

令和 5 年 4 月 27 日現在

機関番号：12601

研究種目：基盤研究(C) (一般)

研究期間：2019～2022

課題番号：19K03023

研究課題名(和文) The Role of Informal Learning Spaces in the Japanese University Context

研究課題名(英文) The Role of Informal Learning Spaces in the Japanese University Context

研究代表者

BERMAN NAOMI (berman, naomi)

東京大学・大学総合教育研究センター・特任講師

研究者番号：60814407

交付決定額(研究期間全体)：(直接経費) 2,700,000円

研究成果の概要(和文)：当初のプロジェクト範囲と実施計画に沿って、統合されたデータセットは豊かな洞察を生み出し、様々な会議や出版物で発表されました。COVIDの流行に伴う中断や制約があったため、予想外の革新的な新しいエスノグラフィーの手法が使われ、その後の学会で発表されました。プロジェクト期間中、合計8回の会議・セミナーでの発表(国際・国内)、5本の査読付き雑誌記事、1本の章、日本での3回の招待大学訪問が行われました。このハイブリッドなイベントは、学識経験者を集めました、オーストラリア、日本、その他の地域から教育関係者、専門家を招き、大学卒業後の進路について、高等教育の将来について議論します。

研究成果の学術的意義や社会的意義

This study showed that the material environment of a campus produces special meaning and unexpected attachments for students, and that there is a need for more consideration of the everyday needs of students with regard to meaningful interaction, connection and belonging in a post-COVID environment.

研究成果の概要(英文)：Consistent with the original project scope and implementation plan, the combined data sets produced rich insights that have been presented across various conferences and publications. The interruptions and limitations accompanying the COVID pandemic, led to the an unexpected and innovative new ethnographic method being used and presented on in subsequent conferences. Over the project period there was a total of 8 conference/seminar presentations (international and local), 5 peer reviewed journal articles, 1 book chapter, and three invited university visits in Japan. The project culminated in a one-day symposium held at the University of Tokyo, November 2022. This hybrid event gathered academics, educators, and experts from Australia, Japan and other regions to discuss the future of higher education as universities navigate pathways out of the pandemic. These papers were then collated to form a special issues of the UNESCO Observatory Multi-disciplinary Research in the Arts Journal

研究分野：Youth/education sociology

キーワード：Young people Pandemic Informal learning Campus University Pandemic

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## 1. 研究開始当初の背景

This study investigates the role of informal learning spaces in the Japanese university context. Campus based informal learning spaces worldwide are becoming popular destinations for students, but little is known about them, particularly student use and the learning outcomes they produce. Additionally, existing research relies heavily on quantitative methodologies, creating a need for more qualitative approaches. The purpose of this research is to explore informal learning spaces as novel personalized learning environments and how they contribute to positive academic outcomes. In doing so, it seeks to identify issues and barriers that exist, and develop appropriate instruments for capturing robust and reliable outcome measures. This will be achieved through a mixed-method investigation involving observational sweeps, surveys, walk-through and semi-structured interviews with three Japanese universities. The wider benefit of this research is its potential scaling up for international comparisons, as well as being of value to other education providers.

As increasing importance is placed on the development of 21st century learners, the design of campus learning spaces must reflect the promotion of innovative ways of thinking. Many institutions have successfully embraced novel instructional methods such as flipped classrooms or digital innovations to accommodate this emerging generation of ‘new learners’ (Arvanitakis and Hornsby, 2016). At the same time ‘classrooms of the future’ are being created to enhance group learning through student collaboration and the incorporation of technology. Active learning centers, studios, classrooms, and ‘learning commons’ have thus become another set of tools, techniques and spaces available to enhance student learning experiences. Learning commons are a typical example of informal learning spaces. Significant examples such as Manchester University’s Alan Gilbert Learning Commons (<http://www.library.manchester.ac.uk/locations-and-opening-hours/learning-commons/>), Osaka International University Learning Commons ([http://www.oiu.ac.jp/f\\_language.pdf](http://www.oiu.ac.jp/f_language.pdf)), or Singapore Management University Library and Learning Commons (<https://library.smu.edu.sg/about-us-library-facilities>), provide an insight into the current innovations in informal learning spaces where Wi-Fi enabled and technologically supported group study rooms exist alongside multi-function device stations, power plugs and relaxation zones. These and similar developments across the higher education sector seek to provide comfortable and supportive learning environments for students through creative and custom-designed spaces.

Usually attached to university libraries or learning centers, informal learning spaces are key ‘destinations’ for students (Cox, 2018). A recent study found that students spend three times more time in these spaces than anywhere else on campus or online: **420,000 hours** per year (**informal** physical spaces) compared to **168,000 hours** per year (**formal** physical spaces) (Ellis, 2017). Yet despite this, and the significant investment in the design, construction and furnishing of these spaces, not enough is known about them, particularly how and why students use them and the social behaviors and learning outcomes they produce. Moreover, existing studies on informal learning spaces, although providing valuable insights, routinely draw on traditional quantitative methods regarding their patterns of use and learning outcomes. If universities are to proceed in better understanding these new learning environments and the meanings and practices students bring to them, **new perspectives incorporating novel qualitative approaches are required.**

The **key research questions** guiding this study are:

1. How do informal learning spaces organize student practices and experiences?
2. How do these in turn influence learning outcomes?
3. What issues and challenges exist in how these spaces are accessed and used?
4. What instruments are best suited to measuring the effectiveness of informal learning spaces?

Answers to these questions will be achieved through a cross-sectional, mixed-method investigation incorporating quantitative and qualitative approaches with three Japanese universities. The cultural dimension of how these spaces are experienced by students is crucial. In response to this, the research will take place in Japan only to provide a **domestic focus** and detailed picture of the cultural particularities of these spaces.

