

## Internationalization of Japanese Higher Education: Effective Organization of Internationally Cooperative Higher Education Programs

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### Abstract

This study explored challenges of international collaborations in Japanese higher education by identifying management frameworks and elements necessary to run effective programs. Internationalization was examined from three perspectives: collaboration between a university's headquarters and its departments, program management, and quality assurance. A qualitative case-study design involved interviews with 48 directors of collaborative international programs. Results show that internationalization of Japanese higher education institutions has already progressed beyond the level of "amateur" activities but still faces several challenges. One key element of an entrepreneurial culture, effective central leadership, has already been introduced. Another key element is funding, but given limitations of forms dependent on public funding, self-funding systems, which have been established in some institutions, need to be embraced more widely. Quality assurance remains challenging for higher education, and most institutions have not yet obtained accreditation by external agencies.

**Keywords:** international collaboration higher education program, collaboration form, management form, quality assurance

### Introduction

With the strengthening in recent years of globalization's impact on world affairs and on other aspects of human development and endeavor, globalization has risen to prominence in higher education institutions. In response, a key strategy adopted by universities worldwide is internationalization (Maringe & Foskett, 2010), which is often associated with new forms of national and institutional management. From the perspective of higher education institutions, the meaning of internationalization is underpinned by both economic and more altruistic perspectives (Foskett, 2010). For some small countries, development of international networks of teaching and research allow participation in large-scale projects that would otherwise be impossible (Taylor, 2010b). Additionally, Taylor (2010a) noted that internationalization is driving change in the organization and management of higher education institutions. As the Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development (Hénard, Diamond, & Roseveare, 2012) suggested, higher education institutions should investigate selecting internationalization's most appropriate modes and forms for the particular institution, consider both the institution's missions and objectives and the environment affecting internationalization so as to manage it well, and explore relationships between challenges facing institutions and institutional management forms.

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## Institutional Management Form for Internationalization

Higher education institutions have moved toward new forms of executive management and flatter decision-making structures, embraced additional responsibilities, and enhanced the level of professionalism within their service and support areas. As a result, a new approach to management of internationalization has emerged within higher education institutions. Organization and management vary in form and detail between higher education institutions in relation to most aspects of their functions and reflect the complex interaction of cultures, histories, resources, strategies, and power relationships within each institution. However, key elements of organizational arrangements show some clear similarities across universities in relation to leadership and international offices (Foskett, 2010; Shattock, 2003). Strong central leadership and direction coupled with accountability characterize the new approach to management of internationalization (Taylor, 2010a). Consensual rather than charismatic or visionary leadership seems more to match the most successful universities' demands (Shattock, 2003). Internationalization has become too important to be left to the enthusiastic amateur, and new forms of organization have emerged. Many institutions now have a vice president, deputy rector, or deputy or pro vice chancellor with responsibility for international leadership and management (Taylor, 2010a).

Furthermore, institutions of higher education have established central international offices to lead, encourage, and coordinate their internationalization activities, which include negotiation of important links and partnerships, maintenance of existing links, international student recruitment, and coordination of all other activities linked to internationalization (Brown & Jones, 2007). In successful operation of an international office, presumably, organizational structure provides appropriate support to address internationalization's ongoing challenges (Said, Ahmad, Mustafa, & Ghani, 2015). For this to be possible, leaders must become involved in promotion of internationalization functions and the institution's capacity (Jones & Oleksiyenko, 2011). This is achieved through allocation of resources (Casciaro & Piskorski, 2005), which are usually limited. To achieve the most efficient use of limited resources, many institutions manage related human and financial resources as part of their internationalization strategy (Green, Marmolejo, & Ergon-Polak, 2012).

In recent years, entrepreneurship, whereby academics and administrators explicitly seek new ways of raising private sector funds through such enterprising activities as consultation and applied research (Deem, 2001), has become regarded as a key driver of higher education's internationalization (Altbach & Knight, 2007; Slaughter & Cantwell, 2011). But because many institutions are vulnerable to fluctuations in their resources, executives' motivation to pursue internationalization is reduced. Glass and Lee (2018) noted that the only factor moderating executives' dissatisfaction with the limited resources at their disposal was satisfaction with their institution's internationalization strategy, while outsourcing and competition provided the least satisfaction.

In addition, increasing internationalization has raised concerns about accountability. One key element of accountability, quality assurance, seems to drive further development of internationalized learning outcomes (Aerden, 2014). A reputation for quality is essential for long-term, successful pursuit of internationalization because once a reputation has been tarnished, it is very difficult to restore (Taylor, 2010a). Quality assurance begins with the program deliverer, either domestic or international. Many higher education institutions have adequate quality-assurance processes in relation to domestic delivery. However, these processes do not cover the challenges inherent in working cross-culturally, in a foreign regulatory environment, and, potentially, with a foreign partner (Altbach & Knight, 2007). In addition to government bodies,

professional organizations and international associations in various professions have also implemented various forms of quality control in their international networks (Van Damme, 1999). Still, even though quality-assurance procedures and instruments have been developed, systematic quality management is lacking. Three factors were identified that can accelerate quality management: support of higher management or higher education leadership, cooperation with other institutions, and the quality manager's role as promoter of quality assurance (Seyfried & Pohlenz, 2018).

