

International Cooperative Education in Japan

Challenges and Hindrances

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Abstract

This thesis presents a study of the challenges supervisors and faculty staffs working at foreign higher education institutions have with creating and sustaining a cooperative education program in Japan.

Internationalization has become even more important for both the Japanese and Norwegian government the past years. This can be seen from how the two governments' new policies and projects encourages universities to send more students abroad and vice versa accept more international students. In Japan, Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) replaced the prior project for funding internationalization of academics, called Global 30 with the new Global University Project, in 2014. The aim of the new project is to encourage more Japanese universities to become internationalized and/or compete to be among the top 100 universities in the world.

In Norway, the new strategy for 2016 to 2020 by The Ministry of Education and Research (2015) was launched in the fall of 2015, called the Panorama Strategy. The strategy aims to increase cooperation with six countries, Brazil, Russia, India, China and South-Africa (BRICS), plus Japan, in the field of higher education and research. Centre for Internationalization of Education (SIU), the Research Council of Norway (RCN) and Innovation Norway (IN) are important organizations to execute and make this strategy work.

Data was mainly collected by conducting a semi-structured interviews and questionnaires with open-ended questions from staff and faculty staffs from nine higher education institutions. Based on the in-depth description of the staffs and faculty staffs experience seven challenges in sustaining and five challenges in creating a cooperative education program in Japan were identified. These twelve challenges show four primary themes influence the process of creating and sustaining a cooperative education program in Japan by a foreign higher education institution. The themes that emerged were: language, terminology and resources.

Acknowledgements

This thesis marks a good ending to my eight years of studies at six different universities and one college. What started as a fascination in languages ended in a study that has broadened my view of the world, given me friends from all around the globe and made me realize how important international education is. That is not to say there have been no struggles throughout the years.

I want to thank my friends for pushing me to finish my master's and making me understand how important it is. I am especially grateful to my parents who have always looked at the opportunities ahead of me rather than the hindrances. They have always been supportive of my choices and encouraged me to finish what I start.

This thesis would not have been possible without the input from my informants. Thank you for taking the time to answer my many questions in your busy schedule. I feel lucky to have had the opportunity to speak to faculty staffs across the world and research and publish a thesis that is relevant and important. Hopefully this thesis will prove useful for them and the other faculty staffs around the world.

Finally, most importantly I am grateful to my advisor, Dr. Aike Peter Rots from University of Oslo. Despite spending most of my research time away from the university, he has taken the time to speak to me through Skype and answered my many e-mails. If it was not for his positive attitude and patience towards my research, I might not have had the motivation to finish. It means the world to me to have an advisor that are able to both praise and criticize my work in a professional way.

Abbreviations

- BRICS – Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa
- CEIA – Cooperative Education & Internship Association
- HEI – Higher Education Institution
- IN – Innovation Norway
- JASSO – Japan Student Services Organization
- MEXT – Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology
- MISTY – Massachusetts Institute of Technology International Science and Technology Initiatives
- RCN – Research Council of Norway
- SIU – Centre for International Cooperation in Education
- SME – Small and Medium-sized Enterprises
- WACE – The World Association for Cooperative and Work-Integrated Education
- WIL – Work-Integrated Learning

Abbreviation for higher education institutions

- NHH – Norwegian School of Economics (Norway)
- KSU – Kyoto Sangyō University (Japan)
- MIT – Massachusetts Institute of Technology (USA)
- RBS – Rotterdam Business School (Netherland)
- RCT – Riyadh College of Technology (Saudi Arabia)
- RIT – Rochester Institute of Technology (USA)
- UC – University of Cincinnati (USA)
- UiB – University of Bergen (Norway)
- UiO – University of Oslo (Norway)
- UL – University of Limerick (Ireland)
- UW – University of Washington (USA)
- WCSU – Western Connecticut State University (USA)

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1 Introduction

The real strength of cooperative education as a strategy of practice-based learning is not that students gain opportunities to learn in the classroom and in the workplace, but that these opportunities are fostered and integrated to create learning that is more than the sum of the two parts. This helps the learner to find their place in the world and to understand how to shape the future, which are true measures of education. (Coll and Eames, 2010: 192)

1.1 Motivation and purpose

As a student in the humanities, with a bachelor in English and Japanese language, I have always worried about finding a job after my studies. It was therefore perfect that my Master's Degree in Asia and the Middle-East studies, specializing in Modern Japan, at University of Oslo (UiO) offered a work experience in the second year called "International Project Term in Asia and Africa". Even though UiO cooperates with around four hundred companies (Lindquist, 2016), in 2015 it was not common for students to find work in Japan. Therefore, none of the advisors at my faculty could provide me with much help regarding finding a company or had knowledge of what visa to apply for. Nevertheless, as I believed the benefits were worth the hardships I decided to apply for the program and search for a company. After a long process, I was fortunate to be accepted at an incubator company in Tokyo and left for Japan in the spring of 2015. While I was working in Tokyo, I had to write a 20 pages' paper for my home university, that was about an issue relevant for my company. It was in this context that I contacted Innovation Norway (IN) in Tokyo as I thought that IN, at that time, to be in a similar line of work as the incubator company I worked for and could therefore provide me with vital information for my paper. It was through IN that I learnt about the Centre for Internationalization of Education (SIU) which would later grant me my second internship in Japan.

SIU is a Norwegian government organization working under the Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research. In the spring of 2015, they signed the first cooperation agreement with IN and the Research Council of Norway (RCN) in Tokyo.¹ In the fall of 2015, SIU and IN hosted

¹ Cooperation between IN and RCN already exist at various IN offices in the world, among more, in South-Africa and Brazil. SIU's cooperation agreement with IN and RCN in Japan may be one of many more to come.

their first internship for one Norwegian student and among 14 applications, I was selected.² This resulted in my second internship experience and a one semester break from my master's degree. Even though SIU and IN joined to create this internship, I mainly worked in the interest of SIU, but on the other hand, my business card said I was a trainee at the Trade & Technology Office at the Royal Norwegian Embassy. This status definitely made people respect me more than it would have said "Centre for Internationalization of Education – Trainee". Despite working for SIU, they (and RCN) had no employees in Japan, but were instead represented by IN's employee Dr. Svein Grandum, who is the Counsellor of, Science, Technology and Higher Education at IN's office at the Royal Norwegian Embassy in Tokyo, Japan.

During the internship, one of my main tasks was to interview Norwegian students and look at the hindrances for increased student mobility in Japan. This meant not only to increase students coming to Japan to study, but also students coming to work as a part of their degree. Therefore, one of my tasks was to examine how to develop sustainable cooperative education programs between Japan and Norway. Through my research it became clear that there is an increased focus on internship and cooperative education programs not only in Norway, but also in Japan.

My office at IN was also shared by the Executive Director of the Norwegian Council of Commerce (NCCJ) and the casual atmosphere at the embassy made it possible to gather much useful information about the Norwegian companies in Japan. This is how I learnt about the Japan Business Internship program, that IN and the NCCJ created four years ago, in 2012 (NCCJ, 2012). The program was for Norwegian students to give them work experience in Japan and intended to last for many years, but unfortunately ended after only one year. One of the persons involved, as mentioned above, Dr. Svein Grandum, told me that he believed one of the reasons the program failed was that it was not linked to an educational institution and therefore not sustainable in the long run.³ This inspired me to do more research into this field and write a master's thesis that could enlighten the challenges and hindrances that foreign⁴ higher education institutions (HEI) have in creating and sustaining cooperative educational programs in Japan.

² In the fall of 2016 SIU and IN will hire a new intern for the second time.

³ Per. comm. with Dr. Grandum, fall 2015. With permission to use his name.

⁴ Foreign is meant as higher educational institutions that are outside of Japan.

In the past recent years, internationalization has become even more important for both the Japanese and Norwegian government. This can be seen from how the two governments' new policies and projects encourages higher education institutions (HEIs) to send more students abroad and the other way around, accept more international students into the country. In Japan, Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) replaced the prior project for funding internationalization of academics, called Global 30 with the new Global University Project, in 2014. The aim of this project is to encourage more Japanese universities to become internationalized and/or compete to be among the top 100 universities in the world.

In Norway, the new strategy for 2016 to 2020 by The Ministry of Education and Research (2015) was launched in the fall of 2015, called the Panorama Strategy. The strategy aims to increase cooperation with six countries, Brazil, Russia, India, China and South-Africa (BRICS), plus Japan, in the field of higher education and research. An example, is that the strategy is to facilitate increased work mobility in order to supply students with relevant work experience and help ensure that the business sector can take advantage of the market relevant expertise. (Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research, 2015: 21).⁵ Centre for Internationalization of Education (SIU), the Research Council of Norway (RCN) and Innovation Norway (IN) are important organizations to execute and make this strategy work.

