

PAPERS

Acculturative Stress Among Mongolian Students in Korea

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This study explores language fluency, social connectedness, financial support, homesickness, and perceived discrimination as predictors of acculturative stress among Mongolian students enrolled in a South Korean university. The results were twofold. First, as expected, language fluency was a strong indicator of acculturative stress among the Mongolian sample group. Financial support was also a major source of stress for Mongolian students. Second, contrary to expectations, the Mongolians demonstrated lower levels of stress overall than a comparative sample group of Korean students, indicating a dynamic particular to the Mongolians in Korea that contradicts much of the literature on acculturative stress experienced by international students in general. The Mongolians exhibited low levels of stress in forming social connections on and off campus, and only moderate stress levels from homesickness. Implications for future research are discussed.

While a great deal of literature has been devoted to exploring acculturative stress and perceived discrimination among international students studying in the United States and Europe, very little research has been conducted on international students who have enrolled in undergraduate and graduate programs in East Asia. It is not difficult to understand why this lacuna exists. Until quite recently, East Asia had not been a favorable destination for study. As of 2006, the most recent year for which the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization Institute for Statistics have enrollment data, the gap between the exodus of East Asian students leaving the region in search of higher education and the influx of students coming from outside the region remained vast. Of the 2.9 million international students worldwide, 20 percent (580,000 students) were enrolled in the United States, with

another 11 percent (319,000 students) going to the United Kingdom, 9 percent (261,000 students) to Germany, and 7 percent (232,000 students) to France. These four countries accounted for nearly half of all tertiary students enrolled outside their country of citizenship. Moreover, if one looks at the figures for the students who chose the United States as their destination, it is revealed that 63.6 percent (368,880 students) were from Asia. By way of contrast, the total number of all international students who chose Japan, the most popular Asian destination, as their place of study was just 116,000 students (4 percent of the total worldwide figure).¹

South Korea, typical of the region, has traditionally failed to attract large numbers of foreign students into its universities. In Korea, the number of foreign students in tertiary education is just 0.7 percent of the total student population.² There are a number of reasons for this, though language is a primary one. Despite Korea's status as a modern, technologically advanced, democratic country, few Korean universities can offer a wide variety of courses in widely spoken languages such as English, German and French, meaning that most of the foreign students who come to Korea, particularly for undergraduate enrollment, would have to immerse themselves in the Korean language. Even in cases where students have a basic understanding of the language used in the destination country prior to arrival, it has been well documented that the language barrier is the most formidable problem for the majority of international students.³ Certainly, for Asian students who study in the United States those who encounter difficulties due to a lack of English language ability tend to be at greater risk of psychological and health problems.⁴ These mental and physical concerns which are stimulated by the language barrier are likely due to not only greater stress in understanding academic coursework, but also to the role that language plays in facilitating smooth social relations.⁵ Conversely, it would be expected that international students coming to study in Korea would experience similar language related difficulties.

Still, there is room for optimism in Korea. In the six years from 2000 to 2006, the real number of international students in the country doubled, and this growth trend in tertiary education seems likely to continue.⁶ The current Lee Myung-bak Administration has taken steps to increase the number of foreign

1 Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, *Education at a Glance 2008: OECD Indicators* (Paris: OECD Publications, 2008): 348-373.

2 Ibid.

3 Sakurako Mori, "Addressing the Mental Health Concerns of International Students," *Journal of Counseling and Development* 78 (2000): 137.

4 Jun-Chih Gisela Lin and Jenny K. Yi, "Asian International Students' Adjustment: Issues and Program Suggestions," *College Student Journal* 31, no. 4 (1997): 473-479.

5 Christine J. Yeh and Mayuko Inose, "International Students' Reported English Fluency, Social Support Satisfaction, and Social Connectedness as Predictors of Acculturative Stress," *Counselling Psychology Quarterly* 16, no. 1 (2003): 23.

6 Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, *Education at a Glance 2008: OECD Indicators*, 352.

students by 2010 to 100,000, and has backed this up with funding for expanded course offerings instructed in English rather than Korean, scholarships for foreigners, and the construction of new dormitories. Given the government's desire for increased globalization as well as the global trend of ever-increasing numbers of students willing to leave their countries in search of educational opportunities, it is highly likely that Korean campuses will become much more cosmopolitan in the years to come.⁷

Though this is a positive step, the further intake of more international students will most certainly raise new challenges for Korean universities and the surrounding communities. Attracting foreigners into the country is one thing, helping them adjust is another; nor is the United States' experience a model example of how to accommodate international students. American universities have often shown too little interest in assuaging the adjustment issues suffered by international students, and the existing support services on campus have lacked the cultural relevance necessary to deal with problems unique to the foreigners.⁸ For instance, culture shock and homesickness are particularly acute among international students, problems for which few services are ever provided.⁹ There is little reason to expect that foreigners studying in Korea would be free from such problems. Moreover, Korea is a country of relatively strong racial and cultural homogeneity, increasing the potential for racial discrimination and the stigmatization of minority groups, raising the possibility that these minority groups will undergo the rejection-identification model documented in the United States whereby affected individuals seek out similarly stigmatized others in order to achieve a sense of inclusion and avoid the lowered self-esteem and increased depression caused by the dominant majority group.¹⁰

However, it might be inappropriate to make too many comparisons between the treatment of international students in Korea and the United States. In terms of the composition of international students attending university in the two countries, there is an important difference. Whereas the majority of international students in America come from distant shores, the majority in Korea are from neighboring countries. As of August 2008, the Korean Ministry of Justice reported that 52,176 international students were in the country, of which 39,475 (75.7

7 It is expected that by 2020 the number of international students will reach 5.8 million. See Anthony Böhm, Marcelo Follari, Andrew Hewett, Sarah Jones, Neil Kemp, Denis Meares, David Pearce and Kevin Van Cauter, *Vision 2020: Forecasting International Student Mobility. A UK Perspective* (Manchester: British Council, Education and Training Group, 2004), 4.

8 Mori, "Addressing the Mental Health Concerns of International Students," 143.

9 Senel Poyrazli and Marcos Damian Lopez, "An Exploratory Study of Perceived Discrimination and Homesickness: A Comparison of International Students and American Students," *The Journal of Psychology* 141, no. 3 (2007): 268.

