

The expectations and experiences of Korean International Students in New Zealand tertiary education

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Outline of presentation

1. Background to the research - RL
2. Research methods - JY
3. Research participants – profiles / data -JY
4. Three case studies – JY & RL
5. Findings – RL & JY

Literature review – main articles and resources

For factual background:

Factsheet Korea (2015) Department of Education New Zealand

7,879 Korean international full fee-paying students (in all sectors Primary schools to PTEs, ITPs and Universities) studied in New Zealand in 2014, down 7% (-573) compared to 2013.

Korean international students in ITPs constitute 3.8% of all Korean students in New Zealand. (Total in 2014 – 303)

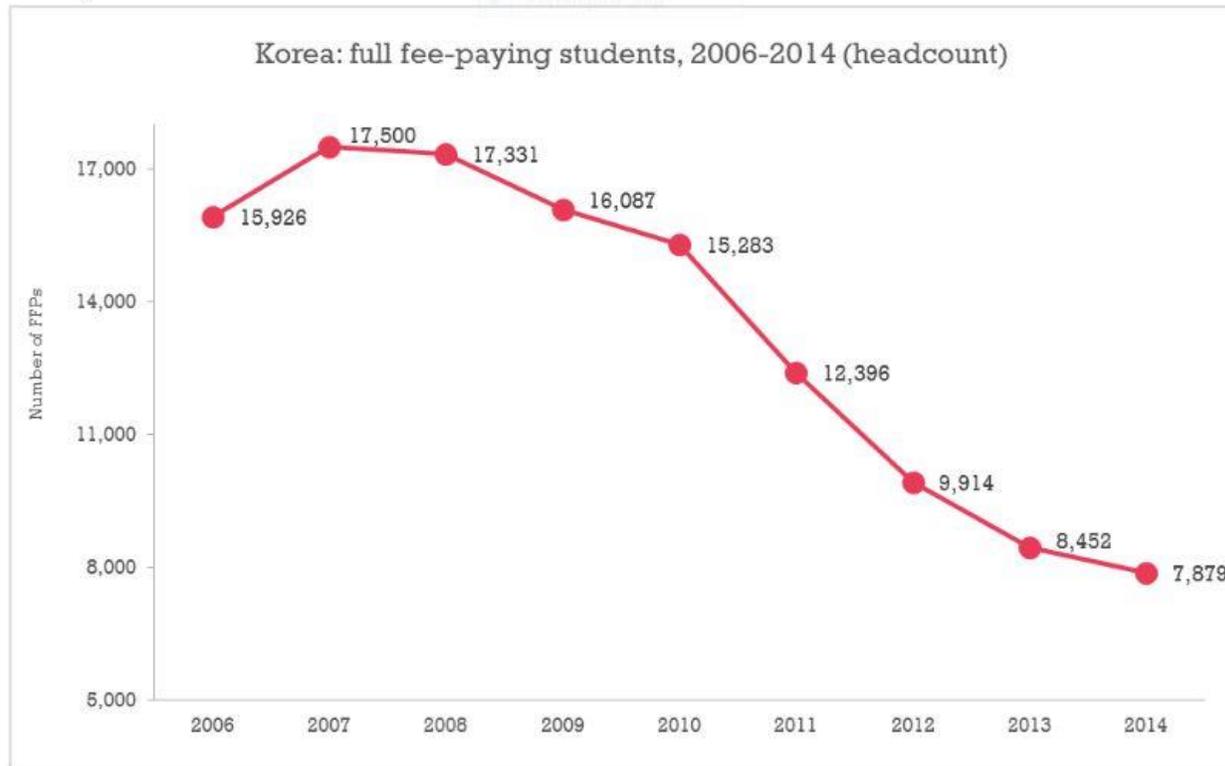
77% of all Korean students are in Auckland; 3% in Waikato.

Background to this research

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Intelligence



Full year student numbers 2006-2014



[Source: Levy full fee-paying stats]

- 7,879 international full fee-paying Korea students studied in New Zealand in 2014, down 7% (-573) compared to 2013. The continued trend of declining student numbers was evident in 2014.

Literature review – main articles and resources contd.

On doing qualitative research

Barkhuizen, G., Benson, P. & Chik, A. (2014). *Narrative enquiry in language teaching and learning research*. New York: Routledge.
(especially chapter 2 – Oral narratives)

Burnard, P. (1991). A method of analysing interview transcripts in qualitative research. *Nurse Education Today* (199) 11, 461-466. UK: Longman Group.

Literature review – main articles and resources contd.

Li, M. (2016). Learning the Rules of the Game: Issues affecting academic acculturation of Asian International Students in New Zealand Universities. Chapter 3 in Bista, K. & Foster, C. (2016). *Exploring the social and academic experiences of international students in higher education institutions*.
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Research methods

Wintec research protocols and procedures were followed.