In concurrence with the governments' strategies, higher education institutions (HEIs) in Japan and Norway also strive to provide their students with relevant education programs, as more companies hire only students with work experience (Katō, 2005). The concept of higher education institutions (HEI) cooperating with companies is far from new. Cooperative education originated in the USA for over one hundred years ago at the University of Cincinnati (UC), mainly for engineering students. The concept of cooperative education started to spread across the world in the 1990s, not only in engineering but in other fields, such as humanities and social science (Katō, 2005). According to the only international organization working for cooperative education, The World Association for Cooperative and Work-Integrated Education (WACE,n.d.), they have worked with 52 countries until now in 2016.

⁵ Translation from Norwegian done by myself.

To better grasp the idea of cooperative education, I created a figure, showing the triangular cooperation between the HEI, the company and the student (Figure 1).

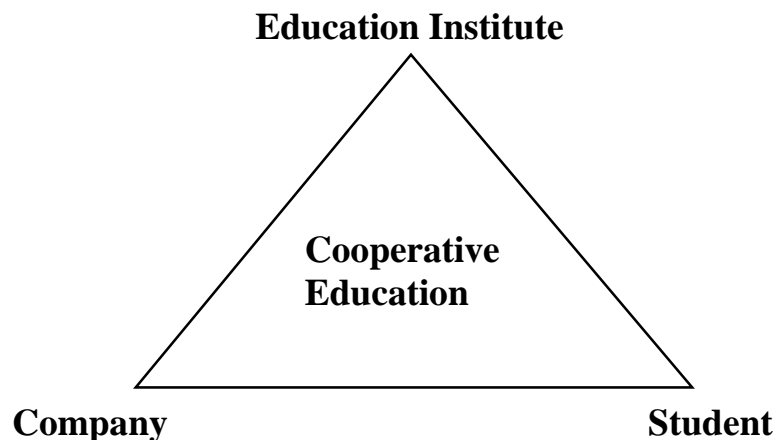


Figure 1: Cooperative Education Triangle

I would argue that participation in cooperative education abroad gives even more benefits compared to cooperative education done locally. Not only does the student learn about a different business culture in another country, but the student may also bring back knowledge to their own country that can be of great importance to the local companies when they do business in Japan (or elsewhere). Mainly three governmental authorities are responsible for promoting internship programs in Japan:

The Ministry of Education oversees the management and implementation of internship programs at universities and higher educational institutions. The Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare is responsible for implementing employment policies for young people, and the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry promotes economic activities within local business communities, such as venture businesses for young people.

(Katō, 2005).

As this thesis focus on higher education institutions, only internship programs promoted by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT, formerly known as Ministry of Education) will be included in this thesis.

This thesis contributes to the existing literature on cooperative education by focusing on the foreign HEIs' cooperative education programs in Japan. The emphasis of this study will be on the hindrances in creating and the challenges in sustaining a cooperative education program from a HEI's staff' point of view and is therefore particularly of interest for people who wish to create similar programs in the future. Understanding the challenges are vital for making a successful program run year after year. The purpose of this thesis is not to criticize any program or to analyze which program is better than the others, but rather locate traits and general challenges they all face with cooperating with companies in Japan and compare it with earlier research done in the field of cooperative education.

In the next subchapter, 1.2, I will explain the terminology used in this thesis and then state my research questions in subchapter 1.3. In my second chapter, I describe the methodology used in collecting primary and secondary sources. In the third chapter is a literature review. The fourth chapter gives an overview of the history of cooperative education. In the fifth chapter, information about the HEIs included in this thesis, and their cooperative education program in Japan is written. Chapter six, I will list my findings related to my research questions. Chapter 7, will have a discussion and comparison of the findings with earlier research. Then finally, I will write my conclusion.

1.2 Terminology

Cooperative Education:

To be able to analyze and better understand what challenges foreign universities have in creating Cooperative Education programs in Japan, one has to understand the different terminology used. The term "Cooperative Education"⁶ is used inconsistently in the academic world and both supervisors in industries and faculty staffs struggle with the correct terminology (Hamilton and Hamilton, 1997; Jacobsz and Wessels, 2010; Coll and Zegwaard, 2012). Furthermore, there is an ever growing number of terms used to describe the relationship between HEIs, students and companies. Similar terms include: Work-based learning, co-op, internship or interns, project-based learning, industry engaged learning, work-integrated learning (WIL) and school-to work

⁶ *Cooperative education* should not be confused with *Cooperative Learning* where the students work together to solve a task.

(Hamilton and Hamilton, 1997; Jacobsz and Wessels, 2010; Coll and Zegwaard, 2012). WACE (the World Association for Cooperative and Work-Integrated Education) has solved this by creating a new term: Cooperative & Work-Integrated Education (CWIE). This term refers to all forms of work-experience students have at industries.

In the UK, the term “Sandwich Program” is preferred above “Cooperative Education” and dates back as far as 1840 (Davies, 1983). According to Tanaka (2014) the main difference between a sandwich program and (typical North American) cooperative education is that a sandwich program takes place between the student’s second and third years, while the other is a 12-month program spread across the entire undergraduate years.⁷ The reason I mention a sandwich program, which is confusingly similar to Cooperative Education, is because most of the programs called cooperative education in the world today is inspired by the cooperative education program from Cincinnati University and/or the UK Sandwich Program. For example, Kyoto Sangyō University states that their cooperative education program is developed from a sandwich program (KSU, 2015) called On/Off Campus (Figure 2). When the students are on campus, they attend classes and study, and when they are off campus they do an Internship or Project Based Learning (PBL) at a company.

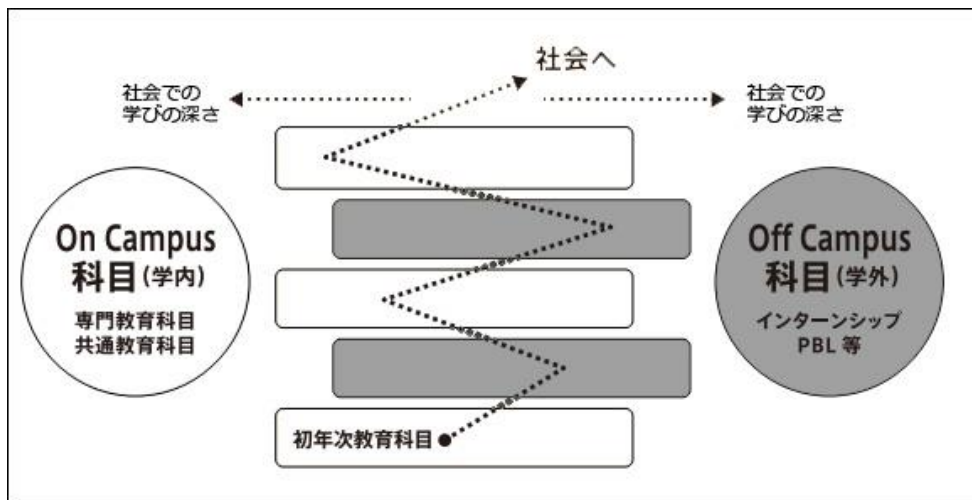


Figure 2: On/Off Campus (KSU, 2015)⁸

⁷ For example, at Drexel University, one of their options is to do a full-time employment during three six-month periods. <http://drexel.edu/difference/co-op/how-co-op-works/> (Accessed 13 May 2016)

⁸ Changes has been done to the original figure to match the colors of this thesis.