10 Michael T. Schmitt, Russel Spears, and Nyla R. Branscombe, "Constructing a Minority Group Identity out of Shared Rejection: The Case of International Students," *European Journal of Social Psychology* 33 (2003): 3.

percent) were Chinese, 2,430 (4.7 percent) were Vietnamese, 1,697 (3.3 percent) were Mongolian, 1,210 (2.3 percent) were Japanese, and only 1,110 (2.1 percent) were American.¹¹ Accordingly, there is an inherent danger in applying the lessons learned from research conducted in the United States to the Korean experience where an entirely different cultural historic context needs to be accounted for. As such, the multitude of American studies can only serve as a starting point for more focused and fruitful research within Korea itself.

The goal of the current study was to begin filling in this gap in the literature regarding international students in Korea by focusing on one group of international students and determining how language fluency, social connectedness, financial support, homesickness and perceived discrimination acted as predictors of acculturative stress. It is hoped that this initial cogitation will provide some insight into the unique circumstances of tertiary education in East Asia and stimulate further inquiries in the field.

Acculturative Stress Among International Students

The definition of acculturation has undergone considerable revision by researchers who have viewed the acculturation process from both unidirectional and bidirectional perspectives.¹² For the present study, in which the international students enrolled in Korean tertiary education do receive some ethnic community support in the greater context of a dominant majority culture, the definition offered by José Szapocznik and William Kurtines would seem appropriate. They argue that acculturation consists of a very complex give and take in which the characteristics of the international person's original culture are relinquished or retained according to experiences acquired in the dominant host culture.¹³

Moreover, this process happens concurrently at the individual and the group level. The group dynamics will necessarily affect the opportunities that each individual within the group has for acculturation, though how each individual will respond to those opportunities will differ.¹⁴ Also, because this study perceives acculturation as a bidirectional rather than unidirectional process, in which neither individual change within the international student nor acceptance from the

11 Ministry of Justice, Republic of Korea, <http://www.moj.co.kr>. (accessed February 1, 2009).

12 Gargi Roysircar Sodowsky and Barbara S. Plake, "A Study of Acculturation Differences Among International People and Suggestions for Sensitivity to Within-Group Differences," *Journal of Counseling and Development* 71 (1992): 53.

13 José Szapocznik and William Kurtines, "Acculturation, Biculturalism, and Adjustment among Cuban Americans," in Amado M. Padilla, ed., *Acculturation: Theory, Models and Some New Findings* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1980), 139-159.

14 Bruce P. Dohrenwend and Robert J. Smith, "Toward a Theory of Acculturation," *Southwestern Journal of Anthropology* 18 (1962): 30-39.

dominant culture are required in order for acculturation to take place, acculturation cannot be seen as synonymous with cultural assimilation.¹⁵ This is a particularly important point when discussing international students as it is assumed that the majority of these students will return to their home countries after their period of study, thereby making it less likely that international students will feel the need to relinquish their own cultural values and retain those of the dominant host culture. In other words, in terms of acculturation, international students represent a population of foreigners distinct from other minority groups with their own particular needs to be addressed.¹⁶

Acculturative stress can simply be defined as the psychological impact of adaptation to a new culture.¹⁷ Early studies in acculturation and the stress incurred by acculturation were conducted in the 1940s in the United States by scholars interested mainly in the Hispanic, Jewish, Japanese and Italian ethnic minorities,¹⁸ but attention to the stress experienced by international students was not given until the second half of the twentieth century when international student enrolment really started to take off. Initial forays into the field explored the so-called U-curve pattern of adjustment and attitudinal changes among international students whereby individuals engaged in a honeymoon period of high enthusiasm toward the host country followed by a more critical perception after a few months had transpired, and finally, by a period of renewed appreciation for the host country prior to departure.¹⁹ As the U-curve pattern was being uncovered, researchers also began to elucidate on the different sources of stress being experienced by foreign groups such as refugees, immigrants or other ethnic minorities and those being experienced by international students. In particular, international students received stress from academic competition with American students, hectic academic scheduling, the restriction of previously enjoyed activities, and the need to downgrade

15 Raymond H. C. Teske, Jr. and Bardin H. Nelson, "Acculturation and Assimilation: A Clarification," *American Ethnologist* 1, no. 2 (1974): 365.

16 Daya Singh Sandhu, "An Examination of the Psychological Needs of the International Students: Implications for Counselling and Psychotherapy," *International Journal for the Advancement of Counselling* 17 (1995): 229-239; see also Frederick T. L. Leong and Elayne L. Chou, "Counseling International Students and Sojourners," in Paul B. Pedersen, Juris G. Draguns, Walter J. Lonner, and Joseph E. Trimble, eds., *Counseling Across Cultures* (London: Sage Publications, 2002), 185-208; and Eunju Yoon and Tarrell Awe Agahe Portman, "Critical Issues of Literature on Counseling International Students," *Journal of Multicultural Counseling and Development* 32 (2004): 33-44.

17 Julie F. Smart and David W. Smart, "Acculturative Stress: The Experience of the Hispanic Immigrant," *The Counseling Psychologist* 23, no. 1 (1995): 25.

18 Melford E. Spiro, "The Acculturation of American Ethnic Groups," *American Anthropologist* 57 (1955): 1242.

19 For a good description of the U-curve and its implications, see Tamar Becker, "Patterns of Attitudinal Changes among Foreign Students," *The American Journal of Sociology* 73, no. 4 (1968): 431-432.

interpersonal relationships both with Americans and fellow nationals.²⁰ The implication here is that stressors were academic related rather than purely cultural, and, as such, an international student's stress level or morale level might show a higher correlation with the exam schedule in an academic calendar than with the duration of stay in a country.

A new frontier for study emerged in early 1980s, this time on the other side of the Pacific Ocean. In the closing years of the 1970s, Japanese universities began experiencing a large shortfall in the number of applicants to university graduate programs and accordingly began aggressively recruiting foreign students. The call was answered, though mostly by students from other Asian countries. In 1978 Japan had roughly 5,000 international students enrolled in tertiary education. By 1992 there were 48,561 international students, 90 percent of whom were Asian.²¹ This prompted Japanese scholars to begin researching the causes and effects of acculturative stress among non-Japanese students who had left their home countries to pursue higher education.

