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研究課題名(和文) Investigating Virtual Student Exchange Practices and Models: Challenges and Possibilities in Tertiary Education

研究課題名(英文) Investigating Virtual Student Exchange Practices and Models: Challenges and Possibilities in Tertiary Education

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研究成果の概要(和文)：Drawing on Lefebvre's (1991) theory of production of space, the research illustrated how VSM models are conceived and perceived by stakeholders in the region and experienced or lived by the participants in VSM programs.

研究成果の学術的意義や社会的意義

The study shows that VSM programs can expand access to international education, particularly for students who cannot afford to study abroad physically, promote intercultural awareness and support green mobility initiatives.

研究成果の概要(英文)：Drawing on Lefebvre's (1991) theory of production of space, the research illustrated how VSM models are conceived and perceived by stakeholders in the region and experienced or lived by the participants in VSM programs. The study helped understand common VSM models used in the region and track the development of VSM during and post Covid-19 pandemic. While the VSM has the potential to complement traditional exchange programs by providing flexible, cost-effective, and accessible international learning opportunities, future programs should address technical challenges and enhance interactive components.

研究分野：Academic mobility

キーワード：Virtual Student Mobility Higher Education Internationalization

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1 . 研究開始当初の背景

International student exchange has long been a cornerstone of global higher education, fostering intercultural competence and global human resource development. However, the COVID-19 pandemic brought unprecedented challenges, leading to border closures and travel restrictions. This situation necessitated a rapid shift to virtual student mobility (VSM) programs, which use information and communication technologies to facilitate international academic, cultural, and experiential exchanges. Before the pandemic, virtual exchange was limited to ICT-based collaborative learning activities such as telecollaboration or collaborative online international learning (COIL) (Op de Beeck & Van Petegem, 2013). In Asia Pacific region, online exchange models were limited to language learning (e.g. use of telecollaboration) or collaborative learning designs (Akiyama, 2019, Ciftci, 2016; Ikeda, 2019).

2 . 研究の目的

Given the low number of Japanese students studying abroad and increasing challenges to travel abroad, this research examined the potential of the virtual mobility model in international education and exchange by addressing the following questions:

1. How has virtual mobility evolved since COVID-19 pandemic in the Asia Pacific region?
2. What are some challenges and advantages?
3. What conceptual framework can be developed to understand the VSM?

3 . 研究の方法

Scoping Review

The research began with a scoping review of existing literature on virtual mobility. This included scientific publications, reports, and university program websites. 28 journal articles out of 291 records, webpages of 37 universities in 10 countries in Asia Pacific region (Australia, China, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Singapore, South Korea, Taiwan, Thailand) were included in the analysis. Materials were collected, coded, and analyzed using nVivo software.

Case Studies and Interviews

Data was gathered through surveys, reflection papers, and interviews with stakeholders from East Asia, particularly focusing on Japan, South Korea, and China. The case study involved 900 student surveys and 500 reflection papers.

4 . 研究成果

Drawing on Lefebvre's (1991) theory of production of space, the research illustrated how VSM models are conceived and perceived by stakeholders in the region and experienced or lived by the participants in VSM programs (Figure 1).

Conceived Space

According to Lefebvre, conceived space refers to the space of planners and those in power, encompassing the institutional and programmatic frameworks. In the context of VSM programs, the conceived space includes the institutional strategies and goals related to international student mobility and exchange. The main discourses around VSM were:

- Internationalization of Higher Education: The number of students on exchange programs and the development of strategic global partnerships by adopting VSM models.
- Use of Technology in Education: Enhancing digital transformation, digital literacy, and efficiency in delivering educational programs.
- Social Impact & Sustainability: Promoting diversity and access to international education and supporting green mobility initiatives.

