Investigating Ways to Reform International Education in Confucian Contexts: A Case Study of South Korean Higher Education

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to explore issues of international education within a Confucian context. Fifteen international learners were purposively sampled from a Korean university; these participants were then given an extensive open-ended interview to elicit information about educational experiences. Data analysis revealed five main issues: a dichotomy between Korean and international learners, a dichotomy between Chinese and other international students, a "sink-or-swim" philosophy toward international education, cultural/behavioral differences, and a lack of cultural understanding. Review of the issues revealed an underlying conflict between Confucian and other diverse philosophical perspectives. Although international learners from Confucian backgrounds understood and followed the existing hierarchical social system, other international learners appeared to have difficulty adjusting, which left them isolated from their peers. The data suggests that new forms of pedagogy and extracurricular activities are needed to promote intercultural communication. Because efforts to increase communication may be hampered by strict hierarchical relationships and an emphasis on harmony mandated by the Confucian philosophy, a tripartite system of behavioral training is needed for professors, Confucian learners, and other diverse learners. Such reform may significantly increase the effectiveness of international education within Asian countries that embrace a Confucian philosophical paradigm.

Keywords: higher education, Korea, confucian, international education, diverse learners

1. Introduction

In an increasingly globalised world, where population movements across national boundaries have become more common (United Nations Statistical Division, 2006), attention has become increasingly focused upon the difficulties posed by the education of people from differing racial, cultural, linguistic, and religious backgrounds (Oh & Hahn, 2009; US Government Accountability Office, 2009). In an attempt to address such notable challenges, Banks (2008) outlined key benchmarks required for the development of an effective multicultural school.

According to Banks (2008), effective multicultural schools must promote teacher excellence through liberal recruiting practices that increase diversity and the implementation of in-service training to promote culturally-responsive pedagogical practices (Ambe, 2006; Armour-Thomas & Gopaul-McNicol, 1998; Collins, 1992; Gay, 2002; Irvine, 2003; Kayes, 2006; Ladson-Billings, 2001). Extensive training in multicultural pedagogy may help teachers avoid didactic, teacher-led instruction which can impede the expression of diverse perspectives (Banks, 2008; Orlich, Harder, Callahan, Trevisan & Brown, 2009). It can also educate teachers about innovative strategies which facilitate discussion, self reflection, and conflict resolution (Garmon, 1998; Gurin, Nagda & Lopez, 2004; Montgomery, 2001; Nagda, 2006).

In addition to teacher-based requirements for effective multicultural schools, Banks (2008) outlines the importance of making curricula transformational and action focused. Changing curricula in this way may help eliminate the hegemonic devices that often persist within social institutions of power and leadership (Jay, 2003). In addition to textbooks, handouts and other materials should present diverse racial, ethnic, cultural and religious

perspectives to help all learners articulate their knowledge of subject matter more effectively (Abril, 2006; Banks, 2006; Banks, 2008).

Yet another requirement of effective multicultural schools is the utilization of successful monitoring strategies for the implementation of multicultural goals (Banks, 2008). Because educational reforms directed at diverse learners may not always be successful (Borman & Kimball, 2005), monitoring strategies must be employed to test the effectiveness of policy implementation. This ensures that changes in a program can be made when necessary (Ross, Smith, Alberg & Lowther, 2004). As pointed out by Rivera (2007), care should be taken when reviewing statistics so that they are not used to justify policies, punish schools, or discipline staff for political reasons.

A final requirement for an effective multicultural school is the utilization of effective communication (Banks, 2008). In addition to communication among administrative staff, teachers, and students, schools must communicate extensively with the parents of international learners. Because parents of diverse learners may come from low socioeconomic backgrounds or have employment obligations that preclude frequent school visits (DeNavas-Walt, Proctor & Lee, 2006; Presser, 2005), ensuring parental participation is a challenging task (Comer, 2004; McGee-Banks, 2007). Nonetheless, research documenting the positive outcomes of parental intervention illustrates the importance of such communication (Comer, 2004; Guryan, Hurst & Kearney, 2008).