- 9 face to face interviews
- 2 video-link interviews with participants in Korea
- Audio recording of interviews, including the video-link interviews
- Transcription of interviews – including use of voice-recognition software, *Dragon Naturally Speaking*
- Immersion in the data and data analysis with categories

Research Participants:

No.	Gender	Year of arrival in NZ	Age at arrival	Number of years in NZ	Tertiary study in	City at time of research interview
1	F	2010	19	1	Hamilton	Seoul, ROK
2	F	2002	13	12	Hamilton	Seongnam, ROK
3	F	2009	17	7	Hamilton	Hamilton
4	F	2002	20	1+8	Hamilton	Hamilton
5	F	2012	20	4	Hamilton	Hamilton
6	F	2007	13	9	Hamilton	Hamilton
7	F	2008	14	8	Auckland	Auckland
8	F	2011	15	5	Auckland	Auckland
9	F	2005	7	11	Auckland	Auckland
10	F	2007	19	9	Auckland	Auckland
11	F	2010	15	6	Auckland	Auckland

ROK = Republic of Korea
(South Korea)

Questionnaire

Profile questions and information:

1. When did you come to New Zealand?
2. How long did you spend / have you spent in New Zealand?
3. Did you come alone / with members of your family / with relatives / with friends
4. When you arrived did you live with other Korean people?
5. Where did you study?
6. What course(s) were you / have you been enrolled in?
7. What qualifications have you gained in New Zealand?
8. What is your present situation of work or study?

Main questions:

Before coming to New Zealand:

1. Why did you choose to go overseas, outside Korea, for further tertiary study?
2. Why did you choose to come to New Zealand, rather than go to another country, to study?
3. What did you expect to gain by studying in New Zealand that you may not have gained in Korea?

During tertiary study in New Zealand 1:

4. What challenges, if any, did you face in the New Zealand tertiary education environment?

5. What support do you need in meeting these challenges? What support did you receive? What were the sources of this support – family? friends? student services? other?

6. How did you feel being a student at your place of study? How were you treated?

7. Did you feel that your place of study was open? welcoming? respectful? understanding of Korean students?

During tertiary study in New Zealand 2:

8. Which aspects of the New Zealand study environment did you find different from what you were used to in Korea?
9. How would you describe your level of participation in your classes? In learning activities? Social activities?
10. How did you feel about the attitude and behaviour to you of tutors, administrative staff, and other staff in the place where you studied?
11. What adjustments – culturally, academically and personally – did you have to make in order to undertake your course of study in at a New Zealand tertiary education institution?

After tertiary study in New Zealand:

12. Were you as successful academically as you hoped in your tertiary study in New Zealand? What factors contributed to this situation - of either success or lack of success?
13. Were there non-academic, personal benefits in your experience of studying in New Zealand?
14. To what extent, if any, has your tertiary education experience in New Zealand equipped you for employment or for further study?
15. Would you recommend tertiary study in New Zealand to your friends or to other students in Korea? Why/why not?

Categories emerging from the research data

‘Immersion in the data’



categories to group data

1. Reasons for coming to NZ – family expectations and students’ expectations
2. Pre-tertiary study life and study in New Zealand
3. Experiences of tertiary study in New Zealand
4. Experiences of life in New Zealand
5. Post-tertiary study experiences in New Zealand and in Korea
6. Reflections on fulfilment or non-fulfilment of expectations
7. Reflections / recommendations

Participant 1: Susan

- **"I didn't expect the university life would be like that.** The lecturer was just doing PowerPoint and just reading the slides and then finished....we just put assignments in the assignment box...**I did a lot on it, but she just gave me D,** so I was like 'What am I learning?'**I felt disappointed and empty."**
- **".....do they know what they are doing now?...because I don't know.....How do they know what to do or what they need to do things...?"**
- **"I cried a lot. I don't know why I cried, but I just cried a lot at that time. I was very annoyed with everything.** Yeah, **easily annoyed**....I wasn't sleeping and every time I was so messing up...."
- **"... when I said I want to quit the university, he was really angry. He was like 'Can't you just stay there and keep doing the same thing? You've been there for five years, what's wrong with that...?', but it was different....."**

- **"....But I got really sick at that time. Like really bad headache and all over my body...like all sorts of chiropractic things....."**
- **"I was doing all by myself and that was the hard thing for me..... I was staying by myself , so I needed to do everything by myself like rental and money thing....I was so messing up and I couldn't endure that I think." ...**
- **"I don't know what I'm missing exactly, but sometimes I feel that if I do assignments in Korea, I can do it better. If I have to use a lot of academic words, that makes me so....frustrated. Sometimes, the lecturers say some jokes and other people laugh, but I still don't get it...."**
- **"...honestly in university not really, not very sure...but at high school, yes....diversity is quite good for me... I think..."**