## 2. 研究の目的

This research has several purposes. **Firstly**, it seeks to gain a deeper understanding of informal learning spaces as novel personalized learning environments and how these might contribute to positive academic outcomes. **Secondly**, the research aims to identify any issues and barriers to access and use of these spaces by students, as well as implementation and sustainability as a model for universities. **Finally**, the project seeks to define what 'good' looks like in these spaces to add to the existing evidence base in the field. This aspect of the research will identify and explore the utility of methodologies that produce deeper insights into the complex interplay between space and social practice in these educational environments, particularly how they are used, experienced and inhabited by students (Kraftl, 2006). The **scientific significance** of this project relates to **developing an instrument for understanding and capturing the new forms of personalized learning** in which these spaces promote. This has **not been done before** and is valuable in a policy context that puts increasing pressure on higher education institutions for pedagogical innovation and reform.

## 3. 研究の方法

Capturing the effectiveness of complex environments such as informal learning spaces requires a robust yet nuanced approach. The methodology for this project is designed to capture the granularity of the experiences of students who use these learning spaces and those who support this use. The use of multiple methods will ensure that the research is informed and guided by several perspectives including participating students, technical and support staff, and members of management. Consistent with this, the methodology proposed here comprises the following key elements:

Observational sweeps all three field sites (RQ 1, 3, 4)

Surveys of students involving approximately 100+ students per field site (RQ 1, 2, 3, 4)

Walk-through and photo-elicitation interviews with 4-5 students per field site (RQ 1, 2, 3, 4)

Semi-structured interviews with 1-2 support staff and one management per field site (RQ 1, 3, 4).

Each of these methods addresses the specific research questions, the sequence of which is designed to reveal an initial picture of overall impact, linking to the question concerning barriers and challenges, then these insights will be combined to formulate best practice models for measuring effectiveness.

Qualitative ethnographic approaches are under-represented in this field, yet recent research exploring technology use in educational environments has demonstrated the value of drawing on innovative methodologies for generating behavioral as well as attitudinal data. These include user-centered design methodologies such as walk through interviews and photo-elicitation methods. For this study, both methods will engage participants in the process of re-creating their patterns and activities and enable the collection of rich data on their attitudes and behavior in these learning environments. The semi-structured interviews with support staff and management will explore the more practical outcomes and longer-term impacts including the social, political and economic factors that influence their take up and effectiveness. All data will be interpreted in relation to each research question. The observation and survey data will be analyzed by a range of variables using the statistical analysis program SPSS. While the qualitative data will be analyzed using thematic analytic methods supported by NVIVO software.

## 4. 研究成果

Consistent with the original project scope and implementation plan, the combined data sets produced rich insights that have been presented across various conferences and publications. The interruptions and limitations accompanying the COVID pandemic, led to the an unexpected and innovative new ethnographic method being used and presented on in subsequent conferences. Over the project period there was a total of 8 conference/seminar presentations (international and local), 5 peer reviewed journal articles, 1 book chapter, and three invited university visits in Japan. The project culminated in a one-day symposium held at the University of Tokyo, November 2022. This hybrid event gathered academics, educators, and experts from Australia, Japan and other regions to discuss the future of higher education as universities navigate pathways out of the pandemic. These papers were then collated to form a special issues of the UNESCO Observatory Multi-disciplinary Research in the Arts Journal.



5. 主な発表論文等

〔雑誌論文〕 計1件（うち査読付論文 1件 / うち国際共著 1件 / うちオープンアクセス 0件）

1. 著者名 Naomi Berman	4. 巻 39
2. 論文標題 A critical examination of informal learning spaces	5. 発行年 2020年
3. 雑誌名 Higher Education Research and Development	6. 最初と最後の頁 127-140
掲載論文のDOI（デジタルオブジェクト識別子） 10.1080/07294360.2019.1670147	査読の有無 有
オープンアクセス オープンアクセスではない、又はオープンアクセスが困難	国際共著 該当する

〔学会発表〕 計6件（うち招待講演 1件 / うち国際学会 5件）

1. 発表者名 Naomi Berman
2. 発表標題 Experience with a digital walkthrough interview method
3. 学会等名 OEEN presentation, 27th July Online (国際学会)
4. 発表年 2021年

1. 発表者名 Naomi Berman
2. 発表標題 How a gimbal saved my research
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1. 発表者名 Naomi Berman
2. 発表標題 Sticky Campuses: Re-imagining University Social Settings in a Post-COVID Context
3. 学会等名 TASA Thematic Week, 22-26 Nov 2021, Online (国際学会)
4. 発表年 2021年

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2. 発表標題 Goffman meets Osmo Pocket: Novel applications of digital ethnography
3. 学会等名 7th Biennial ACSPRI Social Science Methodology Conference, December 2020, Online (国際学会)
4. 発表年 2020年

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2. 発表標題 Zones of proximal comfort: A critical examination of informal learning spaces
3. 学会等名 Drones Research Series, Sophia University (招待講演)
4. 発表年 2019年

1. 発表者名 Naomi Berman
2. 発表標題 Left out: Informal learning spaces and social exclusion in universities
3. 学会等名 10th Urban Space and Social Life Conference, June 2019, Osaka (国際学会)
4. 発表年 2019年

〔図書〕 計0件

〔産業財産権〕

〔その他〕

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6. 研究組織

氏名 (ローマ字氏名) (研究者番号)	所属研究機関・部局・職 (機関番号)	備考

7. 科研費を使用して開催した国際研究集会

〔国際研究集会〕 計1件

国際研究集会 Revitalising Universities in Post-Covid Times Symposium, University of Tokyo, Nov 5	開催年 2022年～2022年
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8 . 本研究に関連して実施した国際共同研究の実施状況

共同研究相手国	相手方研究機関
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