While Banks' (2008) benchmarks for effective multicultural schools have been deemed effective within Western contexts (Jackson, 2004), research reveals that social barriers are preventing such directives from infiltrating the South Korean educational system (Hong, 2010). Strong Confucian traditions in South Korea now pose a major hurdle for the implementation of successful multicultural educational strategies, because the philosophical paradigm, which promotes harmony and obedience to superiors, appears diametrically opposed to beliefs that value difference. Hence, more research is needed to explore multicultural education within Asian contexts where traditional Confucian traditions persist.

2. Literature Review

Contemporary South Korean society has placed a strong emphasis on education. Currently, primary and secondary students in Korea regularly attend privately run academies for further instruction, and approximately 75% of all primary and secondary school children take classes from private tutors (Kim & Lee, 2010). The results of this educational commitment have been impressive, with the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development's Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) ranking Korea second in the world for 15 year olds in reading, mathematics and science in 2009 (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, 2009). Despite the fact that education has a prominent place in modern society, efforts to provide effective multicultural education are not well documented.

One reason for problems with the implementation of multicultural curricula is the perpetuation of stereotypical views that depict Korea as an ethnically and racially homogenous nation (Lee, 2009). This prevalent view has been interwoven within the fabric of social studies curricula, which report Korea to be a monolithic society with one language, history, and ethnicity (Choi, 2010). As cited by Kang (2010), the implementation of this type of curriculum has ingrained a form of exclusive racism through promoting a strong sense of nationalism, "regarded as a virtue in society, but … a vice for others who are not included in this circle" (p. 296). Although more recently constructed social studies curricula include elements of foreign culture, research suggests that the content still primarily reflects the implementation of a contributions approach (Nam, 2008). Because of these shortcomings, researchers have called for the incorporation of curricular reforms that transform Korean society through promoting understanding of social changes and ethnic diversity (Choi, 2010; Nam, 2008).

Another reason for problems with the implementation of multicultural curricula within South Korea is the perpetuation of the Confucian philosophy. According to this philosophy, members of society are expected to harmoniously fulfill their roles within a strict hierarchical social system (Yang, Zheng, & Li, 2006). Moreover, subordinates must show respect and unquestioning loyalty to their superiors (Seo & Koro-Ljungberg, 2005). Due to the prevalence of this philosophical paradigm, students, as subordinates in the classroom, are often discouraged from asking questions, taking responsibility for their own learning, or pursuing a reciprocal relationship with their teachers (Oak & Martin, 2003). As a result, learners often exhibit communication problems, refusing to speak and appearing to be overly passive (Lee & Carrasquillo, 2006; Seo & Koro-Ljungberg, 2005). Because Korean learners do not often participate or critically examine issues within a classroom setting, the implementation of a multicultural curriculum, which requires a great deal of self-reflection and interpersonal communication, can be a daunting task.

Regardless of the influence of maladaptive views on multicultural education, other racial and ethnic groups have been making an entrance into the society since the late 1980's (Kim & Kim, 2012; Lee, 2003). During the early stages of migration, migrants came primarily for economic reasons; from the turn of the century, however, there have been a large number of female marriage migrants from Vietnam, the Philippines and other South East Asian nations (Bélanger, Lee & Wang, 2010). Many of the offspring of these multicultural marriages are now starting to enter the educational system, and there is considerable concern that they may fail to perform as well as their ethnically 'pure' Korean peers (Kang, 2010).

Due to the contemporary challenges that now face South Korean schools, more research is needed. In accordance with this need, issues concerning the education of international learners within a South Korean educational context have been explored within this paper. Through a transposition of the results more broadly, it is hoped that new, pragmatic methods to enhance international education can be developed for South Korean schools, as well as other Asian schools sharing common cultural, historical, and educational backgrounds.

3. Research Questions

To examine contemporary issues related to international education in South Korea, the following questions have been posed:

1) What are the current challenges facing international learners in South Korean universities?

2) What steps can be taken to better serve the needs of these international learners?

Through the investigation of these questions, new avenues for the reform and improvement of international education may be developed.

4. Methodology

In order to assess issues associated with international learners at South Korean universities, a qualitative open-ended interview was developed. This interview was designed to elicit information about essential aspects of multicultural education, as outlined by Banks (2008). Participants were selected from a moderate-sized university two hours south of Seoul, the capital city of South Korea. The university, which has a student body of more than 14,000 students, enrolls nearly a thousand international students from 38 different nationalities.

