A Shared Vision? Understanding Barriers to Internationalization

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Abstract

This mixed methods study identified obstacles to internationalization in the Republic of Korea by examining differences in stakeholder perceptions at a large, private regional university. Questionnaire data (n = 127) and interview transcripts (n = 17) were analyzed. Independent samples t-tests of Korean and international stakeholders (administrators, faculty, and students) and one-way ANOVAs of faculty, students, and administrative staff were conducted to detect differences in the perceived importance and quality of internationalization at the university. Stakeholder groups shared high perceived importance for internationalization, but internationals perceived quality to be lower than Koreans (p = .023), and faculty lower than both students (p = .03) and administrative staff (p = .025). Qualitative analysis revealed differences rooted in inconsistent conceptualizations of internationalization among stakeholder groups. Resentment, confusion, a lack of communication, and low organizational commitment emerged as barriers. Without a change in approach, internationalization efforts at Korean institutions of higher education will likely stall.

Keywords: internationalization, higher education, mixed methods, stakeholder analysis, Korea

Introduction

The magnitude and breadth of international activities in higher education have increased dramatically with internationalization (Mok, 2007). Increased cross-border activity, curriculum reform, and mobility Altbach and Knight (2007) introduce new cultures and ideas to institutions. To

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succeed, higher education institutions (HEIs) must undertake "the process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of post-secondary education" (Knight, 2004, p. 11). This shift in HEIs has also led to a greater emphasis on competition over cooperation, as international education increasingly becomes characterized as an industry that serves as a source of revenue and enhanced reputation (de Wit, 2020). Yet without careful forethought, internationalization can lead to pushback and tension. Integration at the individual, community, and institutional level remains a challenge (Spencer-Oatey & Dauber, 2019).

The Republic of Korea (henceforth, Korea) has implemented internationalization policies to compete in global higher education. Policymakers have focused on establishing a strong presence through internationalization policies that preserve the Korean character (Palmer & Cho, 2012). These efforts have drawn international students and faculty (Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, Korea, 2010). They could achieve internationalization at home by exposing local students and faculty to new cultures (Jon, 2013). Internationalization of higher education in Korea is driven by complex factors within higher education, the environment in which it exists, political and economic developments, and individual expectations for higher education (Yeom, 2019). Academics have experienced structural and cultural adjustments to move Korean HEIs towards a global standard of excellence (Kim, 2005). Meanwhile, internationally mobile faculty (Ghazarian & Youhne, 2015; Gress & Ilon, 2009; Kim, 2016) and students (Jon et al., 2014; Jang, 2017) strive to adjust and succeed within Korean HEIs.

Internationalization policies in Korea have also had unintended consequences. Quantitative indicators of internationalization have shown signs of marked progress (Cho & Palmer, 2013), though concerns remain over whether these quantitative gains have a meaningful impact in practice (Byun et al., 2011). Despite the possibility for positive, sustainable internationalization to occur (Jang, 2017), for many international faculty members, time spent at Korean HEIs ends with frustration and departure (Kim, 2016). This study examines internationalization through a mixed methods design to gauge differences in the perceptions of internationalization held by stakeholders

groups according to their nationality (Korean or international) and status (students, faculty, administrative staff) in order to better define the barriers to internationalization in Korean higher education.

The Challenges of Internationalization

HEIs internationalize for various reasons, but competition for resources is often a motive. As HEIs received less public funding (Mok, 2007), international students replaced reduced state funds. In Korea, a number of government policies encouraged recruiting internationals and implementing English-medium instruction (EMI) to allow HEIs to attract students from beyond the borders of Korea. Although EMI featured in political discourse on higher education in the early 2000s, it took time for policies to take shape. In 2004, the "Study Korea Project" offered financial support of as much as 200 million Korean won (approx. USD 200,000) to HEIs that introduced EMI (Byun et al., 2011). The Study Korea Project continues to be funded and run by the Ministry of Education, within its National Institute for International Education, marketing Korean higher education and serving as a portal for international student applicants (Study in Korea, 2019).