Massachusetts Institute of Technology’s (MIT) School of Engineering, on the other hand, has a different approach. According to Kaneko, Noguchi and Yoshikawa (2009), the students at engineering at MIT go through a Classroom Study – Expose – Practice – Reflect circle throughout their study. In year two, the students can participate in Undergraduate Practice Opportunities Program (UPOP) which run for one year where the students only work for a couple of hours and at the same period attend classes. In the third year, they can do another internship. And in the fourth year they can participate in an Industry Initiated Project. (Figure 3)

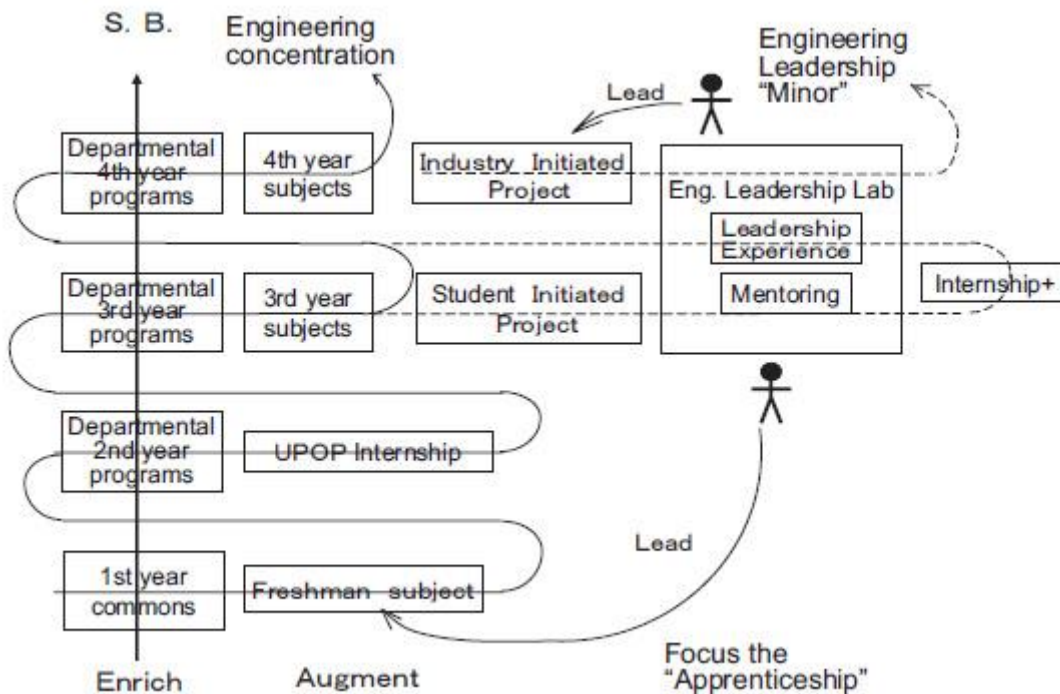


Figure 3: MIT students’ typical roadmap. (Kaneko, Noguchi and Yoshikawa, 2009: 66)

The terms Internship and Cooperative Education are often used interchangeably. Western Connecticut State University (WCSU), with their program “The WCSU Cooperative Education Internship Program” states that “there is no difference (WCSU, 2014: 1)” (between Cooperative Education and Internship), in which I disagree, despite that in Norway, the word Internship is used to cover them both terms.

To argue my point, I have listed below common differences between Internship and Cooperative Education:

Internship

- During the summer and/or part time besides studies.
- Paid or unpaid.
- Flexible.
- Short in length.

Cooperative Education

- Full time.
- Usually paid.
- Academic involvement.
- Length: 3 to 12 months.
- Tuition may be free of charge during the program depending on the HEI.

(Boyington, 2015)

In the case of Japan, Katō (2005) claim that one of the hindrances for the expansion and development of cooperative education in Japan is the interchangeable usage of the Japanese words for internship *intānshippu* インターンシップ and cooperative education *kōpu kyōiku* コープ教育. This issue is not unique to Japan, as one can see in the above example from WCSU consider internship and cooperative education to be one and the same, and Norway where there are commonly used one term to cover them both. A bit confusingly, Churton, Matsutaka and Tanaka (2009: 1) claim that Co-op Education (Cooperative Education) is better known as Career Education *kyaria kyōiku* キャリア教育 in Japan. If this was the case, then Katō's (2005) claims about the terminology being a hindrance the development of cooperative education in Japan would have be solved. However, from reading sources about cooperative education in Japanese, I noticed a tendency that all three terms are used interchangeable, making it even more confusing.

Furthermore, Coll and Eames (cited in Coll and Zegwaard, 2012) argue that another harmful practice that hinders the legitimacy of these programs is the broad labeling of the term cooperative education. Today, some programs that are labeled as cooperative education are mere

add-on work experience programs attached to a degree, based on the assumption that learning will happen simply by providing a workplace (Coll and Zegwaard, 2012).

Despite my focus being Japan, I have chosen to use the more internationally used term Cooperative Education in this thesis. Based on Hamilton and Hamilton (1997), Katō (2005) and Tanaka's (2014) definitions of the term, I will define Cooperative Education as: *Work experience for students in higher education institutions (HEIs), in which they earn credits from their home institution. The work experience is developed and/or approved by the HEIs that run the cooperative educational program. The students have to actively participate in work similar to the other employees instead of just shadowing.* Another criterion, set by WACE (World Association for Cooperative and Work-integrated Education) (see Tanaka, 2014), is that the program *must be a minimum of 3 months long.*

The aim in Cooperative Education is not for the students to find a job, but to acquire work skills that they can use after graduation to apply for a job (Katō, 2005). Whether or not the students receive remuneration for working will not be an important criterion in my case. In Norway, even higher education is free and Norwegian students receive support from the Norwegian government (The Norwegian State Educational Loan Fund) during their studies and therefore cannot accept money for a work program related to their education.

The word Internship will be used in this thesis when is unsure from the source if it is a Cooperative Education program or an Internship program. Meaning, the students may not receive credits for the program.

1.3 Research Questions

1. What hinders higher education institutions to create cooperative education programs in Japan from the point of view from supervisors or faculty staffs working at a higher education institution?
2. What challenges are there in sustaining a cooperative education program in Japan, from the point of view from supervisors or faculty staffs working at a higher education institution?

2 Methodology

This chapter will describe the methods used in collecting data, how the samples were selected, and the reason this method was chosen.

Foreign universities running cooperative education programs in Japan are still few, and it would therefore be difficult to conduct a quantitative research on this topic. Hence, mainly qualitative methods were used. A semi-structured interview style was used in order to go in depth of what HEI's staff and supervisors perceived to be the challenges in cooperative education programs in Japan. Informants were asked open ended questions in the interviews and questionnaires.

Interview as a method does not have a scientific theory because of the complexity and flexibility and is considered more like an art form rather than science (Kvale, 1990). Many good guidelines and techniques are however developed. A semi-structured interview is 80% improvised as the prepared questions cannot predict the responses from the informant (Wengraf, 2001). Before conducting the interviews, I created an interview guide that focused on answering my research questions. Kvale (1990) emphasizes the importance of receiving various viewpoints of the topic by creating open questions which do not direct the answers in a semi-structured interview. I have avoided group interviews (Brandth, 1998) because it would be difficult to handle when most of my interviews were conducted through the computer program Skype.

As I lacked the time and money to travel and directly interview the supervisors and faculty staffs at universities that were outside of Norway, e-mail was the best initial way to get in touch with them. Meho (2006) has published guidelines for how to use e-mail interviewing in qualitative research. To encourage the participation, she suggests to contact each person personally, which I have done. The subject line should state the purpose of the e-mail, so that the receiver will not accidentally delete it. For example, I used "Master's thesis about cooperative education in Japan" and "Internship in Japan" in the subject line. In the first e-mails, I only used the term Cooperative Education in my e-mail text, which turned to be unfortunate because not everyone understood the term. From the first replies, I realized I had to do some changes. Besides explaining my objectives better, I made two changes. First, I replaced the term Cooperative Education with Internship in e-mails to universities which only used the term Internship on their website. Second, in other e-mails I wrote the term "Cooperative Education" with the term

“Internship” in brackets. A good subject line title would be “Research Interview” as Meho (2016: 1292) use as an example. One of the challenges in using e-mail as a method is that it is harder to build trust. Therefore, in the beginning of each e-mail, I was careful to spell the titles and names correctly, then introduce myself and my research and where I had found their contact information (Meho, 2016). One advantage of using e-mail is that one can easily quote the answers, compared to an interview.

Besides the universities contacted in Bergen and Oslo (Norway), I had little knowledge of which universities outside Norway that had cooperative education programs in Japan, corresponding to my above definition of the term cooperative education. By searching online and reading on various universities’ homepages I was able to find more information about their programs and see if it was related to my research. My internship at IN ended in the beginning of February, so it was not until then that I was able to concentrate solely on my thesis. In the course of the spring of 2016, I sent out e-mails to 34 different higher education institutions’ (HEIs) staff, organizations, and faculty staffs, from Norway, Ireland, the USA and Canada, asking for interviews or more information about their programs. Of the 34 I sent, excluding follow up e-mails, 23 e-mails were replied resulting in a 68% response rate. however only 48% of the 23 responses had useful information that could be used for my thesis, ergo only 32% of the answers could be used. The three universities I contacted in Canada⁹ all referred me to an organization called the “Canada-Japan co-op program”, with which they collaborate. This organization is in charge of finding internships in Japan for their Canadian partner universities’ students. The concept of the “Canada-Japan co-op program” could be interesting to find more about and include, but I will not include this organization as it strays from my focus.

