

Study Abroad Experiences of Exchange Students in South Korea

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<p>Abstract</p> <p>Studying abroad is a wonderful way to travel to foreign countries and learn about other cultures. Thus, it is not surprising a number of university students around the world choose to live and study in other countries as exchange students.</p> <p>In particular, a growing demand for student exchange programs in Korea is by no means a recent phenomenon. The thesis explored the study abroad experiences of foreign students who come to South Korea for student exchange programs. The study set out to explore reasons why foreign students choose South Korea as their destination, and focuses on similarities and differences in aspects of national culture and the challenges the students encounter during their time in South Korea. A further goal of the thesis was to help the Korean government and Korean universities continue to develop student exchange programs, and ultimately, to increase foreign students' satisfaction with their experiences.</p> <p>A descriptive research approach was employed and both quantitative and qualitative research methods were used in which semi-structured interviews and a survey were conducted as a means of collecting primary data. Semi-structured interviews of four foreign exchange students and survey results from 50 foreign exchange students were collected and analyzed. The semi-structured interviews were conducted through E-mail and the online survey was created using Google Forms. Both the interviews and survey were promoted through the social network services of foreigners in South Korea.</p> <p>The results showed that the participants expressed a range of reasons to come to Korea, that they experienced cultural similarities and differences, and that they faced significant challenges during the exchange programs. Based on the analysis of the results, recommendations are provided to contribute to the further development of Korean education and its internationalization programs.</p>		

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1 Introduction

In recent years, the fever of learning Korean language and Korean culture is gradually spreading in the world. It is called as 'Hallyu' which is the Korean Wave with Korean culture and entertainment such as movies, music, food and game. Hallyu leads to global popularity of South Korea and therefore, according to Medleva (2020), the development of K-culture is a help for the government in South Korea to generate profits.

Hallyu also affects the number of foreign students in South Korea. More and more international students come to study in South Korea, learn Korean language and experience Korean culture. Compared to the previous years, the number of international students in Korea grew about 10 percent each year since 2015 (Koh 2019).

However, studying and living in Korea is not a paradise as foreign students expect it be and some of them say it is because of the characteristics of South Korean society and the Korean education system. What is clear is that South Korea is one of the most serious countries about education in the world and Korean society generally spends a lot of costs on education. According to Maths Tutor in Korea (2014), among OECD countries, South Korea was the highest country that spent on private tuition as a proportion of GDP in 2009. Furthermore, "According to the Ministry of Education, South Koreans spent 19 trillion Won (US \$17.9 billion) on private tuition in 2012" (Maths Tutor in Korea 2014). The perspective of Korean people on education is getting more and more serious and including governments, people discuss, change policies and build up new education system every year.

The research question explores study abroad experiences of foreign students who come to South Korea for exchange programs. The purpose of the thesis is to find out why foreign students choose or chose to come to South Korea for exchange study and what their experiences are.

The thesis discovers exchange students' stories including benefits and struggles in South Korea. It is the opportunities to perceive the reality of living and studying in South Korea and further, to encourage exchange programs between Korean and other countries.

2 Theoretical framework

The following chapters provide the theoretical framework related to the thesis. The theoretical framework is consists of four main concepts which are closely relevant to the topic of this thesis and the concepts include student exchange, student mobility between Korea and other countries, Korean education system and Korean culture.

2.1 Student exchange

We cannot deny that we are living in the era of globalization. In this era of globalization, the necessity of exchanges of knowledge, divers-ability, culture and language is unquestionable and therefore, it is important to have tools which make the exchange possible between countries. As one of the tools, there are academic programs such as student exchange programs. As academic programs, student exchange programs help the students to enroll in courses at a foreign university abroad and to integrate into that universities academic system. (Dirks 2011, 12) Students can apply for student exchange program with the help of their home institution and they usually return after completing the exchange program.

Most higher education institutions in South Korea offer student exchange programs. The programs share values with student exchange programs of universities in other countries and it is based on academic agreements with universities overseas. Not unlike the programs in other countries, Korean student exchange programs offer foreign students to study in South korea for one semester or two semesters. Korean university gives the students opportunities to earn college credits during the

exchange program. Besides of earning the college credits, the students can travel, learn Korean language and experience Korean culture. Foreign students must pay their tuition fee to their home universities during the program and they are treated as equally-qualified as local students in the campus life.

Student exchange programs bring benefits to students. Williams' study (2014) found student exchange programs as the following:

To move out of their comfort zone and participate in a new academic and cultural world broadens their horizons. And improves their chances of getting a job. Students learn to make cross-cultural connections and open their minds to a globalized environment. (p1.)

As we can see Williams' founding, student exchange program brings the students who take part in the program adventures and opportunities to design their career path. Furthermore, the experience of student exchange program gives the students special memory in order to make their own life journey. It helps them to become an independent and responsible person by living in other countries that have different cultures and environments.

On the other hand, student exchange program can be double-edged sword. It means this program has countless benefits for the students, the schools and the countries but it also has disadvantages. Usually the program costs a lot of money. The students usually have to pay extra tuition fee besides paying regular tuition fee for student exchange program and the students are charged for their visa processing fee, housing fee, transportation expenses and so on. It costs more than their regular spending. Even though there are some countries that may lead the students to spend less than their regular expenses, basically studying and living in most countries increase their expenses.

Besides that, it is not easy to adapt new environment. Once the students go abroad, they meet new people who have different nationalities, study in different educational environment with unfamiliar systems and live in the countries that have different cultures and languages. Some exchange students who chose the destination that has

totally different weather, environment, cultures or languages for the exchange program were struggling with getting used to these differences. According to Kennedy (2018), Seoul National University's diversity council conducted a survey and only 17.8% respondents from the survey answered they could understand most of the lectures. Especially the survey found that a lot of respondents said they struggled to participate in class discussions and group projects, and the main reason is lack of Korean language proficiency. (Kennedy 2018)

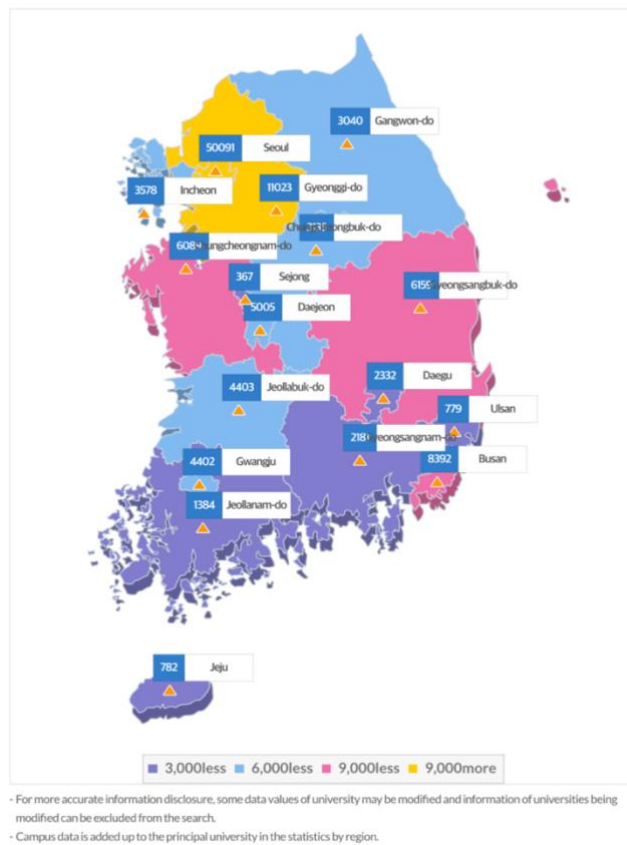
To sum up, student exchange program provides students with a number of merits. However, depending on the countries they choose, complaints toward the student exchange program by foreign students can be also existed.

2.2 Student mobility between Korea and other countries

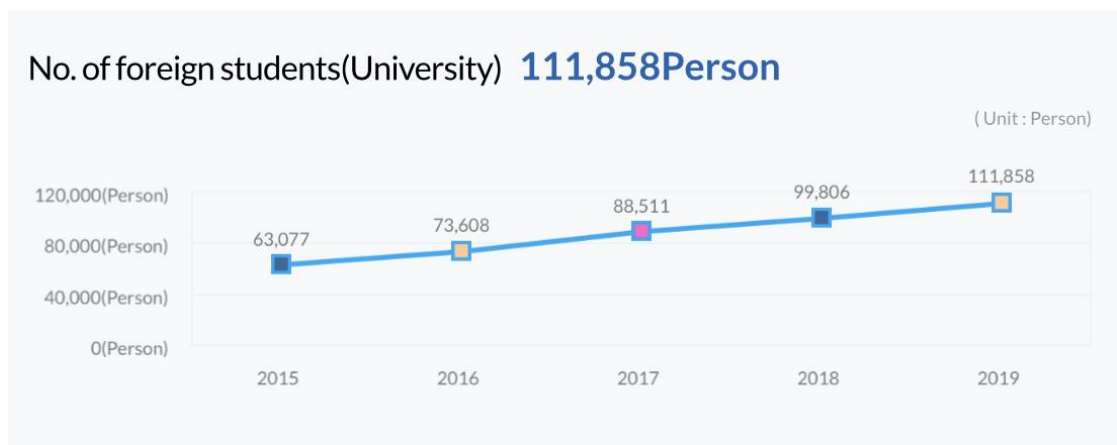
Since Korea became one of the most popular countries in Asia as a destination for study exchange program, it is shown that a number of international students who come to study and live in South Korea. According to Kwon (2013), scholars have noted not only the growth of cross-border higher education in Europe, but also noted an increased interest in higher education in Asia. "In particular, student mobility has tended to increase in Korea" (Kwon 2013).

In 2019, there were over 106,000 foreign students who studied in Korean universities. Seoul had the largest number of foreign students in South Korea. The following figure 1 presents that Korean universities located in Seoul had 50,091 foreign students. Including Seoul, every area -in this case, states- had at least over 300 foreign students and the average of the number of foreign students in all of the areas was 6,655. (Higher Education in KOREA 2020)

Figure 1. The number of foreign students in South Korea in 2019



Moreover, Higher Education in KOREA found that the number of foreign students gradually has increased since 2015. In 2015, the number of foreign students in Korean universities is 63,077. From 2016, the number of foreign students had increased and in 2019, 111,858 foreign students studied in Korean universities. (Higher Education in KOREA 2020)



Graph 1. Changes the number of foreign students from 2015 to 2019

As the above graph 1 shows, the number of foreign students who come to study in South Korea has increased. In addition to that, a number of people from all over the world become more interested in Korean culture. Especially young people have a lot more curiosity on Korean culture and life in South Korea. Based on the interests and curiosity, foreigners often come to South Korea to travel, work, or study. Among all, studying in South Korea is one of the preferred means and many people become international students in Korean universities. Thus, student mobility between Korea and other countries is a key which allows them to have opportunities that they can learn Korean language, discover Korean culture and experience daily life in South Korea. As a welcome feature, Korean government and Korean universities have launched various study abroad programs and actively encouraged students to join the study abroad programs between Korea and other countries.

For example, there are a lot of efforts at a Korean academic institution's level. Korea University, known as one of the prestigious universities in South Korea, launched new thematic study abroad program for domestic students in Germany. The program is entitled "KU-Germany Global Leadership Program." Korea University Office of International Affairs (2019) mentioned the program as the following:

These programs are part of an overall educational strategy to foster what President Jin Taek Chung of Korea University, has called "creative, future-oriented talent," students with the skills and experience to create the new values necessary to address emerging social challenges.

In short, as people stressed the necessity for student mobility between nations, Korean universities and universities overseas create partnerships and strengthen their study abroad programs or support the programs. Korean universities have tried to support their foreign students with diverse and efficient programs. In the case of Korea University, the university helps foreign students to learn Korean language by providing them with one-on-one language exchange program. Each student who wants to take part in the program can have a partner and get a chance to improve their language skills and build relationships with local students. Since the language

barrier is one of the biggest struggles that foreign students have during the stay in South Korea, the one-on-one language exchange program is a much help for the foreign students.

Besides, Korean government also works on the creation of education policies and the development of support programs for foreign students in order to attract more foreign students and help them to feel more comfortable during their stay. For example, according to Study in Korea (2020), Korean government has many programs that support foreign exchange students. The programs are various and most of the programs can be seen as a big help for the exchange students by supporting their living expenses, settlement allowance, round-trip airfare and medical insurance.

2.3 Korean culture

Korea is located in East Asia, between China and Japan. In 1945, Korea was divided into two different states: the Republic of Korea and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The republic of Korea is located in Southern portion of the Korean peninsula and therefore, we call it South Korea. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea is called as North Korea. South Korea is a democratic country and its population has reached about 50 million people. Historically the country was affected from the competitions between other strong nations, South Korea is emerging as the culture leader in the world with its unique culture and developed tradition.

Korean culture is based on the Confucianism. Confucianism is an ancient philosophy of belief that society can flourish when people interact and respect each other. Confucianism places high value on mutual respect, kindness and righteousness. As a moral system, Confucianism set up the rules for people's daily living and focuses on its belief that individuals can thrive only when everyone obeys their duties in the community. And, by extension, Confucians believe its ideas and values are able to live in harmony with each other in the communities such as the family, the village

and the country. In other words, Confucianism is mainly about social order and harmony. It is practiced throughout the countries in East Asia.

The trend of East Asian ideals is Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism. Korea has developed all three ideals by absorbing and promoting them, especially among them, Confucianism was introduced from the ancient times since Korea was geographically close with China, and plays an important role in formatting Korean national spirit. Therefore, Confucianism has deep roots in Korean society. According to Lee, president of the Advanced Center of Korean studies, "Confucian values have been rooted in Korean culture so deeply over the past 2,500 years that they have become the cultural genes of the Korean people" (The Korea Times 2015). In short, Korean culture has Confucian values such as respecting parents, having senior-junior relationship and ritual culture, and even though Korean culture is becoming more Western these days, we can see that Korean society is basically based on Confucianism in daily lives.

Hangeul, Korean language, is a typical example of it. Like some other countries, South Korea has its own alphabet which is called as Hangeul. Korean language is based on Hangeul and it is official language of both South Korea and North Korea. The pattern of speech, gesture, and etiquette by Korean reflects Confucian-related values with expressions of propriety and politeness. (Chung 2015) For example, when you meet the person who is older than you, it is rude if you do not use honorific in right way. That is why foreigners, especially those who are not familiar with Asian culture and language, face challenges during their stay in South Korea. They find Korean language is difficult to learn compared to other languages, and most of them are struggling with living in Korea due to language barrier. Besides that, there are different dialects depending on cities in South Korea. Sometimes it is happened that South Korean cannot understand what others say since the others use different dialect. Nevertheless, nowadays a lot of foreigners become more interested in learning Hangeul due to some positive effects of Hallyu. As it can be proved, Korean language classes have been increased in many other countries.

2.4 Korean education

2.4.1 Korean education system

Korean education system consists of six grades of primary school, three grades of middle school and three grades of high school. After twelve grades, Korean students can take four years of university or two years of college. It is mandatory to take six years curriculum of primary schools and three years curriculum of middle schools, and tuition fee is free during the curriculums.

