

SYSTEM ANALYSIS TO RELIEVE ACCULTURATION STRESS OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS: FOCUSING ON KOREAN AND CHINESE WEB PORTAL CASES

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ABSTRACT

As the number of foreign students opting for studying abroad continues to rise, there has been a corresponding surge in research and discussion surrounding the process of acculturation for these international students. In line with this trend, it is imperative to assist international students in adapting to study abroad programs and society, while also reducing the stress associated with acculturation. The objective of this research is to ascertain the essential information content required by international students. To accomplish this, a survey was conducted on three Korean websites to evaluate the accuracy of the provided information and the satisfaction levels of students with their learning experiences. The primary research goal of this study is to identify the information content that international students truly require, and to offer a reference and assistance for the future development of a comprehensive acculturation web portal.

Keywords: *Acculturation Pressure, Acculturation, Website Portal, International Students.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Due to the close political and economic relations between Korea and China, the number of international students has significantly increased from 85.92 thousand in 2013 to 167 thousand foreign students in 2022[1]. Various social and cultural factors have contributed to this surge, including the government-led "Study Korea Project," the "Korean Wave Boom," Korean popular culture, and the impact of a declining school-age population in Korean society[2]. However, as the number of international students continues to increase, the issue of acculturation stress among these students is becoming an increasingly important social concern. While research on international student acculturation has grown in recent years, there is a lack of studies focusing on managing acculturation difficulties and reducing acculturation stress. International undergraduate students in Korea may struggle to adapt to Korean culture, society, and universities due to a lack of knowledge about life and society, as well as limited information about universities[3]. Therefore, it is crucial to prioritize the acclimation

of international students to Korea's unfamiliar culture over their proficiency in the Korean language[4].

Many international students studying in Korea struggle to reconcile their own cultural background with Korean culture[5]. Research has shown that Chinese students face difficulties in accessing specific information that is not available on the school's website, as they are often unaware of which department to contact[6]. Additionally, language institute students, who are not proficient in Korean, face challenges in accessing diverse information through media or websites[7]. These factors indicate that the existing Study in Korea Information System fails to provide sufficient information to foreign students[8]. Consequently, the Korean government has developed websites such as Hi-Korea, Study in Korea, and Seoul Foreigner Portal to assist foreigners and international students in adapting to Korean life and understanding Korean culture by offering information on various aspects of Korean life, Korean language education, Korean news, and

laws. However, these websites face issues such as low visitor traffic and infrequent updates of content. Although mobile applications have been developed to provide users with community and social networking service (SNS) specific information, the categories of information provided to international students are not clearly defined[9]. Consequently, there is little concern regarding the accuracy of the website's content[10]. As the number of international students continues to increase annually, it is crucial to provide comprehensive information not only for the translation of admission applications and related documents, but also for off-campus living, graduate schools, other educational institutions, and employment opportunities[11]. Therefore, conducting surveys and research to determine the specific information needs of international students and developing an integrated website that facilitates their understanding of Korea and alleviates acculturation stress are of utmost importance.

Despite the existence of numerous advanced studies on alleviating acculturation tension, the practical implementation of these solutions remains limited. As the number of international students continues to grow annually, it becomes crucial to provide comprehensive solutions that address their issues related to access to accurate information and personal challenges.

For our research, we have chosen three government-created websites: Hi-Korea, Study in Korea, and Seoul Foreigner Portal. Our objective is to identify the specific needs of international students by comparing the websites developed for international students in China with those developed in Korea. Based on the results of the comparison, we will offer assistance in the development of web portals by incorporating additional features and expanding the content to enhance the user experience. To ensure the accuracy and relevance of the information provided, we will consult news sources and scholarly works to determine the information that international students actually require. This research is essential in addressing the issue of inadequate information provision to international students during the acculturation process.