In the mid-1990s a group of scholars from the University of the Ryukyus utilized the analysis techniques of previous American studies to differentiate stress levels between different nationalities of students. The Ryukyus group found that 60 percent of the foreign students exhibited stress levels that qualified as a mental health risk, and that although non-Chinese Asians and American/European students displayed a 50 percent stress reduction over time, students from China, Latin America, the Middle East and Africa showed only a 1.1 percent stress reduction over time.²² The Ryukyus study highlighted the fact that the acculturation process of minorities in Japan differed greatly from nationality to nationality, and that while Asians suffered more acculturative stress than Europeans in the United States, Americans and Europeans who studied in Japan were not among the most affected by acculturative stress. The particularly alarming stress levels of Chinese students were confirmed by further studies conducted on the Japanese archipelago.²³ In the 1990s and the opening decade of the twenty-first century studies of acculturative stress in the United States, Europe and Asia have all tended to paint a picture of complexity rather than uniformity, with different groups of students demonstrating varying stress levels.

20 Henry A. Selby and Clyde M. Woods, "Foreign Students at a High-Pressure University," *Sociology of Education* 39, no. 2 (1966): 141-142.

21 Dennis Normile, "Education: Japanese Universities Become Magnets for Asian Students," *Science, New Series* 262, no. 5132 (1993): 351.

22 M. Randall, K. Naka, K. Yamamoto, H. Nakamoto, H. Arakaki, and C. Ogura, "Assessment of Psychosocial Stressors and Maladjustment among Foreign Students of the University of the Ryukyus," *The Journal of Psychiatry and Clinical Neurosciences* 52, no. 3 (1998): 289.

23 For example, see Yuh Huey Jou and Hiromi Fukada, "The Causes and Influence of Transitional Stress among Chinese Students in Japan," *The Journal of Social Psychology* 136, no. 4 (1996): 501-509.

The actual sources of acculturative stress among international students are many. First and foremost, international students are subject to varying degrees of homesickness, defined as “a complex cognitive-motivational-emotional state concerned with grieving for, yearning for and being preoccupied with thoughts of home.”²⁴ Homesickness is thought to be caused by the sudden loss of proximity to family and loved ones, and it has been shown to be increasingly severe amongst more cohesive families.²⁵ This has interesting implications for students from East Asia given the strong communal influences of Asian culture as opposed to the more individual centered influences of Western culture. In any case, it seems certain that the severity of homesickness would differ in meaningful ways from culture to culture. Indeed, even among Western countries studies have indicated that students from some countries are more prone to homesickness than others.²⁶ Likewise, it would be expected that students in different Asian countries would not be uniform in terms of experiencing homesickness.

The difficulty international students experience with the language barrier has already been touched upon and is fairly self-evident. Closely related to both language issues and homesickness is the low level of social connectedness that international students are vulnerable to. Many students arrive in their host country with the expectation, or at least hope, of making strong, lasting relationships with members of that host country, but many students report that the relationships they make are merely superficial.²⁷ To make matters worse, international students have difficulty relating their experiences to family and friends back home who have little capacity to understand what the student is going through. This leads many international students to seek out their fellow nationals, however artificial these forced relationships might be.²⁸ Furthermore, the lack of strong relationships with host country students hinders the ability of international students to adjust to an unfamiliar education system that often differs greatly from the education system in their home country.²⁹

The results of decreased and superficial relationships, unsurprisingly, are feelings of depression, loneliness, anxiety, frustration and perhaps anger. Mental

24 Shirley Fisher and Bruce Hood, “The Stress of the Transition to University: A Longitudinal Study of Psychological Disturbance, Absent-mindedness and Vulnerability to Homesickness,” *British Journal of Psychology* 78 (1987): 426.

25 Nikolaos Kazantzis and Ross Flett, “Family Cohesion and Age as Determinants of Homesickness in University Students,” *Social Behavior and Personality* 26, no. 2 (1998): 195-202.

26 For example, a 2002 study showed that students in the Netherlands displayed significantly less homesickness than students in the United Kingdom. See Margaret Stroebe, Tony van Vliet, Miles Hewstone and Hazel Willis, “Homesickness among Students in Two Cultures: Antecedents and Consequences,” *British Journal of Psychology* 93 (2002): 147-168.

27 Brent Mallinckrodt and Frederick T. L. Leong, “International Graduate Students, Stress, and Social Support,” *Journal of College Student Development* 33 (1992): 71-78.

28 Mori, “Addressing the Mental Health Concerns of International Students,” 138.

29 Ibid.

health problems can quickly translate into a whole host of physical manifestations.³⁰ One way to prevent this from happening is for students to receive proper counseling and support from the university or the community. Research has shown that emotional well-being is positively correlated with institutional and social support, though the same research has shown that international students are less likely to take advantage of this support than other students.³¹

The toll on mental health that financial constraints can take on students has also been documented. At the very least, many international students must keep a nervous eye on fluctuating exchange rates and spend their money cautiously. In a more extreme example of financial pressure, groups of Southeast Asian students studying in England were informed by their governments that they might be recalled home at any time due to their weakening currency to the British pound.³²

Finally, an important and much studied source of acculturative stress is perceived discrimination. Here, the use of the word *perceived* is very deliberate. It is possible that an international student may perceive that he/she is being discriminated against when in fact no discrimination is taking place, just as it is possible that the dominant host culture may perceive a threat from a minority group when no threat exists. Still, real or not, the psychological effect on either the host culture or the international student is a powerful one. Moreover, research in the United States has confirmed that it is still a very real problem. In general, African American students seem to experience more negative experiences with on-campus discrimination than their Asian or Latino counterparts, though the latter groups still perceive discrimination to the effect that their campus life is negatively affected.³³ After the events of September 11, 2001, there have also been more attempts to probe the growing instances of discrimination against students of Middle Eastern descent.³⁴ Problems with discrimination also seem to become magnified when a small minority exists within a campus dominated by a single, large majority.³⁵

30 Ibid., 139. Symptoms range from minor annoyances such as blushing and perspiration to much more serious conditions such as exhaustion, gastrointestinal problems and dysfunctions in pituitary-adrenal activities.

31 Jenny Hyun, Brian Quinn, Temina Madon, and Steve Lustig, "Mental Health Need, Awareness, and Use of Counseling Services Among International Graduate Students," *Journal of American College Health* 56, no. 2 (2007): 109-118.

32 Greta Bradley, "Responding Effectively to the Mental Health Needs of International Students," *Higher Education* 39 (2000): 426.

33 Julie R. Ancis, William E. Sedlacek, and Jonathan J. Mohr, "Student Perceptions of Campus Cultural Climate by Race," *Journal of Counseling and Development* 78 (2000): 180-185.

34 Shideh Hanassab, "Diversity, International Students, and Perceived Discrimination: Implications for Educators and Counselors," *Journal of Studies in International Education* 10, no. 157 (2006): 168.