### **Internationalization in Japan**

Aiming to accelerate internationalization through institutional system reform, many countries' governments have funded higher education institutions to develop and conduct quality-assured international student exchange programs. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization Institute for Statistics (1999–2015) revealed that as a result of internationalization policies in higher education, the number of internationally mobile students has more than doubled from about 2 million in 2000 to 4.6 million in 2015. This is especially true in Asia, which is both the largest source of international students globally and growing in popularity as a host region for international students. Since 1999, the number of outbound students from Asia has more than tripled, while the number of inbound students to Asia has increased nearly threefold (Kuroda, Sugimura, Kitamura, & Asada, 2018). Japan, along with other Asian countries, has recognized the importance of higher education's internationalization. Indeed, the Japanese government has initiated and funded numerous projects aimed at internationalization of universities, for example, the Inter-University Exchange Project (Re-Inventing Japan Project), the Go Global Japan Project, the TOBITATE! Young Ambassador Program, the Global 30 Project, and the Top Global University Project. Despite this commitment to internationalization by the Japanese government, numbers of Korean and Taiwanese students coming to Japan are declining, and the number coming from China to Japan is projected to decrease. In addition, the number of Japanese students going abroad has declined in recent years and is now significantly lower than its peak in the first half of the 2000s (Kuroda et al., 2018). Ohta (2014) insisted that under recent and rapidly changing circumstances in many industrialized countries and under increasing competition to recruit international students and researchers, Japanese institutions' activities dependent on individual expertise have reached their limits of internationalization.

Nevertheless, Japanese institutions have only just begun organized and strategic efforts toward internationalization. Japanese universities have a long tradition of decentralized management resulting in internationalization from the bottom up, unrelated to institution-wide internationalization goals and departmental initiatives (Yonezawa, 2017). The Japanese government has compelled universities to establish centralized management systems because centralization with strong leadership was believed to be an important element in promoting internationalization. However, Ohta (2011) insisted that institutions should develop not only strong leadership but also an attentive environment in which a wide range of faculty and administrative staff is involved with internationalization. Ninomiya (2010) also suggested a network model of internationalization activities nested in multiple levels, for instance, in schools, departments, and subdepartmental units, autonomously promoting internationalization toward an institutional goal established under the president's strong leadership.

To support their internationalization, Japanese institutions rely heavily on government subsidies and competitive funding. Although an organized system for external funding is important, few Japanese institutions have such a system for promoting a strategic approach that creates a variety of resources and leads to stable funding (Ashizawa, 2010). In addition, accountability is an important element for making external funding function more feasible (Taylor,

2010a). Many institutions have quality-assurance activities; however, most are limited to internal activities that do not work cross-culturally in a foreign regulatory environment or, potentially, with a foreign partner (Saito, 2017).

In fact, many Japanese institutions are in the process of reforming management to create strategic planning for effective resource allocation. Because Japanese institutions have a high degree of academic autonomy, whether centralized management is most appropriate for them should be discussed. Many researchers have insisted that strong leadership is key to effective internationalization, but few studies have illustrated workable management forms to promote internationalization. Therefore, this study explored the challenges facing internationalization in Japanese higher education by identifying and proposing a typology of management forms and elements necessary to deliver effective programs. The following research questions are addressed. In offering effective, high-quality internationally collaborative higher education, what are the challenges in (a) relationships between the university's headquarters and operating departments, (b) departmental management, and (c) quality-assurance activities?

## Method

### Study Design

This research used a qualitative case-study design involving individual interviews. Sutton and Austin (2015) claimed that such studies require a research design that can access participants' thoughts and feelings to understand meanings ascribed to their experiences. Therefore, a semistructured interview technique was likely to gain a relatively more detailed and clearer understanding (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2000; Terashita, 2011) of program directors' thoughts on internationally collaborative higher education programs in which various terms may have several meanings. Two experts in qualitative research and cross-border higher education were consulted in designing interview formats, and necessary adjustments were made from their feedback. A purposeful sampling method determined the study group.

### Participants

The study group was composed of 48 program directors from the Inter-University Exchange Project (Re-Inventing Japan Project), a funding program created in 2011 to assist formation of collaborative international higher education programs with universities in various countries in Asia and in the United States that conduct study abroad programs for Japanese students and also undertake strategic acceptance of foreign students. With duties and responsibilities in managing and operating funded programs, 65% of interviewed program directors were head of the operating department, 15% were vice presidents of the institution, and the rest were nonexecutive faculty.

### Interuniversity Exchange Project

International program aims are, generally, to foster human resources capable of being globally active and to assure the quality of the mechanism underlying mutual recognition of credits and grade management through an international framework. Institutions expect increased student exchanges through these quality-assured programs and, when establishing student exchange plans, strongly emphasize quality assurance (Kuroda et al., 2018). These programs were selected by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, and Science and are seen as high-quality programs that can play a leading role in Japanese universities' globalization.

### Data Collection

From January to March 2018, semistructured, face-to-face interviews were conducted, each lasting for 60–90 min. The two interviewers were knowledgeable about the subject matter and issues related to technical cooperation and were experts in interaction and communication (Cohen et al., 2000). All interviewees' responses were recorded using an audio-recording device after obtaining their permission to do so. The semistructured interview format allowed participants to provide very detailed information because the interviewers could ask follow-up questions that went beyond the predetermined questions' scope to clarify respondents' meaning (Creswell, 2018).

### **Interview Questions**

The following four research questions (RQs) were asked about planning and running a high-quality, continual program.

*RQ 1—Collaboration framework between university headquarters and departments:* How was the program created? How was consensus obtained between the university's headquarters and relevant departments? Do you have any concerns with the process?

*RQ 2—Organizational framework necessary to run a program:* How do you run the program? What are the roles of committees, working groups, and other groups? Do you have any concerns with any of these aspects?

*RQ 3—Quality-assurance activities:* What quality-assurance activities are conducted in the program?

*RQ 4—Funding:* How do you plan to continue the program after the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, and Science funding period ends?