In the end, I interviewed one professor and 3 supervisors at four different Norwegian universities: the University of Bergen (UiB), the Norwegian School of Economics (NHH)¹⁰, the University of Oslo (UiO) and HEI X¹¹. As mentioned above, from my knowledge the only Norwegian university that has a cooperative education program in Japan is UiO (more

⁹ The Simon Fraser University, the University of Victoria and the University of Calgary.

¹⁰ This interview was done by phone; the rest were face to face.

¹¹ This Norwegian HEI wished to be held anonymous.

information in chapter 5.6). However, I chose to interview supervisors and faculty staffs at the other Norwegian HEIs because I wanted to gather information about what is preventing them from starting a similar program. The reason I chose to interview personnel from UiB and NHH was because I had correspondence with them during my internship in Japan and knew of their interests in creating a cooperative education program in Japan.¹² HEI X, however, do not want to create a cooperative education in Japan in the nearest future. But is included, because they have experience with local cooperative education programs in Norway and has fresh experience from their new international cooperative education with countries in Europe.

Owing to differences in time zones and busy schedules, I was unfortunately only able to interview one supervisor outside of Norway. Two more interviews were scheduled with supervisors from the USA and Ireland, but because of their restricted schedule they were unable to participate when the date arrived. Thus, I created a questionnaire for those who were not able to meet up for an interview.

From the USA, I interviewed the program manager of Japan at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). In addition, supervisors and faculty staffs from five HEIs answered my questionnaires. From the USA; Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT) and the University of Washington (UW); one university from Ireland, the University of Limerick; and finally, one university from the Netherlands, the Rotterdam Business School (RBS). In total five universities answered my questionnaire. In chapter 5, more detailed information about the different programs developed by these universities will be written. Drexel University (DU) and University of Utah (Utah) did not answer my questionnaire, however they are included because they provided information about why they do not have a cooperative education program in Japan. Because of this, I will not include them in chapter 5.

The names of my informants will be anonymous in my thesis. The names of HEIs are provided to better understand the context and background information of them and what programs they are running.

¹² With the exception of HEI X.

Based on my first responses I made changes in my questionnaire as I realized some of my questions were unclear and/or lacking. Below is the final version of my interview / questionnaire guide.

- 1) Which university are you working for? / Which organization are you working for?
- 2) When did your university start a cooperative education program with Japan?
- 3) Have you worked with the program from the start?
- 4) Do your students have to speak Japanese at the company they have been assigned to?
- 5) How did your university find companies for your students?
- 6) What challenges did your university have in creating the cooperative education program with Japan?
- 7) Has there been any changes in the program since the start? If yes, why?
- 8) Have your university had problems with government policies that have made it difficult to have a co-op program with Japan? If yes, what policies?
- 9) Could you give examples of best-practice and advice to other non-Japanese universities wishing to make a co-op program in Japan?
- 10) Have you been involved with creating co-op programs in other countries besides Japan? If yes, what challenges has been different there compared to Japan?

The aim of this thesis is to provide insight in the challenges and hindrances that foreign universities have in creating and sustaining cooperative education programs in Japan. The target group for this thesis was therefore foreign HEI's personnel involved with cooperative education programs with Japan. The challenges that students and companies experience are of course important as they also influence what challenges universities have. If the students or companies' challenges are not addressed by the HEIs, they will not be able to create a program at all. Some of their challenges may indirectly be shown from the HEIs' viewpoint, however, it was not feasible to include the viewpoints of the students and companies in the timeframe and length of this one semester thesis.

3 Literature Review

In this chapter, I will introduce some of the important researchers in cooperative education and present two reports and one survey related to the challenges related to creating and sustain a cooperative education program.

The literature on cooperative education is a collection of a broad field of studies. It ranges from how to assess the students learning (Beck and Halim, 2008), the link between internship and future employment (Benzing and Callanan, 2004), how to create a successful work placement from a students' point of view (Coll and Wong, 2001), and what are the benefits from cooperative education from a student's point of view (Bentley, J. and Broons, B. 1999). It is natural that a majority of the studies are from the students' viewpoint, as they are the ones who are supposed to benefit mostly from this cooperation. On the other side, I argue that all three parties involved, the higher education institution (HEI), the students and companies benefit from this scheme. If one part received no benefits, it is unlikely they would participate.

Professor Richard K. Coll is the founder of the Asia-Pacific Journal of Cooperative Education has published many articles throughout the years about cooperative education. According to Coll and Eames (2000) the benefits for the students, educational institutes and companies participating in Cooperative Education programs are documented in a thorough manner in the literature (Coco, 2000). Jacobsz and Wessels (2010), argue that there exist limited data on cooperative education concerning the views of companies and HEIs. From e-mail correspondence between professor Coll, he wrote to me that he found my topic interesting and worth studying, but he had neither done research in this field nor could provide me with much relevant sources. I also have, unfortunately, found few sources that has done their research from the supervisor or faculty staff's point of view of the challenges in cooperative education and my research with Japan as focus may be the first of its kind.

The first report I want to present was written by Dean Parkinson (2007), and published in the *Journal for Global Engineering Education*. It discusses the formats, challenges and best practices of engineering study abroad programs from an administrator's viewpoint. Parkinson reviewed around 25 programs based on secondary sources, such as interviews, the web and

literature. He wanted to find out what sort of programs existed, the challenges associated with them, and best practices. His viewpoint is from an administrator currently working with this and is aimed at someone who wish to create such a program at their own educational institute. The challenges he presents are about running the programs, not linked to challenges in creating the programs. His research is not specifically concerned with only the challenges to cooperative education, but rather groups it together with other types of programs, such as “Dual Degree”, “Exchange” and “Partner Sub-contract”. Furthermore, just three of the twenty-five programs had relation with Japan, the others programs worked with, among more, Germany, China and India. I have therefore taken the liberty to pick out the challenges that applies best for running a cooperative education program:

1. Lack of language skills: Most American student are not bilingual
2. Scaling the program: Being able to make it bigger, more companies and students.
3. Recruiting Students: It is expensive for them to participate and they are reluctant to leave family and friends.
4. Recruiting Faculty: Faculty is not interested in participating because it takes time, is not related to their research and they do not advance in rank.
5. Timing of semesters do not match the university abroad.
6. Assessment of learning outcome: How to evaluate the students learning outcome.

Furthermore, from Parkinson (2007) chapter of “Best Practices” is a list of what HEIs need to do based on “exemplary programs”. This can on the other way around, be seen as challenges for other HEIs that are not that “exemplary”. The “Best Practices” below has been paraphrased from “HEIs needs to do this” to “HEIs is not doing this” to fit as a challenge:

7. A clear set of desired outcomes: It is not good enough to just send the students abroad.
8. HEI’s infrastructures already in place is not taken advantage of: This is to avoid using resources on creating programs that already exists.
9. Students are not prepared enough before they go: By preparing the student, they will benefit much more from the experience.
10. Faculties does not work together: By working together it is more likely the college will

buy-in on it. Furthermore, the program will be more sustainable, as the quote below shows:

“It is not uncommon to find that a particular program has grown up based on the drive and enthusiasm of a particular faculty member. [...] Programs build around a single faculty member and his or her international connections are fragile and typically fail when the individual loses interest or moves”. (Parkinson, 2007: 12)

The next report I want to present is about the success and challenges of the cooperative education program at the Riyadh College of Technology (RCT) in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, written by Alabdulahfez and Aleisa (2001). The college offers two programs: An associate degree program and a B.S. program, which in 1997, cooperative education became mandatory part of. Dr. Mohammed A. Alabdulahfez and Dr. Ahmed M. Aleisa are both former employees of RCT: Dr. Aleisa became the Minister of Education in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in 2015. They write from the viewpoint from all three parties involved, the educational institute, the company and the student. The purpose of their research was to collect data about five issues from these different viewpoints. From the report, I have picked out the challenges that are from the supervisors' point of view and listed them below:

1. Lack of resources: The supervision of students is resource intensive.
2. Supervisors have difficulties balancing teaching and supervision.
3. Work-placement in companies in the private sector are hard to secure.
4. The students struggled to speak in English.
5. The supervisors lack transport to and from the workplace.
6. Lack of payment to the students.