35 Bradley J. Fisher and David J. Hartmann, "The Impact of Race on the Social Experience of College Students at a Predominantly White University," *Journal of Black Studies* 26, no. 2 (1995): 117-133.

Again, this has interesting implications for East Asia where incoming international students would certainly be in a small minority in campuses that are dominated by a single racial and cultural group. Here, just as in American schools, the foundations of racial discrimination would not be understood merely by analyzing campus dynamics, but rather by examining the external historical and contemporary contexts of the region.³⁶

Mongolians in South Korea

Literature on Mongolians, let alone Mongolian students in Korea, is scant at best. It should be immediately noted that the lives of migrant workers in Korea generally differ greatly from the lives of visiting students, so much so that Mongolian students in Korea and Mongolian migrant workers in Korea really do represent two distinct groups of people with limited connections to one another. In very important ways, the Mongolian students are in a much more secure position with Korean society than their employed counterparts. Starting in 1991, the Korean government allowed Mongolians to work in Korea under the Industrial Trainee Scheme (ITS), but, by categorizing Mongolians as trainees, the government ensured that these workers did not – and could not – qualify for the rights that regular Korean workers enjoyed.³⁷ While the ITS was phased out in favor of a program called the Employee Permit System (EPS), which now allows migrant workers to sign one-year contracts with an employer and claim basic workers' rights, the system has been criticized as still giving priority to employers rather than employees. The EPS does not constitute a real break from Korea's effort to find and utilize cheap labor in order to relieve labor shortages in small- and medium-sized manufacturing enterprises and maintain its competitive edge.³⁸ The result of Korea's efforts to exploit migrant workers was that a significant number of these workers chose to leave their legal, government-assigned jobs in search of jobs that offered more reasonable compensation. By 2002 Korea had amassed about 260,000 illegal workers, 13,952 of whom were Mongolian.³⁹ While illegal work offers higher compensation, it also has the potential for a variety of abuses by the employers.

None of this applies to Mongolian students. By receiving a D-2 student visa Mongolian students are legally treated in the same way as Korean students.

36 Sylvia Hurtado, "The Campus Racial Climate: Contexts of Conflict," *Journal of Higher Education* 63, no. 5 (1992): 539-569.

37 Chulwoo Lee, "'Us' and 'Them' in Korean Law: The Creation, Accommodation and Exclusion of Outsiders in South Korea," in Lucie Cheng, Arthur Rosett, and Margaret Woo, eds., *East Asian Law: Universal Norms and Local Cultures* (London: Taylor & Francis, Inc., 2002), 112-114.

38 Timothy C. Lim, "Racing from the Bottom in South Korea? The Nexus between Civil Society and Transnational Migrants," *Asian Survey* 43, no. 3 (2003): 427.

39 Wang-Bae Kim, "Migration of Foreign Workers into South Korea: From Periphery to Semi-Periphery in the Global Labor Market," *Asian Survey* 44, no. 2 (2004): 325.

Moreover, with respect to possibly residing and working in the country, it is possible for Mongolians in Korean universities to be recruited after graduation by Korean companies as skilled employees, a classification not covered by the EPS and accordingly not subject to the abuses of the migrant worker system.

In terms of financial capabilities, there are two categories of Mongolian students in Korea. First there are students who have received scholarships to come and study in Korea, and second, there are students whose families are wealthy enough to pay for their children's tuition within Korea. In either case, this separates Mongolian students from Mongolian migrant workers who have come to Korea precisely because they do not have access to financial capital in Mongolia. In this light, it is unrealistic to expect strong connections between these two distinct groups of Mongolians, one more privileged than the other, who have made their way to Korea.

That being said, one should not paint too rosy a picture of Mongolian students in Korea, for they are potentially subject to the same sources of acculturative stress as international students elsewhere. They are forced to study in a language other than their own, they are leaving their families and loved ones for an extended period of time, they constitute a very small minority within campuses dominated by the majority Korean culture, they are vulnerable to weakened social connectedness, and they are susceptible to financial problems. In particular, language would most likely be the paramount sources of acculturative stress. Even for Mongolian students who have studied Korean prior to arriving in the country, attending university courses which are taught in a language that the learner is not fluent in is inevitably stressful.

In fact, if the Mongolian students were typical of the international students studied in the existing literature that has been written on acculturative stress among international students in the United States, Europe, and to a lesser extent, East Asia, the following predictions could be made:

1. The language barrier is the greatest source of acculturative stress among Mongolian students in South Korean tertiary education.
2. The stress levels of Mongolian students in South Korean tertiary education are higher than the stress levels of South Korean students who have left home to attend South Korean tertiary education.

Before testing these two predictions, it is worthwhile to ruminate on some exogenous factors particular to the Mongolian-Korean context which might influence the levels of acculturative stress incurred by Mongolian students in Korea. Mongolian language and culture may act as stress inhibitors to the extent that some similarities can be drawn with Korean language and culture. The Mongolian and Korean languages are both within the Altaic language group and are both agglutinative in structure, and many Mongolian students do have access to Korean language classes prior to arriving in Korea. With respect to culture, it is

suspected that one of the reasons that Asians who study in the United States suffer greater acculturative stress than Europeans studying in the United States is due to the fundamental similarities in the cultural values of Western countries (for example, an emphasis on independence and individual expression) as opposed to the cultural values of Eastern countries (for example, an emphasis on dependence and conformity).⁴⁰ Logically, then, the fact that Mongolian and Korean cultural values both fall under the rubric of ‘Eastern,’ it is possible that culture shock could be somewhat softened.

Racial features might also play a role. Research indicates that white international students in the United States report lower levels of acculturative stress and fewer incidences of perceived discrimination when compared to international students of color.⁴¹ Having the same appearance as the dominant host culture helps international students to ‘fit in’ to society.⁴² Given the strong similarities in appearance between Mongolians and Koreans and the ability of Mongolians to ‘blend in’ on and off campus, racial features may be working in the Mongolian students’ favor.

While language, culture and race might act as stress inhibitors, finances do not. Mongolian students are coming from a country that is economically disadvantaged in comparison to South Korea, and even when Mongolian students arrive on a full scholarship with a housing stipend, it may be difficult for students to arrange finances for books, transportation, extra-curricular activities, medical services and so on. Financial constraints also frustrate attempts to build social relationships with domestic students when Mongolian students are unable to join certain school clubs or participate in social events because they cannot spare any money.