### **Data Analysis**

Qualitative content analysis was applied by decoding recordings of interviews and converting them into digital text format, after which data patterns were identified through content analysis. Then, themes and topics were identified, and codes were applied to enable interpretation and analysis of responses (Terashita, 2011). From coded messages in the interview protocols, knowledge was acquired by processing the text, analyzing it, and then visualizing the results (Higuchi, 2016).

To increase the study's validity, two researchers (in addition to the two interviewers) familiar with international higher education reviewed the validity of themes, topics, and codes identified, made necessary adjustments, and provided feedback. Levels of agreement regarding each research question were 62.5% (RQ 1), 77.1% (RQ 2), 93% (RQ 3), and 66.7% (RQ 4). Further reviews, discussions, and adjustments were undertaken until the level of agreement reached 100% for each question.

## Findings

### Form of Collaboration Between a University's Headquarters and Its Departments

#### **Types of collaboration forms between university headquarters and its departments.**

In response to RQ 1 on the relation between a university's headquarters and its departments in developing and delivering a program, collaboration was categorized into four major types comprising eight subtypes: (a) top-down (leaving the job to departments, control, and ownership), (b) bottom-up (approval and independent), (c) acting as one, and (d) cooperation (regional and field).

**Top-down collaboration.** Top-down collaboration can be subdivided into "leaving the job to departments," "control," and "ownership." Under the "leaving the job to departments" form, the university's headquarters simply ordered departments to apply to government projects for funding but offered no commitment for support and took no responsibility for a program. The governing department was required to manage all aspects of the project's operation. This included troublesome issues of not only intramural affairs but also extramural affairs, for example, negotiating cooperation with other departments, forming a university network by building a cooperative form for the accreditation process, controlling grades, and awarding degrees according to each institution's framework.

Under the "control" form, the university's headquarters developed a framework for a program and managed most aspects of the program's operation. Departments were seen as working teams required to display loyalty to the university's headquarters but were not expected to create and manage programs. All responsibility belonged to the university's headquarters. Only one program was categorized under this form, indicating its rarity in Japan.

Under the "ownership" form, the university's headquarters played an important role in developing an internationalization strategy and requiring departments to drive programs under the strategy. The university's headquarters identified departments appropriate for achieving success in the chosen strategy. Troublesome aspects of running a program in both intramural and extramural matters were handled by the university's headquarters. Meanwhile, governing departments created a program framework that ensured high-quality content, and when issues arose in planning and running a program, they were handled by the university's headquarters. Under the "ownership" form, all directors declared that program outcomes belonged to relevant departments, rather than the university's headquarters.

**Bottom-up collaboration.** Bottom-up collaboration can be divided into "approval" and "independent." Under the "approval" form, departments took initiative for funded projects, including deciding whether to apply for funding, while the university's headquarters authorized departments' decisions. Although departments were required to manage all aspects of program development and delivery and to be responsible for consequences, the university's headquarters authorized all decisions. Such programs tended to promote departmental autonomy.

Under the "independent" form, departments had the same level of initiative for funded projects as in the "approval" form, but their decisions did not need to be authorized by the university's headquarters, and outcomes were vested in departments. Departments in these institutions operated independent accounting forms and had their own funding resources. All institutions in the study operating under this form had unique programs that attracted financial resources, such as expensive executive development programs and industrial-academic collaboration programs. These departments did not rely on university funds but operated independently from the university's headquarters and exerted considerable power and influence

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over their university's internationalization policy. Clearly, these institutions were acting entrepreneurially.

**Acting as one collaboration.** Under the “acting as one” form, because executive faculty and staff in the university's headquarters worked as core members of program committees, prompt decisions were made and actions were easily taken.

**Cooperation.** “Cooperation” was subdivided into “regional” and “field” forms. These involved cooperative programs between Japanese and foreign universities. Under the “regional” form, collaboration among departments in different fields worked well. Combining advantages offered by each university's various fields and complementing disadvantages enabled the maximization of outcomes. Under the “Field” form, successful programs run by institutions in the same field but in different locations were combined. This enabled institutions to use various regional advantages to enhance program outcomes. One example was a veterinary medicine program in both the northern and eastern regions. The university in the northern region had access to a large area of land that enabled provision of an excellent program focused on large animals, whereas the university in the eastern region focused on a leading-edge veterinary medicine program.

**Collaboration forms between a university's headquarters and its departments.** All programs were matched for eight subtypes of collaboration forms. As shown in Figure 1, the largest number of programs was categorized in the “approval” form, followed by “ownership,” while programs in “field” and “control” forms were rare.

Program directors' responses indicated that each form has both advantages and disadvantages. Fifteen of 24 program directors recognized the “approval” form as workable for Japanese institutions because it is not a central control form; that is, departments maintain autonomy. However, 17 program directors claimed that differences in internationalization policies among departments burdened governing departments. They also felt that dynamics of power struggles among departments affected program outcomes, in turn leading to challenges in running continuous programs.

They felt challenges as follows: “Too strong power of the governing department caused its arbitrary operation, which made other departments' faculty and staff lose their motivation. It resulted in an unsuccessful program,” and

I felt exhausted to negotiate with other departments to join our projects. They felt “it is not our business.” Sharing the institutional goal of internationalization and working hard with multiple departments benefits our students, but most departments are only interested in which department has the initiative.