4.1 Instrument

To gain a holistic perspective of the multiple variables impacting international learners, a qualitative approach was used. An open-ended questionnaire was developed to address key benchmarks outlined by Banks (2008), which are related to teaching quality, curricula, and monitoring strategies.

To develop the questionnaire, three English language instructors, each with more than 10 years of teaching experience in the TESOL field, independently developed questions to assess each target benchmark. Questions from the combined pool, which reached nearly 90 questions, were then evaluated collectively by the group to assess validity. Questions that were collectively judged to be invalid were removed, along with other questions that appeared subjective or leading. Discriminating questions in this way was meant to ensure that the interview elicited natural responses without introducing interviewer bias. As with questions that were invalid or subjective, duplicate questions were eliminated. The resulting questionnaire (Appendix A) included 61 questions and was separated into 6 parts. Part 1 provided background information (Country of Origin, Age, etc.) for the interpretation of responses to other question categories, which covered aspects of multicultural education such as teaching quality, curriculum design, and monitoring strategies.

4.2 Participants

Fifteen international students on campus were purposively selected for the qualitative interview because they comprised a wide range of linguistic, cultural, and educational backgrounds (Table 1).

Table 1. Background information of participants

Participant #	Country of Origin	Age	Major	Gender
1.	Ghana (Ewe ethnicity)	25	Business Administration and TESOL	Male
2.	Ghana (Ewe ethnicity)	27	Business Administration and TESOL	Male
3.	Morocco	24	Computer Engineering	Male
4.	Kenya	22	Computer Engineering	Female
5.	China	23	Korean Language	Male
6.	China	26	Computer Science	Male
7.	France	23	Korean Language	Male
8.	France	21	Korean Language	Female
9.	Tajikistan	20	Korean Language	Male
10.	Tajikistan	25	TESOL	Male
11.	Mongolia	20	English Language and Literature	Female
12.	Mongolia	22	English Language and Literature	Female
13.	Mongolia	22	Business and TESOL	Female
14.	Mongolia	24	TESOL	Female
15.	Romania	27	International Trade	Male

As revealed in Table 1, the participants came from several different countries within Asia, the Middle East, Europe, and Africa. Ages ranged from 20 to 27 years old, with 6 of the 15 participants being female. While majors varied, they were predominantly concentrated in the areas of business, computer science, and language instruction.

4.3 Procedure

After the instrument was constructed, selected participants were divided and assigned to the three researchers conducting the study. Only researchers who had not served as the participants' professors were selected, so that learners could feel more comfortable voicing complaints. Prior to the interviews, participants were told that all information obtained from the interview would be kept confidential. Moreover, they were encouraged to talk freely about their campus experiences as international students without fear of any reprisal. They were then asked to read and sign a consent form attesting to the fact he or she understood the research and the nature of his or her involvement in it.

Following each interview, participants' answers were recorded and transcribed. Where necessary, students were asked further questions via email and/or in person. The transcribed answers were then analyzed by the individual researchers. Following the analyses, all three researchers met together to compare data and categorize complaints and comments. Answers were holistically examined along with background information to ascertain main themes in the issues voiced by international learners and their associated causes. Suggestions to improve existing issues for international learners were then proposed.

5. Results

Review of the interview results revealed that issues voiced by international learners centered around five main themes: a dichotomy between Korean and international learners, a dichotomy between Chinese and other international students, a "sink-or-swim" philosophy toward international education, cultural/behavioral differences, and a lack of cultural understanding (See Table 1). Characteristics and associated examples of the issues within each category are further described within the following sections of this paper.

Table 2. Issues of international students

Problem Type	Examples
1) Dichotomy between Korean and International Students	● Korean culture is portrayed as the best in the world
	● Superficial questions about the students culture
	● Perceived discrimination from Koreans
	● Reluctance of Korean students to interact with international peers
2) Dichotomy between Chinese and Other	● Perceived segregation from Chinese by other international students