Alabdulahfez and Aleisa (2001: 1) claim that it is difficult to “secure work-placement in private sector companies”, however, 235 of the 265 companies participating in 2001 was from the private sector. Furthermore, it is not explicitly written if the companies are only local or also abroad. However, in the report, the word “abroad” and “international” is not mentioned and therefore it is likely that only local businesses were involved.

The last literature I want to present is a survey done by Kaneko, Noguchi and Yoshikawa (2009) titled Survey of Internship Education in Western Countries and the Problems to be considered in Japan *Ōbei ni okeru intāshipu kyōiku no genjō chōsa to wagakuni de no kadai* 欧米におけるインターンシップ教育の現状調査と我国での課題. This survey is part of a postgraduate course at School of Engineering, Hokkaido University. The authors gathered firsthand information from seven universities, three companies and one institute in the USA and Europe. The reason I have included this survey, is to show what challenges Japanese HEIs have in creating cooperative education locally. The challenges may be similar to what foreign HEIs experience when dealing with Japan. In their survey, they identify two main problems with internship programs in Japan:

1. There is not a foundation that students can do internship in Japan. Students prioritize their graduate thesis and master's thesis. Furthermore, from the 3rd year or the winter of the first year of one's master, students have job hunting in Japan.
2. Japanese companies view internship as a burden and do not see the benefits from participating. The reason for this is the internship is for two weeks to one month and is mainly shadowing.

4 History of Cooperative Education

In this chapter is a brief overview of the history of cooperative education and the development and expansion in Japan.

The term *Cooperative Education* was coined in 1906 (Katō, 2005) at Cincinnati University, where it was solely aimed at engineering students. The first programs were successful despite being “met with great resistance from both traditional educators and non-committed industrialists” (Haddara and Skanes, 2007:67). In the UK, a similar program called the Sandwich Program, started already in 1840 (Davies, 1983). From the mid 1990’s the idea of combining higher education with work experience became more popular and the idea spread across the world.

The only international organization that work with cooperative education is the World Association for Cooperative and Work-Integrated Education (WACE), formed in 1983. Important local organizations, worth mentioning, are the Cooperative Education & Internship Association (CEIA), formed in 1963 in the USA and The Canadian Association for Co-operation Education (CAFCE), formed in 1973 in Canada.

Cooperative Education became popular in Japan not until the 1990s. Previously, only research agreements between universities and companies existed. One of the first Japanese universities starting with Cooperative Education was Ritsumeikan University, in 1992 (Katō 2005). However, according to Tanaka (2013) in 2012 there was still no cooperative education system in Japan. Inagaki (2014) argues that “Kyoto Sangyō University (KSU) is a pioneering university that has implemented Cooperative Education at Japanese universities”, but do not give a source to his claims or writes when or where it was implemented.

The reason Inagaki (2014) and Tanaka (2013) claim it started much later, might be because of the different interpretations of the term Cooperative Education. In the beginning, in the 1990s, there were mainly short-term (ten days or less) unpaid internships in Japan, which, as Katō (2005) argues, could not be considered as cooperative education programs. Around the year 2005, internships in Japan increased to one month and became credit-based (Katō, 2005).

According to most recent survey from The Japanese Ministry of Education and Technology (MEXT, 2007), from 2007, 504 (of a total of 756) universities had credit based internships.

In 2010, MEXT launched the Workforce Development Assistance Project for University Students¹³ *Daigakusei no shūgyōryoku ikusei shien jigyo* 大学生の就業力育成支援事業 (Yamada and Katō, 2015). 180 universities got funding for their projects related to creating work experience for their students. For example, Kyoto Notre Dame University got funds for their project Practice career education to self- develop a workforce¹⁴ *Shūgyōryoku o jiko kaihatsusuru jissen kyaria kyōiku* 就業力を自己開発する実践キャリア教育 (MEXT, 2010). In 2012, The Education Improvement and Enhancement Maintenance of the Industry Organization's needs Project Theme A¹⁵ *Sangyōkai no nizu ni taiōshita kyōiku jūjitsu taisei seibi jigyo tēma A* 産業界のニーズに対応した教育改善・充実体制整備事業 テーマ A was launched to support universities and (two year) junior colleges that dealt with development of human resources for the needs of the industrial world. 174 universities and junior colleges were selected to receive funds for up to three years, ending in 2014, to promote internships. (Yamada and Katō, 2015: 8-9) This turned to theme B in 2014 with the aim to spread the expansion of internship in Japan. This successfully spread and in 2015, continued under the new name The Education Enhanced through Internships project¹⁶ *Intānshippu nado o tsūjita kyōiku kyōka* インターンシップ等を通じた教育強化 started (JASSO, 2015a; Yamada and Katō: 9). In 2015 it included 135 Japanese universities divided into 11 groups supervised by JASSO (Japan Student Services Organization) (JASSO, 2015b). JASSO's task is to approve internship programs, distribute funds from MEXT and motivate more universities to start their own internship program by holding workshops for the universities to spread "best practice" between them. However, it is up to each of the universities how they want to develop these internship programs. They have much liberty to create what suits their university and students best. As part of my work for SIU (Centre for

¹³ My translation

¹⁴ My translation

¹⁵ My translation

¹⁶ My translation

Internationalization of Education), I was fortunate to participate in one of these workshops in the fall of 2015 in Tokyo.

As the only foreigner attending the workshop, everything was held in Japanese. The workshop was split into five parts: First a representative from JASSO welcome everyone to the workshop and then a person from MEXT explained what the workshop was about. Then another MEXT employee Toshiaki Katō, who also is a committee member of the above mentioned project, The Education Improvement and Enhancement of the Industry Organization's needs Maintenance Project, gave a speech about The Future of Achievements and Internship in the Workshop¹⁷ *Kenshūkai ni okeru seika to intāshipu no shōrai ni mukete* 研修会における成果とインターシップの将来に向けて. In this thesis, I refer to a book Katō wrote together with Yamada (2015) which is called Become an internship professional!¹⁸ *Intāshipu no puro ni naru! インターシップのプロになる!*, describing the current situation of internship programs in Japan and gives examples worries and solutions from ten Japanese universities. Furthermore, I also refer to an article he wrote for the Asia Pacific Journal of Cooperative Education (Katō, 2005). In part two were two speeches from professors from Kyoto Sangyō University and the Institute of Technologists¹⁹ about Mid to Long-Term Internships. Part three, presented by a professor from Kyūshū Sangyō University and Dōshisha University was about Students' Active Learning triggered by PBL (Project Based Learning). Part four was about the Management of Risk in Internship, by a professor from Nagoya Sangyō University. One of his concerns was how to deal with students who got hurt while doing an internship abroad. In the end was a group discussion where 4 and 5 people sat together and wrote down their main challenges with their internship program and made post-it notes they posted on a blackboard to share with the rest. Attending the workshop was 268 professors and university staff from all around Japan, and one intern (that being me). Similar workshops were held in Hokkaidō and Kyūshū prefecture.

¹⁷ My translation.

¹⁸ My translation.

¹⁹ Name in Japanese: *Monotsukuri daigaku* ものつくり大学.

According to Yamada and Katō (2015), 67 691 students from universities and junior colleges²⁰, a mere 2.4%, participated in internships in Japan in 2013. 80% of those had a duration of less than three weeks.

²⁰ *Tanki daigaku* 短期大学

5 Foreign Higher Education Institutions

In this chapter I will briefly give some basic information of the different cooperative education programs from the universities included in this thesis.

5.1 Higher Education Institutions with a Cooperative Education Program in Japan

5.1.1 Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) (USA)

Situated in Cambridge, Massachusetts, USA, MIT is ranked high as a private research university in the world. MIT's program MISTY (MIT International Science and Technology Initiatives) started in 1981 and sent their first students to Japan in 1983. The program has now in 2016 been running for 33 years. The students are mainly from majors such as computer science and engineering. To this date (2016), MIT has placed over one thousand students in 19 different countries and each year they send 30 to 40 students to Japan. The students going to Japan mainly work at Research and Development department of the company and it is required of the students to have studied at least two years of the Japanese language and culture prior to the work exchange.

5.1.2 Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT) (USA)

RIT is among the top ten regional colleges in the USA, situated in Rochester, New York, USA. Their cooperative education program called Work Abroad started in 2013 and is mandatory for all RIT students, in which they earn credits for their graduation. Japan is just one of many countries the students can travel to. While the universities find companies in some countries, the companies in Japan are found and contacted by the students and they have to speak Japanese to participate.