No program director identified any disadvantages of the “ownership” form. As for advantages, 11 of 12 stated that their university's headquarters were supportive and enabled their program to succeed in student outcomes. They stated that the form's greatest advantages were the university headquarters' appointing personnel to run programs and considering policy differences among departments, thus relieving them of a considerable burden. They also stated that support from the university's headquarters freed them from having to address troublesome issues and enabled them to concentrate on developing a high-quality program. Nine of 12 program directors stated that most faculty and staff were highly motivated to become involved in their programs. One program director responded,

Our headquarters is always supportive and proud of our program. The most appreciative support is positive negotiation with other departments to join our program. Our headquarters believes that our progressive program leads our students to be more competitive and talented.

Under the “leaving the job to departments” form, three of four program directors found it difficult to reach consensus within their institution. They claimed that because programs were not authorized by the university’s headquarters, obtaining cooperation among various departments was extremely difficult. These program directors perceived the high level of departmental autonomy as a barrier to cooperation.

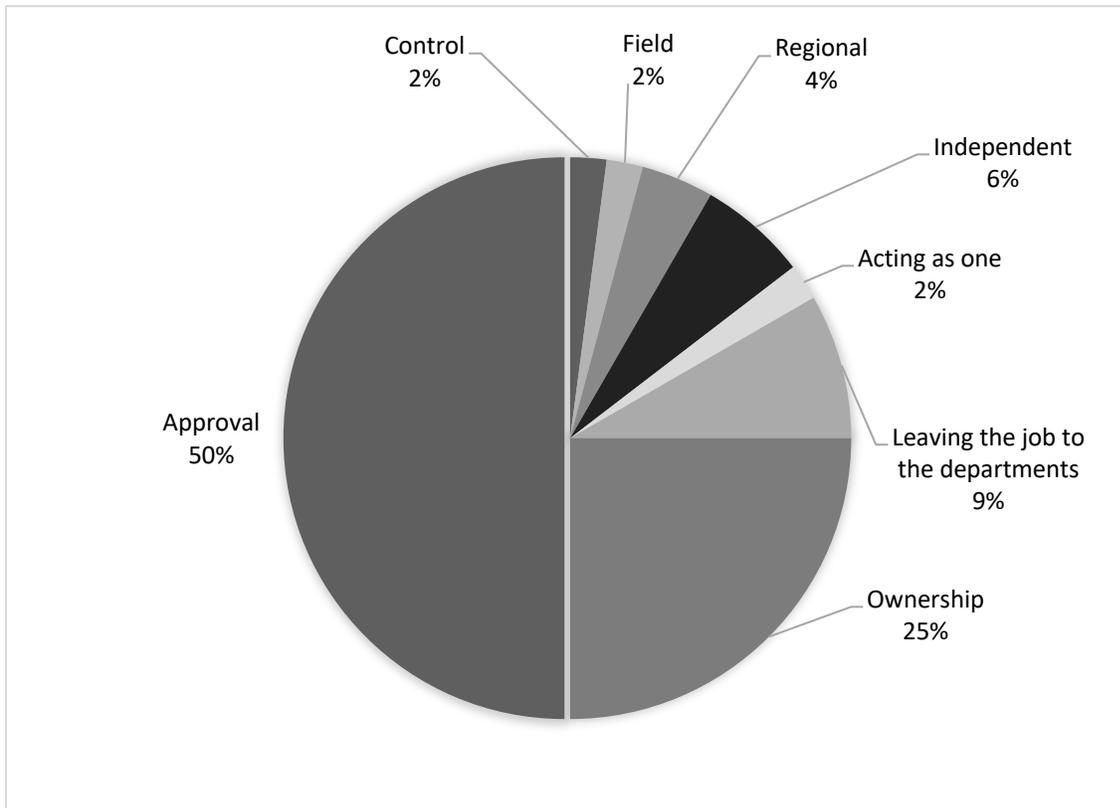


Figure 1. Prevalence of various types of collaboration forms between a university's headquarters and its departments.

The sole “acting as one” program director thought that the form accelerated decision-making and enabled prompt action because the university’s headquarters and departments had reached consensus regarding their internationalization policy. This program director also felt that small- and medium-sized institutions worked well, stating that too many departments made it impossible for the university’s headquarters to understand various departments’ capacities, leading to difficulty in reaching consensus within the institution. A sample response was “Quick decision and action are our advantages. A small-scale college can maneuver more effectively than large-scale universities. Small can beat big.”

Under the “independent” form, all three program directors were proud of their programs, which they saw as pioneering the university’s internationalization. Two of the three program directors stated that most faculty were highly motivated to run a successful program, while all

three program directors had a clear vision regarding Japanese higher education's internationalization.

Under the "control" form, one program director expressed concern that many departments were not interested in outcomes because they thought they were not involved in the program's essential aspects: "Most faculties considered program activities as one of the obligations they should carry out. They are not interested in institutional internationalization."

Under the "regional" form, all program directors stated that to make Japanese universities more competitive in the world market, their mutual trust was important. An advantage of the "regional" form that all directors identified was mutual motivation to share effective, successful strategies and information from previous programs. A program director called it a "win-win program."

The "field" form was recognized as an ineffective approach to running a successful program because departments competitive in the same field were reluctant to share information. However, one program director stated that if institutions can use their reciprocal strengths, the form can work. In this study, one reciprocal strength identified was the various locations of institutions. In addition, this form's program directors emphasized the need to obtain consensus regarding program goals and strategies through discussions among institutions. One program director stated, "Jumping the gun without prior detailed discussions among institutions is the most dangerous type of program." Another program director was also proud of their long history of sharing information among institutions, believing that close communications built mutual trust.