The government's quantitative approach encourages administrators to see recruiting international students as an effort to fill a quota. After reaching that quota, continued support relies upon policy incentives and cost-benefit analysis. As policies shifts to other priorities, administrative attention tapers off. Consequently, HEIs are unlikely to invest in the long term success of internationalization and instead focus on short term benefits (Forbes-Mewett & Nyland, 2013). The government's focus on quantitative measures of internationalization has led to a sudden increase in the number of international students and faculty on Korean campuses (Byun & Kim, 2011), creating some tension and conflict.

EMI and the growing presence of internationals have been seen as a threat to Korean higher education. Critics suggest internationalization policies concentrate on Americanization or Westernization and could facilitate the loss of institutional and national identity (Cho & Palmer, 2013). These views draw on nationalist sentiments that are opposed the government's

internationalist vision and see cultural change as threatening. Rather than imposing a foreign culture, however, internationalization seeks to establish a third culture on campus. Drawing from Pollack and Van Reken's (2009), Third Culture Model, such an interstitial or third culture is based on "shared commonalities of those living an internationally mobile lifestyle" (p. 17). This third culture must be negotiated within the context of an HEI's host culture and can benefit local students and faculty by strengthening their intercultural competence. Yet these changes can still be seen as disempowering to the local population (Park, 2018).

Winning over faculty, students, and administrative staff is essential to successful internationalization. Faculty hold positions of power and influence within HEIs and without their commitment to promote change, the impact will be limited. Altbach and Postiglione (2013) emphasize the role of faculty and document the problem of weak faculty engagement in internationalization efforts. Faculty in Korea have also challenged the stated benefits of internationalizing. Park (2015) criticizes the market influences that promote English as the international language of teaching and research, arguing that they have allowed for a form of academic colonization that marginalizes local faculty.

Ensuring students have positive, meaningful experiences as a result of internationalization is also crucial. Superficial contact among local and international students leads to misunderstandings and negative feelings among all parties (Jon, 2012; Jon, 2013; Lee & Rice, 2007). Evidence from within Korea (Jang, 2017) and from other contexts suggest that this conflict is not inevitable. Lehtomäki et al. (2016) find that cultural diversity can add value to students' learning when managed appropriately. Diversity on campus can build students' competencies. Reaping these benefits is not simple, as evidence from both within and beyond Korea indicates that majority students often resist intercultural interactions and intercultural collaboration (Harrison, 2015; Jon, 2012) and often find intercultural communication inefficient and frustrating (Kimmel & Volet, 2010).

Programs to prepare students and faculty for the intercultural classroom and campus remain in their infancy. Ghazarian and Youhne (2015) illustrate the need for more support for international

faculty and Bodycott (2016) points out a similar need for international students' adjustment to host cultures and institutions. Yet given the emphasis on short term benefits, support services struggle to attract adequate funding (Forbes-Mewett & Nyland, 2013). Further work is needed to define problems in the experiences of stakeholders and identify methods to address common conflicts. This study aims to identify what barriers exist that prevent successful internationalization at Korean HEIs. In identifying the differences in perception among stakeholders of Korean HEIs, the study examines the steps to be taken to ensure that the benefits of internationalization will be successfully realized.

Method

A sample was drawn from a large private, regional university in Korea for the survey (*n*=127) and interviews (*n*=17). The institution hosts roughly 25,000 enrolled students and 1,000 full-time faculty members. It has emphasized internationalization with policies and programs to incentivize international faculty and student recruitment and EMI. These initiatives include the presence of an English-only international college, a Korean language institute, partnerships with overseas institutions, and internationalization criteria in departmental and college evaluations. Questionnaires were collected over seven weeks from March 20 to April 8 and interviews conducted over eight weeks from May 29 to July 25 in 2014. Respondents self-identified as Korean citizens, non-Korean citizens, or dual citizens of Korea and another country (no participants held dual citizenship). The quantitative questionnaire data were tested for differences in perceptions of internationalization between Korean (*n*=77) and international (*n*=50) faculty, students, and staff and among faculty (*n*=50), students (*n*=58), and administrative staff (*n*=19).