5.1.3 Rotterdam Business School (RBS) (The Netherlands)

RBS is part of Rotterdam University of Applied Sciences, located as the name indicates in Rotterdam, the Netherlands. RBS has run their cooperative education program Trade Management for Asia for over twenty years and it is mandatory for all Bachelor of Business

Administration (BBA) students. Japan is just one of many countries they can choose from. Each year twenty to twenty-five students travel to Japan. The students first study for one semester in Japan, then they work at an organization for three months. Depending on the company, the students need to speak Japanese or English.

5.1.4 University of Limerick (UL) (Ireland)

UL is situated in Limerick, Ireland. Despite not having a high rank in the world, UL is proud that their students are more likely to find work after graduation compared to other universities in Ireland. (UL, 2013) UL has run their program for eight years, since 2008. Cooperative education is mandatory for all the students and on average, ten students go to Japan each year. Mainly students from humanities studies travel to Japan, as they have the highest level of Japanese. The university finds companies in Japan in which their students work at for six months.

5.1.5 University of Oslo (UiO) (Norway)

Situated in the capital in Norway, Oslo, UiO is one of the oldest and most reputable universities in the country. In 2012, UiO started planning their new program “Career: Asia” where they focused on three countries: Japan, China and India. In the fall of 2015, UiO sent their first three students abroad to Japan. The students first study language and business courses during the first semester at a Japanese university, then they work at a company for four months. To be eligible to apply for this program, the students must have a bachelor in Japanese language and culture.

5.2 Higher Education Institutions without a Cooperative Education Program in Japan

5.2.1 Norwegian School of Business (NHH) (Norway)

NHH has their campus in Bergen, Norway and was the first public business school to be established in the country. Their students may take classes in Japanese and study abroad in Japan at NHH’s two bilateral agreements at bachelor’s level and 5 bilateral agreements at master’s level. Every year, around ten students do an exchange in Japan.

5.2.2 University of Bergen (UiB) (Norway)

Situated in Bergen, UiB is one of two public universities that offers students a Bachelor's Degree in the Japanese Language in Norway. Yearly, sixty to ninety students start studying Japanese at UiB, where it is mandatory that they study abroad for one year at one of UiB's twelve bilateral agreements in Japan. This is the university I graduated my bachelor's degrees at.

5.2.3 University of Washington (UW) (USA)

Situated in Seattle, Washington, USA, UW's ranked number 11 at U.S.News (2015) Best Global University Ranking in 2015. Their cooperative education program called Technical Japanese ran for 25 years from 1990 to 2015 when the program ended because their main supervisor retired. UW has two different programs: Firstly, a master's degree program where the student combined the study of Engineering or Technical Communication and Japanese. Secondly, undergraduates could combine a work experience in Japan to earn a minor in Technical Japanese. The students had to speak Japanese at the company they worked at.

5.3 Summary

The higher education institutions (HEIs) with cooperative education programs all give their students credits from participating in a work experience. The programs run from three to six months in length. The students were enrolled from various majors, ranging from engineering to the humanities. Four countries are included in my research the USA, Ireland, the Netherlands and Norway. All the universities, with the exception of RIT, find companies for their students. The HEIs without current cooperative education programs, either had one before or wish to create one in the future. Two universities from Norway and one from the USA.

6 Findings

In this chapter, I will present the findings from the interviews and questionnaires and e-mail exchanges in two subchapters related to the two research questions.

6.1 Findings part 1

Findings from the interviews with the staff at University of Bergen (UiB) and Norwegian School of Business (NHH) and two e-mail responses from University of Utah and University of Drexel, related to research question one will be presented here.

Research question one is as follows:

1. What hinders higher education institutions to create cooperative education programs in Japan from the point of view from supervisors or faculty staffs working at a higher education institution?

From the interviews with a professors who teach Japanese at UiB, he told me that he hoped to help his students get work experience in Japan as it is difficult for them to find companies themselves.²¹ However, his first concern was where to find the time and money to do it as he spend most of his time preparing lessons and correcting tests. His second concern was the Japanese proficiency level of his students. Such a program would not be doable at a bachelor's level, but perhaps afterwards. He did not see the point in sending his students to Japan if they were not able to communicate in Japanese. On the other hand, he also considered finding Japanese companies in Norway for his students. His third concern was how to find time to visit companies in Japan, as this is an important to build trust between the company and UiB.

NHH, on the other hand, wished to create a cooperative education program in Japan is because of how their current exchange program is set to fit the Japanese school system. While schools in Japan start their semester from April, schools in Norway start in January. This means that NHH's students have a three months break before they can start classes in Japan. Instead of wasting those three months in doing nothing in Norway, they could get work experience in Japan. The

²¹ Per. comm. with a professor from UiB, 08. April 2016.

supervisor I interview informed me that one of the main issue was to get the faculty to agree on creating a new program. To be able to create more courses to teach at the college, the lecturers are reluctant in making cooperative education programs because they want most of their student to earn credits at the home university and not outside. The students could do an internship in Japan for those three months without credits, however then they would not be entitled a scholarship or loan from the government during that period because they earn no credits from their school. A second challenge is lack of resources; it takes time to find companies. Even if their bilateral partners in Japan find companies for their students, they would expect in return that NHH find companies in Norway for their students.

Similar to my findings in Norway, I received an e-mail from University of Utah, responding to my questions about an internship program called JETRO International Internship in Japan, which ended in 2007. Below is a quote where they explain to me why they have not created an internship program in Japan:

We simply have not had the student interest or level of language capacity to warrant a strategic global internship in Japan. The high cost, language requirement, and difficulty and length of establishing relationships/contacts in Japan have all been factors as to why we have not established a long-term internship program in Japan. University of Utah

If our students want to go to Japan, they must find their own jobs. When we investigated the job situation, there were language issues primarily so that's why we do not develop jobs for our students. Drexel University

From the interviews with the Norwegian universities, one of the main hindrances are the lack of resources such as time, money and manpower is hindering them in creating a cooperative education program in Japan. Another challenge is to get enough eligible students to apply for a new program, especially a program that requires a high level of Japanese.

To sum up, the main challenges I found are as follows:

1. Balance teaching and supervision.
2. Lack of resources: Money, time and manpower.
3. Recruit faculty.
4. Recruiting students.
5. Find companies.

6.2 Findings part 2

Research question one is as follows:

2. What challenges are there in sustaining a cooperative education program in Japan, from the point of view from supervisors or faculty staffs working at a higher education institution?

From the interviews and questionnaires, six challenges regarding companies were identified. Firstly, the companies are unsure what cooperative education is and therefore do not see the value of the program. Secondly, they do not value students who are not able to speak Japanese. Thirdly, they are not aware of the work quality students can provide. Fourthly, the companies cannot afford to give remuneration to the students. Fifthly, big companies are bureaucratic and conservative to create an internship program. Lastly, the companies are not used to take in interns and are therefore unsure what tasks to give the students. Quotes from HEI's staff is provided below:

Since the definition of co-op is paid work experience in the student field of study many companies or 3 party providers that we work with cannot afford to pay the students. They also do not see the value if the student is not fluent in Japanese. They are also not aware of the quality of work the students could provide to them. (Furthermore) Companies are not aware of what a Cooperative Education is and they do not see the value of the program. Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT).

Japanese companies don't have the habit to take interns. They don't know what they can let the students do. They don't want to give any responsibility to the students.

(Furthermore) Large companies are bureaucratic and difficult to arrange something new, such as an internship. SME (Small and medium-sized enterprises) are much easier to arrange the things. Rotterdam Business School (RBS)

On the other hand, these challenges depend on who are involved, as University of Washington (UW) explains:

It takes much time, effort and patience unless you already have many business connections or Japanese companies are eager to have a relationship with your institution.
UW

To depend on an organization in Japan to find companies for the program is also challenging. Both the University of Limerick (UL) and RIT used a third-party placement provider in Japan, but UL decided later to contact the companies directly themselves.

I wanted to ensure high level of quality in the relationship with our partners and I wanted our employers in Japan to understand the importance of learning outcomes. I also wanted to move away from the reliance on one partner only who couldn't guarantee the same numbers of placement every year so I started developing direct relationships. (UL)

RIT on the other hand chose to end their cooperation with the third-party placement provider because the RIT students' Japanese language proficiency were not good enough. Now the students have to find companies by their own instead.

Another challenge is financial compensation. According to RIT, many Japanese companies cannot afford to pay the students. The University of Washington also finds it difficult to negotiate the payment for their students. Traveling from Europe or America to Japan is costly and Japan is known to be an expensive country to live in. For this reason, recruiting students is hard for University of Limerick (UL). UiO also struggles with recruitment for their new program as it requires a high level of proficiency in Japanese.