Korea's school year has two semesters. Unlike the school systems in other countries, Korea's school year starts in the spring. First semester is started in March and second semester is started in September. After the first semester, there is summer vacation and the period of summer vacation is about a month to two months. Winter vacation is operated after the second semester and the period of winter vacation is about a month. Before the start of the new grade year, there are entrance ceremony and graduation.

Korean education curriculum focuses on six core competencies of self-management, knowledge information processing, creative thinking, aesthetic sensibility, communication, and community spirit in order to develop the practical ability to do something in the actual life of students throughout its curriculum, creative activities and overall school life. The curriculum suggests all students will grow up with creative talents by cultivating basic skills in humanities, society, science and technology. Therefore, the subjects of integrated society and integrated science are introduced to high schools in order to have basic skills and develop integrated thinking skills. Students can develop their skills and competences by participating in class activities such as discussion classes, experimental activities and practical trainings.

Primary school system allows students to strengthen their Korean language skills by providing the students with Nuri program in the first and second grades, and to have at least one hour per week to get safe life centered on experiences by operating

safety unites in the classes such as CPR education and physical education. From 2016, middle schools started to operate the term of free semester system. The free semester system allows middle school students to discover their dreams, their talents and experiences related to their future career by combining career exploration activities, subject selection activities, art and sports activities, club activities and more creative activities. It changes Korean middle schools from 'Junior high school' to 'Middle school' that focuses on integrated activities and respect by following primary school system. Korean general high schools have common subjects such as common society, common science, and Korean history. It is required to complete half of the common compulsory subjects for three years of high school. Korean high school students can take elective courses that are divided into general selection and career choice. With career choice, they can get career guidance, deep learning and real working life experience. In the curriculum of vocational high schools, there are high school vocational education courses based on the National Competency Standards (NCS). As a national standardization of the abilities needed to perform the duties in working life, NCS aims to establish education system that teaches how to do in working life.

After completion of 12 school years, students can apply for universities in South Korea. Entrance requirement is different depends on universities. Most universities in South Korea require students to submit with their high school grade point average (GPA), their College Scholastic Aptitude Test (CSAT) and student record. Therefore, most of high school students usually take the College Scholastic Aptitude Test (CSAT) when they are senior in high school. If they do not satisfy the result of CSAT, they may choose to keep challenging the test even though they graduate their high school. Korean College Scholastic Aptitude Test is taken in November, once a year and it consists of 6 subjects such as Korean, mathematics, English, Korean history, social studies/science/exploring career and a second foreign language/Chinese character. Test-takers are able to take the test with different choices on the subjects, but the subject of Korean history is mandatory, which means all test-takers must choose. After taking CSAT, test-takers usually receive report card within a month. Once they get the grades of the test, they decide which universities to apply for. If they get admission from the universities, they choose and go into one of the universities.

Higher education institutions in Korea are divided into three different types of institutions such as junior colleges (a two or three-year-course college), Universities (a four-year-course university) and graduate schools. Cyber universities that provide e-learning program are also growing due to the development of information and communication technologies. A four-year-course university has graduate-level programs including master's and doctoral degree programs in general. In different way, Korean universities can be divided into three different types of universities such as national universities that the central government established and operates, public universities that local governments established, and private universities that private non-profit educational foundations founded. The number of these is 433 in 2016. (Study in Korea 2020, 18)

2.4.2 Korean education fever

According to Lee (2005), definition of education fever is parental zeal or passion in order to provide children with better opportunities for admission into higher universities. In Korea, education fever is not a new phenomenon anymore. Since few decades ago, Korean society has been serious in education and South Korea became the country that is well known for competitiveness of its educational system in the world.

This phenomenon brings many benefits to South Korea such as development in the nation's economy growth, strengthening competitive power in international market and improving personal competences and skills. Lee (2005) found that Korean education fever may have affected Korean students' achievements as the following:

Korean students' achievement in science, math and reading ranked at the 1st, 2nd, and 6th places respectively among the 27 OECD countries in 2002 as shown on the PISA and top 5% of students' achievement ranked at the 5th, 6th, and 20th places.

However, some people concerns that South Korea's obsession with education is bad for both parents and their children. Most South Koreans tend to think that going into higher university guarantees better jobs and higher income in working life, by extention, it makes people happy. And a number of children in South Korea have pressures to study hard in order to enter higher universities even though some of them may not have no clear golas or future career plan yet. Worse, such a social atmosphere, a considerable number of students kill themselves with depression about their school record. Besides, since many Korean parents believe they should prvide their children with a wide range of private education at early age so that the children can be competent compared to their peers, they spend a lot of money on private education. For example, when their children grows older, parents start to send them to English-speaking pre-schools and study academies which are called as Hagwon in Korean language such as mathematics, Korean language and literature, arts, and music. The ministry of education's report says that the participation rate of Korean students in private education is 74.8 percent in 2019. Specifically, 83.5 percent of elementary school students take part in private education, 71.4 percent of middle school students and 61 percent of high school students take part in private education as well. The total of their private education costs are about 21 trillion Korean won and as a result, spending on private education per elementary, middle and high school student increased 10.4 percent to a monthly average of 321,000 Korean won from 291,000 Korean won in last year. (Ministry of education 2020)

To sum up, most South Koreans have obsessions with Education in recent years and their education fever has both benefits and disadvantages to themselves. Many experts pointed out that their obsessions are encouraged by Korean society's one of main characteristics, competition and it affects private education market in South Korea.

3 Research questions and objectives

The purposes of this thesis are to find out why foreign students choose or chose South Korea as the destination for student exchange program and to explore their stories about living and studying in South Korea. These provide which factors of South Korea appeal them to come to Korea as an exchange student and what kind of struggles exists during their stay. With the results of this thesis, foreign students who wish to choose South Korea for exchange programs could potentially consider the program carefully and a number of universities in South Korea which are willing to have more and more exchange students from other countries could develop their education systems and create more efficient and helpful classes for the students.

Therefore, the thesis' theoretical framework has been established for the research and the research aims to answer the following questions:

1. Why do students choose South Korea as a destination to advance their studies as exchange students?
2. In particular to aspects related to national culture, what similarities and differences do exchange students experience and discover in their studies in Korea?
3. What kinds of challenges do these students encounter during their time in Korea and how do they deal with them?

The research structure was designed to answer these three questions in most suitable way. The structure includes process such as establishing of theoretical framework and developing of research content. With the theoretical framework and research content, research methods for the research could be employed. And by elaboration of the research methods, the author could collect data from the research, analyze the results, and finally the author could make conclusion of the research. In the end, through this process of the research, the thesis could show us some recommendations that suggested how to develop exchange programs and the way to strengthen the strength and make up for the weakness in South Korea for more satisfaction of foreign students.

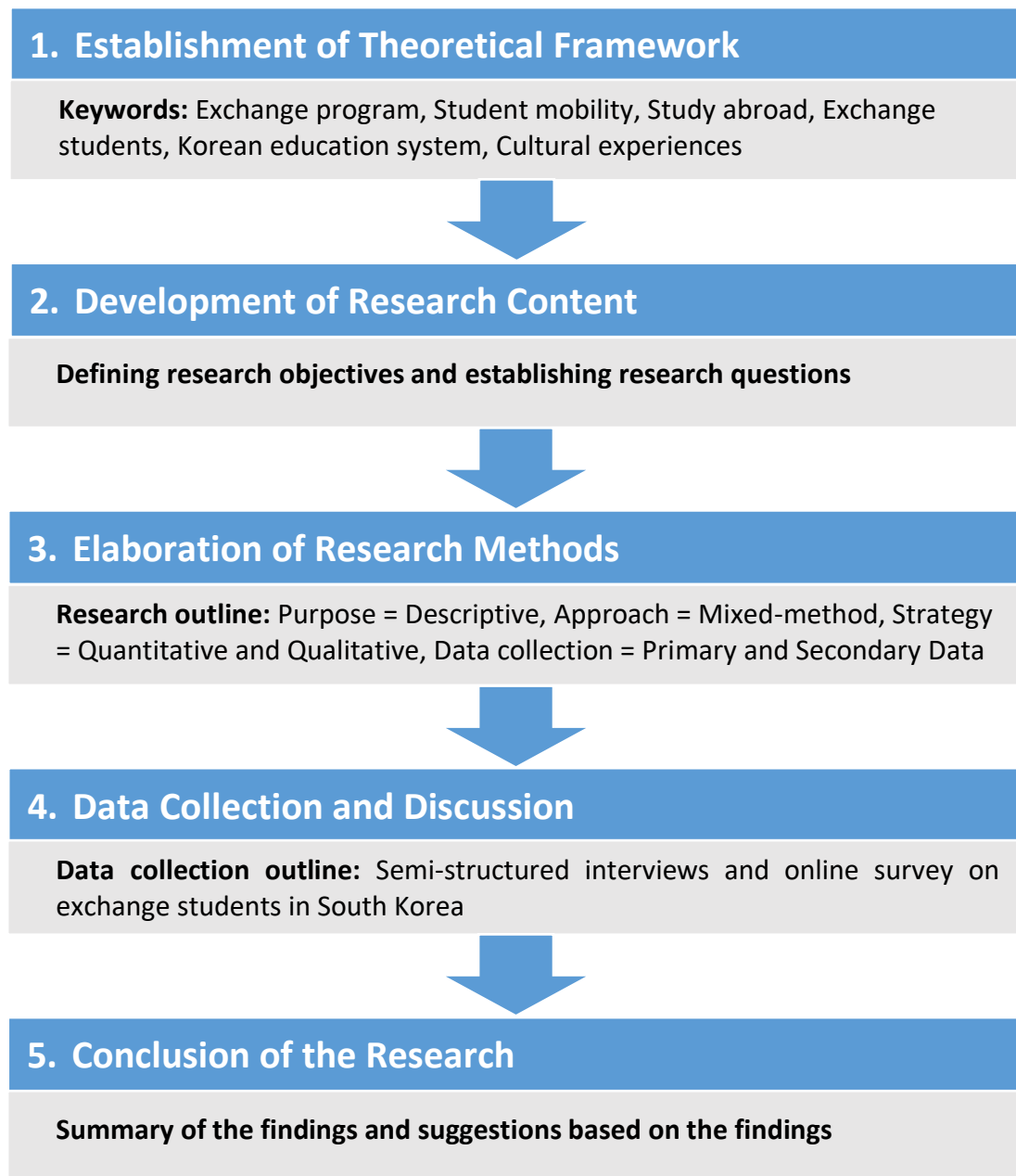


Figure 2. Overview of the thesis development

4 Methodology

4.1 Research Design

Philosophical stance of the thesis is interpretivism. In order to answer the research questions and to fulfill the research objectives, the author decided to choose the research approach “descriptive research.” Krishnaswami and Satyaprasad (12. 2010)

explained descriptive research as a fact-finding investigation with adequate interpretation. According to Krishnaswami and Satyaprasad (12. 2010), as the simplest type of research, descriptive research focuses on particular aspects of the problem by handling descriptive information. Furthermore, according to Helen L. Dulock (10. 1993), one of purposes of descriptive research is to describe systematically and accurately the facts and characteristics of a given population or area of interest. With descriptive research, the research explores foreign students' experiences in South Korea as exchange students and with the findings, the thesis could make suggestions for developing Korean universities' exchange programs.

Also, both quantitative and qualitative research approaches are employed for discovering the experiences of exchange students in South Korea and their reasons to choose South Korea as the destination to study. Quantitative research approach is conducted by using data that can be quantified in numbers. Generally empirical studies are largely divided into quantitative research and qualitative research depending on the nature of the data. Compared to qualitative research that handles the data which are qualitative such as descriptive records for historical research, quantitative research deals with the data which are quantitative such as statistics from Survey and experimental research. For example, identifying each student's age and their amount of drinking alcohol through surveys, quantifying and analyzing their associations are examples of quantitative research.

On the other hand, qualitative research returns a phenomenon to its natural state before conceptualization, categorization, or quantification, and approaches as much as possible to 'as it is' or 'from its original position'. According to Salkind (172. 2018), "it is social or behavioral science research that explores the processes that underlie human behavior using such exploratory techniques as interviews, surveys, case studies, and other relatively personal techniques."

Quantitative research and qualitative research has different characteristics. Qualitative research is to do development of hypothesis while quantitative research's purpose is testing hypothesis. (Salkind 173. 2018) Besides that, compared to qualitative research that is primarily subjective in approach, quantitative research is

conducted objectively separated from subject matter. Both quantitative and qualitative studies have contrasting advantages and disadvantages, and in modern social science, some researchers use these two methods together, which are called as mixed-method.

This research is a mixed-method research since it is integration of quantitative and qualitative data collection methods. According to Janice M Morse (2016):

Mixed method research is therefore a systematic way of using two or more research methods to answer a single research question. It includes using two (or more) qualitative or quantitative methods or it uses both qualitative and quantitative methods (Janice M. Morse, Linda Niehaus 2016, 10).

4.2 Research Methods of Data Collection

In the process of establishing theoretical framework for the thesis, the author decided main keywords for the research: Exchange program, student mobility, exchange students, Korean education system and cultural experiences. With these main keywords, the research was designed to answer the established research questions.

The author collected secondary data through a literature review (In this thesis, as seen in the Theoretical framework) such as theories, journals and articles, and it is used to help establishing theoretical background and designing research outline, especially collecting primary data. Primary data was collected through semi-structure interview using e-mail system, and online survey.

4.2.1 Semi-structure interview

A semi-structure interview is one of the most popular methods of research related to social sciences. Gillham (2005) found that semi-structured interview means the same questions are asked of all those involved, and the kind and form of questions go

through a process of development to ensure their topic focus. Unlike a structured interview, a semi-structured interview is generally open, allowing new ideas during the interview. It is sort of conversation or further, interaction between interviewer and interviewee since a framework of interview is still existed but the questionnaires can be changed or added like general conversation. According to Gillham (2005), the semi-structured interview is argued as the most important way of conducting a research interview and it is because semi-structured interview is flexible but balanced by its structure, and because of the quality of the data which is obtained through the interview.

4.2.2 E-mail interview

Due to its flexibility and benefits in collecting data, semi-structure interviews were chosen for collecting data for the research from exchange students who are currently studying in South Korea or those who has studied in South Korea as exchange students before. Face-to-face interviews were planned in the early process of developing theoretical framework and establishing research design, however, due to Covid-19 coronavirus over the world and South Korean government urged a social distancing policy within the country, E-mail interview was chosen as a main method to collect data.

As one of time and cost saving methods, e-mail interviews were convenient to collect data from the interviewees who lived in other countries and had busy schedule or different time zone. Furthermore, using e-mail was also efficient in obtaining direct answers from the interviewees and processing the data. It is because they wrote down their stories and experiences themselves, and the data was saved online automatically.

4.2.3 Online survey

Besides of individual in-depth interviews via e-mail, the research needed a large pool in order to have more reliable data. To gather enough data for the purpose, survey

was used as an appropriate method since survey is fast and convenient to obtain answers from many people. Especially online survey is one of the most fastest and efficient ways to collect data from all over the world. Once people have online survey link, it usually takes about 10 to 20 mins to read and answer the questions. Compared to other methods, it costs less and saves time consuming. Therefore, online survey was chosen as a method to ask a large pool about foreign students' study abroad experiences in South Korea as exchange students.

