus countries, contrasting sharply with structural and cultural rigidity in Japanese institutions. While Erasmus countries benefit from more structured, multilingual, and culturally sensitive systems, Japan continues to face gaps due to linguistic barriers, cultural stigma surrounding mental health, and limited institutional coordination.

As global student mobility continues to grow, institutions that prioritize inclusive, proactive student services will not only enhance student satisfaction and retention but also strengthen their reputations as genuinely international centers of learning. Policymakers and university leaders must act on this evidence to build environments where international students can thrive—academically, socially, and emotionally. The findings call for systemic, cross-sector reforms in policy and practice—particularly within Japanese higher education—to ensure that international students are not only academically accommodated but also emotionally supported and socially integrated. A culturally sensitive, multilingual, and holistic model of student support is essential for fostering psychological well-being, academic performance, and long-term engagement.

References

Beelen, J. (2007). Implementing internationalisation at home. In *EAIE Profesional Development Series for International Educators*. European Association for International Education.

Byram, M., Gribkova, B., & Starkey, H. (2002). Developing the intercultrual dimension in lanugage teaching A practical interoduction for teachers. *Modern Languages*, *41*. http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/source/guide_dimintercult_en.pdf

Curle, S., Lin, Y., & Ikuya, A. (2023). English medium instruction in Japan. In F. M. Reimers (Ed.), *Policies, politics, and ideologies of English-medium instruction in Asian universities* (1st ed.). Routledge.

DAAD. (2023). *International student mobility in Germany: Summary of the results for the first International University* (Issue April 2023).

EC. (2025). *Erasmus+ EU programme for education, training, youth and sport*. European Commission. https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/

Honkimäki, S., Päivikki, J., & Tynjälä, P. (2024). Academics' experiences of university-wide top-down curriculum reform in Finland. *Journal of Further and Higher Education*, *48*(6), 594–607. https://doi.org/10.1080/0309877X.2024.2373725

JASSO. (2025). *Details of statistics for international students*. JASSO. https://www.jasso.go.jp/en/ryugaku/related_information/chosa.html

Lavonen, J. (2020). Curriculum and teacher education reforms in Finland that support the development of competences for the twenty-first century. In F. M. Reimers (Ed.), *Audacious Education Purposes: How Governments Transform the Goals of Education Systems* (pp. 65–80). Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-41882-3_3

Nakano, S., Tanaka, T., & Mikushi, K. (2023). Cross-cultural social skills instruction and indirect expressions: Psychoeducation in Japan's high-context culture. *IAFOR Journal of Psychology & the Behavioral Sciences*, *8*(2), 19–35. https://doi.org/10.22492/ijpbs.8.2.02

Ota, H. (2018). Internationalization of higher education: Global trends and Japan's challenges. *Educational Studies in Japan*, *12*, 91–105. https://doi.org/10.7571/esjkyoiku.12.91

Pury, J. de, & Dicks, A. (2020). *Stepchange: Mentally Healthy Universities*. Universities UK.

Rakhshandehroo, M. (2017). EMI and internationalisation The experiences of Iranian international students in Japanese universities. *The Electronic Journal of Contemporary Japanese Studies, 17*(3). http://www.japanesestudies.org.uk/ejcjs/vol17/iss3/rakhshandehroo.html

Rakhshandehroo, M. (2018). A qualitative exploration of on-campus experiences of English-speaking graduate international students at a leading Japanese university. *Journal of International Students*, *8*(4), 1831–1847. https://doi.org/10.32674/jis.v8i4.233

Resch, K., & Amorim, J. P. (2021). Facilitating intercultural encounters with international students: A contribution to inclusion and social network formation. *Social Inclusion*, *9*(3), 58–68.

Shimauchi, S. (2018). English-medium instruction in the internationalization of higher education in Japan: Rationales and issues. *Educational Studies in Japan*, *12*, 77–90. https://doi.org/10.7571/esjkyoiku.12.77

Smith, R. A., & Khawaja, N. G. (2011). A review of the acculturation experiences of international students. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, *35*(6), 699–713. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijintrel.2011.08.004

UIS. (2025). *Data for the Sustainable Development Goals*. UNESCO Institute for Statistics. https://uis.unesco.org/

Wächter, B., & Maiworm, F. (2014). *English-taught programmes in European higher education: The state of play in 2014.* Lemmens. https://www.lemmens.de/dateien/medien/buecher-ebooks/aca/2008_english-taught_programmes_in_european_higher_education_-_the_picture_in_2007.pdf3322

Wikipedia. (n.d.-a). *Erasmus Student Network*. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Erasmus_Student_Network?utm_source=chatgpt.com

Wikipedia. (n.d.-b). *Studentenwerk*. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Studentenwerk

Wikipedia. (n.d.-c). *University College Maastricht*. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/University_College_Maastricht?utm_source=chatgpt.com

Yonezawa, A., Akiba, H., & Hirouchi, D. (2009). Japanese university leaders' perceptions of internationalization: The role of government in review and support. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, *13*(2), 125–142. https://doi.org/10.1177/1028315308330847

Zhang, R., & Steele, D. (2012). Improving intercultural awareness: A challenging task for Japan. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, *47*, 52–63. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2012.06.613

Contact email: tran@tokushima-u.ac.jp