According to a staff from HEI X²², Norwegian students often have problems leaving their family, friends and safe environment back home, making it hard to recruit them to do international cooperative education. Other universities worried about low recruitment as a result of the high language requirements and the high cost of participating.

One example is the Technical Japanese program at the University of Washington. In an e-mail correspondence with the supervisor who were in charge of the program, I found out the reason the program ended in 2015, after 25 successful years, was because the person in charge had retired.

To sum up, the main challenges I found are as follows:

1. Controlling the learning outcome and the quality of the program.
2. Language barriers.
3. Make the Japanese companies pay the students. / Negotiate for payment.
4. Matching students with companies in accordance with their major.
5. Recruit Japanese companies.
6. Recruiting students.
7. Terminology: Japanese companies do not understand what a cooperative education program is.

²² Per. comm. with a staff from HEI X, 13, April 2016.

7 Discussion

In the discussion, I will first compare the findings listed above with the list of challenges from Parkinson (2007) in Chapter 3: Literature Review. Then I will discuss my findings with the challenges listed from Alabdulahfez and Aleisa (2001). Then continue discussion the local issues in Japan by Kaneko, Noguchi and Yoshikawa. Then finally, discuss other findings and observations.

7.1 Comparison of own findings with Parkinson (2007)

1. To be able to function in a Japanese company, students need a high level of Japanese proficiency. Many of the cooperative education programs in Japan, mentioned above in chapter 5, required that the students have studied the Japanese for a minimum of two years. Even if the student is majoring in Japanese, two years is not much when it comes to being able to communicate in a business setting. Before I went on my first internship in Tokyo, I already had four years of Japanese language study behind me, whereas three of those years were spent at three different Japanese universities. Conversing in polite language was relevant easy for me, but attending meetings proved challenging as I was not familiar with most of the business terminology used and I was not allowed to ask questions during the meetings.

On the other hand, Japanese companies are becoming more internationalized, and there are cases, for example Rotterdam Business School, where the students do not need to speak Japanese while in Japan. But I would argue that being able to speak the language makes it much easier to connect with the other workers and understand the hierarchy as it is much more visible through the language. For example, when speaking to a person of higher rank or a customer, one has to use keigo, polite language. For example, use the polite endings *masu* ます and *desu* です instead of the dictionary forms of the verbs. Japanese body language is equally as important as spoken. For example, I often had to follow clients to the elevator and bow until the door closed at my former internship at the incubator company in Tokyo.

Moreover, Japanese language skills is also important for the supervisors and/or the faculty staff. In the story above, where I met my professor from UiO and his colleague traveled in Japan to

recruit companies I learnt something I would later see a pattern of from my informants. My professor's colleague, the supervisor of the program, could not speak Japanese and told me she became a silent partner during the meetings with the companies. The employees did not switch over to English to include her. This made me more aware of the issue when I contacted supervisors and faculty staffs that worked with cooperative education in Japan. It was noticeable that my informants were either Japanese, had a high level of fluency in the language or had help from a 3rd party who could speak Japanese. In my opinion, this shows how difficult it is to create cooperative education programs in Japan without the knowledge of the language. As UL put it: "Language knowledge is essential in building successful experiences and relationship with employers in Japan."

2. Proof of scaling challenges were not found directly.²³ But, indirectly it is visible through the higher education institutions' struggles with recruitment of students, companies and faculty members.

3. One of the reasons recruiting students is challenging, is because traveling to and living in Japan is expensive for them. MIT has solved this by funding their students, making the program free of charge. On the other hand, MIT's have a hard time raising those funds. Students from Norway may be easier to recruit as they get scholarship to cover part of their traveling and living expenses from the government. However, as HEI X said, Norwegian students are reluctant to leave the comfort of their family and friends.

4. Recruiting Faculty may be challenging as the Norwegian School of Business has experienced. Their lecturers refuse to give their students credits from new programs done outside the college.

5. Timing of semesters is the motivation for the Norwegian School of Business to create a cooperative education program in Japan, as their students have to wait three months in Norway before they can study abroad. On the other hand, this challenge may not be related to cooperative education, as companies follow a different schedule than schools.

²³ Scaling, meaning, making the program bigger with more students and more companies.

Challenges (slightly paraphrased) **6**: Assessment of learning outcome; **7**: Set a clear list of desired outcomes; **8**: Taking advantage of HEI's infrastructures and **9**: Prepare students were not brought up by my informants and are therefore difficult to conclude or discuss if they are relevant for cooperative education programs.

10. Just as in the quote from Parkinson's (2007) above, a program is vulnerable if it is dependable on one or two key persons finding and creating ties with companies in Japan. As mentioned above, the Technical Japanese Program at University of Washington ended when their supervisor retired. For further support from literature, Engelbrecht (2003:260, cited in Jacobsz and Wessels, 2008: 6) also argue that many programs have failed because "the driving force was but a single person with limited influence".

7.2 Comparison of own findings with Alabdulahfez and Aleisa

1. Lack of resources is one of the main challenges as it influences many of the other challenges. Firstly, supervisors struggle with finding time to handle everything at work. Secondly, to be able to recruit more companies one needs to meet them in person; this require money and time. Thirdly, it is hard to recruit students as they find it expensive to participate; this require more funding to the students. Fourthly, one of challenges recruiting faculty staff is because they are afraid other programs might be neglected; they are lacking money.

2. Balancing teaching and supervision is challenging, as can be seen from the interview with a faculty staff from UiB. However, often supervisors are not faculty staff, but only work with administrative tasks and therefore do not need to balance teaching and supervision.

3. Work-placement in companies in the private sector are hard to secure. To my astonishment, my former professor from UiO, who were in charge of finding companies for the new program Career: Asia, told me that it was surprisingly easy to find companies for the new program and many of them were even interested in hiring the students after the program ended. That being said, my professor has lived many years in Japan, is fluent in the language and has many business contacts from that period. The conversation took place in Tokyo, at the spring of 2015, when my professor and his colleague where in the end of their process of gathering companies

for the new program. At that time, I was working in Tokyo as part of my master's degree and I was fortunate to be invited by my professor to meet before they went back to Norway.

4. The students struggled to speak in English: Language struggles were covered by challenge 1. by Parkinson (2007), so it will not be elaborated more here. Furthermore, **challenge 5**: The supervisors lack transport to and from the workplace; is not applicable when the distance is that far. One cannot expect the supervisor to come and visit the students every week when they work in another country.

6. Some companies in Japan refuse to give students remuneration which could be because, one they cannot afford it, or two they do not see the value of students working for them and therefore it is unlikely they would agree to an extra burden and pay them. According to MIT, internships are growing in popularity in Japan, and they recently lost a company because the company now (in 2016) could get Japanese interns working for them for free. This challenge would perhaps not be applicable to Norway, because, as mentioned in the introduction, education is free and students receive financial support from the government. Therefore, it is uncommon that students accept payment for work experiences that is related to their studies.

7.3 Comparison of own findings with Kaneko, Noguchi and Yoshikawa

Kaneko, Noguchi and Yoshikawa (2009), mentions two main reason it is problematic to create internship programs in Japan. The first problem regarding Japanese students have other priorities rather than participate in Japan are not directly relevant to foreign HEIs challenges, but could indirectly show that companies are not used to take in Japanese students. According to a survey done by MEXT (Yamada and Katō, 2015: 7), in 2013, also show that there are more students wanting to do an internship than there are companies.

The lack of companies could be related the second problem, Kaneko, Noguchi and Yoshikawa (2009) describe in their survey: Japanese companies look upon internship as a burden and do not see the benefits from participating. Katō (2005) also support the claim that companies might be hesitant to participate because of the “large structural burden on participating organizations and companies” (Katō, 2005: 8).

Another reason that companies are hard to recruit, might be because they struggle to grasp the meaning and value of such a program. As Debbie Gulick Donue, who runs Georgia Tech's program (Fischer, 2011: 20) states "the term 'co-op' doesn't exist abroad" and "you can't even use the word, because it confuses people." Even researchers in cooperative education and faculty staffs have not been able to universally agree on one definition of the term. Therefore, it is understandable that companies are unsure what cooperation education is and what is expected of them. Alabdulahfez and Aleisa (2001: 6) explains this well:

The success of any 'experiment' in cooperative education cannot be achieved unless a high degree of cooperation between the participants is achieved. Such cooperation must reflect the workplace's clear understanding of cooperative education concept, the means necessary to implement it and its importance for the trainee and for the workplace. Hence good communication with employers and students about the co-op programs objectives is essential for success of any coop program.

