

Factors Related to Satisfaction of Chinese International Students in Double Degree Programs

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The internationalization of universities has accelerated the movement of students across countries. In recent years, countries have actively introduced international joint degree programs, which are represented by double degree programs (DDPs). Although research on international students is accumulating, limited studies have examined the study experience conditions faced by Chinese students participating in DDPs in Japan. Therefore, this study aims to focus on the level of satisfaction that the students enrolled in DDPs derive from their study abroad experience; additionally, it examines the difficulties they face during their stay abroad, their motivation for studying abroad, and the strategies they implement to cope with related difficulties.

Excluding the introductory chapter, this thesis consists of ten chapters. Chapters 1 to 4 present the literature review, Chapters 5 to 9 present the empirical studies, and a comprehensive discussion is provided in the final chapter. The following sections describe the contents of each chapter.

Chapter 1 provides an overview of the current status of the implementation and development of international joint degree programs through international university agreements, as an internationalization initiative of universities worldwide. It also describes the current status of DDPs, which are the most widely implemented as joint degree programs.

Chapter 2 provides an overview of the trends in the number of international students as well as the cross-cultural environment surrounding international students and their reception in Japan. The characteristics of the Japanese culture, the culture shock associated with cross-cultural migration, the process of cross-cultural adaptation, international student friendships, and the nature of social support for international students are examined.

Chapter 3 outlines the trends focusing on the research on international student satisfaction and its related factors. Research trends on the difficulties faced by international students, their motivations for studying abroad, and their coping strategies are summarized. It was observed that although international students experience difficulties in various aspects, their study abroad experience leads to personal growth.

Chapter 4 covers various theories relevant to the present study. After an overview of the existing theories on stress, motivation, and coping, the research questions in this study are discussed.

Based on the previous chapters, Chapter 5 conducts a qualitative analysis of the difficulties faced by Chinese international students in the DDPs (DDP students). The difficulties are classified into six categories: unfamiliarity with living in Japan, difficulties related to participation in DDPs, dissatisfaction with interpersonal relationships, difficulties related to Japanese language skills, dissatisfaction with professional education in Japan, and barriers to career choices post-DDP completion. Specific difficulties for DDP students assessed: having a lack of information about the DDP system before coming to Japan, experiencing anxiety due to discrepancies in specializations,

and the narrowing of the range of personal relationships due to the large number of peers in the DDP students' sphere of activity.

In Chapter 6, a quantitative survey of DDP students' motivations and difficulties in studying abroad reveals five factors attributing to the difficulties faced by DDP students: dissatisfaction with specializations, difficulties with career decisions, dissatisfaction with friendships, dissatisfaction with the monotony of life, and difficulties associated with communicating in Japanese. The following five factors are regarded as the motivations for studying abroad: exploring possibilities, improving academic qualifications, understanding the Japanese culture, making negative choices, and to escape from reality. Furthermore, it is found that students with a negative motivation to study abroad are more likely to experience various difficulties.

Chapter 7 examines the relationship between the difficulties faced by DDP students and their coping strategies. Five factors were extracted as strategies for coping with difficulties for DDP students: mood adjustment, problem avoidance, problem-solving efforts, blaming others and seeking support. The results show that DDP students tend to adopt negative coping strategies when experiencing various difficulties.

In Chapter 8, a qualitative analysis of the satisfaction in studying abroad and its related factors is conducted based on DDP students' evaluations of the program. The results indicate that the factors associated with low satisfaction with studying abroad include the length of the study period and the complexity of the procedures, while the factors associated with high satisfaction are personal growth achieved through the abroad study experience, increased career awareness through the DDPs, and the efficiency and convenience of the DDP system. As the efficiency and convenience of studying in Japan are the main attractions of the DDPs, the results suggest that if these advantages are weakened, the overall satisfaction with the study abroad experience will decline. It is also confirmed that personal growth and increased career awareness during the study abroad experience lead to increased satisfaction.

In Chapter 9, the relationship between the effectiveness or overall satisfaction of studying abroad and the strategies adopted by DDP students to cope with difficulties is examined through a quantitative survey. Five factors are found to influence the effectiveness of studying abroad, including improved competence, development of relationships with teachers, increased global awareness, enhanced personal relationships, and increased interaction with foreigners. Meanwhile, three factors were found to influence the coping strategies in times of difficulties, including problem-solving efforts, emotional problem avoidance, and behavioral problem avoidance. Furthermore, for DDP students, problem-solving efforts is shown to be an important factor related to the effectiveness and overall satisfaction of studying abroad.

In the final chapter, these results are comprehensively discussed, and the advantages and disadvantages of the program are described from the perspective of DDP students. In addition, specific coping strategies are proposed, which can help the DDP students facing difficulties. Furthermore, recommendations are provided for the education and support of DDP students in

Chinese and Japanese universities and to further the program's improvement. Based on the results obtained in this study, further research should be conducted to determine the factors related to students' satisfaction with the study abroad experience, among other prospects.