Participant 2: Sumin

Arrival in NZ/ Expectations

- “Actually I majored in English language and literature at university in Korea **and I wanted to improve my skills in English**, especially my speaking skills so I chose to go abroad.”
- **“The first reason was my little brother. The second reason was that compared to other countries New Zealand had a good exchange rate. So that decision was economic. I could afford to study in New Zealand.”**
- **“I had to support my younger brother who was at high school. I got very tired. It affected my studies and the way I often felt. Often I had to wake my brother up in the morning, which was not always easy, and I needed to prepare our lunchboxes. This gave me a lot of stress.”**

Participant 2: Sumin

- **“I had a problem speaking with other people. Also I felt that many people had a problem speaking with me as an Asian person. That kind of experience made me feel embarrassed and awkward. And even at times humiliated.”**
- **“Most people treated me as an Asian girl but one of my teachers showed a special understanding of me as a Korean person.”**

Participant 2: Sumin

Tertiary Education Experiences

- **“I wasn’t used to portfolios.** In my experience of learning English in Korea, my university did not require that amount of essay writing.”
- **“It was quite hard to get used to the New Zealand accent.** Korean students are used to listening to American accents. They are often uncomfortable listening to Australian or New Zealand accents.”
- **“It would be good if some support staff were Korean.** When Korean students arrive in New Zealand... they are often having difficulty to speak to others.”

Participant 3: Katie

- **"I was so scared...when I see some foreign people...it was so difficult to me.** My personality is always to be shy... when they look at me I feel scared. I don't know why. It's fine now..." "I always cried every day. Yes, I thought I wanted to back to Korea....."
- **"I was usually quiet, but when my classmates ask me, I usually do it. But I usually so afraid when I was speaking in front of other people. When I stood in front of other people, I was so panic. I can't say anything. I was panic. I was so panic.it was very difficult at first. "** "Now, I think I'm getting better, **but not comfortable....but it's fine.."**
- **"I don't know what I should do.** What should I study? Just tell me what I should do and the teacher said, no you should do it yourself." **"In Korea teachers never ask me anything.** They just teach. There's only one way....., **but in NZ, teachers ask a lot of questions** during the class time. It was a new experience. It increased my involvement"

- “..... but in my university **they never do that..... I feel it’s good. Sometimes, I don’t feel like coming to school.**”
- “...in New Zealand, I have to do everything. I have to do cleaning, paying bills and control myself....”
- “.....when I'm staying in Korea, it's fine.....**everything is fine and my body.... it's really fine.** But I don't know why in New Zealand, I get a cold....when I see the doctor, he said you need to take a rest. I always did, but it still happens. But now I’m getting used to it. **When I feel stressed I usually get sick...during exam time or the assessment time especially.... .”**

Further comments

- “...academic writing....it was so hard to do some tasks individually....assignments and group work....assignments are quite stressful. I don't always know what to...”
- “Even though I participate in the group work, **I don't have a sense of belonging.**”
- “....**first year was full of confusion....**”
- “..**making sessions for Korean students like speak freely in Korean...I was never be able to express myself how I was feeling. I was never be able to fully describe myself....there were some words that I could never translate in English.**”

Findings

Expected / not Experienced

The majority of participants expected but did not experience

- Gaining higher than average / good grades
- Forming friendship with New Zealanders
- Enjoying socialising with New Zealanders
- Being accepted by New Zealanders
- Having no problems with living arrangements

Educational Issues

The majority of participants experienced

- Language problems
- Difficulties adjusting to teaching styles
- Problems with lectures
- Difficulties with essay writing
- Difficulties with speaking demands
 - e.g. entering into a discussion/participating in group work/presentations

Personal Issues

The majority of participants experienced

- Difficulties with spoken English, especially with New Zealand slang, idioms, jokes
- Family pressures to do well
- Financial issues
- Frequent decreased motivation
- Lack of confidence
- Feelings of isolation
- Cultural shock e.g. Homestay, food, living arrangements
- Health concerns
- Homesickness, loneliness

Findings

Our findings confirm Li Mengsheng's research findings showing that for Korean international students there are two interrelated processes going on –

- adaption to New Zealand culture in general
- adjustment to academic culture in particular

In most cases the more a student has adjusted to New Zealand culture, forming associations with both New Zealand and Korean peers, the more they adjust to the demands of tertiary education in New Zealand. In most (but not all cases) this can be seen as an outcome of time - the number of years they have spent in New Zealand.

Perceived needs and recommendations

Pastoral care: Appropriate orientation programmes specifically for Korean students

Korean staff people in international student support teams

References

- Barkhuizen, G., Benson, P. & Chik, A. (2014). *Narrative enquiry in language teaching and learning research*. New York: Routledge.
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