International Students	- Professors appear to assist Chinese students more (provide translation) - Chinese students appear more comfortable in Confucian teacher-centric classrooms (they feel are treated equally) - Other than Chinese, no language resources are provided (more English resources requested)
3) Lack of Assistance to International Learners ("sink-or-swim" philosophy toward international education)	- Students are given inadequate Korean language training - Non-Chinese international students forced to seek out resources in their language using the Internet or Books - Very little or no class discussion - Very little elicitation of opinion by professors - Refusal by professors to assist students after class - Over-reliance on lecture - Overuse of PowerPoint
4) Negative Perceptions of Korean Cultural and Behavioral Differences	- Korean and Chinese students interpreted as unhelpful or unfriendly - Differing teaching style of Korean professors (teaching details first and expressing the main idea at the end) - Maintaining the appearance of a strong "work ethic" by spending long, albeit sometime unproductive, hours in the library or other locations
5) Lack of Cultural Sensitivity and Understanding	- Korean stereotypical views of some countries as underdeveloped and poor - Lack of sensitivity toward cultural differences

5.1 Dichotomy between Korean and International Learners

One issue that emerged from the data analysis was a perceived dichotomy between Korean and international learners. Six participants complained about a lack of effort on the part of Korean learners to communicate and develop friendships with international peers. A French learner explained, for example, "They (Korean learners) never invite us anywhere. They have no interest in us. We would talk about the problems at first, like we want to meet Koreans, but they did not do anything to try to include us at all. Now I don't even try to say hello anymore." Results suggest this problem is not a language issue, since both Mongolian and Moroccan participants complained that even Korean language proficiency did not allow for the cultivation of friendships with Korean peers.

Concerning the failure to seek out or accept friendships with international learners, a Ghanaian participant explained that the Korean ethos is, "you're not part of us." Many students perceived this attitude to be elitist and discriminatory. A French participant, for example, explained that Korean culture is portrayed as "the best in the world." Other participants from Ghana and China also reported discriminatory attitudes towards their home countries, citing that Korean learners considered their countries to be inferior.

5.2 Dichotomy between Chinese and Other International Learners

Like the dichotomy between Korean and international learners, many non-Chinese international students perceived a dichotomy with their Chinese peers. Seven of the thirteen (non-Chinese) participants voiced concerns about Chinese international learners. A French participant, for example, explained that these students "don't try to talk to me. At first I tried to talk to them but now I gave up as they have no interest. The professors know but they can do nothing. The students make a joke in Chinese but me and the professor don't understand. We are alone." Participant 9 from Tajikistan cited a similar problem, claiming that Chinese learners would not interact with him due to lifestyle differences; this learner felt that his Islamic-based belief banning the consumption of alcohol prevented interaction with his Chinese peers, who often discussed drinking on the weekends.

In addition to perceptions of a dichotomy, non-Chinese participants voiced concerns about preferential treatment of Chinese learners. A participant from Ghana, for example, explained that the international student body is, "not an international body, but a Chinese body. All focus is directed toward the Chinese because of their number."

This view was expounded upon by a French participant, who further explained that, "They (the professors) help the Chinese because there are many more than us. I am the only foreigner in the class. They have Chinese translations and they write Chinese characters on the board. I understand because there are 30 Chinese and me, but it's not fair to me." Concerning this issue, a Romanian participant cited the need to seek out resources through Google, and called for the provision of both English and Chinese definitions when bilingual resources were provided. In addition to preferential treatment in the classroom, participants from France and Mongolia both complained that dormitory announcements were provided in Korean and Chinese, but not English.

5.3 Lack of Assistance from Professors and Curricula

Most international students voiced concerns about a lack of assistance from professors and curricula. Problems concerning the professor and his or her instructional style were a primary concern. Eight participants cited that lecture and PowerPoint presentations were used almost exclusively, with little or no class discussion or group activities. Concerning the teacher-centered approach, Participant 1 from Ghana claimed, "They (the professors) use PPT too much. Teach me! Don't read to me!" He continued to explain that special teaching strategies to help learners better understand class content were needed, such as diagrams or visuals. With the exception of language learning classes, only one participant reported the use of group work. Participant 4 from Kenya reported that group work was used to facilitate a computer programming class. Because this work was assigned for homework, however, participants merely interacted through media such as email. She felt it would be better to do group work in class, so that the professor could ensure everyone was working together.

While non-Chinese international learners tended to heavily disparage the use of lecture in Korean classes, Chinese learners appeared much less critical of this teaching style. Participant 6, for example, voiced no concerns about his computer science classes. Although this learner identified a strict emphasis on lecture and a lack of participation, he felt the teaching methods matched his own learning style. While the other Chinese participant voiced a need for more discussion in class, he also explained that the lecture-based teaching style was similar to that in his native China. He felt that the teacher-centric form of pedagogy was acceptable.