Our study aims to assist international students studying in Korea by utilizing previous research to compare the differences in content, information, and functionality between Chinese and Korean websites. In addition, we will analyze the survey results through a questionnaire result to determine the level of satisfaction with Korean websites. As a

result, our study strives to incorporate certain elements of Korean websites when developing future websites or applications, while also utilizing the findings from analysis papers and questionnaires. Furthermore, we propose adding functions and information that are not currently available on Korean websites to enhance the overall user experience.

The findings will serve as a valuable resource for future website development initiatives. By utilizing this website system as a primary tool, international students can effectively reduce acculturation stress and enhance their satisfaction with the study abroad experience. Furthermore, this research may also provide valuable insights for future studies on website development and acculturation processes.

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

The increase in the number of international students has led to significant advancements in acculturation research.

We proceeded to conduct a comprehensive analysis and synthesis of pertinent research studies on various systems or platforms developed specifically for international students. Firstly, it emphasizes the significance of investigating and analyzing systems or platforms that facilitate the dissemination of information for international students. Additionally, it highlights the importance of conducting a comprehensive analysis of the questionnaire results. Acculturation, defined as the process through which individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds interact and undergo transformation through sustained contact and change[12]. According to Berry's theory of acculturation, there are four primary categories of acculturation: integrated, assimilated, separated, and marginalized[5]. The integrated type involves active participation in the host country's culture while preserving one's cultural heritage. The assimilated type, in contrast, individuals who assimilate fully embrace the culture of the host country, leaving behind their native culture. The marginalized type neither maintains their cultural identity nor actively engages in the cultural activities of their native country. Lastly, the segregated type preserves their cultural identity but refuses to interact with the culture of the host country[5]. Among these categories, the assimilation/marginalization form has been found to be the least psychologically satisfying and the most culturally stressful. Acculturation stress refers to the psychological and physical reactions experienced

when adapting to a new culture that differs from one's native culture[13].

According to researchers H. Mun, and Y. Kim(2022), substantial research has been conducted on various aspects of acculturation, including acculturation stress, psycho-emotional well-being, future prospects, and academic performance[14]. Among these, academics and interpersonal relationships have emerged as the most challenging issues faced by international students studying in Korea. Unfortunately, due to their limited understanding of academic and interpersonal dynamics, they struggle to effectively address interpersonal issues with their peers or teachers[15]. Research indicates that there is a correlation between academic stress and increased levels of melancholy. Specifically, students who set ambitious goals within a short timeframe tend to experience heightened academic stress[16]. Consequently, acculturation stress has been found to significantly impact depression levels[17].

Furthermore, active support from the school in facilitating the self-identification process is crucial for international students[18]. Particularly during the initial stages of studying abroad, school policies and methods play a vital role in shaping the experiences of international students. The school should also provide appropriate solutions and policies to aid in this endeavor. For instance, Seokyeong University's Future Counseling Center implements the Bridge to College Life Adaptation Program, which aims to assist international students in their transition to college life. This program not only addresses psychological issues faced by students but also offers effective solutions[19]. It is worth noting that, in response to the specific needs of international students, the school has employed dedicated mental health counselors to assist them in identifying and addressing psychological challenges[18]. This one-on-one approach ensures a more personalized problem-solving process, alleviating the stress associated with studying abroad and addressing cultural adjustment difficulties. Consequently, the school's policies and approaches during the cultural adaptation stage can significantly impact the psychological well-being and overall quality of life for international students.

The rise of social media has provided international students with an additional avenue for obtaining information and engaging in communication[20]. Chinese students, for example, can utilize SNS platforms to gather relevant information, thereby helping them navigate cultural pressures such as alienation, fear, and

discrimination[21]. Moreover, international students can utilize SNS platforms to expand their social networks and establish new connections in Korea, thereby reducing acculturation stress and enhancing their overall satisfaction with life abroad[22]. Notably, according to J. Kong, foreign communities and social networking sites (SNS) cannot provide users with the customized information they need[9]. So, advancements in research have led to the development of mobile applications that cater specifically to the needs of international students. By leveraging SNS platforms to promote acculturation-related policies, expatriate communities, and relevant websites or applications, we can effectively support international students in acquiring the necessary information for their life in Korea. Furthermore, research efforts have been undertaken to facilitate the sharing of experiences among international students who have studied or worked in Korea, or those who have returned to China, thus providing valuable insights for both seniors and juniors in similar situations[6].