**Relationship between program continuation and the collaboration form.** Based on responses to RQ 1 and RQ 4, Figure 2 shows the relationship between continuation of internationally cooperative programs and the collaboration form. RQ 4 responses were divided into four categories: (a) Responses to holding or increasing the number of exchange students (e.g., "We are motivated to continue our program using our own financial resources even after the funding period has ended" and "We have decided to cooperate with more departments because of the success of our program") were categorized as "hold/increase"; (b) some responses indicated strategic plans to reduce the number of exchange students (e.g., "We are continuing our program on a smaller scale after the end of the funding period because we recognize the period as an introductory phase to encourage more students to study overseas. After the period, we will shift our goal from increasing the number of exchange students to exchanging only elite students" and "After the funding period, it will be time to refine the program to just its best aspects"), categorized as "strategic decrease"; (c) most responses indicating a reduced number of exchange students or calling off a program (e.g., "We are eager to continue our program, but we do not have sufficient financial resources to continue" and "The workload necessary to manage the program is too heavy without support from the university's headquarters") were categorized into "disappear/decrease in response to external factors"; (d) Some programs had not yet decided whether to continue (from overall results, "hold/increase" constituted 60.4% of all programs, "strategic decrease" was 16.7%, "disappear/decrease in response to external factors" was 12.5%, and programs undecided about continuation were 10.4%) and of these negative responses, 83% related to lack of financial resources, whereas the rest related to lack of human resources.

Figure 2 shows that "leaving the job to the departments" had the greatest negative effect on program continuation, followed by the "approval" form. Meanwhile, the large number of programs operating under the "ownership" form seems to suggest that it was the most effective for program continuity.

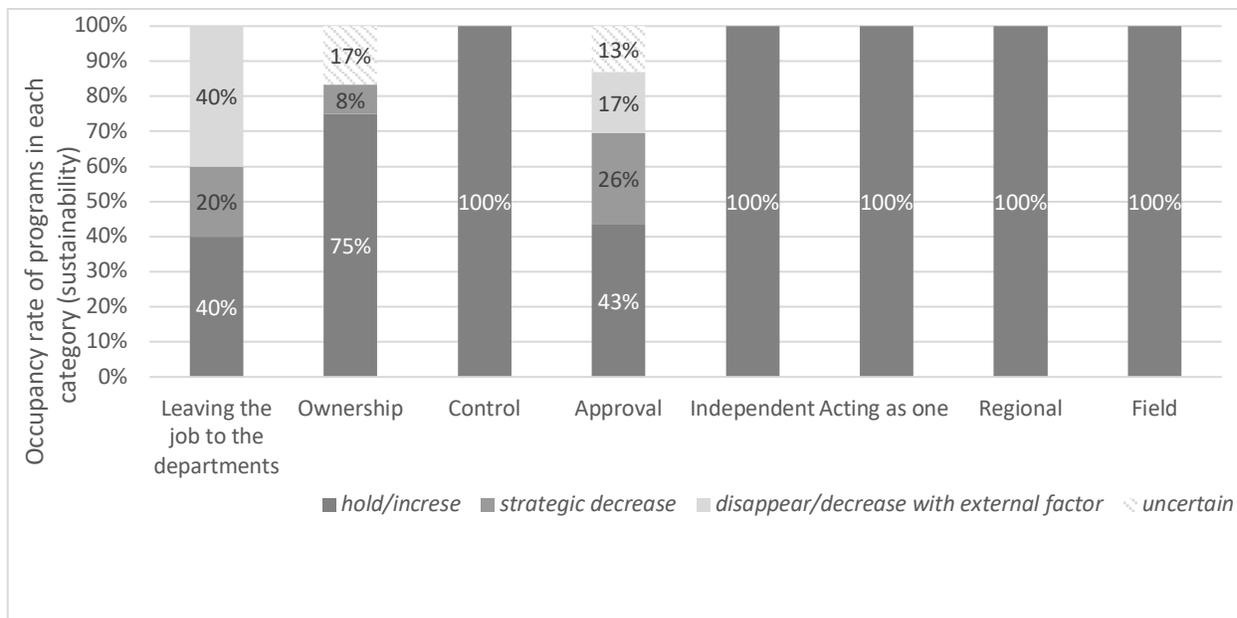


Figure 2. Relationship between continuation and collaboration form.

### Program Management

**Program management structure.** Responses to RQ 2 on the organizational framework necessary to manage a program were divided into five categories reflecting the maturity level of program management from basic (Level 1) to advanced (Level 5). At Level 1, neither a Japanese host university nor a partnered university had an institution in place, such as a working group, committee, or other group, to discuss and decide on program issues, which were dealt with by individual staff within each faculty rather than as part of an organizational management process. At Level 2, a working group was formed within a Japanese host university to run an internationally cooperative education program composed of the involved faculty and staff. This group discussed and managed program issues. At Level 3, the working group was upgraded to a committee within a host university. In addition to this committee, a cooperative committee composed of faculty and staff at the Japanese host university and at partnering foreign universities was created. An authorized cooperative working group enabled more active discussions about programs. At Level 4, in addition to the framework outlined for Level 3, a working unit was formed to facilitate speedy actions. At Level 5, the most advanced framework, a university’s headquarters had an active unit focused on macromanagement of the university’s internationalization strategy, while program organizations focused on its micromanagement. Under this framework, the headquarters unit and program organizations interacted to share information, and this was helpful in creating new programs.

Table 1 shows that 75% of all institutions were at either Level 4 or 5, indicating that most institutions have mature organizations able to manage programs successfully.