4.2.4 Implementing the research

For conducting E-mail interviews, the author contacted many foreign exchange students through Korean universities and via social networks services. Among them, four exchange students responded. Some of them studied in the past and the others has studied in South Korea until 2020. All of them were willing to participate in the interview. However, unfortunately, Covid-19 coronavirus spread over the world at that time. Due to the situation, it was strongly recommended to keep social distancing and self-quarantine. Besides, some of them went back to their home countries and there was long distance between South Korea and their home countries. Thus, giving up face-to-face interview, the author chose E-mail interview as a tool to communicate with the interviewees.

After choosing interview method for collecting data, the first thing to do was creating interview questions. Since the interviews were supposed to be conducted via E-mail, not face-to-face, the interview questions had to be clear and easy to answer. After developing the interview questions, the author sent the interviewees email with the interview questions and they also replied via E-mail. When the author or the interviewees had additional comments on the interviews, E-mail and Facebook messenger were used.

To conduct online survey for the research, using online platform had been considered as an option. Especially, since Google survey has a lot of options in creating survey form and it is easy to make, the author chose Google online survey system as a tool

to collect data. In addition, the survey form was written in English. It is because foreign exchange students have different nationalities and they usually tend to use English besides of their mother languages. Even though some of them might be able to read and write in Korean language, the author believed that survey in English would allow them feel more relaxed in expressing their feelings and introducing their experiences rather than using Korean language, and gather more participants from all over the world. To sum up, the online survey for the research was conducted on Google survey and was written in English due to convenience.

Once the online survey form was created, the author contacted many organizations related to exchange programs in South Korea. Some of the organizations replied, however, their responses were unconvinced to release their students' information. Therefore, the author came up with ideas to find participants through social networks services. Using kakaotalk messenger, the author contacted and asked some of foreign exchange students in Hanyang University in South Korea. Besides, the author found some facebook pages related to foreigners or international students in South Korea, and uploaded some posts on the pages with a link of the online survey. For a help of participants' understanding on the survey, the purpose of the research was clearly explained and the author stated only foreign exchange students in South Korea could be participated in the survey.

As a result, about 50 foreign exchange students participated in the online survey. The survey was conducted anonymously. The students were willing to give frank and helpful answers to 21 questions and further, they made some suggestions to develop student exchange programs in South Korea.

5 Research Results

In this part, the research results were stated. First is the results of E-mail interviews from four foreign exchange students who experienced student exchange programs in

South Korea. Second is the results of online survey from 50 exchange students in South Korea.

5.1 E-mail interviews results

5.1.1 The interviewees' demographical information

The first interviewee, Student 1, is female and 20 years old. Her nationality is French. She studied from September to February in 2019-2020 in South Korea. She studied at Incheon National University in South Korea as an exchange student. Her stay in South Korea was about 6 months (She arrived at the end of August 2019 and left Korea on March 1, 2020). Due to Covid-19 coronavirus, she canceled to keep studying in South Korea for her second semester and went back to France in 2020.

Student 2, the second interviewee, is also female and 29 years old. Her nationality is also French. She came to South Korea for exchange program and lived in South Korea in 2020. When the author interviewed her, she had lived in South Korea for 2 months. She lived in Seoul, a capital of South Korea and she studied in Sogang University.

The third interviewee, Student 3, is female and 23 years old. She is Brazilian. She came to study in South Korea as an exchange student and when the author interviewed her, she was in Curitiba, Brazil. She had lived in Daejeon, one of biggest cities in South Korea for almost 5 months and stayed in the dormitory that her Korean university provided with.

Student 4, last interviewee, is male and he is 29 years old. He is Filipino and he was living South Korea when the author interviewed him. He studied in Inha University which is located in Incheon. He studied language program in Inha University and moved to Cheonan. It had been more than 3 and half years to stay in South Korea for him.

5.1.2 The interviewees' reasons to come to Korea as exchange student

Most interviewees have common reasons to decide to come to Korea as exchange students. They had curiosity about living and studying in South Korea. They wanted to experience real life in South Korea. By getting offer from their home university's exchange program, they could come to South Korea as exchange students.

Student 1 answered she wanted to visit and live in Asian countries since she was teenager. Meanwhile, her home university offered her to study abroad for completing her bachelor's degree program. Her first option was Taiwan due to her language proficiency, but Taiwanese rejected her application. While searching for other options, she decided to study in South Korea and she realized that she would love Korea.

"I decided to come to experience Korean campus life and especially I would like to improve my Korean language level." Student 2 said. She was curious about living and studying in South Korea and wanted to study Korean language. She added, "Living in South Korea is best way to learn Korean language."

Student 3 told that main reason to come to Korea for exchange program is her home university has a partnership with Korean business school. Although her home university has cooperations with a lot of universities in the world, she chose Korean business school because of her studies. Furthermore, she has liked Korean culture for a long time. It was because of K-drama, K-pop and Korean life style.

When asking Student 4 why he came to study in South Korea as an exchange student, there were many reasons to come to Korea for him. He answered that he wanted to experience another country's culture. And he also wanted to meet new people and learn something else that helps his personal growth.

5.1.3 How to get information about living and studying in South Korea

Most of the interviewees used internet to get information about living and studying in South Korea. Nowadays, there are a number of information about Korean culture and life on the internet. Some interviewees preferred to watch YouTube videos that introduced real life in South Korea as foreign exchange students. In addition, it is found that they also got helps from their home university and Korean university. From VISA issues to opening bank account in South Korea, their home university and Korean university gave them advice through E-mail or phone, and they stated information on their websites.

“For most of the informations I got them from my home university and from exchange students that studied in Incheon National University.” Student 1 said. Her coordinator from Incheon National University helped her the most to get information, and she remembered that the coordinator was really kind. Besides that, she also searched for information on the internet and found some websites that had interesting and useful information about living and studying in South Korea. She also said that YouTube was helpful to get information about South Korea. She subscribed some French YouTubers who studied in South Korea and watched their videos.

Student 2 tells that she also got information from her home university. She said her home university in France and Korean university supported her a lot. Furthermore, she read articles and watched videos on YouTube related to South Korea and studying in the country.

“The Korean business school has a nice Brazilian employee who knows well about the exchange program and living in South Korea.” Student 3 said. She added, “She answered all my questions.” Student 3 told that besides of a help from the Brazilian employee, she got information on the internet. Moreover, her home university already had some students who went to South Korea for their studies as exchange students. So she asked them and got useful information from their experiences.

Student 4 said he got information about studying in South Korea from a former classmate who already started to study in South Korea. "Little did I know what kind of life waits for me here. All I know that time was I want to have an adventure." He said.

5.1.4 First impressions of Korean people and culture

Student 1 described she thought Korea and Korean people were weird at first time. She was upset that some Korean people looked at her in a rude way and she was shocked that most of Korean people cannot speak in English well. "They don't speak even a word in English." She added. However, she realized it was just first impressions. After few weeks, she discovered there are amazing people and beautiful culture in South Korea.

Student 2 said it was very impressed at modernity, one of the characteristics of South Korea. "Everything tends to be as efficient as possible." She said. Student 2 explained that the official procedures of public offices or organizations were simple and fast. Korean public transportations were easy to use and convenient, and most restaurants in South Korea provided customers with good services.

"Koreans are very pretty." Student 3 said. She told that Korean people take care of their fashion, hair and skin. Apart from that, when she looked at Korean people, especially Korean workers seemed that they concentrated on their work to have better results. "Their work performance is outstanding and the processing is fast." She explained. She added Korean workers focuses on having better results, but surprisingly, they can be flexible depending on the situations. Moreover, she said Korean food is very delicious and have different flavors even if Korean people use peppers a lot in the dish.

Student 4 tells he had learned Korean people are strongly competitive in nature. He said Korean culture has its unique identity. For example, Korean people are passionate in whatever they do. "I totally admire that." He said. "To be honest, I was

not attracted by Hallyu. But by the historical FIFA world cup in 2020.” He said there were a lot of things to make him stay in Korea for long time besides of Kimchi.

5.1.5 Hardest part of living in South Korea

As the author mentioned above in the part of literature review, the hardest part of living in South Korea for most of the interviewees was also Korean language. Most of them were beginners in Korean language. They had struggles to communicate with Korean people due to language barrier. Besides that, they commonly mentioned that Korean people cannot speak in English well and some of them often tend to ignore foreigners.

Interestingly, student 1 said Korean language was not the hardest part for her. “For me, the hardest part was not the problem of the language but the food!” She said when she went to grocery shopping, she found it was expensive to buy food ingredients. “It was difficult to cook what I usually cook without giving my all money to Lotte.” She added. She said she missed cheese, ham and everything in French so much. “Sometimes I found the place where selling French products but the price was very expensive. It was almost 10 times the price in France and the quality is not even good.” She answered. Moreover, she also struggled to cook by herself in South Korea. Because a lot of restaurants in South Korea serve inexpensive menu, she couldn’t help eating out and it made her to spend a lot of money and to get more fat, especially in her belly.

On the other hand, student 2 answered communication was the hardest part in living in South Korea. “Sometimes I feel like people are afraid of speaking in another language but Korean.” She said. She added that even if she tried to speak in Korean with them, they often made a gesture. In addition, she said it was uncomfortable to browse Korean websites since some of the websites didn’t offer translation into other language even the websites aimed at foreigners.

"In my experience, sometimes Korean people are not emphatic or gentle naturally."

Student 3 said. She reminisced her experiences and told that she felt Korean people were not kind naturally. In one of her experiences, the taxi driver overcharged her. "I could not take a taxi alone in South Korea." She said. "The taxi driver made the biggest way that he could in order to earn more money, just because I do not look like Asian and I cannot speak in Korean language fluently." The other day, one lady shouted at her near by her dormitory because she didn't throw away the things in the right trash can. At that moment, she could not read Korean. "The place was near from my dormitory where more than 200 international students live and their Korean language level is just beginner level in general." She added. Besides these two experiences, she experienced a few more strange things such as facing the man who hit bank station and another man who shouted at her because of recycling issue. "Sometimes I felt that when foreigners speak in English and Korean people can not understand, they just ignore us." She said. She told that she understood language barrier can be existed, but she didn't understand that some people cannot even use translator application. Moreover, she felt that it was hard to live for her in South Korea because of many guys who were being stalker and being not cool for stuff with ladies. Some of the guys even chased. She was shocked and depressed with that because Korea seemed to be more secure than her country.

Student 4 answered that being away from home was the biggest challenge for him. "I was always concerned of the people I left behind." He said. Besides that, he mentioned that he always had difficulty to communicate with people. "I could not express myself to the natives. Once you start talking to them with a couple of words in Korean language, they expect you to have full knowledge of it." He added.

5.1.6 Hardest part of studying in South Korea

Likewise the hardest part of living in South Korea, most interviewees pointed out that language was the hardest thing in Studying in South Korea. They said their Korean university offered them to register the courses that were provided in English and the courses had Korean professor and local students. According to them, Korean

professor and local students sometimes or often spoke in Korean language during the courses. They said it was hard to join the conversation. Besides, it was also challenge for them to do group projects with Korean people due to the similar reason. Some of the interviewees said there were differences in education system between their home universities and Korean universities. They experienced different education system in South Korea and it made them to change their life style.

Student 1 said the hardest part of studying in South Korea is language. "I arrived without knowing words such as hello, bye and thank you in Korean. So most of the time in my classes that even were offered in English, when the teacher and the students spoke in Korean, I was lost and disappointed that they didn't seem that they respected the fact that the classes were English courses." She said. "The worst thing was group project in the class." She added. She said that her group consisted of 5 Koreans and her, and the Korean students didn't speak with her because they were not good at speaking in English. They preferred to work with other Koreans, not with her. After completing the group project, they said there was her fault since she couldn't speak in Korean. "They said I did not put in efforts..." She said.

As Student 1 felt that language barrier was the biggest problem of studying in South Korea, Student 2 also had same difficulty Student 2 said she should have learned Korean language before she came to Korea in advance.

Student 3 mentioned that there were a lot of differences between her country and South Korea. These differences became the challenges during her time in South Korea. For example, her home university in Brazil offer classes, in which its students can get both theoretical knowledge and practical knowledge. The students in the university should read a lot of articles and write more. "We focus on understanding the knowledge, not memorizing it." She explained. She said Korean university's classes were like a cube. "I just needed to read the PowerPoint and the professor just read it too. I totally had to change my way to study such as memorizing all the worlds." She added.

Student 4 found clear differences of educational environment and education system between his home country and South Korea. He explained that some classes in his Korean university gave him a lot of things to do. It was the things that he had never learned before, and besides of that, the classes were provided in Korean language. “I was one of a few foreigners whom my professor had to work with, and it was experimental for both students and the professor.” He added. In the beginning, his Korean professor didn’t understand why Christmas day is important for the students. “So basically, we could not spend precious moments with our loved ones on Christmas day.” He said.

5.1.7 How to deal with difficulties

When asking the interviewees how to deal with difficulties that they may have while staying in other country, they answered that they had their own way to handle it.

“I spent more money to eat more vegetables and meats.” Student 1 said. She was struggling with eating in South Korea for the first time. She finally realized that she could love Korean food, and she tried to buy more vegetables and cooked healthy meals. Furthermore, she joined a gym for doing exercise so that she still kept being healthy even though she loved eating out so much. About the problem of language, she said she just focused on studying Korean language so that she could improve her language skills. Besides of studying by herself, she also used her best friend, Google translation application.

Student 2 answered that she tried to be prepared before she started something new. “I try to be prepared as much as I can before doing something, such as searching on the internet.” She said. She explained that she often studies some words in Korean language before she goes to a place where has non-English speaker.

“I think difficulties are part of my life.” Student 3 said. She explained that difficulties or troubles do not have to be solved at the same time. “I solved my problems when I

had to do.” She said. Related to relationship issues, she said she always try to talk with people that are involved in the issue.

Student 4 said he tries to be responsible for his decision. “I must be responsible for my decision to come here. So, I must compete with myself to bring out the best results in myself.” He said.

5.1.8 Best part of living in South Korea

What all of the interviewees have in common is a sense of respect. They respect cultural differences even though Korean culture and society have different aspects from those of their countries. During the time in South Korea, four interviewees respected the cultural differences they encountered, and they enjoyed it. When asking them best part of living in South Korea, the author found that they all agree that Korean food is amazing and the conveniences of many various services made their life easier during their stay in South Korea.

Student 1 said there are a lot of benefits to live in South Korea. The best part of living in Korea is that her life was being much more convenient. Including restaurants, stores in South Korea stay open until late night. She also explained that school campus has everything such as convenience store, book store, bank, café and restaurants. Furthermore, Korean transportation is cheap and convenient. The preferred means of transportation for her were bus and subway. “You can go anywhere you want easily with Korean transportation.” She said.

“In general, everything is fast.” Student 2 answered. She found that Korean’s working speed is pretty fast compared to the working speed of people around the globe. She explained that she didn’t have to wait for long time to open her bank account, to receive documents from student service, and to get food through food delivery services in South Korea.

“It is not only the learning process in the school but also the countless adjustments I had to make the experience worthwhile. It may be weather, food, norms and so on.” Student 3 said. She said food is one of the examples. At the beginning of living in South Korea, she was not the one who enjoyed eating Kimchi. But she became a big fan of Kimchi after recognizing Kimchi’s amazing effects and nutrients. She realized that Korean people generally follow healthy diet.