Setting

The university is located within a regional, metropolitan area with a historically industrial economy. The private institution was founded by missionaries and is consequently seen as having historically international roots. The president of the institution serves as a champion of its internationalization efforts, having instituted a policy that requires each department on campus to have at least one international faculty member. The university is a large institution, with over 1,000

Korean faculty members, 100 international faculty, and 500 administrative staff. The institution has a population of undergraduate students over 20,000, postgraduate students over 2,000, and international students over 1,000. The institution is famed for its beautiful and scenic campus.

Positionality

This study was conducted by a former international faculty member at a Korean HEI, making the researcher an insider to international faculty members but an outsider to other stakeholder groups. The status of the researcher relative to the subjects and context of a study influences participant responses and the meanings attributed to those responses (Merriam et al., 2001). The use of trained proxies for interviews and transcription of Korean participants in the study was intended to help limit the impact of these effects. However, in the attribution of meaning throughout the coding process, the researcher is an insider among the international faculty and, to a degree, international students, but an outsider to Korean faculty, students, and administrative staff.

Instruments

Data were gathered using an online questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. The questionnaire consisted of 5-point Likert response questions regarding the importance of internationalization and their perceptions of the quality of internationalization at the institution. Additionally, the questionnaire asked open-ended questions about the respondents' understanding of internationalization. These open-ended questions asked participants to describe what characteristics they believed to be important for a successfully internationalized university, what factors they felt benefit efforts to internationalize their institutions, and what factors they felt hinder efforts to internationalize their institution.

Korean participants received a Korean language version, while internationals received an English language version. Both versions included a link to the other language version. The questionnaire was distributed to all full-time faculty and administrative staff, of whom 50 full-time faculty and 19 administrative staff completed the questionnaire. Student responses were gathered

using QR-coded Korean and English language posters and by tablets in dining halls and lounges on campus. A total of 40 Korean and 18 international students completed the questionnaire.

Semi-structured interviews provide greater depth to the questionnaire findings by capturing more nuanced individual experiences and opinions. Interviewees elected to be contacted via the questionnaire or were approached and agreed to the interview at public locations on campus. The interviews each lasted approximately 30 minutes and were held in a place chosen by the interviewees, typically an office, empty classroom, or cafe. Interviews with international faculty and international students were conducted and transcribed in English by the author. Given the potential for the interviewer's identity to influence respondents' answers, the interviews of Korean faculty, students, and administrative staff were conducted and transcribed in Korean by two Korean doctoral students trained in qualitative methods.

Interviews introduced the study and requested consent from the participant. The interviews then covered views and experiences of internationalization. Time was spent asking about relationships with each of the stakeholder groups (Korean students, Korean faculty members, Korean administrative staff, international faculty members, and international students). Interviewees were asked about recommendations they believed could improve internationalization and given an opportunity to raise any other matters that were not covered in the interview.

Analysis

Quantitative data were tested for differences in perception of internationalization among Korean (*n*=77) and international (*n*=50) faculty, students, and staff using independent samples t-tests. Two t-tests were conducted, one for the importance and one for the quality of internationalization. Questionnaire data were also tested for differences in the perceived quality and importance of internationalization among faculty (*n*=50), students (*n*=58), and administrative staff (*n*=19) using one-way ANOVAs. As with the t-tests, ANOVAs were conducted to test for differences in both the perceived importance and quality of internationalization at the HEI.

Qualitative data from the questionnaire and interviews with Korean faculty (*n*=3), international faculty (*n*=4), Korean students (*n*=5), international students (*n*=3), and administrative staff (*n*=3) were examined to better capture personal experiences of internationalization. Qualitative questionnaire data for each stakeholder group were coded separately for themes in the perceptions of internationalization among these groups. The interview data were also coded by stakeholder groups, seeking out key quotations that illustrated the lived experiences of participants. Particular attention was given to conflicting views expressed within groups to ensure diverse experiences of individuals were represented in the findings. These efforts built upon the findings of the quantitative data by providing an intersubjective understanding of internationalization as reported by the participants, describing their differences and similarities.