Table 1. *Maturity Level of Organizations*

Level of management of structure	Occupancy rate of programs at each level
Level 1	2.1%
Level 2	8.3%
Level 3	14.6%
Level 4	29.2%
Level 5	45.8%

**Relationship between cooperation form and maturity level of management structure.** Figure 3 shows the relationship between the collaboration form and the management structure’s maturity level, with “ownership,” “control,” and regional” forms having the most mature management forms. Considering the large number of institutions using the “ownership” form compared with “control” and “regional” forms, particularly noteworthy is that programs operated under the “ownership” form had mature management forms. Conversely, all programs at Level 1 were operated using the “leaving the job to the departments” form. The other notable point is that programs operated under the “approval” form were subject to various levels of maturity in terms of their institution’s management form.

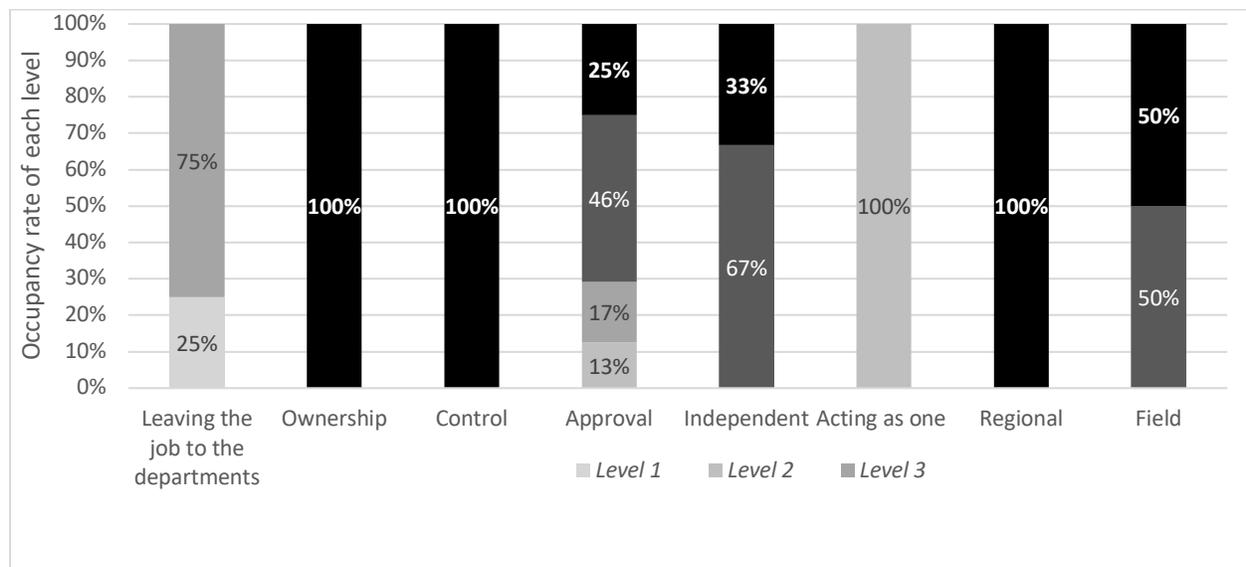


Figure 3. Relationship between maturity level of management structure and cooperation form.

### Quality Assurance of Programs

In response to RQ 3, quality-assurance activities were classified into three levels: “no system,” “intraexternal,” and “external.” The lowest level, “no system,” included programs that either did not have quality-assurance activities or relied on self-assessment by program faculty and staff. At this level, review was not transparent. The middle level, “Intraexternal,” included programs that established an evaluation committee of external experts who assessed and reviewed them; their transparency was better than that of “no system.” The highest level, “external,” included programs accredited by outside quality-assurance agencies. Accreditation means external review of the quality of higher education institutions and programs by an external quality-assurance body, which may be an agency or any entity other than the institution itself that

assesses its operation or that of its programs, to determine whether it is meeting the agreed upon or predetermined standards. If it is meeting the standards, the quality-assurance body accredits the program.

Of study programs, 41.7% were at the “no system” level, 54.2% were at the “intraexternal” level, and only 4.2% were at the “external” level. This indicates that many programs have yet to pay sufficient attention to quality assurance, in particular, accreditation by external agencies, which is clearly a burden for institutions.

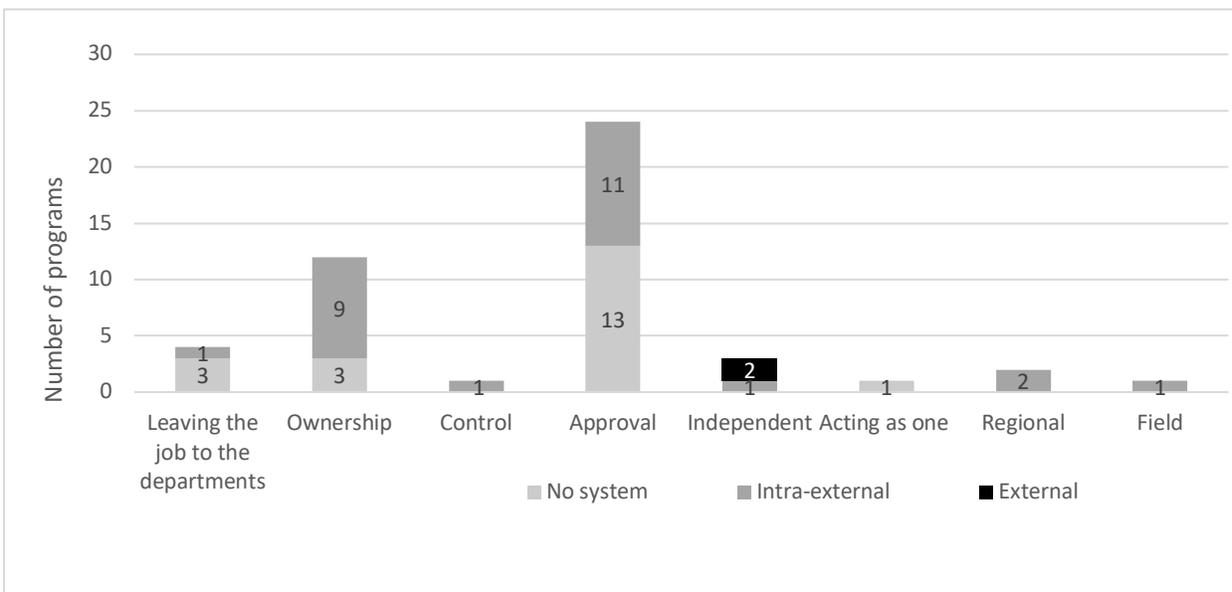


Figure 4. Relationship between collaboration form and quality assurance activities.