Student 4 also mentioned that Korean food is awesome. He enjoyed having meals in Korea. “The best part of my day was eating!” He said. Apart from eating, he loved to go some historic places and learn more about Korean history and culture. “I loved visiting museums, too. I like National Hangeul Museum, The War Memorial of Korea and Samsung Innovation Museum. It was amazing.” He added.

5.1.9 Best part of studying in South Korea

According to all of the interviewees, Korean university has different system and different educational environment. They basically think that it was good opportunity to study in South Korea in terms of learning about the differences.

Student 1 said Korean university has great atmosphere and educational environment for its students. For example, her Korean university’s campus has a library which opens 24/7 so that its students can come and study anytime they want. Besides of the library, she found that the use of other faculties on the campus was easy, and she doesn’t have to go outside of the campus since everything she needs was on the campus. She said she loved the campus has many basketball playgrounds. “You can come and play basketball on campus whenever you want.” She said.

“The campus is very nice even if I currently have only online courses due to Covid-19 coronavirus.” Student 2 had similar answer. Student 3 also added, studying in Korean university gave her a lot of opportunities to improve her skills and to gain a high level of competence. For example, with many group projects, she could work with a

variety of people who have different characteristics and diverse skills. "I had the chances to experience a lot of championships, camps and traveling as well." She said.

Student 4 told that studying in South Korea was very helpful for his studies. "After completing the course successfully, I can say it was all about the experience and opportunity." He explained. He said he could have not set foot in Korea in the first place without exchange program and he would have never had visited Hawaii for a conference. "It was a great pleasure, after all, I knew that these perks are equipped with lots of sacrifices." He added.

5.1.10 Cultural differences or similarities

When asked about cultural differences and similarities that the interviewees have ever experienced before while living in South Korea, their answers have a few things in common.

Student 1 said there are a lot of differences between South Korea and her country, France. She said it is hard to find trash on the street in South Korea. According to her, in South Korea, subway station is very clean. "In France, you can find trash everywhere." She added. Besides, she discovered that Korea has strict regulation of smoking. In general, smoking and non-smoking areas are segregated in South Korea. It is forbidden to smoke in the places except smoking areas. Student 1 said in her country, France, people can smoke everywhere and that's the difference between Korea and France. Furthermore, she found that Korean restaurant is different from French restaurant. "In Korea, there are always free dishes besides of your meal such as Kimchi or pickles." Compared to France, Korean restaurant provides customers with side dishes for nothing. The customer can ask more if they want to. Also, most of Korean restaurants have tables with a bell, and the customers can ring the bell to ask something. "And in Korea, people usually share their meals with their family or friends." Student 1 said. While French people have their own meals without sharing, Korean people often share their meals with others and enjoy food.

Student 2 also mentioned that there are a number of cultural differences that she had experienced. One of the cultural differences she found is to control disasters. Especially in the situation of Covid-19 coronavirus, she found that Korea is one of well-organized countries which can deal with disaster such as natural disaster, disease, or damage. She was surprised that people in Korea are loyal to social distancing policy, Korean government's one of recommendations.

"Koreans are open to talk." Student 3 answered. She said it is not hard to make a friend in South Korea such as in Itaewon, Seoul. However, she found that some Korean restaurants have waiters or waitress who are in cold manner. To illustrate this, she gave a concrete example. "Brazilians are very friendly and kinda easy to talk. But some Korean restaurants were just fast and the workers were cold." She also added that it is not the case of every restaurant in South Korea. "But some of them were lovely and very gentle." She said. She explained that some of waiters and waitress treated her like a part of family, and she liked it because Brazilians generally like to be well treated. Besides that, she found Korea is very safe country that she can use her smartphone without any worries while walking on the street. "I cannot do that in my city." She added.

"Cultural diversity exists everywhere." Student 4 said. He told that he has learned a lot from people coming from different parts of the world and their stories. By getting to know and spending time with them, he realized no matter where they come from, people are good in nature, and it is one of similarities that she experienced during her exchange program.

5.1.11 Education

As the author mentioned before, it is clear that Korean education system has differences from other countries' education system. Korean students tend to study hard and their parents are willing to be supportive for their children's education. Most of the interviewees agreed that Korean people are smart, talented and competitive because they are educated in such an environment. However, they also

pointed out that Korean students may have so much pressure since most of them are forced to study hard for going into more prestigious school and getting better job.

Student 1 said Korean people are really well educated. “But I think there are too much pressure for them from their school and family.” She said. For example, during the period of final exam in college, she found that Korean students were forced to take high grades. “But from the point of view that it makes Korean people do hardworking, it is merit for them.” She added.

Student 2 pointed out there is keen competition in Korean society. Korean education focuses on making students to be competitive in particular. She said Korea has different level of education system compared to other countries. “Korean university gives students a lot of group projects and individual assignments, and Korean students try to complete the projects or assignments perfectly.” She added.

“Education is very important in South Korea.” Student 3 said. She discovered that Korean people have their own special attitude about their studies. “They tend to be intuitive and have the highest level of concentration.” She said it makes Korean people to study hard and have great results in their studies. And further, in their work, too. Nevertheless, she was also concerned about the weaknesses of Korean education. According to her, Korean education has a tendency to emphasize more focusing on memorization. “I think depending on memorization is not great. The reason I think is because my country, Brazil, has different culture and education system.” She said. She explained that Brazilian is not forced to go into college after high school graduation. She said people in Brazil have wide choices in getting their job. While Korean students have more pressure about their studies since their ultimate goal is going into good university and getting good job, Brazilian students have less pressure about their studies.

Student 4 discovered that Korean education has both merits and demerits for students. “I could not condense the entirety of the education system, but I could say something about the research industry in Korean education.” He said. He found that

the research industry in Korean education has been developing in very rich and sustainable way. “However, it is quite monotonous and boring at some extent.” He added. He did not deny that Korean education is very impressive at some point, but still it needs to be more attractive for students by upgrading the contents, methods and projects.

5.1.12 The interviewees’ satisfaction of student exchange programs in South Korea and their suggestions to develop the programs

“Yes, I’m fully satisfied with my student exchange program in South Korea!” Student 1 answered. She said she cannot wait to come back to Korea. “I fell in love with the country, with the Korean way of living.” She said that living in South Korea was the best experience of her life. Nonetheless, she said few things to the question: do you have any suggestions to develop the exchange program in South Korea. First, she said she felt a sense of frustration at the classes in her Korean university. The university offered its foreign exchange students with some courses, but it was not fully processed in English. Some of the professor and Korean students often spoke in Korean language during the classes. She suggested that the university should provide more classes in which only foreign exchange students can register or it needs to manage its classes much more tightly so that foreign students may not have language barrier during the classes. Besides that, she proposed the university to give international students access to join sport clubs as well.

Student 2 answered that she is really satisfied with the student exchange program in South Korea. She said she is willing to come back to South Korea as visitor in the future and she will miss Korea and Korean people. Asked what kind of suggestions she may give for developing the exchange program in South Korea, she replied: “It’s hard to say because of the emergency situation. Even though I know that everything is not perfect, but it’s well-organized despite of the national disaster which is Covid-19 coronavirus. But I can only hope that there are more supports towards foreign exchange students so that they can adapt to new environment and different culture.

Moreover, I hope that the students can be aided in solving their problems.” She added.

“In general, the score of my life as an exchange student in South Korea was 3.2 out of 5.” Student 3 said. “I hope Korean people to be nicer to foreigners.” She made a suggestion based on her personal experience in South Korea. However, even though she had bad memories that some strangers showed her bad manners, she said she thinks South Korea is one of beautiful countries and the country has nice culture. “I want to try more foods, and to travel to more cities such as Busan and Suwon. I want to try everything in South Korea as many as I can.” She added.

Student 4 also said he is satisfied with his experiences in South Korea. He mentioned that he would love to visit Korea again. “It is such a lovely place for foreign travelers.” He said. Besides, he proposed it would be nicer if student exchange programs in South Korea provide foreign exchange students with more efficient opportunities to improve their skills and learn more about Korea and Korean culture by having collaborations with other institutions.

5.1.13 Competences the interviewees gained from their student exchange programs in South Korea

Student 1 said she made her personal growth. Living in South Korea was her first time to live without her family. Even though she lived with her roommate, she learnt a lot of things by doing everything by herself. She found that she became more flexible and independent. Besides that, she discovered her Korean language skill is also improved.

Student 2 said it is early for her to answer the question since the interview was conducted at the moment that she has been only few months in South Korea. “It’s a bit early to say, but I can feel that both of my English and Korean language skills are improved.” And she also found that she is more confident to live in other country

alone and her point of views is more enriched by experiencing and understanding Korean culture.

“It is very amazing when I think of what I gained during the student exchange program in South Korea.” Student 3 answered. She said she earned a lot of things such as personal growth, great people and diverse experiences. “Not only I gained practical knowledge in my studies such as marketing and business, but also I gained a lot of prizes from the competitions.” She reminded that it was great to have such opportunities in different country. Student 4 commented he gained the appreciation and values for his studies as well.

5.2 The online survey results

This section has the online survey results. The online survey was conducted by 50 foreign exchange students who studied or studies as exchange students in South Korea. The purpose of the survey collected data related to study abroad experiences of foreign exchange students in South Korea and the reasons they choose South Korea for their studies through exchange programs. Moreover, the students were also asked about what kinds of challenges they encountered during the time in South Korea, and how to cope with it.

5.2.1 Respondents’ demographical information

The first six questions asked about the respondent’s demographical information. The demographical information includes their gender, age, nationality, major, and residence information in South Korea.

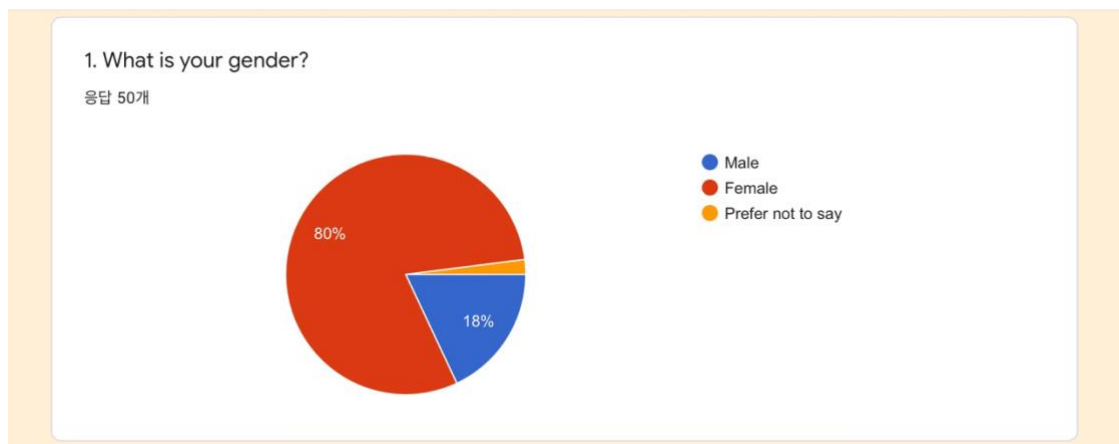


Figure 3. The gender of the respondents

The above figure 3 shows the gender of the respondents. In the question, there are three options to choose: Male, Female and Prefer not to say. Among 50 respondents, 80 percent was female. 18 percent of the respondents were male and only 2 percent responded they preferred not to say their gender.

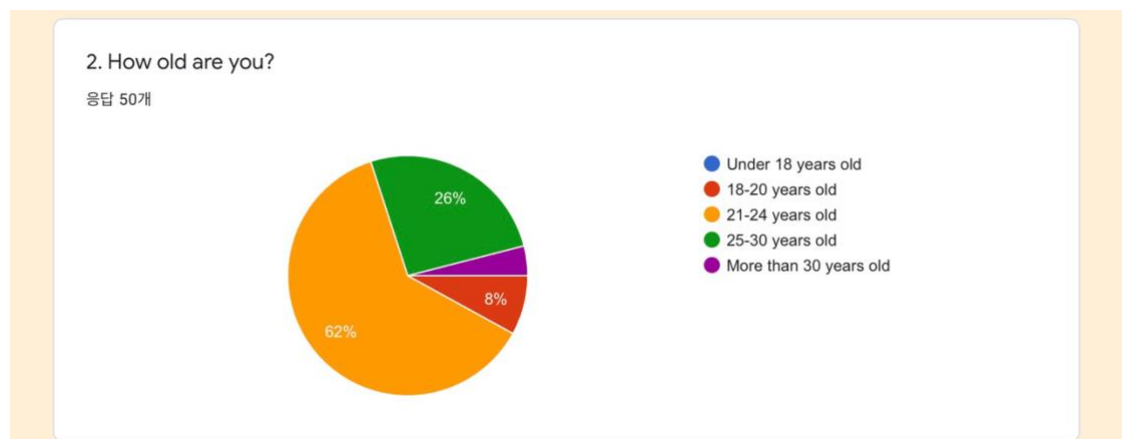
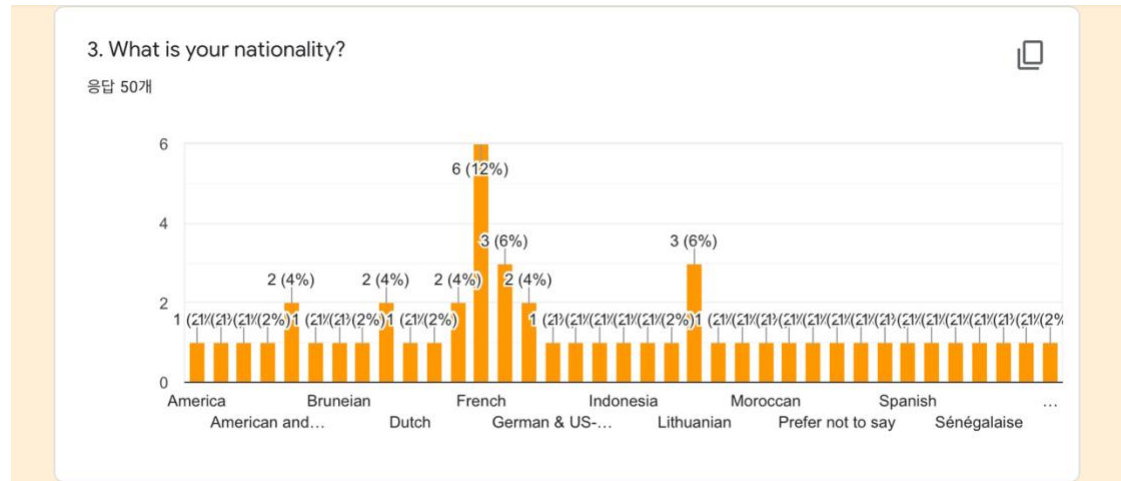


Figure 4. The age of the respondents

The above figure 4 tells the respondents' age. The author made five multiple choices which the respondents could choose: Under 18 years old, 18-20 years old, 21-24 years old, 25-30 years old, and more than 30 years old. Surprisingly, most of the respondents were more than 20 years old. Among all of the respondents, more than half was 21-24 years old. There was none of under 18 years old respondent and only 8 percent of the respondents was more than 30 years old.

