

Doctoral Thesis in 2021 (Abstract)

Junior College Education from the View of Students:  
Analyses of Student Survey and Alumni Survey

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## Introduction:

This paper aims to clarify the contexts and challenges to Japanese junior colleges based on comparisons of other higher education institutions and to identify the impacts of college experiences on students' learning outcomes from the perspective of junior college students and graduates. To achieve these purposes, this research sets three tasks: finding out the historical development of Japanese junior colleges and differences from other higher education institutions, identifying the recognition of learning experiences and outcomes of Japanese junior colleges in the views of their students and their graduates.

## Methods:

The research method consists of three approaches: Historical study in the Japanese junior colleges based on literature review and national educational statistics to expose characteristics in successive periods at first. Secondly, a comparative study carries on between Japanese junior colleges and other higher education institutions such as 4-years universities, national colleges of technology, and vocational education institutions to make clear the uniqueness of junior colleges in Japan. In the analysis of colleges and universities, The National Students Survey by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, and the National Survey for Junior College Students by Japan Association for College Accreditation (JACA) are applied. Lastly, this research applies the "Japanese Junior College Education Model," advances the "I-E-O (Inputs, Environment, and Outputs) model based on College Impacts Theory proposed by Alexander Astin (1993). The data of twenty and one thousand junior college students in 79 junior colleges based on the National Survey for Junior College Students in 2019 is applied in the Japanese Junior College Model. Moreover, to identify the learning outcomes of Japanese junior colleges from the perspective of their graduates, this study relies on the results of the "Alumni Survey in Junior Colleges" managed by JACA. It has responses from over two thousand graduates at 44 Japanese junior colleges, and it analyses the utility of their educational experiences and overall satisfaction longitudinally.

## Results:

In chapter 1, this research focuses on the characteristics of Japanese junior colleges in the aspects of historical and comparative views. It shows that Japanese junior colleges contribute to increasing the college-going rate for women and confirm some uniqueness compared to other higher education institutions in Japan.

Chapter 2 identifies the factors by factor analytic study based on the Japanese Junior College Education Model in the three dimensions, the motivation to college-going as inputs, learning experiences as environments, and learning outcomes and satisfaction as outputs.

Chapter 3 focuses on the students who tend to avoid vocational educational institutions and 4-years colleges and universities in the input perspective. These students recognize the differences between junior college and other types of educational institutions. This recognition supposes to influence positive educational impacts and their learning outcomes.

Chapter 4 introduce the impacts of environmental factors in learning experiences and outcomes. A positive commitment to the class such as active learning experiences contributes to improving scores in every aspect as for learning experiences, outcomes, and satisfaction.

Outputs are examined in chapter 5 by finding the effect of inputs and environmental factors. This section clarifies that the motivation for going to college and learning experiences relates to learning outcomes and overall satisfaction in junior colleges.

Chapter 6 confirms the validity of the Junior College Education Model through covariance structure analysis between input, environment, and output/outcome factors. The motivation for college going as an input influences the environment and output/outcome factors while learning experiences contribute to the learning outcomes. Output/outcome also gives educational and facility satisfaction effects that lead to overall satisfaction, which causes recommendation for others.

The final chapter considers learning outcomes assessment by junior college graduates. It finds a high level of usefulness and positive impression of junior college experiences and outcomes. Some skills and knowledge such as easier to apply in their lives tend to be retained even in secular change.

## Discussion

These results point out the availability of junior college education and match the educational needs in the perspective of junior college students and graduates while junior colleges contribute to improving access to higher education everywhere in Japan with the less financial burden for students and their families. Additional analysis such as applying the panel survey to focus on the academic grade, making quantitative approaches to junior college students and graduates, studying comparatively between Professional and Vocational Universities and Colleges, and foreign junior colleges remain tasks to verify the outcomes of this paper.