Methodology

A survey was conducted at a university in the Seoul area in the spring of 2008. The campus population of Mongolian students was contacted, fifteen students in all, representing 0.4 percent of the university’s student body. The youngest student was 19 years old, and the oldest student was 29 years old. The average age was 23.667. Seven of the respondents were male, and eight were female. Six of the students had been in Korea between one and six months, five of the students had been in Korea between one and two years, one of the students had been in Korea

40 Senel Poyrazli, Philip R. Kavanaugh, Adria Baker and Nada Al-Timimi, “Social Support and Demographic Correlates of Acculturative Stress in International Students,” *Journal of College Counseling* 7 (2004): 80.

41 Jenny J. Lee and Charles Rice, “Welcome to America? International Student Perceptions of Discrimination,” *Higher Education* 53 (2007): 381-409.

42 Yeh and Inose, “International Students’ Reported English Fluency, Social Support Satisfaction, and Social Connectedness as Predictors of Acculturative Stress,” 23.

between two and three years, and three of the students had been in Korea for more than three years.

To avoid any communication misunderstandings and maximize respondent accuracy, the survey was translated into Mongolian. The survey consisted of twenty-six Likert-type scale questions designed to elicit stress ratings. The questions themselves were derived from the Social Readjustment Rating Scale⁴³ and previous studies conducted in Japan on international students.⁴⁴

Fourteen additional questions were then asked to determine the levels and types of discrimination that the Mongolians perceived was directed at them because they were non-Korean. These questions were derived from a European study designed to measure perceived discrimination among international students and international faculty members.⁴⁵

In order to provide a comparison sample and provide a basis to answer the second prediction in the previous section, thirty Korean students at the same university were surveyed regarding their stress levels. These Korean students were selected on the basis of their living situation; all thirty respondents were from hometowns other than Seoul or the cities in the surrounding Gyeonggi-do area. In other words, the sample of Korean students were all living away from their families and were accordingly vulnerable to transitional stress i.e., encountering a new environment in which the individual has no automatic adaptive responses.⁴⁶ The youngest student was 21 years old and the oldest student was 28 years old. The average age was 23.2 years old.⁴⁷ The survey was translated into Korean and the questions were designed to be coupled with the equivalent questions asked to the Mongolian students.

In addition, each of the thirty Korean students was asked additional questions about their interactions with foreign students and their perception of discrimination that foreign students might receive. In order to increase the sample size, twenty additional students from the Seoul and Gyeonggi-do area were given the questions about discrimination, bringing the total number of Koreans who were surveyed regarding perceived discrimination to fifty. The average age of the

43 T. H. Holmes and R. H. Rahe, "The Social Readjustment Rating Scale," *Journal of Psychosomatic Research* 11 (1967): 213-218.

44 Jou and Fukada, "The Causes and Influence of Transitional Stress among Chinese Students in Japan."

45 Barbara Krahe, Charles Abraham, Juliane Felber and Muriel K. Helbig, "Perceived Discrimination of International Visitors to Universities in Germany and the UK," *British Journal of Psychology* 96 (2005): 263-281. The authors of this study utilized a prejudice categorization initially developed by G. H. Allport. See G. H. Allport, *The Nature of Prejudice* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1954), 49.

46 Israel J. Sykes and Dov Eden, "Transitional Stress, Social Support, and Psychological Strain," *Journal of Occupational Behavior* 6, no. 4 (1985): 293.

47 Koreans count their age differently from Mongolians, usually adding one or two years to their birth age.

twenty additional students was slightly lower, reducing the total average age of all Korean students down to 22.9 years for the discrimination questions.

Finally, interviews were conducted with a number of participants within the Mongolian sample group. These interviews were conducted individually and in the English language. In one case, a translator was required. Aside from this case, the English ability of all respondents was sufficient to explain relatively complex ideas without difficulty. During the interviews, respondents were asked to extrapolate on what they perceived were the primary sources of stress in their study abroad experience and to comment on the relationships they had formed while in Korea. While research has indicated that the subjects of interviews or discussion groups tend to respond most favorably to questions delivered by someone of the same cultural background,⁴⁸ it was felt that in the context of the Mongolians being a minority group on a campus dominated by a single cultural group, the respondents would feel sufficiently comfortable expressing themselves to an interviewer from outside that majority cultural group.

In the following section, the data acquired from the surveys is analyzed, whereas the more qualitative data from the interviews is summarized in the discussion section.

Survey Results

Figure 1 lists each of the stress indicators tested for the two groups (Mongolian students and away-from-home Korean students), and shows the extent to which these indicators caused each group to feel stress. Because survey respondents were asked to choose between five possible answers, namely no stress, a little stress, medium stress, more than average stress and very much stress, the stress levels for each indicator can be shown numerically with a higher number indicating a greater level of stress.

Figure 1: Stress Indicators Among Away-from-home Korean Students and Mongolian Students

Indicator	Koreans	Mongolians
The amount of homework received	1.867	1.867
Language/communication problems in class	-	2.600
Lack of interest in class	2.733	1.667
Relationships with university professors	1.333	1.267
Relationships with Korean students	1.333	1.200
Relationships with other international students	-	0.533

Lack of close friends at the university	1.167	1.267
No one to talk to about personal problems	0.933	1.267
Relationships with Koreans off-campus	-	0.667
Relationships with parents	1.400	0.267
Injuries or illness while away from home	2.433	1.267
Problems with immigration/visa issues	-	0.667
Illness of a close family member	2.667	1.333
Perceived declining health	2.067	1.267
Death of a family member	0.667	0.533
Death of a close friend	1.367	0.267
Failure to receive a scholarship	2.033	1.200
Possibility of losing a scholarship	-	1.800
High cost of living in Korea	2.467	2.200
Family financial problems	1.900	1.600
Difficulty in finding a job after graduation	2.733	1.400
Unstable politics/economy in home country	-	2.200
Different culture from home country	-	1.067
Different housing from home country	-	1.333
Different climate from home country	-	1.200
Different food from home country	-	1.733

The most immediately apparent result visible in Figure 1 is that the Mongolian students showed lower levels of stress than the away-from-home Korean students. In all areas except three – the lack of close friends at the university, the absence of people to talk to about personal problems, and the amount of homework received – the away-from-home Koreans showed higher levels of stress. This is counterintuitive and requires explanation. One possibility is that the Mongolians are attributing the majority of their stress to the language barrier and the associated communication problems in the classroom, and in light of this primary cause of stress, they might be inclined to rank subsequent stressors much lower. The Korean students, not having any communication problems, would be inclined to give a higher ranking to other stressors. Another possible way to explain the higher levels of stress among the away-from-home Korean students when compared to the Mongolian students is to look for dynamics of the Korean education system in particular and Korean society in general which might be causing Korean students to feel more stress than they should. This is beyond the scope of the current study.