Therefore, we read and analyzed several papers that were based on keywords mentioned in the previous research, such as interpersonal relationships, future planning, insurance, and more. Moreover, the platform has developed an Online to Offline(O2O) intelligent big data platform, which enables users to search and compile information related to living and studying abroad, excluding schools and educational institutions, using keywords or phrases[8]. H. Ralph (2010) referred to the suggestions proposed by the interviewed students in the paper, which mainly focused on the need for universities to provide better support to help students achieve a better balance between study and part-time work[23]. Furthermore, the Personal Development Planning (PDP) process is utilized to enhance students' understanding of graduate attributes, skills, employability concepts, and ultimately benefits undergraduates in various ways, including clarifying career goals and increasing motivation for academic studies[24]. Some papers also mention that interpersonal relationships pose difficulties for Chinese international students in terms of social, psychological, and social adaptation aspects[15]. Another study concludes that online ethnic support groups can assist Chinese international students in reducing accumulated stress and providing a sense of belonging to other international students[25]. In regards to insurance, both domestic and foreign students seek health insurance-related information when faced with a lack of insurance knowledge or

when they possess the confidence and ability to utilize health insurance[26].

3. RESEARCH METHODS

Our research methodology is outlined in [Figure 1].



Figure 1: The procedure of study

As the focus of this study centers around international students in Korea, our initial analysis involved examining three prominent Korean websites. Our investigation encompassed an evaluation of the websites' similarities, the information they provide, as well as their overall layout. The findings of this analysis serve as a crucial basis for the future development and design of websites catering to international students.

Furthermore, it is worth noting that the Chinese international student population is considerably vast. These students rely on websites and software platforms to access the necessary information pertaining to their study abroad endeavors. Consequently, the websites that international students are used to search some information during their studies in China also have reference value.

In summary, the comparative analysis between Chinese and Korean websites offers valuable insights that can significantly inform the content development phase of a website. Hence, the findings derived from the questionnaire survey conducted on Korean websites, as well as the outcomes obtained from the comparative analysis between Korean and Chinese websites, hold significant importance in the context of this study.

4. STUDY RESULTS

4.1 Analysis of Korean websites

With the growing number of expatriates in Korea, the Korea government has established a multitude of websites to cater to the needs of international students. One noteworthy example is Hi-Korea, which primarily focuses on visa and immigration matters. Another prominent website,

Study in Korea, serves as an invaluable resource for international students and individuals seeking information about scholarships and life in Korea. Additionally, recognizing the significant foreigner and international student population residing in Seoul, the Seoul government has developed the Seoul Foreigner Portal website to provide assistance and support.

This study selected three representative websites in Korea for the purpose of content and function analysis, as well as web design research. The main objective is to establish a comparative framework with Chinese websites.

Hi-Korea, an expansive website created by key Korean government agencies such as the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Industry, Trade, and Resources, and the Ministry of Employment and Labor, holds particular significance[27]. Notably, Hi-Korea offers information in three essential languages: Korean, English, and Chinese, thus facilitating easier access for foreigners. Furthermore, Hi-Korea offers an exclusive online visa extension service, which sets it apart from other websites and contributes to its greater importance compared to the other two platforms.

Study in Korea serves as a comprehensive website dedicated to the pursuit of studying abroad and is overseen by the National Institute of International Education, an entity operating within the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Korea[28]. Notably, it also features information pertaining to Koreans studying abroad. Moreover, through the utilization of Google Translate, the website is accessible in 28 languages, catering to the needs of international students worldwide. In addition, Study in Korea offers a plethora of invaluable resources, encompassing vital details pertaining to living in Korea as an international student, expos tailored for students studying abroad, as well as comprehensive employment information specifically targeted towards foreigners. Additionally, it provides comprehensive information about the prestigious Global Korea Scholarship (GKS) program, along with an online application service.