In addition to overemphasis of lecture, professors were criticized for not assisting the international learners when help was requested. Five participants, who came from the countries of Romania, Mongolia, France, and Morocco, indicated that professors had refused to help them. A Romanian participant reported that he began searching for answers to his questions independently after three unsuccessful attempts to elicit help from Korean professors after class. A Moroccan participant even reported that he was rebuked after asking for assistance. The professor told this learner, "I'm the professor. Ask your classmates." Like the Romanian and Moroccan participants, both Mongolian and French learners complained that professors did not help them understand lecture materials, leading them to conclude that their professors were distant and unfriendly. In contrast to such criticism, both Chinese learners agreed that their Korean professors were friendly, and that it was the responsibility of students to seek out translations and extra assistance outside of class. One Chinese participant commented, "I talk with my Korean classmates in private and they feel the same. If we have a question, I will do the research by myself, not ask the professor."

A final concern of international learners was the inadequate support from classes and curricula designed to facilitate transition to mainstream classes. Two students from Mongolia and Tajikistan cited only superficial coverage of other countries within language curricula. In addition to this criticism, 5 learners (China (2), Mongolia (2), and Morocco (1)) expressed concerns about insufficient Korean language training before mainstreaming. Two Mongolian learners cited having only one semester of Korean language training before being mainstreamed into English literature classes, which were conducted in Korean; a Moroccan learner received only 8 months of language training before being forced to take a compulsory Korean Literature class.

5.4 Negative Perceptions of Korean Cultural and Behavioral Differences

Perceptions of cultural differences and misunderstandings were another prevalent theme detected within the interview data. Six participants (Mongolia (3), Tajikistan (1), Kenya (1), and Morocco (1)) complained that Korean students did not initiate or participate in discussion with professors or international students; two participants, similarly, complained that Chinese students did not initiate discussions with professors or non-Chinese international learners. Perceived reasons for this lack of discussion differed. Participant 14 from Mongolia, for example, felt that this failure to speak was due to lack of confidence, while Participant 3 from Morocco believed Korean learners were not interested in helping international students. One participant explained that although questions are acceptable and encouraged by teachers in Kenya, she began to participate much less in class after coming to Korea, feeling a tacit pressure from Korean peers to remain quiet.

Yet another cultural difference perceived by the participants was a disparity in the method of organizing a lecture. Participant 14, from Mongolia, for example, identified a fundamental difference in the Korean professors' teaching style. She explained that in Mongolian classes, professors would explain the main ideas first and then follow up this discussion with supporting points. In her Korean classes, however, supporting ideas were provided first, followed by a conclusion. She further explained that, "Koreans explain things a lot – again and again – so in order to catch the main point of the conversation, we should listen so carefully."

A final cultural distinction identified by international learners was a difference in Korean study practices. Participant 4 from Kenya cited surprise at the degree to which students spend time in the library to study and prepare for exams. She further explained, however, that these students are often idle. According to this learner, Korean students "stay up all night in the library. Not always to pass the exam, but because everyone else is doing it." Like Participant 4, Participant 14 from Mongolia also identified a great deal more idle time and cancellations in Korean universities. Her friend, who joined a Korean Tennis club, decided to stop attending classes after cancellations occurred three weeks in a row. These cancellations were reported to have been caused by "mandatory" orientation lunches and outings with upper-classman. Participant 14 further explained that Korean students work day and night, while Mongolian students work less time, yet more efficiently.

5.5 Lack of Cultural Sensitivity and Understanding

A final prevalent theme found within the data concerned Korean students' lack of cultural sensitivity or understanding. While several participants reported that Korean learners asked questions about their countries, some of these participants felt that the questions revealed stereotypical or insensitive perspectives. A Ghanaian participant, reported that questions such as, "Do you have bicycles?" reveal a weird and unrealistic view of Africa. A Mongolian learner also reported insensitive questions such as, "You're from Mongolia? Do you go to school by horse? And why is your face white?" This learner went on to say that, "They (the Korean students) didn't have any concepts. That usually makes people a little down. It stops the conversation. Some of my Mongolian friends have taken it too seriously and don't want to talk with the person anymore." Both of the Chinese participants within this study also complained that Koreans portray China as a poor and undeveloped nation.