Closer in line with the traditional literature on acculturative stress among international students is the importance that language fluency has to play in reducing stress levels. Figures 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 use Rahe's Social Readjustment Rating Scale to categorize the responses according to interpersonal, academic, health/

living, financial and environment stressors. The academic stressors, of which language plays a key role, are the paramount sources of stress for the Mongolian students. Financial stressors also ranked high, indicating that the imbalance between the economies of Mongolia and Korea and the high cost of living which Mongolian students must bear do play a significant role in causing acculturative stress.

Figure 2: Interpersonal Stressors for Mongolian Students

Indicator	Value
Relationships with univeristy professors	1.267
Relationships with Korean students	1.200
Relationships with other international students	0.533
Lack of close friends at the university	1.267
No one to talk to about personal problems	1.267
Relationships with Koreans off-campus	0.667
Relationships with parents	0.267
AVERAGE	0.924

Figure 3: Academic Stressors for Mongolian Students

Indicator	Value
The amount of homework received	1.867
Language/communication problems in class	2.600
Lack of interest in classes	1.667
AVERAGE	2.045

Figure 4: Health/Living Stressors for Mongolian Students

Indicator	Value
Injuries or illness while away from home	1.276
Problems with immigration/visa issues	0.667
Illness of a close family member	1.333
Perceived declining health	1.267
Death of a family member	0.533
Death of a close friend	0.267
AVERAGE	0.889

Figure 5: Financial Stressors for Mongolian Students

Indicator	Value
Failure to receive a scholarship	1.200
Possibility of losing a scholarship	1.800
High cost of living in Korea	2.200

Family financial problems	1.600
Difficulty finding a job after graduation	1.400
Unstable politics/economy in home country	2.200
AVERAGE	1.733

The Mongolians did not attribute high levels of stress to the interpersonal stressors, though there are interesting deviations within the interpersonal categorization. For instance, there was a marked difference in the levels of stress caused by relations with Korean students and with other Koreans not on campus, indicating that there is room for improvement in how international students and Korean students interact with one another. This correlates with the finding that the Mongolians seem to have much better relationships with other international students. Also interesting is the very low stress between the Mongolian students and their parents, a finding that is made even more interesting when compared to the much higher level of stress that away-from-home Koreans reported in their relationship with their parents.

Figure 7: Discrimination Indicators Among Mongolian Students (in order of frequency)

Indicator	Prevalence Value
People are less interested in you because you are not Korean	1.714
Someone made a discriminating remark to you	1.357
People keep a physical distance from you because you are not Korean	1.357
Someone made discriminating remarks about other non-Koreans	1.143
Someone expressed disapproval because you did not behave like a Korean	0.292
People lose interest in you when they discover that you are not Korean	0.292
You felt afraid in Korea because you are not Korean	0.857
You were treated unfairly by government officials because you are not Korean	0.857
Your mistakes are judged more harshly than the mistakes of Korean people	0.786
You felt afraid in Korea because you are not Korean	0.786
You were treated unfairly at the university because you are not Korean	0.714
People avoid eye contact with you because you are not Korean	0.714
You were verbally threatened because you are not Korean	0.500
You were physically attacked because you are not Korean	0.286

Figure 7 shows the prevalence values of perceived discrimination from the perspective of the Mongolian students. Figures 8, 9, 10 and 11 reorganize these indicators into categorizations of antilocution, avoidance, direct discrimination and assault, showing that the highest prevalence of perceived discrimination occurs in the first two categories. The fact that perceived discrimination does occur at all in the latter two categories, direct discrimination and assault, is cause for concern as these incidences could have very serious implications on the mental and physical health of the students. However, it should also be recognized that when compared to other studies in Western countries, the prevalence of direct discrimination and assault indicators for the Mongolian students in Korea is quite low.⁴⁹ This in turn helps to explain why the Mongolian students reported lower levels of stress as the incidences of perceived discrimination and the levels of stress that students feel are closely interrelated.

Figure 8: Antilocution Indicators Among Mongolian Students

Indicator	Prevalence Value
Someone made a discriminating remark to you	1.357
Someone made discriminating remarks about other non-Koreans	1.143
Someone expressed disapproval because you did not behave like a Korean	0.929
AVERAGE	1.143

Figure 9: Avoidance Indicators Among Mongolian Students

Indicator	Prevalence Value
People are less interested in you because you are not Korean	1.714
People keep a physical distance from you because you are not Korean	1.357
People lose interest in you when they discover that you are not Korean	0.929
People avoid eye contact with you because you are not Korean	0.714
AVERAGE	1.179

Figure 10: Direct Discrimination Indicators Among Mongolian Students

Indicator	Prevalence Value
You were treated unfairly by government officials because you are not Korean	0.857

⁴⁹ For instance, see Krahe et al., "Perceived Discrimination of International Visitors to Universities in Germany and the UK."

Your mistakes are judged more harshly than the mistakes of Korean people	0.857
You were treated unfairly at the university because you are not Korean	0.786
AVERAGE	0.833

Figure 11: Assault Indicators Among Mongolian Students

Indicator	Prevalence Value
You felt afraid in Korea because you are not Korean	0.786
You were verbally threatened because you are not Korean	0.714
You were physically threatened because you are not Korean	0.500
You were physically attacked because you are not a Korean	0.286
AVERAGE	0.572

The relatively low levels of direct discrimination and assault indicators are substantiated in part by the survey on discrimination given to the fifty Korean students. The questions in this part of the survey centered around how Korean students interacted, or desired to interact, with international students and to what degree they thought that international students were being discriminated against. The following questions and results suggest that many incidences of antilocution and avoidance may have been a result of shyness or unfamiliarity with foreign students rather than intentionally discriminatory.

Sample Question A

Which sentence best describes your feeling when you see foreign students at the university?

- a. I avoid foreign students, and I don't want to talk to them.
- b. I have no particular interest in foreign students, so I don't talk to them.
- c. I am curious about the foreign students, but I am too shy or embarrassed to talk to them.
- d. I am curious about the foreign students, so I talk to them occasionally.
- e. I try to become friends with the foreign students, and I talk to them often.