Since the exchange students who studied before also participated in the online survey and it is not clear when they came to South Korea for the student exchange programs, the result cannot explain which age group is appealed to the exchange programs in South Korea. However, it tells student exchange programs in South Korea are chosen by people who have different age.



Graph 2. The nationalities of the respondents

The above graph 2 illustrates information about the respondents' nationality. The graph shows that the respondents came from many diverse countries such as America, Germany, France, Netherlands, Finland, Indonesia, Spain, and so on. Out of 50 respondents, more than 10 percent was French and 6 percent was German. It tells that people from diverse countries came to South Korea as exchange students regardless of distance.

The below Figure 5 presents areas the respondents live or lived during the programs in South Korea. Most of them answered Seoul which is a capital city in South Korea. Besides of Seoul, they responded they live or they lived in Gyeonggi-do, Daejeon, Incheon and many other areas.

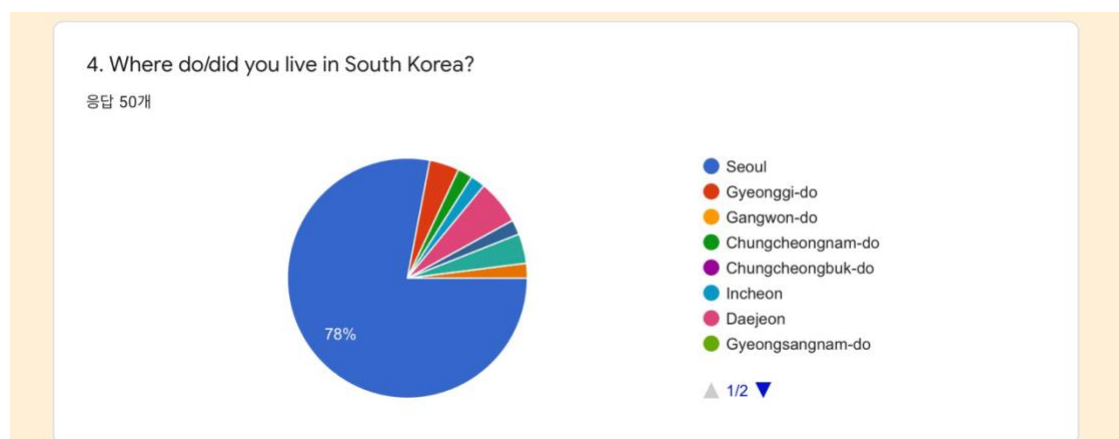


Figure 5. Residence information of respondents

The following figure 6 illustrates the respondents' department of major in their university. More than 30 percent chose business administration. The following is engineering, 18 percent. Apart from business administration and engineering, political science and economics, media & communication, and international studies were ranked. The figure tells that students who have many diverse majors came to South Korea through the student exchange programs.

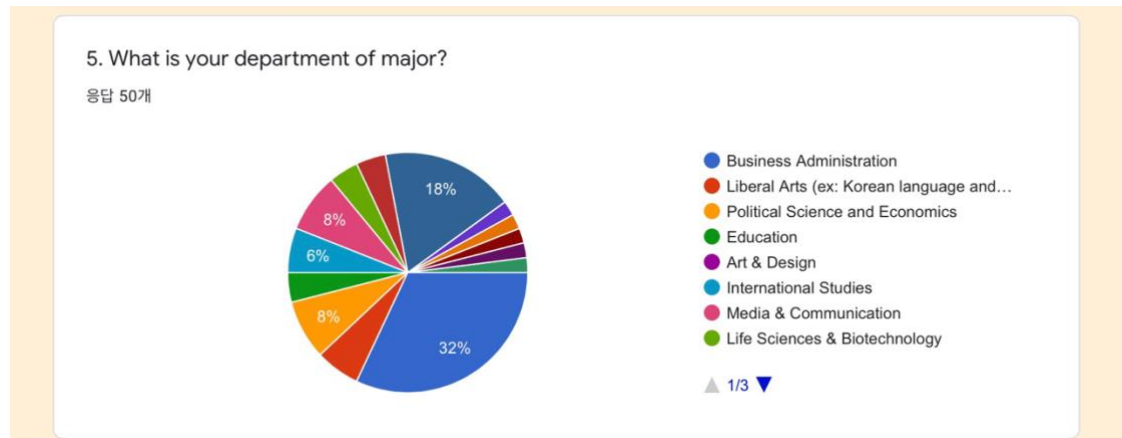


Figure 6. Major information of respondents

The below figure 7 shows how long the respondents have stayed in South Korea. There were five multiple choices: Less than 3 months, more than 3 months but less than 6 months, more than 6 months but less than 1 year, more than 1 year but less than 2 years, and lastly, more than 2 years. More than half of the respondents answered they have stayed in South Korea more than 3 months but less than 6 months. The next is more than 6 months but less than 1 year. The interesting finding is that about 10 percent responded they have stayed more than 2 years.

In other words, most of the respondents have stayed at least more than 3 months in South Korea. It is not surprising because student exchange programs generally offer two options in staying in other countries: for one semester or two semesters.

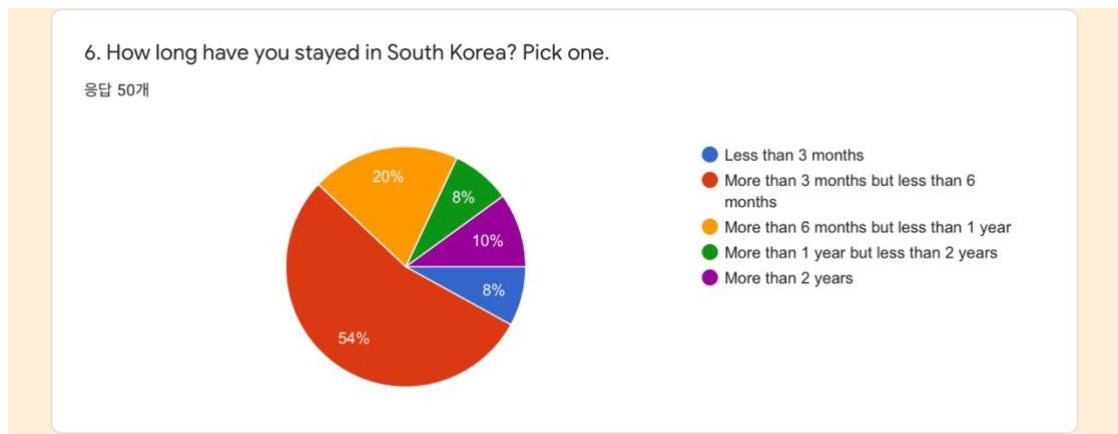
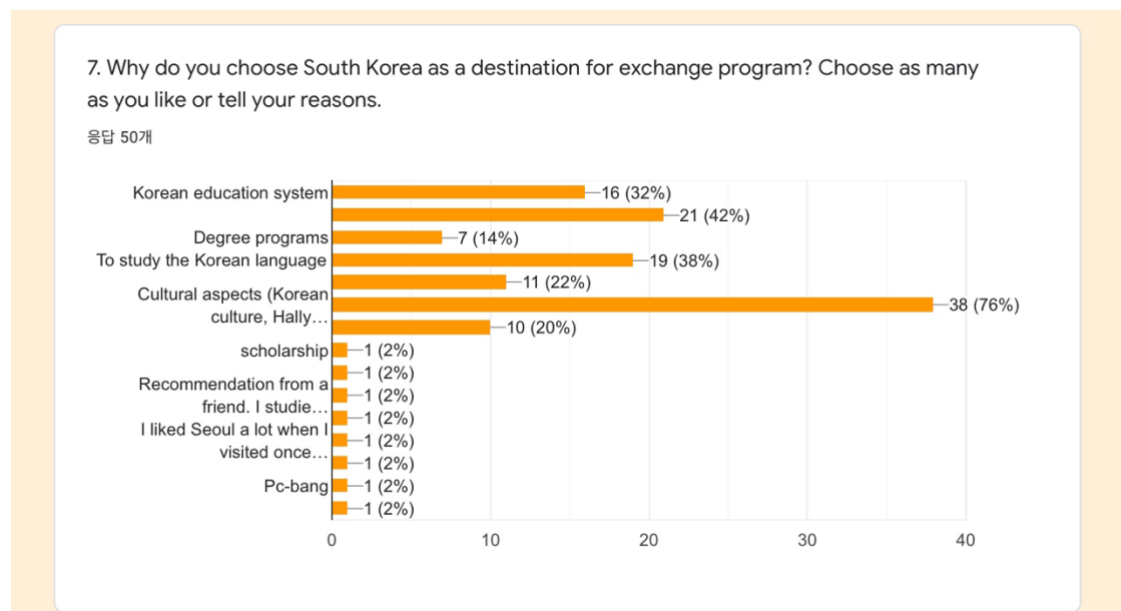


Figure 7. How long the respondents have stayed in South Korea

5.2.2 The reasons the respondents choose South Korea as a destination for exchange program

As the author stated above and the results of E-mail interviews showed, there are various reasons that foreign exchange students would like to come to South Korea as exchange students. In this part, the following graph 3 shows why the respondents of



the survey choose South Korea as a destination for exchange program.

The above graph 3 presents that most of the respondents chose South Korea as a destination for the student exchange programs because of cultural aspects. As the author mentioned above (In the section of introduction and literature review), Hallyu, Korean Wave, contributes to the expansion of cultural exchanges between Korea and other countries. As the above graph 3 showed, more than 75 percent chose Korean culture and Hallyu as the reasons to come to Korea. It explains cultural aspects are important to connect between countries and there is the necessity of creation and development of Korean culture for promoting cultural exchanges and building international relationships between countries.

Not only because of cultural aspects, but also not a few of the respondents chose Korea because of their studies. More than 35 percent said they came to Korea because they wanted to study Korean language. Also, more than 30 percent answered Korean education system is the reason they chose Korea as destination for the exchange programs. In terms of educational value, the respondents have a tendency to be interested in Korean educational environment and learning Korean language.

In short, as the above graph 3 shows, there are various reasons for the respondents to choose Korea as a destination for the student exchange programs. The reasons include Korean education system, cultural aspects, degree programs, studying Korean language, scholarship, but it seems clear that both cultural aspects and Korean education are main reasons for the respondents.

5.2.3 Similarities

Table 1. Similarities the respondents experienced or discovered in South Korea

8. Regarding aspects related to national culture, what similarities do you experience or discover during the time in South Korea?
응답 50개
Kindness of people
Not a lot of similarities
korean culture very respectful, but dictatorship in supervisors vs labors
Korean and German people like to follow rules and they are punctual
The importance of beauty and looking good is quite similar as in France in the way people tend to judge each other from the way they look.
Well i didn't see any similarities until now
same educational organization; for exchange students etc.
.
Importance of family life among Koreans. mutual respect and traditional.

Among 50 respondents, most of them answered they experienced and discovered some similarities between South Korea and their home countries regarding to aspects related to national culture during their stay in South Korea. Many students mentioned that the characters of Korean people are quite similar with that of their home countries' people. They said people in South Korea are open-minded, friendly, kind and hospitable. Especially a lot of students said Korean people are very respectful to elder and this is one of the similarities they found. "People's generosity." One of the students answered. Besides, some students also mentioned that many Korean people are humble and modest. "People are very modest. In South Korea it is not seen as a good thing to brag about you in front of others." One of them commented.

In addition, some respondents also experienced that Korean education has many things in common with their home countries' education such as the educational system in Korean educational organizations, or the curriculums in Korean educational institutions. Besides, some told that Korean night culture is similar with theirs. They said Korean people enjoy hanging out, having party, and drinking culture. One thing

to note is that not a few students agreed that Korean people's work performance is quite similar with that of their own people. They said it is similar to do prioritizing work, working hard and having hierarchy system. Aside from these similarities, the respondents mentioned law-abiding spirit, punctuality, lifestyle, safety, music and history as well.

In contrast, there are some respondents who said they couldn't find any similarities. Few of them even said that Korea and Korean culture are completely different from their countries and its cultures. "I couldn't find a lot of similarities regarding cultural aspect but I could say people want to, of course, look for a better life like in anywhere else." One of them said.

5.2.4 Differences

9. Regarding aspects related to national culture, what differences do you experience or discover during the time in South Korea?
응답 50개
Food, manners, approach to life
The easy administrative task and how people are really nice
koreans do not easily work with foreigners and try to only employ koreans
Korean people are a little more distanced and harder to get to know. However they are also more respectful of others, i.e. they don't talk as loudly in public, they don't skip the line when waiting and they are also cleaner (don't throw trash on the street) One big cultural difference is that hierarchy is extremely important in Korea
Korean people follow the rules in most situations. They line up when there is a line and wait patiently.
english language. In indonesia although we using indonesian language most of the indonesian people can speak english, but in korea is hard to find someone who can speak english
Many ! for social differences, physical appearance is very important in Korea and racism also. Very safe country, dynamic, every public place (stores, bars, etc) opens late.

Table 2. Differences the respondents experienced or discovered in South Korea

As the above table 2 illustrates, most respondents described a number of differences they discovered during the time in South Korea. Most intriguingly of all, most of them found there are a lot of differences between the characters of Korean people and that of their home countries' people. It can be seen as ironic because many respondents pointed out there are similarities related to the characters of Korean people between South Korea and their home countries. However, it is understandable since the differences they found in the characters of Korean people are totally contrasted with the answers from the question of similarities. According to them, people in South Korea are being shy, conservative and very polite. "Students in Korea are not proactive in class. They don't participate enough. However, they work fast & in an efficient way during team projects. And they are on time." One of them explained.

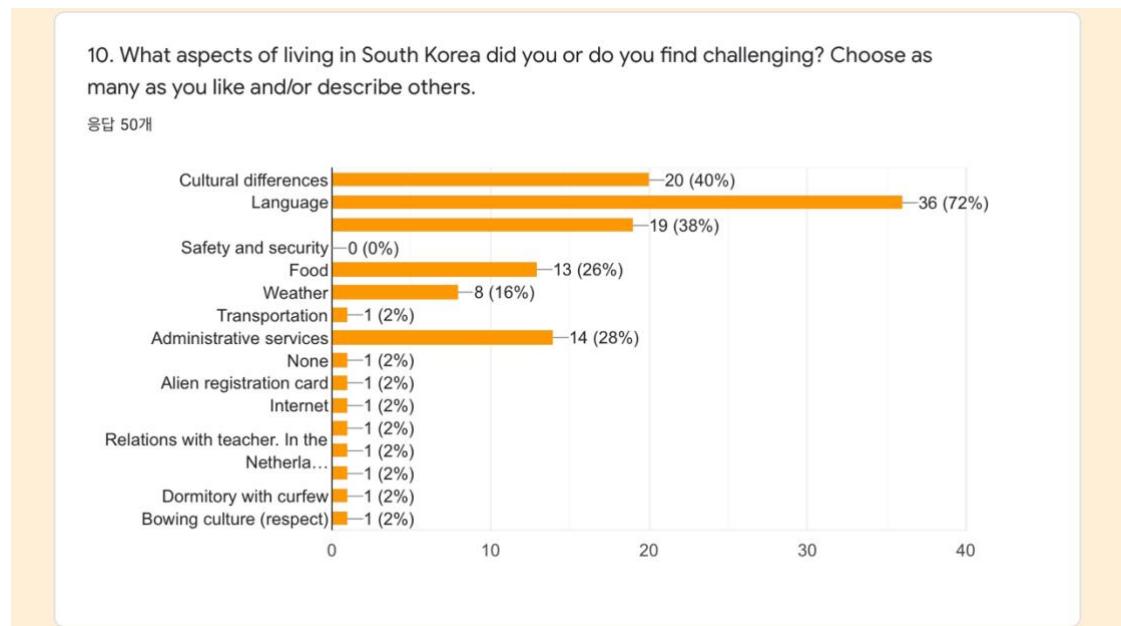
They also discovered that there are difficulties in having relationships with Korean due to some differences. "Korean people tend to be conservative in relationships.