Good communication with employers and students is important, but maybe the definition of the objectives should come from the educational institution, to both the employers and students as this program is initiated and created by the education institution and not the company. The HEIs needs to be involved of the objectives of the program for it to have a high academic quality.

Most of my informants answered recruiting of Japanese companies was a challenge, however, my professor from University of Oslo (UiO) had a totally different experience when he took part in creating the new program Career: Asia at UiO, which started at the fall of 2015. As mentioned before, my professor thought it was easy to create cooperation with Japanese companies. The reason for this could be related to University of Washington (UW) argument: It all depends on how well known the institution is. For example, MIT and Stanford will have much less difficulty in finding companies than lesser known institutions. In the interview with MIT's staff, they told me it was not uncommon to get requests from Japanese companies to participate in their programs. However, they also actively looked for new companies to specifically cover the needs of their students.

Depending on the needs, and what the student is majoring in, finding a company that match may be tricky as there might not be that many companies working with what they specialize in. The danger of this is that some universities may put the students randomly at companies they make a cooperation agreement with because they lack the time and resources to find a better match. It is debatable if this could be called cooperative education at all (Coll and Zegwaard, 2012).

7.4 Discussion of other findings and observations

Visa was one of the worries my professor at UiO had when I spoke to him in the spring of 2015. In Career:Asia, first the students need a visa for studying for one semester and then change it to a work / culture visa the second semester. Luckily, it turned out to be no problem when the students needed to change their visa status in January²⁴. This challenge seems to be more relevant earlier. Rotterdam Business School (RBS) for example, has been running their program for over 20 years and tells that it is much easier now (2016) to arrange a visa for their students than 10 years ago. The university in Ireland (UL) also answered that getting visa for their students is not an issue for them. However, it is wrong to conclude that there are no visa challenges regarding Japan as my informants are only from Europe and the USA. This only shows that visa agreements between Europe / USA and Japan might be more relaxed than.

When a HEI is creating a new program, there are always much to figure out. Using a third-party placement organization in Japan, could make the process of getting a visa smoother and less of a hassle. Moreover, the organization could also help with creating and sustaining the cooperative education program, with their network of companies and their know-hows of cooperative education in Japan. However, with this type of cooperation the universities lose much of their control of the program and the academic quality may worsen. That is why many of my informants chose to directly contact the companies themselves.

Lack of information exchange, was what surprised me the most from the interviews of the higher education institutions (HEIs) in Norway. The professor working at UiB for example knew little of how Career:Asia was created at UiO or the objectives of the program. More knowledge exchange could help overcome hindrances without spending that much resources on it. This

²⁴ Per. comm. with one of the students at Career:Asia in January, 2016.

might be the reason that The Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research (2015) will establish a forum for The Research Council of Norway, HEIs and other government organizations, in order for them to have a platform where they can share experience and information.

Exploitation of students by Japanese companies, were not mentioned by my informants as a concern. Reports of companies in Japan exploiting their interns with long working hours and low to no payments has been reported for many years (Satoshi, 2008; Harney and Slodkowski, 2014; Vice News, 2015).

During the prolonged economic slump, there was a tendency for Japanese companies to employ increasing numbers of part-time workers, primarily for the purpose of cutting human resource costs. Because interns receive even lower wages than part-time workers (and indeed, often work for free), some companies save money by hiring student interns to take on duties that would normally be done by full-time employees. Many companies took these policies one step further, ‘employing’ students nearly full-time under the pretense of an internship. Students who have to work under such conditions, with heavy workloads, long hours and little pay, and who are given more responsibility than they should perhaps have, will no doubt have little time to use the internship to the advantage of their studies. (Katō, 2005: 8-9)

Hopefully, this is a problem that only occurs when the internship is not under the supervision of an educational institution.

8 Conclusion

This thesis has looked at the hindrance of creation and challenges in sustaining a cooperative education program in Japan. In this chapter I will first present the findings from the interviews and questionnaires that answers the thesis's two research question. Then I will write shortly about the themes that emerged and my conclusions.

This section will synthesize the qualitative interview and questionnaire findings to answer the thesis's two research questions:

1. What hinders higher education institutions to create cooperative education programs in Japan from the point of view from supervisors or faculty staffs working at a higher education institution?
 - a. **Balance teaching and supervision:** When it is up to the professor to do both teaching and creating a new program, it might be hard to balance his / her work tasks.
 - b. **Lack of resources:** Money, time and manpower is often scarce in HEIs.
 - c. **Motivate the faculty to participate:** The faculty may be hesitant to create a new program as this may take away time and money from other programs.
 - d. **Recruit students:** In Norway there is a tendency that students are afraid of leaving the comfort and safety of home.
 - e. **Recruit Japanese companies:** To build a business network, it is important to visit the company. This is especially expensive and time consuming when the company is in another country.
2. What challenges are there in sustaining a cooperative education program in Japan, from the point of view from supervisors or faculty staffs working at a higher education institution?
 - a. **Recruit Japanese companies:** Nearly all of the supervisors and faculty staffs in this thesis states that it takes time and effort to build business connections in Japan. Small and medium-sized enterprises (SME) are much better to build connections with compared to big companies as they are often bureaucratic.

- b. Language:** Students with a high Japanese proficiency level are few.
- c. Learning outcome and quality:** With the use of a third party provider, the staff at HEIs struggle to control the learning outcome of the students and quality of the program.
- d. Recruiting students:** Few students are able to work in Japan as their language proficiency is too low. Furthermore, students are reluctant to leave the comfort of their home country.
- e. Terminology and Value:** Japanese companies struggle to understand what cooperative education is and the value of participating.
- f. Remuneration:** Japanese companies refuse to pay the students making it hard to negotiate an agreement.
- g. Matching:** It was challenging to find companies that match the students' major.

These twelve challenges show four primary themes influence the process of creating and sustaining a cooperative education program in Japan by a foreign higher education institution. The themes that emerged were: language, terminology and resources. Without knowing Japanese, it is hard to create a cooperative program in Japan. In the business sector the supervisors speaking Japanese makes it easier to build trust with the Japanese companies, and students that have studied the language can work at a broader range of companies where English is not used. The huge range of terminology and their usage is a major challenge in promoting and expanding cooperative education as all three parts (students, higher educational institutions and companies) struggle to understand what it cooperative education is and its value. Hence, the HEIs should create a clear definition of the term and objectives of what they want their students to achieve at the company as this would erase any misunderstandings from what the company has and make them see the benefit in participating in a cooperative education program.

To my surprise, when I unsuccessfully found no hindrances and challenges that were unique to Japan, I may have found a correlation that is equally as interesting. From my discussion at chapter 6; my findings fit well with former research done by Parkinson (2007) and Alabdulahfez and Aleisa (2001). This despite that the research done by Parkinson (2007) generalized the challenges from various programs, such as Dual Degree, Exchange and cooperative education. Only three of the twenty-five programs were in Japan, other countries were among more, Germany, India and China. Moreover, the survey done by Alabdulahfez and Aleisa (2001) was

from their local program at Riyadh College of Technology (RCT) in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia are also similar to my findings. This indicates that supervisors and faculty staff working with local cooperative education at a higher education institution (HEI) could be able to provide useful input on challenges to supervisors and faculty staff working with international cooperative education and vice versa. Of course, in the case of Japan, knowledge of the language is of importance. Moreover, in Norway there seem to be a lack of knowledge exchange between HEIs and even between their own faculties. This is probably the reason the Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research (2015) with the new Panorama strategy, will create a new platform for HEIs to communicate and exchange information. Knowledge sharing could save resources. Another way to save resources, as Alabdulahfez and Aleisa (2001) writes in their survey, is that HEIs should take advantage of the infrastructures already in place at the faculties, as this would save the HEIs money, time and human resources.

Finally, in relating these findings to the purpose of this thesis, which was to contribute more knowledge to the existing literature on cooperative education by focusing on the challenges faced by foreign higher education institutions' creating and sustaining a cooperative education in Japan, I hope that these findings will be useful to the growing body of international cooperative education programs by HEIs seeking a better understanding of the process of creating and sustaining such a program. But maybe most importantly, I hope that more students are able to find the "true measures of education" (Coll and Eames, 2010: 192) by participate in an international cooperative education program, especially in Japan.

I suggest further research be done in looking at how the HEIs has dealt with challenges related to cooperative education and their best-practices. Further, research could be done into the challenges and benefits with third-party placements providers. As an example, the Canada-Japan co-op program has sparked my interest, and would be an excellent continuation of researching.

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