The Seoul Foreigner Portal[29], an initiative spearheaded by the Seoul Metropolitan Government, functions as a website specifically designed to provide essential information for foreigners in Seoul. Thanks to the expanded language support offered by Google Translate, the website is now available in Korean, English, and Chinese. Beyond offering practical information on

life and legal matters for foreigners residing in Seoul, the portal also serves as a platform for promoting and disseminating information about cultural events, festivals, and exhibitions taking place in the city.

The three websites, Hi-Korea, Study in Korea[30], and the Seoul Foreigner Portal, are each characterized by their unique functions, contents, and service-oriented audiences. However, there are also several notable similarities between the information provided by these websites, as illustrated in [Figure 2].

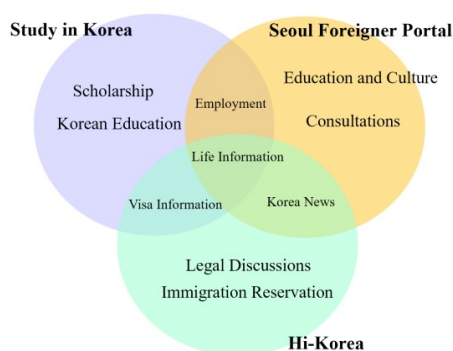


Figure 2: Venn diagram on the information contents of Korean websites

In addition, the data analysis involved administering a questionnaire to a sample of 118 international students in Korea. This questionnaire aimed to assess their overall satisfaction with their life in Korea, as well as their level of awareness and contentment with the three Korean websites under investigation. The survey was conducted using 7 point Likert scale.

According to the data collected, the average level of satisfaction among international students residing in Korea is 5.10, with a standard deviation of 1.24 and a variance of 1.53. An average of 4 or more is positive, but not enough. It is important to note that this dissatisfaction can be mitigated by providing them with a diverse range of information and support to enhance their overall satisfaction.

The analysis of this data leads to the conclusion that the precision of the information obtained by international students is comparatively lower. Consequently, there is a clear imperative to enhance the accuracy and reliability of the information provided to international students. This improvement will contribute to a more satisfactory

study abroad experience for these students in Korea.

The average satisfaction rating pertaining to Hi-Korea website is 4.94, indicating a relatively low level of satisfaction with websites. Furthermore, the variance is 1.74 and the standard deviation is a mere 1.32, suggesting that international students do not significantly deviate from the mean satisfaction rating.

And the Study in Korea website average level of satisfaction is reported to be 5.26, with a standard deviation of 1.42 and a variance of 2.02. These varying levels of contentment among participants can be attributed to a lack of understanding of the website's functions and services.

The survey results obtained from the Seoul Foreigner Portal, reveal noteworthy findings. Notably, this website garners an impressive average satisfaction rating of 5.5, with a variance of 2.03 and a standard deviation of 1.42. Given the considerable population of expatriates residing in Seoul, this website serves as a comprehensive source of information pertaining to the city, thereby contributing to its high average satisfaction rating.

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4.2 Analysis of Chinese websites

According to the latest available data from 2018, a substantial number of international students, a total of 492,185 individuals hailing from 196 countries and regions, were successfully registered in 1,004 esteemed higher education institutions dispersed across the 31 provinces, autonomous regions, and municipalities of China[31]. Along with some local administrations, the Chinese government has created websites to assist international students in preparing for their studies in China. These websites offer valuable information on various aspects of life in China, including details about colleges and universities, as well as access to alumni networks, all of which can greatly aid international students in their adjustment to life in China. It is important to note that the unique climate and cuisine of different countries can

contribute to acculturation stress among these students.