6. Discussion

While the international students cited a number of different concerns about education in Korean universities, all of the issues appeared to be related to five main themes: a perceived dichotomy between Korean and international learners; a perceived dichotomy between Chinese and other international learners; a lack of assistance from professors and curricula (a "sink-or-swim" philosophy toward international education); negative perceptions of Korean cultural and behavioral differences; and a perceived lack of cultural sensitivity and understanding on the part of Korean or Chinese learners. While these themes appear to be discreetly different, detailed analysis suggests that they are predominantly linked to the underlying philosophical tradition of Confucianism and its conflict with other cultural ideals.

According to the Confucian philosophy, members of society are expected to harmoniously fulfill their roles within a strict hierarchical social system (Yang, Zheng, & Li, 2006). Because an individual's role in Confucian society dictates how he or she is treated, Korean students must carefully consider personal characteristics such as age, university major, group affiliations, gender, and other characteristics while developing relationships with others. The complexity and rigidity of this hierarchical system makes Korean student interaction with international peers more problematic, since diverse learners have traditionally held no position in Korean society. Unique cultural and behavioral characteristics of diverse learners can muddle the traditional cues used to assess social status and position, thereby hampering the development of lasting relationships. Such difficulty integrating international learners within the complex Confucian social framework explains international learner perceptions of Korean students as aloof or unfriendly. As illustrated within the data, students who appear distant and aloof may actually want to interact with international learners. Participant 14 cited that Korean students who had ignored her for long periods suddenly became friendly and talkative at university events, commenting, "I wish I'd had the opportunity to talk to you before!" In such cases, the mandated university events served to compel Korean learners to transcend the Confucian insular framework for more positive intercultural interaction.

Like the reluctance of Korean learners to interact with international peers, the avoidance of non-Chinese international students by Chinese learners may be explained by the existence of a complex Confucian social framework. As with their Korean peers, Chinese students appear to have difficulty understanding or accepting unique characteristics of diverse learners, which makes the integration of non-Chinese international learners within a strict social hierarchy problematic. In the case of Participant 9 from Tajikistan, for example, Chinese

students initially tried to ask about the participant's weekend, but stopped inquiring after cultural differences associated with an Islamic ban of alcoholic consumption were revealed. In this case, Chinese learners may have had difficulty comprehending their international peer's position within their social framework, compelling them to abandon further attempts to interact. The cultural differences may have also been interpreted as a disturbance of the social harmony mandated by the Confucian philosophy.

In addition to problems integrating international learners within strict hierarchical social systems, the presence of stringent power relationships between superiors and subordinates appears to be another source of conflict. In Confucian society, subordinates must show respect and unquestioning loyalty to their superiors (Seo & Koro-Ljungberg, 2005). Not only does this philosophical perspective explain the reported lack of Korean and Chinese student interaction in class, it may also explain the professor's reluctance to deal with international students' questions and requests. Professors may perceive questions to be an affront to their position as a content expert. In similar fashion, the lack of passivity from the international learners may be considered argumentative, prompting adverse reactions from Korean professors.

As with other prevalent issues voiced by international learners, descriptions of frequent cancellations, long hours, and low productivity may represent a behavioral manifestation of the Confucian philosophical paradigm. Because Korean students are compelled to obey the wishes of their superiors, they are often required to attend meetings or participate in other extracurricular activities that force them to miss classes or cancel club functions. Confucian ideals that promote harmony also compel students to follow their peers or superiors, explaining why most Korean students often spend long hours in the library without actually studying.

In sum, complaints voiced by international learners tend to confirm the presence of a distinct Confucian hierarchy in South Korean higher education. Korean and Chinese learners, who fail to participate, are adhering to traditional Confucian roles as passive recipients of knowledge. The strict social hierarchy may explain a lack of class participation and failure to interact with non-Chinese international learners, who are not a part of the insular Confucian social framework. Like Korean and Chinese learners, Korean professors, are serving traditional roles in Confucian society. Their role as superior content experts with unquestioning authority may explain their behaviors that discourage questions, rely on lecture, and demand strict obedience from learners.
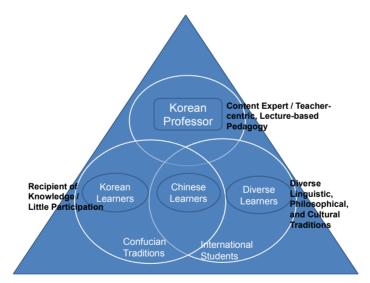