Findings

Quantitative Results

The independent samples t-test examining differences in the importance of internationalization found that there was no significant difference between the Korean (M = 4.35, SD = .757) and international (M = 4.44, SD = .850) groups; t (127) = -.642, p = .522. Both groups expressed the view that internationalization is very important to the future of their HEI. However, there was a significant difference in perceptions of the quality of internationalization between Koreans (M =3.47, SD = .824), and internationals (M = 3.12, SD = .922); t (126) = 2.30, p = .023. Internationals perceived internationalization to be of a significantly lower quality than their Korean counterparts.

The one-way ANOVAs examining perceptions of the quality and importance of internationalization among students, faculty, and administrative staff found no statistically significant difference between groups (F (2,126) = 1.22, p = .298). In the one-way ANOVA testing perceived quality of internationalization, the assumption of homogeneity of variance was violated, and as a result, a Welch F test was conducted. There was a statistically significant difference between groups' perceived quality determined by the Welch F test (F (2,126) = 2.22, p = .01). A

Games-Howell post-hoc test revealed a perception of the quality of internationalization was statistically significantly higher among students (3.492 ± .972, p = .03) and administrative staff (3.556 ± .616, p = .025) compared with faculty (3.059 ± .785). There was no difference in the perception of quality between students and administrative staff groups (p = .941). Thus, faculty members' perceived internationalization to be of a significantly lower quality than both students and administrative staff.

Themes in the Questionnaire Responses

The coding of the qualitative questionnaire responses revealed the themes of culture, curriculum, faculty, language, necessity, networking, opposition, students, support, and quality in the comments of respondents regarding their perceptions of internationalization. The presence of these themes varied in the responses of each of the stakeholder groups, as described below.

Culture. While all of the stakeholder groups mentioned culture as important to the success of internationalization, the scope of the cultural change required varied among the groups. Korean students and staff seemed to hold the narrowest view of this change in culture, with the focus primarily on student life. The administrative staff spoke of creating an academic environment that would allow students from diverse cultural backgrounds to come and study. Korean students described this change in culture at internationalized universities as an opportunity for local students to experience new languages and cultures in a way that could help to broaden their perspectives.

The Korean faculty, international faculty, and international students defined the change at internationalized universities more broadly, including changes to the administrative culture and specifically describing desired characteristics for an internationalized HEI culture. Korean faculty members tended to emphasize the need for an open administrative structure, widespread intercultural competence, and the presence and participation of diverse cultures in all aspects of university life. International faculty and international students shared these views. Still, they went further to discuss equalizing power structures, stressing the need to "eliminate differences" such that individuals are treated similarly regardless of cultural background. The international faculty

members, in particular, mentioned the need include all cultures in academic life in the decision making process. Thus, while all groups shared the view that changing HEI culture is essential, the breadth of that change varied according to status.

Curriculum. All stakeholder groups mentioned curriculum as important to internationalization, albeit from different perspectives. Staff and Korean students tied these changes to breadth and quality, citing the need, as one administrative staff member put it, for "a curriculum worth sharing with the world." Korean students mentioned internationalizing the curriculum as important to developing personal capabilities and skills to a global standard. Korean and International faculty focused on the need to ensure that changes were not merely superficial, and, as one Korean faculty member wrote, "not some one-time event, but an internationalization that extends into teaching and learning." International students also mentioned these concerns, but focused on the need for greater flexibility in the curriculum and integration of domestic and international students. As one student wrote, "mixed classes with regular and foreign students instead of separation" would be necessary.

Faculty. All the stakeholders but staff emphasized the role of faculty members for successful internationalization. These groups agreed that faculty members need to engage in research and community service with international scope and appeal. To these ends, faculty should feel encouraged to engage in international research communities and take part in international exchange programs, as well as need to be able to teach and communicate effectively in English. Further, these internationalized faculty members should be engaged as role models and mentors in the HEI community.