In order to conduct a comparative analysis between Chinese and South Korean study abroad websites, we examined the content and design of three prominent Chinese websites. One such website is Study in China, which is administered by the China Scholarship Service Centre (CSC) under the Ministry of Education. Study in China is widely regarded as an authoritative and comprehensive platform that aims to provide international students with essential information pertaining to studying in China[32]. The website offers a plethora of resources, including policies and regulations related to studying in China, available scholarships, notable case studies, and relevant events. Moreover, it provides valuable guidance and services to international students in areas such as fellowships, employment opportunities, and entrepreneurship. Notably, Study in China also features detailed information and examples of activities catered specifically to graduates and alumni residing in China.

Endowed with support from the esteemed China Scholarship Council, Campuschina stands as an invaluable hub for an extensive array of scholarship-related information and educational content[33]. It offers a vast array of information pertaining to various scholarships, as well as guidance on the admissions and acceptance procedures for designated Chinese institutions. Moreover, recognizing the importance of fostering a sense of community among international students, the website includes dedicated sections focusing on study life, alumni advice, and alumni events, thereby facilitating communication and the sharing of valuable experiences among students studying abroad.

Another noteworthy resource is Study in Shanghai[34], an established by the Shanghai Municipal Education Commission specifically for international students pursuing their studies in this vibrant cosmopolitan city. This website serves as an introduction to a wealth of information, including details on museums and cultural attractions in Shanghai. Furthermore, it provides comprehensive information on application requirements and scholarships available across all educational institutions in Shanghai. Recognizing the linguistic differences between Shanghainese and standard Chinese, the website also offers resources for learning both languages, thus catering to the diverse linguistic needs of international students.

Study in China, Campuschina, and Study in Shanghai are all prominent platforms that aim to provide comprehensive support and resources for international students. While these websites share similar objectives, it is important to note that the information they offer varies. A visual representation of the information provided by these websites can be seen in [Figure 3].

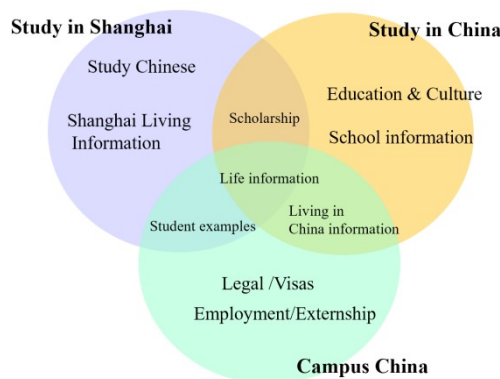


Figure 3: Venn diagram on the information contents of Chinese websites

4.3 Derived requirement for international students

Based on a meticulous comparison of Korean and Chinese websites, as well as extensive research, we have successfully identified the indispensable information required by international students. The comprehensive details are elucidated in Table 1, which is further categorized into two distinct sections: academic and professional life, and daily life.

These findings serve as a valuable foundation for the subsequent phase of website development. By incorporating the aforementioned aspects and information content, the integrated website can effectively cater to the diverse needs of international students, thereby enhancing their overall experience and facilitating their smooth integration into both academic and daily life abroad.

5. CONCLUSION

With the increasing number of international students, the research on cultural adaptation and information provision systems for them has become a recent topic of interest.

However, there is insufficient research on solutions to cultural adaptation and information provision, and it has not been effectively implemented and developed. Therefore, in order to study the information needs of international students, we conducted a questionnaire survey on their study abroad experience in Korea, satisfaction with Korean web pages, and methods of obtaining information in Korea. The participants of the study were international students studying in Korea. The findings revealed low satisfaction with information acquisition and limited knowledge about Korean web pages. Thus, the results of the questionnaire, along with prior research on cultural adaptation and information systems for international students, were utilized to classify the information content that international students truly require. Additionally, this study analyzed three representative web pages in China to confirm the types of information that international students need, providing valuable references for the future development of web pages and the information provided.