Korean couples do not really live together before marriage, or get children unless married.” One of the students added. Among 50 respondents, more than 5 people said Korean dating culture and the way to build relationship are very difficult. They said although Korean people are friendly and kind in general, sometimes it is hard to build deeper relationship with them due to the hierarchical nature of Korean culture. “Age Hierarchy was very strange for me because, in my opinion, it limits people from getting to know each other.” One respondent said. The respondent also mentioned that in South Korea, besides of age, it's not possible to be friends with those who have the opposite gender.

Aside from the characters of people, a lot of respondents mentioned that Korean food and eating culture are different. They said there are a lot of spicy foods in South Korea and there is no tipping culture. They also found that drinking culture is different. “I also felt that Korean drinking culture is a lot different as well. There are specific drinking rules that you must follow (e.g. turning your head away from older people when taking shots, pouring with two hands).” One of them explained. Besides, they experienced that how to behave in public places, the law-abiding spirit, safety and administrative services are also different. One of the respondents said people in South Korea don't talk out loud in public places, don't cut in line, and don't throw trash on the street. Another interesting thing was one respondent found that driving rules are different between South Korea and the United States. “In Korea, cars come first. In the United States, people come first.” He said.

Besides, there are more differences that the respondents experienced such as education, lifestyle, language, and work environment. Some respondents discovered that people in South Korea are sensitive to the hottest trend. According to them, many Korean people tend to judge people by their appearances. “Everyone dresses and acts exactly the same in Korea, the uniformity is crazy! Swedes are a bit more diverse!” One of the respondents added. Also, many respondents pointed out Korean work environment is different from that of their home countries such as long working hours, strict hierarchy, less employing foreign nationals.

5.2.5 Challenges of living in South Korea as exchange students



Graph 4. Challenges the respondents encountered in living in South Korea

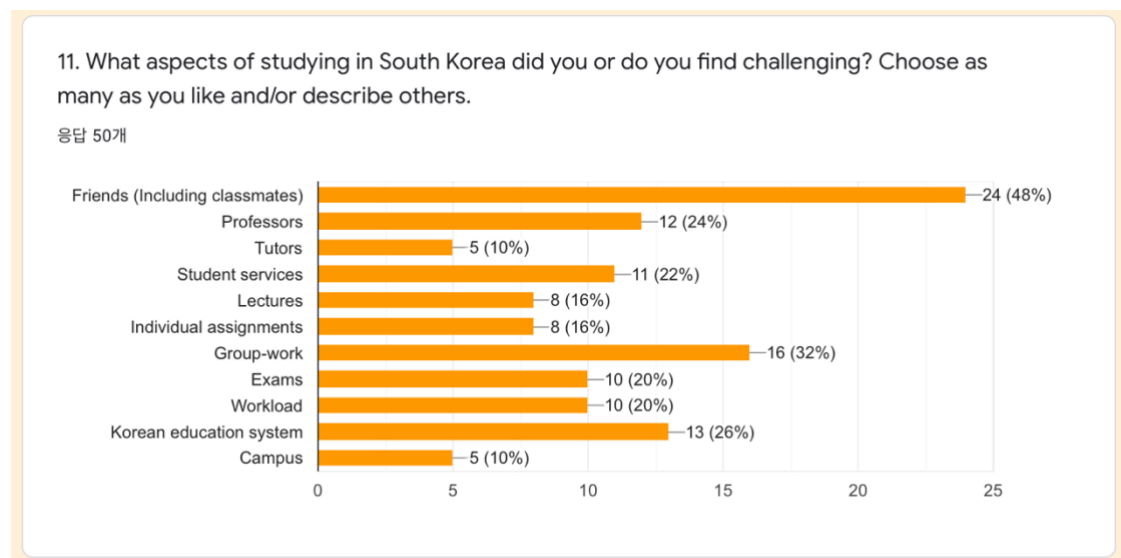
According to the above graph 4, the respondents tend to have difficulties on cultural differences, language, food, and administrative services. Especially most of students answered language is biggest challenge in living in South Korea. As E-mail interviews' interviewees commented on the challenges they faced, the respondents of the online survey also found most of Korean people are not good at speaking in English, and foreign exchange students are not proficient in Korean language either. Due to these things, not only foreign exchange students, but also those who are living or working in South Korea from other countries face the language barrier, and it makes them feel depressed to get along with Korean people.

Besides that, more than 40 percent said they struggled with cultural differences. Especially most respondents from Western countries agreed that they had difficulties on cultural differences since Korean culture is very different from their cultures. It is one of main reasons why western people cannot get along with Korean people well and they feel stressed during their stay. Apart from language and cultural differences, the respondents also commented that they found Korean food and administrative services are also challenges. Even though Korea has a number of different kinds of

restaurants, as one of the interviewees from the E-mail interviews mentioned above, some ingredients such as fruits, vegetables and cheese are expensive, and it is even hard to find it in South Korea. For these reasons they missed their home country's food and decided to go back to their country.

In contrast, none of respondents answered that safety and security are problem while staying in South Korea.

5.2.6 Challenges of studying in South Korea as exchange students

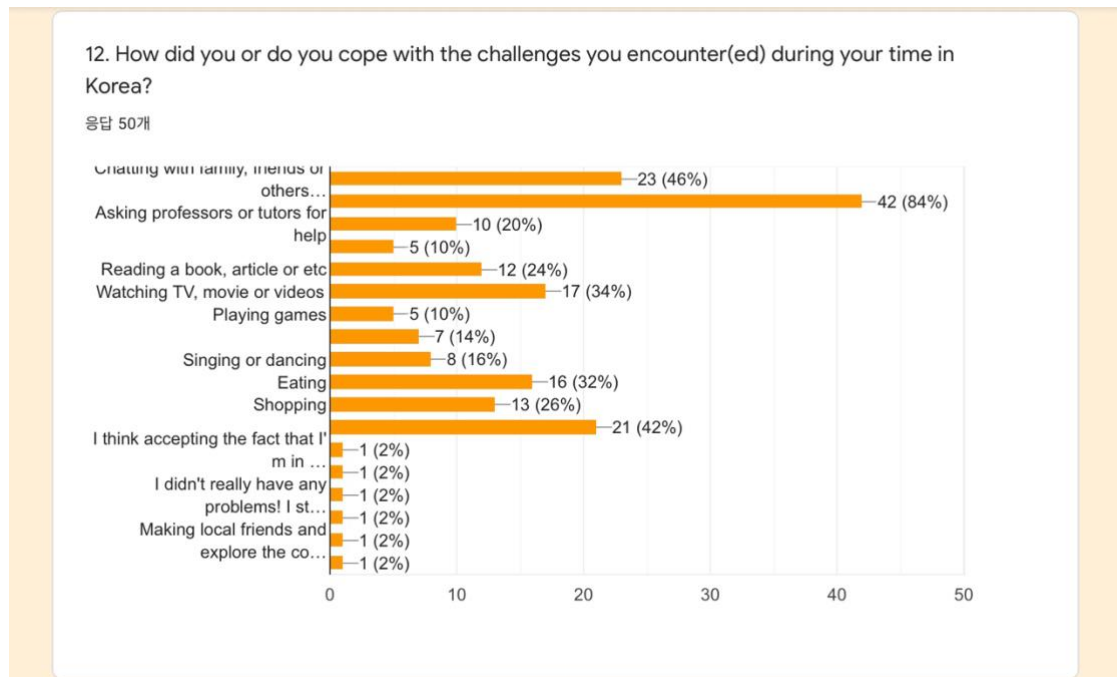


Graph 5. Challenges the respondents encountered in studying in South Korea

The above graph 5 shows what kind of challenges in studying in South Korea the respondents of the online survey encountered. The respondents chose as many as answers they liked. As the result, 48 percent answered friends (Including classmates) the most. Also, many of them said professors and tutors are the challenge in their studies. It shows that having relationships is most difficult aspect in studying in South Korea for the respondents as exchange students.

Apart from having relationships such as friends in South Korea, group-work is second highest challenge for them in studying in South Korea. The following is Korean education system.

5.2.7 How to cope with the challenges



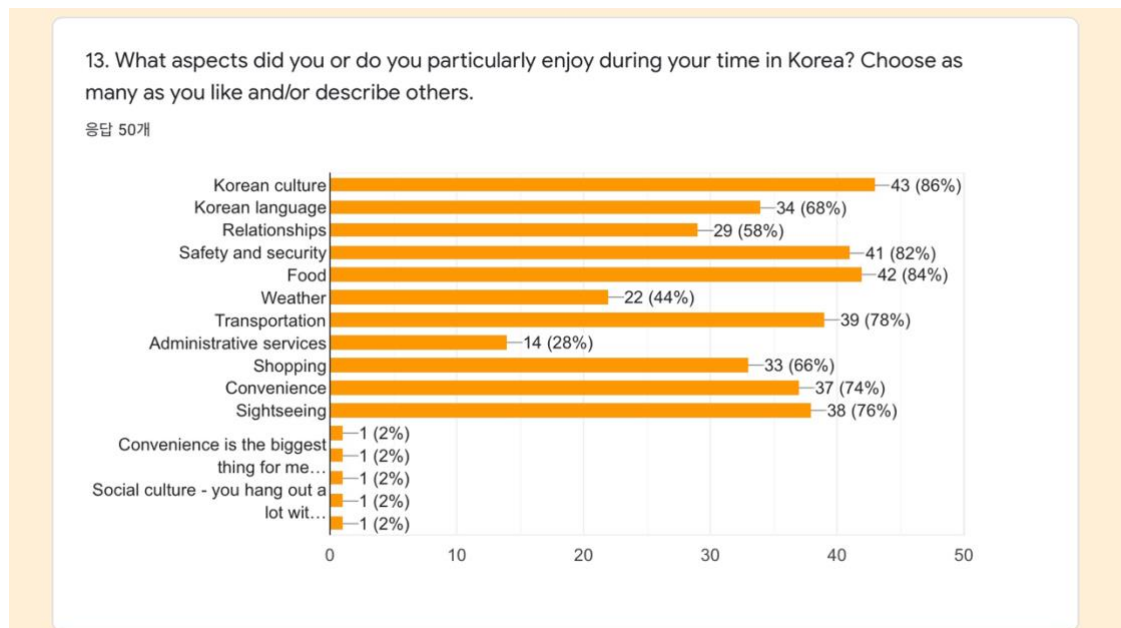
Graph 6. How the respondents cope with the challenges they encounter

The above graph 6 presents how the respondents deal with the challenges they encounter during their time in South Korea. More than 80 percent of the respondents answered that they cope with the challenges by talking to friends, classmates or local people in South Korea. Besides, more than 40 percent of them said they chat with family, friends or others in their home country.

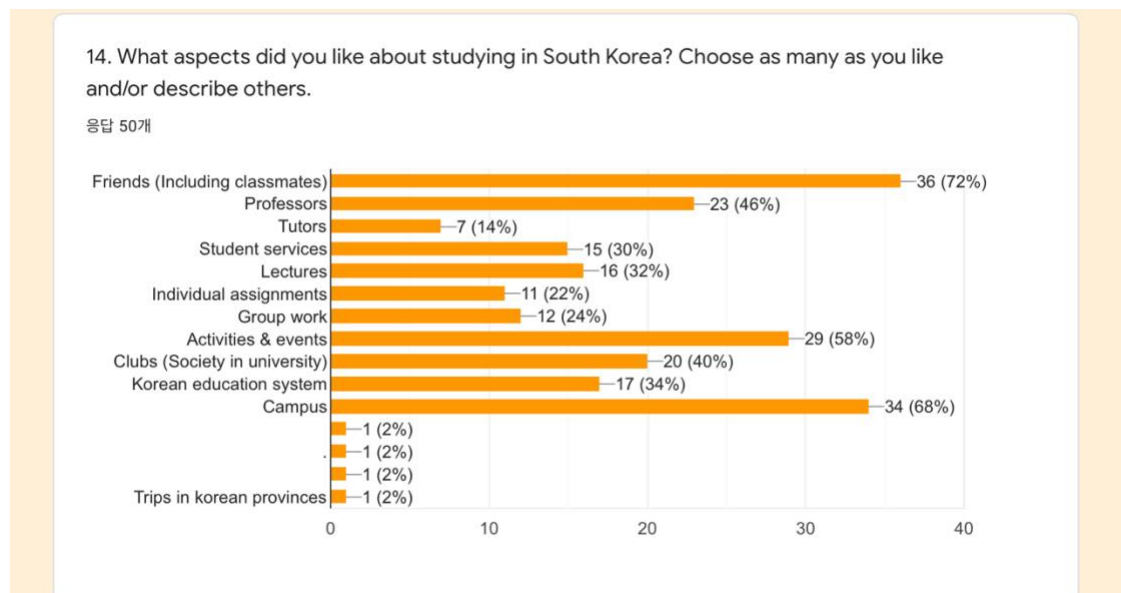
In addition, they also use social media such as YouTube, Instagram or Facebook in order to handle with the challenges. Apart from these, some of the respondents said that they read a book, watch movie, go shopping and eating. As the above graph 6 shows, the author found that foreign exchange students try to overcome the difficulties in different and diverse ways.

5.2.8 Enjoyment and preference

The below graph 7 tells what aspects the respondents enjoy during their time in South Korea. The respondents were allowed to choose multiple answers. More than 86 percent answered they enjoyed Korean culture during their stay in South Korea. As it is the highest rate, the following is food. Besides, safety and security, convenience, sightseeing and transportation are also top choices.



Graph 7. What aspects the respondents particularly enjoy during their time in South Korea



Graph 8. What aspects the respondents liked about studying in South Korea

The above graph 8 presents what aspects the respondents liked about studying in South Korea. More than 70 percent said friends (Including classmates). It is interesting result since many respondents answered from the question of challenges

in studying in South Korea that friends are the most challenge during their time in South Korea. Besides, about 68 percent chose campus, and 58 percent chose activities and events.

5.2.9 Satisfaction

The below figure 8 shows how satisfied the respondents are or were with their studies in South Korea. Among 50 respondents of the online survey, more than half of them said they are or were very satisfied with their studies in South Korea. 22 percent said satisfied while 16 percent chose the answer 'neutral'. Including 4 percent from those who are very dissatisfied, 10 percent answered that they are not satisfied with their studies in South Korea.