Language. Korean students did not mention foreign language proficiency as an important characteristic for internationalization, and language was hardly mentioned by staff except for one response that characterized internationalization as simply "studying English." Korean faculty, international faculty, and international students all emphasized the need for broad-based support

for English language use. Faculty and international student respondents tended to emphasize this need not only for teaching and learning but also for research and campus life.

Necessity. Among Korean faculty, students, and staff, internationalization was often described as necessary for the future. The respondents wrote that internationalization of HEIs played into the larger, inevitable trend of globalization. In the words of one administrator, "given the decreasing numbers of potential domestic students, internationalization is essential to the sustainability of the university." Respondents suggested that as part of the overall process of economic development, internationalization represents the next step for Korean society. These respondents described internationalization not as a choice, but as an obligation.

Networking. Korean and international faculty expressed a nuanced view of networking relative to the Korean students, international students, and administrative staff. Among students and administration, HEI networking for internationalization serves the function of creating opportunities for students for international exposure and jobs. Faculty, rather, saw HEI networking in terms of education, employment, research, and service. One international faculty wrote that a successfully internationalized HEI creates networks "to provide not only exchange student programs but also to pool resources and ideas." Faculty members suggested that with the proper infrastructure in place to support these kinds of connections, an HEI would attract high quality scholars and students.

Opposition. Among Korean faculty and Korean students, some expressed opposition to internationalization in three ways. The first, most common expression of opposition argued internationalization "doesn't really meaning anything at all." While only one Korean faculty member responded in this way, a considerable number of students provided a very similar response. This expression presented uncertainty and cynicism regarding the motives behind internationalization.

The second expression of opposition argued that internationalization may be important for only some academic disciplines. These respondents emphasized the need to protect particular disciplines and departments from excessive internationalization efforts. The third form of opposition

was directly expressed by only students. Internationalization was something "I cannot escape." As another student wrote, "without internationalization, I will be left behind." These responses play into the theme of the necessity described above, but also reveal underlying insecurity. These findings indicate that some feel threatened by internationalization efforts.

Students. International faculty, international students, and administrative staff all mentioned the role of students in successful internationalization. Administrative staff emphasized the quality of international students, citing the need for students from diverse cultural backgrounds who can succeed in the global labor market. International students saw the role of students in internationalization as social, emphasizing the need for everyone to be open to others and internationally aware. International faculty members incorporated both of these views, expressing the need for students with both high potential and an open mind.

Support. Korean faculty, international faculty, and international students all mentioned support services for internationalization. Korean faculty and international students focused on the need for services supporting language skills, intercultural understanding, and exchange programs. International students mentioned the need for communicating current information as a key to success. International faculty expressed concern over their perceived lack of support in areas such as research, local business outreach, and visa matters. They mentioned a desire for stronger intercultural competence and foreign language ability among the administrative staff. As one international faculty member wrote, successful internationalization includes "international students, faculty AND administration" (emphasis theirs).

Quality. The issue of internationalization as a measure of quality emerged in the questionnaire responses of Korean faculty members and administrative staff. For administrative staff, internationalization was equated with movement towards greater educational quality and described, in the words of one administrator, as "the basic competitiveness of the university." Korean faculty often shared this view, but linked quality back to networking, explaining that internationalization would improve access to world class ideas and perspectives, and allow the

institution to draw on resources beyond the domestic scope. These Korean faculty members argued that in successful international networking, the Korean higher education system could become a cultural resource with great relevance in contemporary society.

Stakeholder Interview Results

The interviews better define the perspectives of the stakeholders in the themes that emerged as described below.