By examining literature on cultural adaptation, research and analysis of systems or platforms catering to international students, as well as comprehensively analyzing the questionnaire results, our study arrives at the following conclusions.

Despite the similarities among the three prominent websites offering information about studying in China, there exist variations in the provided information due to cultural and educational disparities. Consequently, analyzing the strengths and content of these Chinese websites can offer valuable insights for informing future website development endeavors. So comparative research between Korean and Chinese websites, we aimed to ascertain the specific information requirements of international students. The results of this analysis led us to categorize the information content into two main categories: Academics and Work, and Daily Existence. Under the category of Academics and Work, we included resources such as Korean Language Education, School Information,

Employment and Part-Time Jobs, and Future Planning. Additionally, the Daily Existence category encompassed aspects such as The Law, Relationships, Foreigners Community, Insurance, and Software Introduction. By categorizing the information in this manner, we aimed to provide international students with the actual information they require in a more organized and accessible format. This approach ensures that the integrated website platform can effectively meet the needs of international students and assist them in their acculturation process.

The primary objective of our research is to offer valuable insights for augmenting the visibility of acculturation websites or government platforms. Additionally, we aim to provide recommendations for policy development with the goal of mitigating acculturation challenges and improving the overall satisfaction of foreign students during their overseas study experience. And enabling foreigners to access the latest information in a more timely manner and using the information provided on the website to solve life problems can indirectly improve life satisfaction.

Our study is not without limitations. Firstly, we have focused primarily on conducting relevant research and providing suggestions, without implementing the development of related websites, platforms, or software. Secondly, while we have summarized the information needed by international students based on advanced research and news, we have not collected essential data through questionnaires and analyzed them specifically within international student groups. The results obtained from such questionnaires may offer a more authentic representation of the information required in the lives of international students compared to conclusions drawn solely from research and news. Therefore, we hope that future research endeavors will strive to obtain more detailed information through data analysis and subsequently develop corresponding software or websites to cater to the needs of international students.

Table 1: International Student Information Service Requirement

Title	Subtitle	Description	Source
Academic and employment	Korean Language Education	During daily life in Korea, we must provide opportunities and activities to enhance language skills.	1. Study in Korea[30] 2. Seoul Foreigner Portal[29]
	School Information	It can help international students choose their favorite colleges by providing information about relevant schools.	1. Study in Korea[30] 2. Study in China[32] 3. Study in Shanghai[34]
	Employment and	In the absence of government measures to provide	H. Ralph [23]

	part-time jobs	financial support for students, universities should implement procedures to assist full-time students who need to work part-time.	
	Future Planning	It is suggested that Personal Development Planning(PDP) be incorporated into the curriculum to ensure the fulfillment of requirements for both the study phase and career planning.	K. L. Baker, J. Perkins, and D. P. Comber [24]
Daily life	The Law	Providing education to international students about the Korea laws.	1.Hi-Korea[27] 2.Study in Korea[30]
	Relationship	The most prominent issue lies in interpersonal relationships, which have the potential to greatly impact the daily lives and academic pursuits of international students, particularly when they experience discomfort in such relationships. Furthermore, the challenges faced by international students in establishing interpersonal connections significantly contribute to their psychosocial adaptation.	J. Jeong and J. Kim [15]
	Foreigners Community	It is important to recognize that international students actively participate in the student community and significantly contribute to the quality of their learning experience and the overall environment.	C. Montgomery, and L. McDowell [25]
	Insurance	During the college years, one crucial aspect is to enhance students' health knowledge and promote better health through the utilization of health insurance.	M. Mackert, et al. [26]
	Online service Introduction	On the Chinese website, there are links to multiple purchasing platforms, such as Tmall and Taobao, offering users a convenient online shopping experience. Hence, when developing a comprehensive website, it is essential to provide detailed information regarding the application technology of commonly used software in Korea. This will assist users in comprehending software functions and enhancing their overall convenience in daily life.	Study in China[32]

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