Of the fifty respondents, 26 percent answered 'b,' 52 percent answered 'c,' 16 percent answered 'd,' and 2 percent (just one student) answered 'e.' While it can be viewed positively that no Korean students are intentionally avoiding foreign students, it is also somewhat discouraging that only 18 percent (those who answered 'd' and 'e') actually socially interact at any level with foreign students at the university. This low number stands in contrast to the fact that 54 percent of the Korean respondents reported studying in the same classes as foreigners. What the

survey may be reflecting is the homogeneity that is still an ever-present feature of Korean society and the resulting discomfort that Korean students might feel when sharing space with a non-Korean.

Concerning the future level of student enrollment, the following question was asked:

Sample Question B

Which sentence best describes your feelings about foreign students attending the university?

- a. I don't think that the university should have foreign students.
- b. I think that the university has enough foreign students now, and the university shouldn't encourage more foreign students to come.
- c. I think that there are not enough foreign students at the university now, and the university should encourage more foreign students to come.
- d. I would prefer to see an equal number of foreign students and Korean students at the university.
- e. I would prefer to see more foreign students than Korean students at the university.

For this question, 2 percent chose 'a,' 29 percent chose 'b,' 67 percent chose 'c,' and 2 percent chose 'd.' This indicates that more than half of Korean students are open to the idea of more foreign students enrolling in the university, although not to the extent that international students begin to approach the same percentage of the student body as Korean students.

Concerning general perceptions of discrimination, the survey asked:

Sample Question C

Which sentence best describes your opinion about discrimination against foreign students by Korean students at the university?

- a. The foreign students are not discriminated against, and they are treated the same way as Korean students.
- b. The foreign students probably experience a little bit of discrimination, but they are treated in almost the same way as Korean students.
- c. The foreign students are sometimes discriminated against, and they are sometimes treated in a different way from Korean students.
- d. The foreign students are often discriminated against, and they are often treated in a different way from Korean students.
- e. The foreign students are almost always discriminated against, and they are almost always treated in a different way from Korean students.

For this question, 30 percent chose ‘a,’ 38 percent chose ‘b,’ 28 percent chose ‘c,’ and 4 percent chose ‘d.’ Korean students perceive that relatively low levels of discrimination against foreign students exist at the university. No students felt that foreign students are always discriminated against.

A more direct question regarding antilocution discrimination was asked:

Sample Question D

Which sentence best describes your opinion about the way other Korean students talk about foreign students.

- a. I often hear other Korean students make discriminating remarks about foreign students, and almost never hear praise for foreign students.
- b. I sometimes hear other Korean students make discriminating remarks about foreign students, and I usually don’t hear praise for foreign students.
- c. I hear about equal amounts of discriminating remarks and praise by Korean students when they talk about foreign students.
- d. I usually don’t hear Korean students make discriminating remarks about foreign students, and I sometimes hear praise for foreign students.
- e. I almost never hear Korean students make discriminating remarks about foreign students, and I often hear praise for foreign students.

The results were fairly mixed. 15 percent answered ‘a,’ 19 percent answered ‘b,’ 36 percent answered ‘c,’ 26 percent answered ‘d,’ and 4 percent answered ‘e.’ Taken as a whole, the responses seem to indicate that antilocution discrimination does exist, but is balanced out to some extent by praise for foreign students.

Finally, when a question was asked regarding physical attacks against foreign students, 88 percent of the Korean survey respondents stated that they had never heard of any situations in which a foreign student was physically assaulted. No Koreans believed that foreign students were attacked commonly. This perception generally matches the low incidence rate of perceived physical assaults reported by Mongolian students.

Discussion

The initial prediction, based on the existing literature on acculturative stress among international students, that language fluency would be the most significant source of acculturative stress for Mongolians studying in South Korea proved to be correct. Even if the similarities between the Mongolian and Korean languages has helped to facilitate efficient language learning for the Mongolians studying in Korean classrooms, the amount of stress garnered from having to perform academically in a second language still supersedes the amount of stress from any other source. In fact, this coincides well with recent research in the United Kingdom

which concludes that even international students with very high language skills, for example scoring at least level six on the International English Language Testing System (IELTS), were prone to feeling anxiety, shame and inferiority.⁵⁰

The second prediction, also based on existing literature, that Mongolian students in Korea would feel more stress than away-from-home Korean students studying in the same university, proved to be incorrect. This begs further research. The Mongolian students reported low amounts of stress from interpersonal relationships, health/living concerns, and to a more moderate extent, environmental factors. Within these categories, the stressor scores that might be related to homesickness (for example, lack of close friends on campus, no one to talk to about personal problems, living in a different culture, living in a different climate, living in different housing and living with different food) showed moderate amounts of stress, though lower than expected. In particular, the low levels of stress from interpersonal relationships and health/living concerns suggest that the Mongolians possess a greater sense of autonomy as opposed to feelings of dependence towards family and loved ones. However, debate still exists as to whether or not autonomy actually reduces stress for students leaving their homes to attend tertiary education,⁵¹ and it is not clear whether or not this is the case with the Mongolian students in South Korea.

Some insight, however, can be gained by reviewing some of the opinions elicited from the interviews given to the Mongolian students. During each discussion, the interviewee was encouraged to share examples of stressful situations that he/she had encountered and to expand on any instances where he/she may have felt discriminated. The interviewees were also asked to comment more generally on whether or not they felt their lives were stressful and to what degree they were satisfied with their university experiences in Korea. In comparison with the survey results, the responses from the interviews reveal a less quantitative and more descriptive picture of how the Mongolian students are interacting with other individuals both on and off campus and how they compare their own university experiences with that of other students. The following interview summaries depict some of the more salient points raised by the interviewees.

One twenty-year-old female student compared her own student life favorably with that of the Korean students she interacted with. She explained that she was not under as much pressure as the Korean students to achieve a high GPA, nor did she think it was important to score highly on the Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC) exam. She also felt that many Korean students felt compelled to do a lot of volunteer work and extra-curricular programs to fill

50 Lorraine Brown, "Language and Anxiety: An Ethnographic Study of International Postgraduate Students," *Evaluation and Research in Education* 21, no. 2 (2008): 75-95.