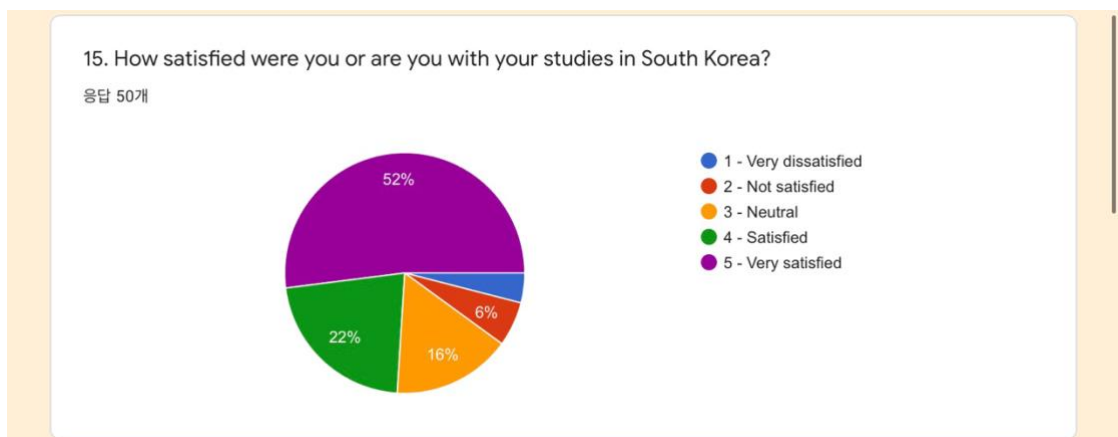


Figure 8. How satisfied the respondents are or were with their studies in South Korea

The following figure 9 illustrates how satisfied the respondents are or were with the student exchange program of Korean university. 48 percent of them said very satisfied while 4 percent answered they are very dissatisfied with the student exchange program of Korean university. In general, seven out of ten in the online survey said they are satisfied with the student exchange program in South Korea.

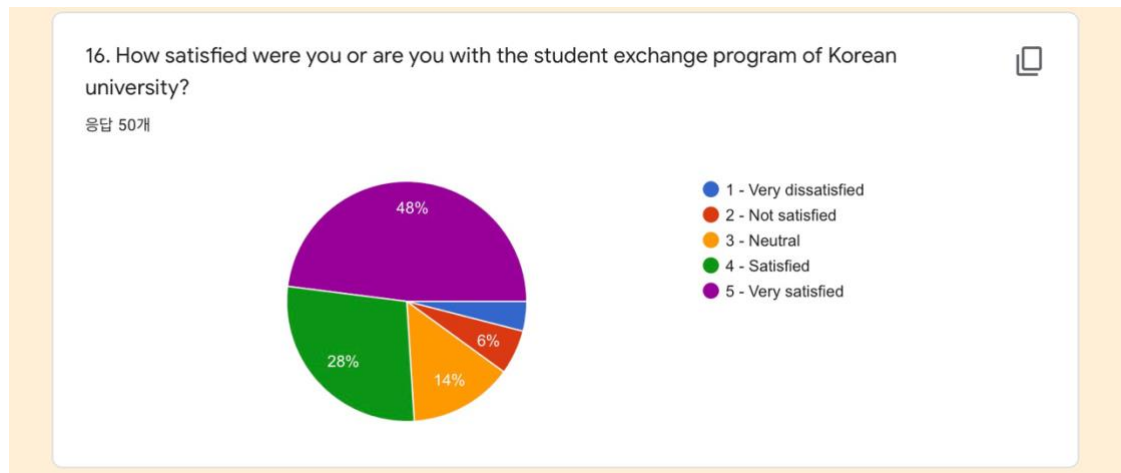


Figure 9. How satisfied the respondents with the student exchange program of Korean university

17. If you were or you are not satisfied with the student exchange program of Korean university, can you tell me any suggestions for development of the program?

응답 17개

<p>students with family cannot survive in korea, the stipends we research are all the same regardless of the city you live in, family members and university you are in. I think they need to reevaluate their stipends distribution.</p> <p>and we cannot apply for health insurance. KGSP asks us to pay by ourself then they return 70%.</p> <p>in addition: KGSP stipends receiving date is not fixed and might delay to the next month which make it very hard for students.</p>
<p>In France, I was doing my second year of Masters; here I had to chose classes from first year of Bachelor, so I learned nothing new</p>
<p>Not being online</p>
<p>More English assistance atleast for beginners with international clubs and standards</p>
<p>My opinion is coming from being banished into my 3x3sqm dorm room for online classes, I believe it's not valid to judge the korean university program according to my experience during this semester.</p> <p>Suggestion would be live classes.</p>

Table 3. Suggestions for development of the program

The author asked those who are not satisfied with the student exchange program in Korean university any suggestions if they have in mind in order to develop the program. There are a wide range of suggestions from the respondents. According to them, there is a lack of support for foreign exchange students from Korean university and most of them insisted exchange students need supports from both Korean government and Korean university. Related to the supports, there come in three main suggestions from them.

First of all, the respondents proposed having opportunities to take part in diverse activities or events on Korean university's campus. Most of them said they were not allowed to join student clubs or take part in events from the school even though they wanted. It is because they were exchange students, and the information was available in Korean only. Many respondents said they would like to have more opportunities to take part in student clubs, activities and events in Korean university. They suggested Korean university offers foreign exchange students to take part in more social events so that the exchange students are able to meet fellow classmates and learn Korean culture.

Second, they also suggested development of student exchange programs. "When I was sick, there was no help from the international office." Using their personal experience as an example, some of the respondents said student services for exchange students were not actually helpful. They mentioned that health care or health insurance should be actually helpful and there is a need for new comers to have enough information about living and studying in South Korea. One of the respondents said Korean university should help its foreign exchange students to adapt new environment and enjoy campus life by offering them a school prospectus or video as guidance before exchange students arrive. Besides, a few respondents also mentioned that Korean university should take into account necessity of more classes or expansion of class numbers for exchange students.

Third, some of the respondents recommended offering financial supports from Korean government or Korean university towards international students. "Students with family cannot survive in Korea, the stipends we research are all the same regardless of the city you live in, family members and university you are in. I think they need to reevaluate their stipends distribution." One of the respondents said. According to the one, it is struggling to provide for a family since stipends are low in South Korea. Besides, few respondents also said it would be much helpful if Korean university or Korean government offer international student loans as other countries or other countries' universities do.

And on top of all these, some respondents strongly advised to Korean university that they must ensure equal treatment and equal opportunities of exchange students with Korean students and international students. “Korean students should be more curious in a good way about exchange students. Unfortunately RACISM still exists in some universities from local students to exchange students, especially Indian people. I was expected Korea to be a welcoming country for exchange students but it seems even in SKY, Seoul National, Korea and Yonsei universities known as three prestigious universities, local students believe clichés a lot and stare non-white people a lot.” One of them said.

5.2.10 Recommendations

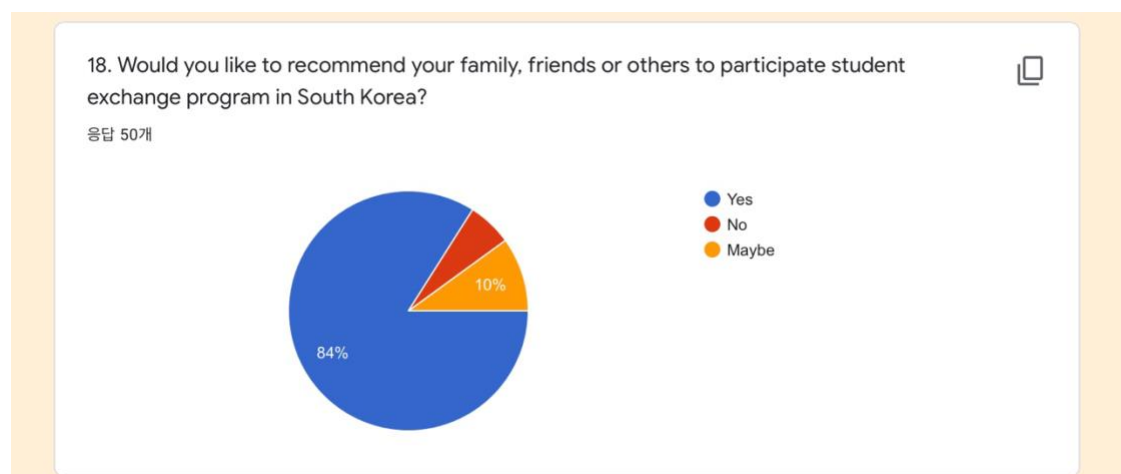


Figure 10. Recommendations to participate student exchange program in South Korea

The above figure 10 illustrates the respondents' opinions on recommending their family, friends or others to participate in student exchange program in South Korea. Most of them answered they would like to recommend. 10 percent of all respondents said maybe while 6 percent of them said no.

The below figure 11 is illustrated whether the respondents think living and studying in South Korea were useful or not. 94 percent of the respondents answered that they think living and studying in South Korea were useful. 6 percent of them said maybe or no.

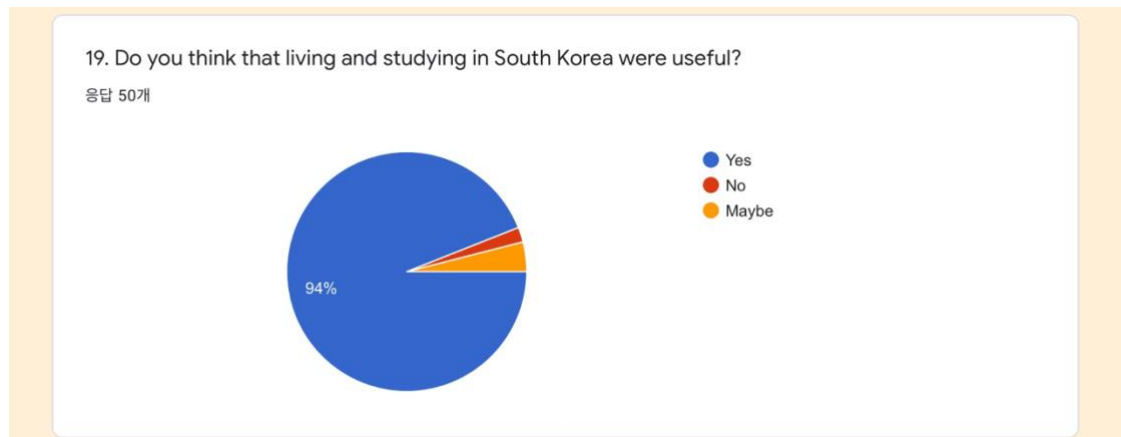
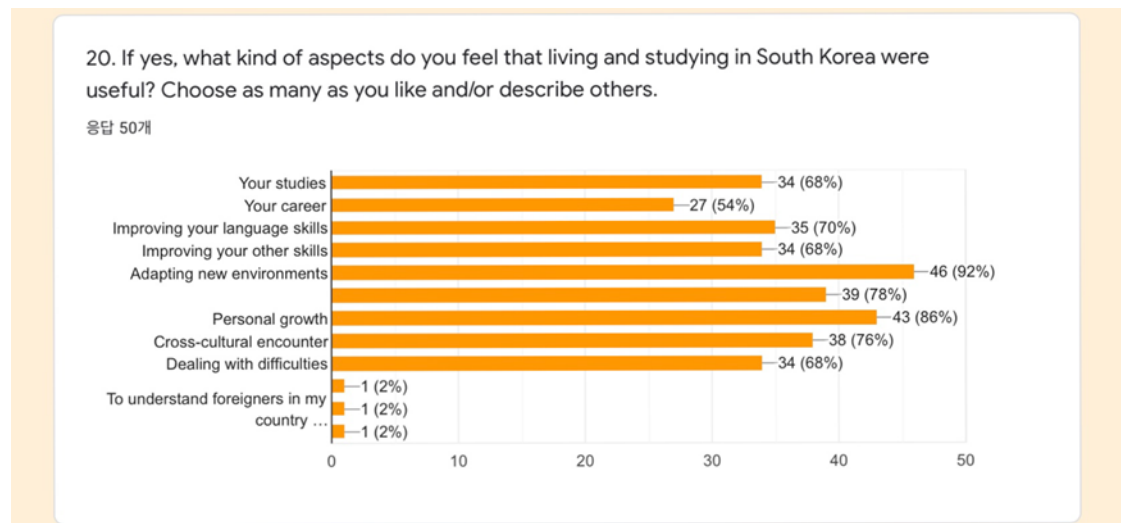


Figure 11. Usefulness of living and studying in South Korea



Graph 9. What kind of aspects the respondents feel living and studying in South Korea are useful

The above graph shows what kind of aspects the respondents feel that living and studying in South Korea were useful if they think yes to the question 19. The respondents were allowed to choose as many as they want. More than 92 percent answered studying in South Korea was useful in adapting new environments. About 86 percent responded personal growth. Moreover, cross-cultural encounter and dealing with difficulties came high on the list. Apart from these, the respondents chose it was useful to live and study in South Korea for their studies, their career and improving their skills including language skills.

The following figure 12 shows the respondents' willingness to visit to Korea after finishing their exchange program. 90 percent of them said they would like to visit to Korea again.

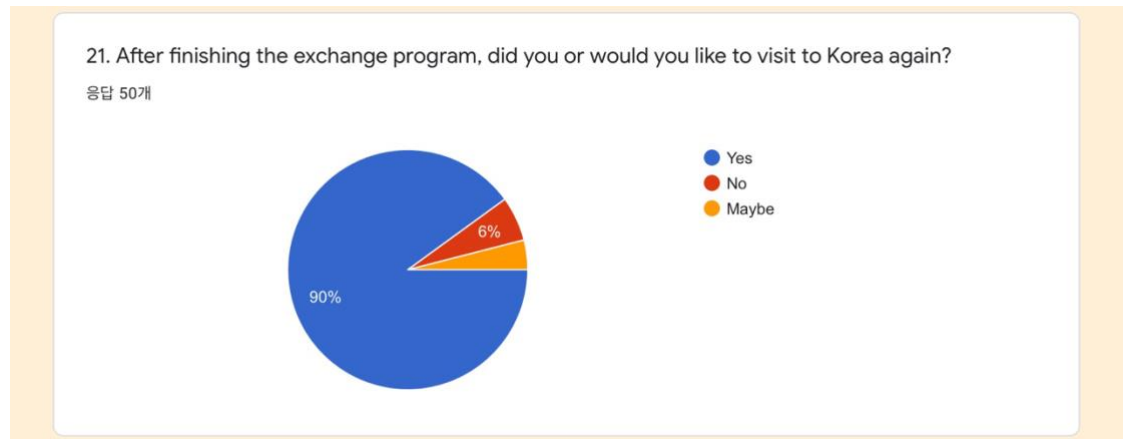


Figure 12. Willing to visit to Korea after finishing exchange program

6 Discussion

By discovering foreign exchange students' experiences and opinions on the student exchange program of Korean university, the research aimed to answer three questions: the reasons foreign students choose South Korea as a destination to advance their studies as exchange students, similarities and differences related to national culture they experience or discover during their stay in South Korea, and challenges they have encountered and how to cope with the challenges. To answer these, the author carried out E-mail interviews and online survey targeting those who live or lived in South Korea as exchange students. After collecting and analyzing all the results from the interviews and survey, the research could discover some important findings and further, present recommendations on development of student exchange programs in South Korea in order to satisfy both foreign exchange students and Korean universities.