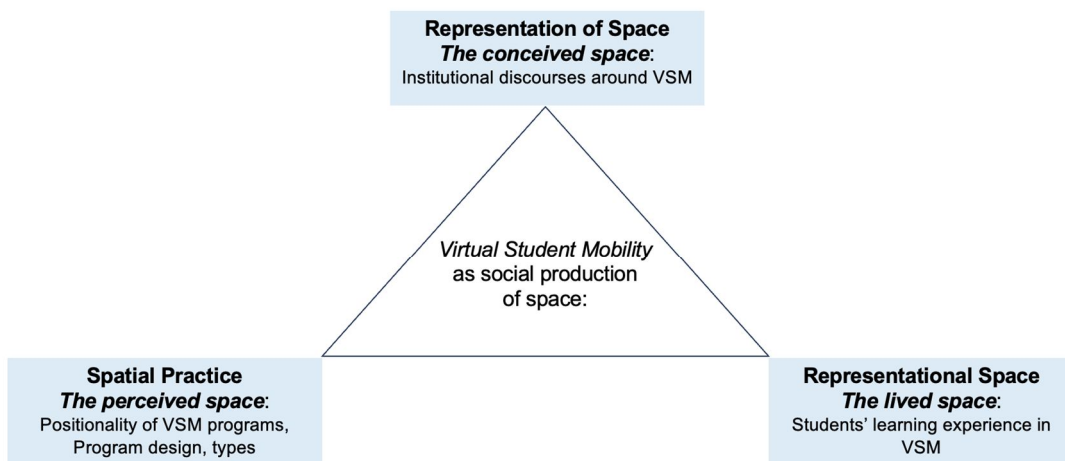


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework adopting the Production of Space theory (Lefebvre, 1991)

Perceived Space

Perceived space involves the actual practices and designs implemented within the conceived space. This includes the virtual environments where VSM programs take place, such as the design of online courses, the use of digital platforms, and the interaction patterns facilitated by these environments. While the programs can have multiple components aimed at different goals, they can be loosely categorized as:

- Academic learning focused programs: These programs prioritize academic learning by exposing students to diverse pedagogy, knowledge, and learning environments, allowing them to gain different perspectives on subject areas. They often include “shared” courses, asynchronous or on-demand components so that students can learn when they have time. While fewer in number compared to “shared” courses, “co-built”, “co-designed” or COIL courses sometimes focus on academic subjects.
- Global or intercultural skills focused programs: These emphasize intercultural skills development and are often referred to as “COIL” and “virtual exchange” programs, incorporating social networking and virtual tours.
- Extracurricular/enrichment programs: These include virtual events, fairs, forums, or internships aimed at helping students build social networks and prepare for career development.

Lived Space

Lived space is the space of everyday experiences and interactions, where individuals navigate and interpret the conceived and perceived spaces. It reflects the subjective experiences of students and faculty within VSM programs. In this research, lived space was understood through students' reflections on their learning experiences, their engagement with course content, and their interactions with peers and instructors. The feedback and experiences shared by students in surveys and reflection papers illustrate the lived space in VSM programs.

The case studies found that students appreciated the diverse academic content, flexibility of online learning, and opportunities to engage with international peers and faculty. Analysis of surveys and interviews with students showed that students are interested in VSM for:

- Academic Knowledge & Research Purposes: Exposure to diverse ideas, pedagogy, and research areas of professors.
- International Exchange: Opportunities to test the waters, stay in touch with international peers, make new friends, and improve language skills.
- Career Building: Development of social networks and professional connections.
- Social Impact & SDGs: Contributing to social causes and sustainable development goals.

Moreover, interviews with faculty members and administrators in the case program showed that while VSM programs can be useful in building effective partnership, it is important to ensure the following main factors:

- Effective Coordination and Support: Providing administrative and technical support to faculty and students.
- Effective Communication: Ensuring open, timely, and culturally sensitive communication between partner institutions.
- Commitment to Partnership: Sustained commitment to collaboration, even during challenging times like the pandemic.

Overall, the study helped understand common VSM models used in the region and track the development of VSM during and post Covid-19 pandemic. While the VSM has the potential to complement traditional exchange programs by providing flexible, cost-effective, and accessible international learning opportunities, future programs should address technical challenges and enhance interactive components. VSM can enhance global engagement and intercultural competence for students who may not otherwise experience international exchange. However, it is important to further analyze how program design and implementation influence students' learning.

5. 主な発表論文等

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〔図書〕 計0件

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〔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
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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0件

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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