51 Richard Beck, Cathy Taylor and Marla Robbins, "Missing Home: Sociotropy and Autonomy and their Relationship to Psychological Distress and Homesickness in College Freshmen," *Anxiety, Stress, and Coping* 16, no. 2 (2003): 155-166.

out their resume in order to increase their chances to get a job, whereas she spent her free time chatting with people, listening to music, watching TV and doing exercise. She was not worried about getting a job once she returned to Mongolia because she felt she was getting a good education in Korea and was able to academically focus on what she thought would be useful in her future career while not worrying about taking extra courses just to improve her resume. Finally, she expressed sympathy for her Korean classmates. She believed that most Korean students only slept for four or five hours per night and often appeared stressed.

A twenty-five year old male discussed his own physical appearance, stating that he could walk around on and off campus without being recognized as a foreigner. He expressed pride that his Korean language ability had improved to the point that when Koreans engaged him in conversation for the first time, it took them a few minutes to realize that they were conversing with a foreigner. Furthermore, he indicated that he was happy with his English abilities because he was able to have positive interactions with foreign faculty and other international students who also spoke English.

A twenty-three year old female who had been in the country for nearly a year and a half made a particular effort to explain why Mongolian culture was of special benefit to Mongolian students in Korea. She expressed her belief that Mongolian culture encouraged travel and movement, stating that journeying was culturally of higher value than associating one's self with a physical home and material possessions. In her words, "Mongolians are comfortable wherever they go." This attitude was reflected in her behavior within Korea. She had developed a wide network of friends in various areas around Seoul and did not feel confined to the campus or its immediate vicinity. Linguistically, she indicated that she felt comfortable speaking both Korean and English, and she was learning other languages as well. This allowed her to maintain a variety of positive interactions with people from different nationalities and cultural backgrounds.

All of the Mongolian students interviewed did admit that language was a source of stress, particularly in the first months after arrival. The sink or swim scenario that they were obligated to endure in their first semester of required classes, all of which are taught in the Korean language, had an alienating effect and caused discomfort. However, language acquisition tended to be fast. A twenty-year-old male student stated that in his opinion, Korean was easier to learn primarily because of the similarities between the Korean and Mongolian languages. "They are both SOV (subject-object-verb) languages, so it is very easy to me." He also stated that in his case, once he had reached a level of linguistic competency, the amount of stress his life as a student caused him was greatly reduced.

Among all of these positives, it should be noted that some non-language oriented sources of stress also emerged. One twenty-four year old female depicted several stressful experiences revolving around her financial situation. She believed that financial constraints impeded her ability to join in activities with Korean classmates. She could not attend field trips or go to special events which

required dipping into the money she needed to pay for her living expenses. Moreover, she expressed her opinion that most Korean students thought she was anti-social and did not really understand why she declined to participate in social functions. This concern over finances also translated into fewer opportunities to travel back to Mongolia to see friends and family members, and as such elicited a sense of isolation.

The same twenty-five year old male who had expressed satisfaction over being able to blend in on campus mentioned that he had encountered stress, particularly when he first arrived, from having to eat Korean food and live in a Korean-style building, both of which he noted were very different from what he had been accustomed to in Mongolia. With respect to food, he noted that the university's cafeteria did not offer any food choices other than Korean food, and that when he was eating Korean food, some Korean classmates thought he was strange for not eating Korean food "the right way," that is to say holding a bowl of rice in his hand instead of keeping it on the table like his classmates.

A twenty-two year old female communicated that she was frustrated by the lack of support services at the university to address problems unique to foreign students. For instance, she had encountered problems registering on Korean websites which she needed to access for her schoolwork. Often, Korean websites require users to enter their name and resident number, and, although the situation has improved in recent years, there are still a large number of websites which do not recognize the resident number given by immigration to foreigners residing in the country. The university was unable to solve this problem for her. Moreover, she conveyed her belief that the university in fact did not show any interest in solving the problem.

Encouragingly, none of the students who were interviewed could recall an incident of physical abuse while studying in Korea. The forms of perceived discrimination that were raised by the interviewees tended to fall in the antilocution, avoidance, and direct discrimination categories. These results matched well with the survey results.

Taken together, the survey results and the opinions elicited from the interviews do have implications for South Korean universities. First, they revealed that the Mongolian students received more stress from their social interactions with Korean students than they did with other international students, indicating that steps should be taken to improve the quality and quantity of interactions between foreign and domestic students. These steps could include social functions, educational materials to help Korean students better understand the cultural differences of international students and buddy programs. Second, as suspected, the difficulty of having to study and interact with peers in a second language is a primary source of acculturative stress. Increased language training and counseling services could be initiated to help Mongolian students overcome stress caused by the language barrier. Third, financial stress affected the lives of a number of Mongolian students. To help alleviate this, employment opportunities could be created within

the constraints of immigration and student visa policies to provide Mongolian students with part-time paid positions on campus, which would help to alleviate some of the money-related stress they are reporting. Fourth, with respect to discrimination, efforts could be made to reduce incidences of discrimination in all forms on campus. Such efforts could include awareness campaigns and clear procedures for reporting discrimination to the school authorities. Of course, it is presumed that these recommendations would be extended to other minority groups on campuses as well. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the results of the study strengthen the poignancy of this project's initial purpose, which was to bring awareness to the needs of a growing minority group that has for the most part escaped attention.

Limitations and Future Research

While the present study serves as a preliminary investigation into the predictors of acculturative stress among international students in South Korea, there are a number of limitations that warrant further research. First and foremost, a follow-up study with a greater sample size needs to be conducted in order to verify the results. Because only a limited number of Mongolian students were attending the university where the study took place, it would be advantageous to conduct another survey at multiple universities. This would also ensure that the results be more representative of the country rather than a single institution.

Likewise, a more detailed survey of the away-from-home Korean students could be compiled in order to provide a more accurate understanding of the stress they encounter from the transition to university. For instance, research in the United States suggests that homesickness increases with the distance between the campus and the student's home.⁵² Accounting for this variable would give a clearer picture as to the importance of physical distance for both Korean students as well as international students.

Regression analysis and more rigorous data management techniques should be used to draw more meaning from the results of a larger scale study. Furthermore, a longitudinal study could be initiated to measure how the results fluctuate over time and ensure that the present study was not abnormal due to factors which were only present at the time the survey was taken. Finally, and most importantly, research on acculturative stress among international students in South Korean universities needs to be expanded to all nationalities in order to better understand the unique needs of a burgeoning minority group. These research efforts should aim to ensure that Korea's commitment to international students goes deeper than simply extending an invitation to study.

PEAR

52 Jerome Tognoli, "Leaving Home: Homesickness, Place Attachment, and Transition Among Residential College Students," *Journal of College Student Psychotherapy* 18, no. 1 (2003): 35-4