6.1 The reasons foreign exchange students come to South Korea

As the author mentioned in the part of literature review, Korean culture, especially Hallyu, is main reason for foreigners to come to South Korea. With the interviews and online survey, it is founded that most foreign exchange students also were motivated to choose South Korea as a destination for their exchange programs due to cultural aspects.

According to four interviewees from E-mail interviews, they already had interests in Korean culture. They watched Korean movie, Korean drama or YouTube videos related to Korea and Korean culture. Some of them even liked K-pop or Korean celebrities such as actor, actress, singer or idol group. The important thing is they became intrigued as to how it is going to be if they live in South Korea. They had curiosity about living in South Korea and it led them to experience real life in South Korea as exchange students. So do the respondents of online survey. Most of them chose cultural aspects as a main reason. There are some other reasons such as

scholarship, recommendation from friends or sightseeing, but more than 76 percent came to Korea due to cultural aspects including Korean culture and Hallyu).

While cultural aspects were main reasons for most of them, some of students wanted to have opportunities to learn Korean language. Since Korean language is hard to study by them, they chose to improve their Korean language skills by coming to Korea and having meetings with local people as many as they could. Moreover, not a few students looked forward to study in Korean educational environment and some of them chose to study in Korean university for their degree programs. It is shown that foreign students are also interested in Korean education besides of cultural aspects.

Therefore, it is necessary that Korean university and government gradually promote Korean education over the world. Especially Korean university needs to provide foreign students with more diverse classes related to Korea and Korean culture such as Korean language education or understanding of Korean culture. For example, if there is a class about understanding of Korean culture, it would be helpful for foreign students to understand Korean culture and learn how to behave in Korean society during the time in South Korea.

In addition to that, before Korean government starts to promote Korean education using Hallyu or benefits of learning Korean language, it needs to see the real state of student exchange programs in South Korea and develop the programs by collecting ideas or opinions from exchange students. In order to make foreign exchange students fully satisfy with the exchange programs and allow Korean university to have more coming exchange students, Korean government is required to create better learning environments for both local students and exchange students in the schools.

6.2 Similarities and differences in aspects of national culture

The data from the research revealed that foreign exchange students found a lot of similarities and differences between their home countries and South Korea during the time. The similarities and differences are various in a wide range of cultural aspects. Accordingly, the similarities and differences that the students have discovered during their stay in South Korea can be categorized into two or three main topics each: people and education in the similarities and ironically, people, eating culture and hierarchy in the differences.

Most of interviewees and respondents agreed that Korean people are similar with their home countries' people in a way to treat others. Although it is hard to make friends on the street or in public places in South Korea since there is language barrier and due to characters of Korean people, most of them said Korean people are kind, polite and open-minded as their home countries' people are. It is founded that Korean people are also willing to be hospitable, punctual, and have law-abiding spirit since their characters are based on considerations for others. Besides, many students explained that Korean education has many things in common with their home countries' education. They said student exchange programs that Korean universities offer are quite similar with that of the universities in other countries.

According to the interviewees and the respondents from the online survey, there are a number of cultural differences between their countries and South Korea. Among the differences that they experienced and discovered in living and studying in South Korea, people, eating culture and hierarchy were the most. Paradoxically, most of them agreed that people in South Korea are very different from own people in their countries. They said Korean people are polite but tend to be conservative in relationships or in public places. They explained that Korean people tend to judge others by their appearance and sometimes it is hard to date or have relationships with them since they often shows a tendency towards conservatism on marriage or living together.

Furthermore, the participants of the research agreed that Korean eating culture is very different of their eating cultures. It is not only main ingredients are different, but also Korean people prefer to have spicy food. Some of the participants pointed out there are differences in a positive way. They said it is very convenient due to Korean restaurants' delivery services and operating hours, and it is glad that Korean restaurants offer free side dishes such as Kimchi and vegetables.

Apart from people and eating culture, it is founded that foreign students experienced hierarchy is existed in Korean society. They discovered that there is a sense of hierarchy between people in the society and it causes them to have difficulties in many relationships. According to them, it is a rigid social hierarchy. They said they could find age hierarchy between people in their daily life.

To sum up, in the aspects of national cultures, it is founded that there are some similarities between South Korea and foreign exchange students' home countries. The character of Korean people such as being kind, respectful and humble is one of the similarities. Besides, Korean education has many things in common with other countries' education as well. However, the research discovered that there are a number of differences in the aspects of national cultures. Ironically many students said some characteristics of Korean people are much different from those of their own people. Besides, it is shown that Korean eating culture has many different things from their eating cultures. Lastly, they also experienced that there is a rigid social hierarchy in Korean society and it is one of the differences in cultural aspects.

6.3 Challenges and how to cope with it

The results of research show that interviewees and respondents have struggled with many diverse things during the time in South Korea. As foreign exchange students, they experienced challenges such as language, cultural differences, food, friends and group-work. Since they were not good at Korean, they had trouble living and studying in South Korea. According to one of them, she had a hard time to work with Korean students due to language. Korean students often spoke in Korean each other

during group-work, and she couldn't communicate with them since she couldn't speak in Korean well. Include her, a lot of students agreed that Korean professor and students should note that it is English course and only speaking in English during the class. Besides of that, many students discovered cultural differences are one of big challenges in living and studying in South Korea. Including eating culture, as the author mentioned in the part of discussion, similarities and differences in aspects of national culture, there are a lot of differences in cultural aspects between South Korea and other countries. Furthermore, it is also shown that having a good friendship is one of big challenges in studying in South Korea.

When asked about how to cope with the challenges they have encountered, most of them said they talked to friends, classmates or local people in South Korea. They also mentioned that they chatted with their family, friends or others in their home country. Apart from these, some of them reminded themselves that they should be responsible with their choice and tried to prepare ahead of time before starting new things. Besides, many students mentioned that they tried to deal with the challenges or the stress by watching movie, going shopping or reading a book.

7 Conclusion

The research questions of this thesis were to discover study abroad experiences of foreign students who choose South Korea as a destination for their student exchange programs. The research of this thesis was designed to answer the research questions in most suitable way.

At the time of the research, Covid-19 coronavirus has spread around the world. To prevent Covid-19, nation's governments strongly advise its own people to keep social distancing and self-quarantine. In such circumstances, the research was conducted into two ways: E-mail interviews and online survey. Although there are some limits to investigate further since the interviews were not face-to-face, foreign exchange students' views on their experiences during the time in South Korea and the student

exchange programs could be properly taken into account successfully as the research found answers to all of the questions. And based on the answers and the additional data, it is also able to make recommendations on how to increase the exchange students' satisfaction on student exchange programs in South Korea.

Fortunately, with the help of many foreign exchange students, the research was able to collect a large pool of responses. The interviewees and the respondents of the online survey did their best to answer the questionnaires and their answers were actually based on their real experiences in South Korea. It is considered that the reliability of this thesis is ensured.

Based on the results, the research tells that demand for student exchange programs in South Korea is growing and therefore, both Korean government and Korean university should cooperate with each other by developing the student exchange programs in various ways in order to ultimately increase foreign exchange students' satisfaction.

7.1 Recommendations

Since the research was designed to get the answers from foreign exchange students who live or lived in South Korea, the results of the research proved its potential worth for all Korean university. Thus, the following recommendations can be widely applied in practice.

The results of the research tell that foreign exchange students face challenges during the time in South Korea, and they tend to cope with the challenges at the personal level. However, to increase their satisfaction, it is necessary to develop student exchange programs in South Korea and foreign exchange students may need to try the challenges with different approaches.

As one of suggestions, the author believed Korean government and Korean university have to provide foreign exchange students with proper and efficient language

education. Considering that the exchange students have interests in learning Korean language, Korean government will be able to support Korean university and its foreign exchange students by setting up networks and creating programs related to Korean language. For example, collaborating with Korean university, the government can allow high school students in other countries to get credits depends on excellence in the Korean-language proficiency test. Furthermore, Korean university can offer dozens of different labs, lectures, and discussion groups in English. Professors and local students should try avoiding speaking Korean during the lectures that are provided in English. Besides of regular courses, Korean university can help foreign exchange students to map out their future studies and career paths by offering practical classes in many various fields. In addition, it is one of good ideas to give foreign exchange students opportunities that allow them to join student clubs and participate in activities or events.

On a personal level, future exchange students from other countries have a profound need to learn Korean language before coming to South Korea or during the time in South Korea. Their Korean language does not have to be fluent, but it would be helpful if they learn basic sentences in Korean. Besides, the students should be ready to understand a cultural gap they may encounter and to adapt new environment. It's best to use a wide range of sources related to South Korea, Korean history, Korean culture or further, Asian culture. Especially there are many YouTubers who creates videos on the basis of their experiences and stories in South Korea.

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Appendices

Appendix 1. Questions for the interviewees

- 1) What is your name, gender, age and nationality?
- 2) What were the reasons you decide to come to Korea as exchange student?
- 3) How did you get information about studying in South Korea?
- 4) How long have you lived in South Korea and where do you live?
- 5) What are the first impressions of Korean people and culture?
- 6) What is the hardest part of living in South Korea?
- 7) What is the hardest part of studying in South Korea?
- 8) How do you deal with the difficulties?
- 9) What is the best thing of living in South Korea?
- 10) What is the best thing of studying in South Korea?
- 11) Have you ever experienced cultural differences or similarities while living in South Korea?
- 12) How do you think about Korean education?
- 13) Were you / are you satisfied with exchange program in South Korea? Do you have any suggestions to develop the exchange program?
- 14) Do you have any competences gained from your exchange experiences?
- 15) After finishing exchange program, would you like to visit to South Korea again?

Appendix 2. Online survey for foreign exchange students in South Korea

Students' experiences for exchange program in

This is survey for the thesis related to foreigners' experiences as exchange students in South Korea.

1. What is your gender? *

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female
- ☐ Prefer not to say

2. How old are you? *

- ☐ Under 18 years old
- ☐ 18-20 years old
- ☐ 21-24 years old
- ☐ 25-30 years old
- ☐ More than 30 years old

3. What is your nationality? *

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4. Where do/did you live in South Korea? *

- ☐ Seoul
- ☐ Gyeonggi-do
- ☐ Gangwon-do
- ☐ Chungcheongnam-do
- ☐ Chungcheongbuk-do
- ☐ Incheon
- ☐ Daejeon
- ☐ Gyeongsangnam-do
- ☐ Gyeongsangbuk-do
- ☐ Daegu
- ☐ Ulsan
- ☐ Busan
- ☐ Jeollabuk-do
- ☐ Jeollanam-do
- ☐ Gwangju
- ☐ Jeju-do

5. What is your department of major? *

- ☐ Business Administration
- ☐ Liberal Arts (ex: Korean language and Literature)
- ☐ Political Science and Economics
- ☐ Education
- ☐ Art & Design
- ☐ International Studies
- ☐ Media & Communication
- ☐ Life Sciences & Biotechnology
- ☐ Science
- ☐ Engineering
- ☐ Nursing
- ☐ Informatics
- ☐ Health Science
- ☐ 기타...

6. How long have you stayed in South Korea? Pick one. *

- ☐ Less than 3 months
- ☐ More than 3 months but less than 6 months
- ☐ More than 6 months but less than 1 year
- ☐ More than 1 year but less than 2 years
- ☐ More than 2 years

7. Why do you choose South Korea as a destination for exchange program? Choose as many as you like or tell your reasons. *

- ☐ Korean education system
- ☐ Safety and security of South Korea
- ☐ Degree programs
- ☐ To study the Korean language
- ☐ Recommendation from family, friends, professors or others.
- ☐ Cultural aspects (Korean culture, Hallyu, etc.)
- ☐ Career opportunities
- ☐ 기타...

8. Regarding aspects related to national culture, what similarities do you experience or discover *
during the time in South Korea?

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9. Regarding aspects related to national culture, what differences do you experience or discover *
during the time in South Korea?

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10. What aspects of living in South Korea did you or do you find challenging? Choose as many as *
you like and/or describe others.

- ☐ Cultural differences
- ☐ Language
- ☐ Relationships (Professional, teacher, intimate, etc)
- ☐ Safety and security
- ☐ Food
- ☐ Weather
- ☐ Transportation
- ☐ Administrative services
- ☐ 기타...

11. What aspects of studying in South Korea did you or do you find challenging? Choose as many *
as you like and/or describe others.

- ☐ Friends (Including classmates)
- ☐ Professors
- ☐ Tutors
- ☐ Student services
- ☐ Lectures
- ☐ Individual assignments
- ☐ Group-work
- ☐ Exams
- ☐ Workload
- ☐ Korean education system
- ☐ Campus

...

12. How did you or do you cope with the challenges you encounter(ed) during your time in Korea? *

- ☐ Chatting with family, friends or others in your home country
- ☐ Talking to friends, classmates or local people in South Korea
- ☐ Asking professors or tutors for help
- ☐ Asking student services for help
- ☐ Reading a book, article or etc
- ☐ Watching TV, movie or videos
- ☐ Playing games
- ☐ Playing sports games or doing exercise
- ☐ Singing or dancing
- ☐ Eating
- ☐ Shopping
- ☐ Using social media such as YouTube, Instagram or Facebook
- ☐ 기타...

...

13. What aspects did you or do you particularly enjoy during your time in Korea? Choose as many as you like and/or describe others. *

- ☐ Korean culture
- ☐ Korean language
- ☐ Relationships
- ☐ Safety and security
- ☐ Food
- ☐ Weather
- ☐ Transportation
- ☐ Administrative services
- ☐ Shopping
- ☐ Convenience
- ☐ Sightseeing
- ☐ 기타...

14. What aspects did you like about studying in South Korea? Choose as many as you like and/or describe others. *

- ☐ Friends (Including classmates)
- ☐ Professors
- ☐ Tutors
- ☐ Student services
- ☐ Lectures
- ☐ Individual assignments
- ☐ Group work
- ☐ Activities & events
- ☐ Clubs (Society in university)
- ☐ Korean education system
- ☐ Campus
- ☐ 기타...

15. How satisfied were you or are you with your studies in South Korea? *

- ☐ 1 - Very dissatisfied
- ☐ 2 - Not satisfied
- ☐ 3 - Neutral
- ☐ 4 - Satisfied
- ☐ 5 - Very satisfied

16. How satisfied were you or are you with the student exchange program of Korean university? *

- ☐ 1 - Very dissatisfied
- ☐ 2 - Not satisfied
- ☐ 3 - Neutral
- ☐ 4 - Satisfied
- ☐ 5 - Very satisfied

17. If you were or you are not satisfied with the student exchange program of Korean university, can you tell me any suggestions for development of the program?

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18. Would you like to recommend your family, friends or others to participate student exchange program in South Korea? *

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Maybe

19. Do you think that living and studying in South Korea were useful? *

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Maybe

20. If yes, what kind of aspects do you feel that living and studying in South Korea were useful? *
Choose as many as you like and/or describe others.

- ☐ Your studies
- ☐ Your career
- ☐ Improving your language skills
- ☐ Improving your other skills
- ☐ Adapting new environments
- ☐ Being independent and responsible
- ☐ Personal growth
- ☐ Cross-cultural encounter
- ☐ Dealing with difficulties
- ☐ 기타...

21. After finishing the exchange program, did you or would you like to visit to Korea again? *

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Maybe