**Relationship between collaboration form and quality-assurance activities.** Based on the responses to RQ 1 and RQ 3, Figure 4 shows that all programs at the level of “external” quality-assurance activities were conducted under the “independent” form, reflecting program directors’ appreciation of quality assurance’s importance. Among programs conducted under the “ownership” form, a much larger number of programs was at the level of “intraexternal” quality-assurance activities than at the “no system” level. All program directors regarded external quality assurance as necessary and valuable for improving their programs and for enabling them to build a positive international reputation, thus reflecting the entrepreneurial nature of many programs. Many program directors operating under the “ownership” form addressed quality assurance but were unable to rise to the “external” level. Of programs operated under the “approval” form, approximately equal numbers of programs were at the “no system” and “intraexternal” levels. Of programs operating under the “approval” form, 15 of 24 program directors stated that although they recognized quality assurance’s importance, they were too involved in daily troubleshooting activities to focus on such activities.

**Relationship between maturity level of management structure and quality-assurance activities.** Responses to RQ 2 and RQ 3 revealed positive correlation between the maturity level of a program’s management form and quality-assurance activities, as shown in Figure 5. Programs at Levels 1–3 whose maturity level was low could not cope with quality-assurance activities, while programs at Levels 4 and 5 were active in quality-assurance. Regarding external accreditation, two noteworthy results were identified. First, only two programs

had been accredited by external agencies. Second, these programs were at Level 4 rather than 5, and were thus not connected to the international strategy pursued by the university's headquarters. Directors of the two externally accredited programs noted that accreditation activities were a burden for institutions but provided a very effective means of evaluating programs objectively, leading to their improvement.

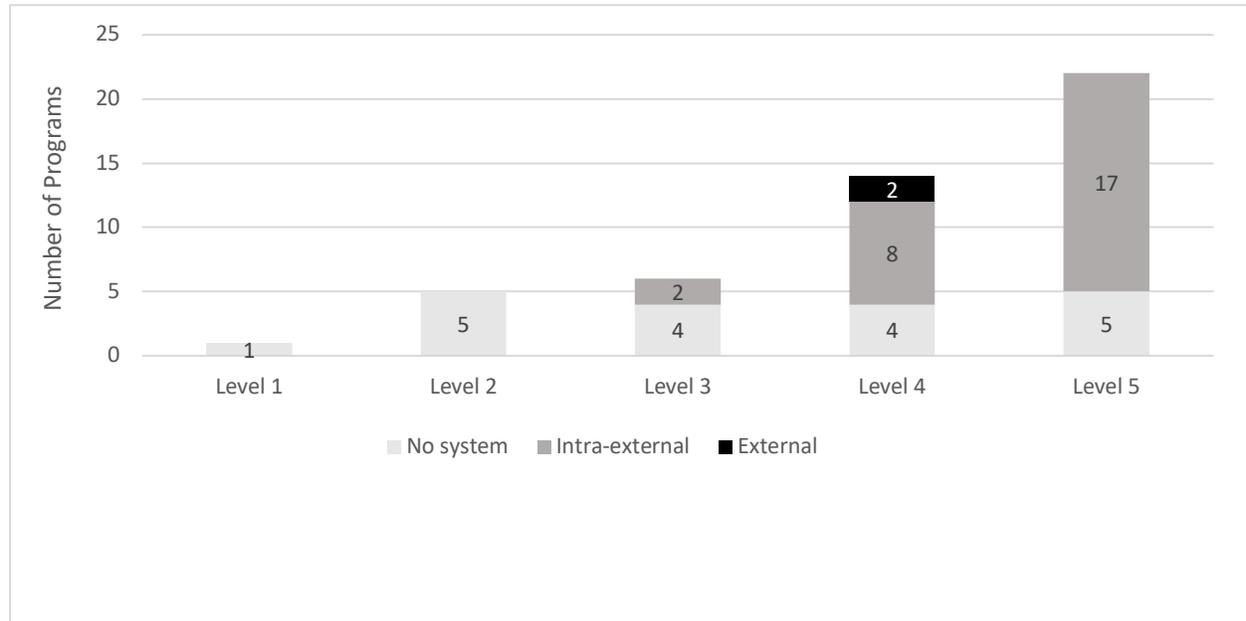


Figure 5. Relationship between maturity level of management structure and quality assurance activity.

## Discussion and Conclusion

Regarding institutional leadership, one form, termed *ownership*, appears best suited to operation of continuing programs. Under this form, operating departments feel that the university's headquarters are supportive and are thus highly motivated to run successful programs. However, the most frequently used is a centralized form termed *approval*. Under this form, although operating departments have full responsibility for running programs, they are not authorized to make final decisions, which must be approved by the university's headquarters. This prevents departments from making quick decisions and taking rapid action, resulting in low levels of motivation for running programs. However, other centralized forms termed *control* and *leaving the job to departments* do not work well. The key to creating a workable centralized form seems to be coexistence of "strong leadership" and "departmental ownership." Persistent departmental autonomy, however, forces university headquarters to give up central leadership, resulting in overloaded departments.