Korean faculty

Interviewees expressed frustration over cultural conflict in broader organizational life. In the words of one junior faculty member: "The culture, overall, is very traditional, how should I say, bureaucratic? Or should I say steeped in seniority? Or always giving precedence to elders? (Korean Faculty Member B)" The interviewees described this culture as a barrier to the development of an international mindset on campus. As one faculty member put it: "It's a little amusing… um, well, those foreign professors don't really understand Korean society, Korean… tradition and culture [...] they often become like lone wolves. (Korean Faculty Member B)" As a result of this cultural divide, the interviewees described two distinct types of international faculty members: the majority who are temporary and live in separation, and those who seek to understand and take part in the mainstream organizational culture.

Discussion of language was predominantly lamentations over the inability to speak and lack of will to learn even basic Korean among most international faculty members and students. However, there were also some expressions of hope for the future based on the perceived greater English language fluency of younger Korean staff, who could help to improve communication.

In terms of networking, Korean faculty focused on the need to expand outbound programs for Korean stakeholders, specifically for students and administrative staff. Korean faculty pointed out such efforts would broaden opportunities available to students and

change the organizational culture by exposing staff to alternative approaches in higher education.

Korean Students

Interviewees described surprise and gradual acclimatization to seeing so many foreigners on campus. They talked about Korean society opening up to the world and the inevitability of internationalization in higher education. Most presented these experiences as positive. However, they also described feeling unprepared by the university to study with international students and faculty members. As one student described: "Rather than lots of separated efforts, there needs to be a little bit more of an overarching program (Korean Student A)."

Not all students saw internationalization in a positive light. For instance: "First we need to get our own stuff right, then we can think about internationalization. I mentioned it before, but there are departments that need internationalization, but also other more important departments related to Korean matters (Korean Student D)."

The interviews revealed indications of some discomfort, desire for support, and concerns over internationalization, particularly the worry that local programs suffer as a result of internationalization.

Administrative Staff

Interviewees focused on the need for internationalization at the university, cultural differences and conflict, resistance to change, and the lack of resources to provide adequate support. Interviewees described internationalization from two perspectives. The first, more positive view, framed internationalization as an opportunity for the institution to expand and gain recognition by leveraging international resources. The second view presented internationalization as a last resort to ensure survival in an increasingly hostile landscape for private HEIs. As one interviewee described: "It's very fierce…um… now we can feel…fear for our survival…that feeling has gotten very strong" (Administrative Staff Member C).

Administrative staff described internal conflict in the organizational culture in resistance to change. Universally, the administrative staff expressed frustration with foreign professors and students as not understanding Korean culture and insistent upon following the practices of their home culture. Many administrators expressed the view that foreign faculty need to learn Korean language and culture. However, others also expressed frustration over the stagnant culture that resists innovation among Korean faculty and administrative staff. In contrast to her own (and others') expressed the desire for international faculty to learn Korean language and culture, one administrative staff member stated: "... I think foreign faculty members have the biggest role to play in internationalization. Unfortunately, instead of bringing their global standard, um, uh…I think that foreign faculty members are becoming really Koreanized (Administrative Staff Member B)".

So while some expressed frustration over international faculty members' inability to adapt to the local organizational culture in administrative matters, others expressed concern over international faculty members' perceived adoption of Korean practices.

Administrative staff also expressed concern over the lack of resources to provide adequate support for internationalization. Interviewees mentioned overload in routine work that prevented them from focusing on matters they considered to be more important. One staff member pointed out that only seven staff were responsible for all international affairs and expressed concern over the lack of planning. Another interviewee linked these problems back to the instrumental view of internationalization, stating:

> First, we just hired a lot of them [international faculty] to improve our score in internationalization [in government assessments]. Now the headcount, the headcount is high and our score is high so our ability to compete for public funds got easier. So that's how we did it, but now we need to just figure everything out. (Administrative Staff Member A)

International Faculty

Interviews focused on a sense of isolation, concerns about the opposition, and a desire for greater support. International faculty members talked about the culture of the university and their struggle to find a place. As one described:

> With my background and my genuine desire to be involved in [the university's] life, I have the feeling of, this kind of, this missing connection, the, uh, missing part of some mechanism that should work, as a team, but in fact, it fails every time there's an attempt to unite the different parts… (International Faculty Member B)