The most stable form, under which operating departments have clear vision on a global scale, is the independent form. Under this form, departments and the university's headquarters are recognized as equal partners pursuing a common strategy of effective internationalization on a global scale. In Japan, however, few programs operate under this form because the current funding system relies on public funds, thus resulting in lack of entrepreneurship among executives in higher education institutions. According to the interviews, all directors of programs operating under the Independent form have an entrepreneurial mindset, are proud of their programs, and believe that their programs could play a leading role in internationalization of Japanese higher

education as a whole. Furthermore, they noted that to become a leading program, seeking accreditation in terms of quality assurance was necessary. This reflected a previous study's results regarding entrepreneurship in Japanese institutions: To develop a more entrepreneurial form, while the staff needed an entrepreneurial mindset, greater accountability was also necessary (Yokoyama, 2006).

The study showed that Japanese institutions did not have effective access to funding compared with institutions in England. Because Japanese departments do not have independent accounting systems, ensuring funding resources is challenging for most institutions. However, unique programs that attract sufficient financial resources can successfully establish independent accounting systems.

Few programs operate under the regional and field forms of cooperation in Japan. In recent years, the decline in public funding has led to increasing competition among institutions, leading many to refuse to cooperate by sharing information and strategies. This reflects the tendency of innovative Japanese research groups not to form consortiums because of the prisoner's dilemma (i.e., when two completely rational individuals may not cooperate, even if it appears that it is in their best interests to do so; Yoshida, Yamashita, & Takeshita, 2011). To avoid the prisoner's dilemma, each institution's precise goal and strategy are important. Our results show that in successful programs under regional or field forms, many institutions have already recognized their unique ability to achieve a precise goal. When institutions eventually recognize that the aim is to compete in the global market rather than within Japan, numbers of these programs will increase.

As Taylor (2010b) noted, internationalization has previously been recognized as an "amateur" (p. 99) activity, normally pursued by academic staff free from institutional direction and oversight, labeled as Level 1 of the organizational framework presented in our study. Results show that most Japanese institutions have progressed beyond that level to a "new form of internationalization" (p. 99), wherein they have a vice president, deputy rector, or deputy or pro vice chancellor with responsibility for internationalization's institutional leadership and management (Taylor, 2010a), labeled as Levels 4 and 5 in our framework. Taylor also noted that a key factor in an internationalization strategy's development is emergence of a central international office established to lead, encourage, and coordinate international activities— included in Level 5 in this study.

Our results show that most Japanese institutions have already developed mature organizations in terms of internationalization. However, many program directors who were interviewed stated that hiring suitable, high-quality professionals was difficult because of insufficient funding. Thus, establishment of a stable accounting system might be the key to Japanese institutions' improved internationalization. Indeed, positive correlation existed between the management form's maturity level and the collaboration form. Successful program forms such as ownership and independent had a mature management form, whereas less successful forms such as leaving the job to the departments had only a basic management form. In programs operated under the ownership form, challenging issues regarding human resources were well supported, while programs operated under independent forms were invariably self-funding and worked well.

Conversely, programs operated under the leaving the job to the departments form were neither self-funded nor supported by the university's headquarters, leading to unsuccessful internationalization and accusations of being "amateur" activities. Although it remains a challenge, if institutions are to improve their management forms, quality assurance is essential (Ohta, 2011).

Even though the Japanese government has strengthened program quality, most institutions have not yet obtained accreditation from external agencies. There are three reasons for this. First, the Japanese accreditation system is institutional. Because external accreditation is not mandated, only highly motivated institutions have pursued it. Second, institutions only limited capacity, and those developing a management form stated that they did not have sufficient capacity to undertake the additional work necessary to obtain accreditation. Even so, many institutions have come to understand the necessity of evaluation by external professionals for improving their programs. Therefore, they have created internal evaluation boards aided by external professionals, but this has had limited effectiveness because the reviews were not transparent. Third, institution executives have not yet come to understand the importance of seeking external accreditation regardless of their already heavy workload. As Taylor (2010b) noted, a reputation for quality is essential for long-term success. Japanese higher education executives have not yet realized that higher education's globalization is causing reputations to quickly all over the world.

### **Implications**

Our research explored potential conflicts on management regarding internationalizing Japanese higher education institutions and showed several possibilities for management types that are applicable to Japanese institutions. Our study results show that Japanese higher education institutions' internationalization has already progressed beyond the level of "amateur" activities but still face several challenges. One key element of an entrepreneurial culture, effective central leadership, has already been introduced into Japanese higher education institutions as the ownership form. However, the other key element is funding, and given limitations of forms dependent on public funding, self-funding systems such as the independent form, which has been established in some institutions, needs to be embraced more widely. It can be said that these forms are neither dictatorship nor noninterference of the headquarters but an organic coordination between the headquarters and departments.

It is high time that Japanese institutions focused more on strategic planning to develop unique, self-funded programs enabling them to compete in the global higher education market. Higher education is becoming increasingly interdisciplinary and international, focused on global issues, and supported by large-scale corporate and charitable funding. Consequently, Japanese institutions need to develop institutional frameworks that operate on a correspondingly large scale.

### **Limitations**

Because data were collected from only 48 international collaboration higher education programs with a specific project that accepted our interview requests, results might not reflect the entire tendency of Japanese higher education institutions. In the near future, to check these findings' robustness, we plan a follow-up survey targeting other institutions.

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