Responses implied anxiety over opposition and a sense that internationalization was not a priority for all faculty and staff. One respondent described his understanding of the cause of this opposition among Korean colleagues:

> Departments usually have quite a bit of administrative work, especially for younger professors. And they need to kind of spread that around. And when you hire international faculty members who don't speak Korean and aren't familiar with the organizational culture at the university, you create a situation where…you have fewer bodies [laughter] basically, to spread the administrative work around. (International Faculty Member C)

International faculty argued that specialized English-language support integrated into the curriculum would be necessary for Korean students and more English-language support would be needed for some faculty members and staff. Many mentioned that international faculty members need access to resources that could help with intercultural understanding when dealing with Korean constituents of the university. Lastly, some of the interviewees expressed concern over the inconsistent ability level among students from different departments or programs.

International Students

These interviews varied more in the experiences described when compared with other stakeholder groups. While international students tended to mention similar positive and negative experiences, the intensity of the experiences varied. They talked about a culture in conflict with their daily lives, imperfect support systems, the role of faculty, and disappointment with the curriculum.

International students frequently mentioned their concerns over practical matters such as the availability of foods for their dietary restrictions, cleanliness, curfew policy, and climate control. They also all mentioned their struggle to break into mainstream student life beyond the international student subculture. As one interviewee lamented: "... there are student clubs that just say no to the foreign students. [...] they just say things like 'We don't take foreigners.' Are you kidding me?" (International Student C). The international students had varying experiences of support. All expressed thankfulness for a genuine desire to help among others, but some felt the system completely left them to fend for themselves. All interviewees expressed hope for more comprehensive, systematic support for international students adjusting to campus life in the future.

International students also had different views on faculty support provided to them. They suggest that individual faculty members respond differently to the presence of international students and the students' experiences vary as a result. International students' cultural backgrounds seem to set different expectations for faculty behavior. For some students, they saw both Korean and international faculty members as very helpful, while others lamented one or both groups as being unavailable.

Students who mentioned the curriculum pointed out concerns over the classroom experience. As one international student described having heard from his peers:

> The other things that students said, complained about, were just like what am I learning in this class? What am I learning? Not so much in due to part because of the English skills of our Korean classmates were not up to par, but mostly because they're just exhausted. They're falling asleep in their chairs and the professor is ruling with an iron fist. (International Student B)

This unfavorable view of the classroom experience was not shared by all international students, but the expectations of some left them disappointed with their time in some classrooms at the Korean university.

Discussion

This mixed method study sought to determine barriers to internationalization in Korean higher education. Quantitative findings indicate that: (1) all stakeholder groups share a similarly high perceived importance for internationalization at the HEI, (2) internationals perceived internationalization to be of a statistically significantly lower quality than Koreans, and (3) faculty members perceived internationalization to be of a statistically significantly lower quality than both students and administrative staff. Qualitative findings revealed these differences in perceived quality are rooted in varying conceptualizations of internationalization among individuals and stakeholder groups. Further, the qualitative analysis found resentment, confusion, miscommunication, a low degree of commitment, and a lack of consensus as barriers to internationalization.

In questionnaire and interview comments, internationals expressed desire for programs that would support internationals and facilitate change in the organizational culture. Their Korean counterparts, meanwhile, described internationalization as inescapable, and not necessarily positive. Many Korean stakeholders mentioned their satisfaction with the high numbers of international faculty and students on campus, but also a sense of discomfort and confusion. Differences persist over how much and what kind of change should be expected of local Korean and international stakeholders. Many Korean stakeholders expressed the desire for further assimilation of internationals into Korean culture, while internationals expressed a desire for intercultural competence among their Korean counterparts. Without any clear means by which to reconcile these conflicting visions, the process of internationalization seems to have stagnated.

In this state, the view of the majority holds sway. The status quo appears to be an unspoken expectation for assimilation by most, but not all, of Korean stakeholders. In the quantitative findings, Korean stakeholders saw internationalization as being of higher quality, given the growing numbers of internationals on campus as an important first step in accessing global resources. Meanwhile, international stakeholders perceived internationalization to be of a lower quality due to the lack of cultural change at their host institution. Diversity of views exists on either side. In fact, some staff expressed concern over the pressure for assimilation placed on international faculty members. They

described this assimilation as subverting internationalization efforts. Without a clear plan, the local culture continues to dominate organizational life. To achieve progress, the university must more clearly define its vision and build consensus over that vision among the stakeholder groups.

This finding dovetails with the results of prior research on internationalization in Korean higher education. Schenck et al. (2013) found that Confucian cultural background played an important part in the ability of internationals to adjust to Korean higher education. Internationals from other Confucian heritage cultural backgrounds adjusted more easily to Korean higher education. Further, Jon (2012) documented power imbalances on campus that favor the norms and values of the Korean culture. Kim (2016) described how this disempowerment could lead to a flight risk, focusing particularly on Western faculty, though her findings may also have implications for faculty from other cultural backgrounds as well as international students.

The qualitative results indicate that stakeholders of different statuses expressed different conceptualizations of internationalization. Faculty tended to hold the broadest understanding, incorporating organizational culture, curriculum, the role of faculty, language, institutional networking, administrative support, and improved quality. Meanwhile, students and administrative staff tended to express a narrower understanding of internationalization. Students focused on English language and student support issues. Administrative staff saw internationalization as simply the increased the presence of internationals on campus, and their comments suggested varying degrees of opposition and surprise over requests for changes to the organizational culture beyond basic language support. Internationalization held different meanings for administrators, faculty, and students.

The broader and more comprehensive understanding of internationalization expressed by many faculty members may explain their significantly lower perception of the quality of internationalization when compared to perceptions of students and administrative staff in the quantitative analysis. Faculty link the process of internationalization to holistic change across the organization. Regardless of cultural background, they anticipated a deeper, almost transformative

process that extends beyond providing higher education to international students and hosting professors from outside of Korea. Building upon this view may aid efforts to find a way forward for internationalization.

All groups expressed concern over the lack of support and guidance. Respondents pointed out this shortfall and described how it contributed to a sense of uncertainty, helplessness, or even anger. While respondents' expectations deviated, all groups expressed the desire for greater direction. This result illustrates issues stemming from policy focus on quantitative indicators (Byun & Kim, 2011; Cho & Palmer, 2013) and a broader need for greater support (Van Mol, 2019). Given the uncertainty over the government's long-term commitment to rewarding internationalization at higher education institutions, together with the underlying economic rationale for pursuing internationalization, the issue of organizational commitment remains an important concern. Further progress for hinges upon the clear commitment of not just physical, but also political capital. HEIs must strive to establish a shared vision that allows individuals, regardless of background or status, to understand their role within the internationalization needs of their institution.

Limitations

The study was limited by self-selection bias and a low response rate. Those participants that chose to give interviews or respond to the questionnaire may have been prompted to do so due to particular experiences or circumstances that conceal other understandings of internationalization. Further, the study only drew on the experience of the stakeholders at a single HEI in Korea, potentially amplifying or obscuring issues related to the specific context of that HEI. Further work would be needed to determine to what extent the findings of this study can be generalized to internationalization efforts more broadly.

Conclusion

Successful internationalization requires the interaction and renegotiation of academic cultures and practices at both the individual- and HEI-level (Otten, 2009). For internationalization to

succeed, HEIs need to allow for the renegotiation of expectations for the organization and the roles of their constituent individuals.

Without a change in approach, internationalization efforts at Korean institutions of higher education will likely stall. While the presence of internationals on campus is an important first step, further work is needed to integrate these newcomers into university life and build consensus over a shared vision for internationalization in higher education. This need exists at HEIs around the world that are confronted with growing numbers of international students that have led to uncertainty and, in many cases, segregation of certain stakeholder groups.

Author Note

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