Figure 1. South Korean higher education

Because Confucian traditions do not facilitate participation or critical examination of issues within a classroom setting, the implementation of international curricula is a challenging task. Reluctance to discuss various issues may make it difficult for Confucian learners or professors to gain a sensitivity and knowledge of foreign cultures, further explaining international learner perceptions of Korean and Chinese insensitivity. Ultimately, the Confucian philosophy may be diametrically opposed to known methods of assisting diverse learners such as the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP), which require a great deal of self-reflection and interpersonal communication (Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2008). Activities that foster communication and interaction within the unique Confucian social framework must be implemented to further enhance higher education within Korea.

6.1 Necessary Reforms and Associated Hurdles

As suggested by the data obtained from this study, professors and students from Confucian backgrounds are discouraging participation in South Korean higher education, which has led international students from highly disparate cultural backgrounds to become socially segregated. This phenomenon has hampered international learners' efforts to cultivate inter-cultural relationships and gain clear knowledge of class content. To overcome maladaptive behavioral manifestations of the Confucian paradigm, it is essential that communication and interaction is promoted in all areas of campus life. Since Korean or Chinese learners appear to have problems taking the initiative to interact with their diverse peers, several campus, classroom, and university-related events should be organized to integrate both Korean and international learners. While compelling Korean and international learners to overcome segregation through compulsory, all-inclusive university events is a step forward, characteristics of Confucianism may continue to preclude interaction without the implementation of specialized social skills training for professors, Confucian learners, and other international students.

In addition to the need for a variety of multicultural events to encourage interaction, more effective pedagogical techniques are required to enhance the instruction of diverse learners. While the Sheltered Observation Instruction Protocol (SIOP) provides clear guidance for the education of diverse learners (Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2008), the techniques included within this framework were designed within Western contexts, making adaption within the Korean classroom a challenging task. As in the case of implementing multicultural events, special training may be required to help professors and learners overcome social or behavioral differences that serve as obstacles to the implementation of the SIOP.

According to the SIOP framework, scaffolding, should be provided through guided practice, comprehensible input, and independent practice. While Korean professors can easily learn to modify power point presentations and handouts to make them more comprehensible through text simplification, use of images, or use of videos, they may have more difficulty restructuring such items to facilitate understanding for non-Confucian learners. As explained by a Mongolian participant, professors tend to start lectures with precise details that lead to one general conclusion, rather than beginning with simple main points that are followed by specific examples. Research confirms that this type of circumlocution and spiral logic is typical in high context cultures such as Korea, China, and Japan (Bennett, 2007), and may present a significant challenge to some Korean professor who utilize this type of discourse.

A second objective of the SIOP is to help diverse learners build links to background knowledge and past learning. Like methods of scaffolding, the professor may have difficulty utilizing this pedagogical technique. Because professors are unaware of the background or past learning of international students, allowing international students to link this information (through brainstorming, images from their country, etc.) forces Korean professors to discuss cultural concepts they may have never seen and don't understand, thereby attacking their role as the content expert in Korean society.

A fourth objective of the SIOP is the utilization of cooperative learning. Exploiting various types of groups (e.g., small groups, partners, and independent activity) can promote comprehension and interest among all learners. Like other objectives, however, these cooperative strategies may be difficult for the Korean professor to implement, since group activity and engagement would require the professor to shift their role from content expert to facilitator. Students from Confucian backgrounds, likewise, may have difficulty transcending the traditional role as a passive recipient.

A final key element of the SIOP is the use of strategies which promote the fair assessment of all learners. Fair assessment practices may be enhanced through integrating multiple modes of evaluation (e.g., individual, group, written, and oral evaluation). A heavy reliance on multiple choice and short answer exams, as well as other traditional forms of summative assessment, may serve as a barrier to the implementation of more innovative forms of evaluation in Korean society.

6.2 Implementing Reform within Korean Universities

Due to the Confucian traditions pervasive within Korean society, along with cultural differences between international students and their Korean counterparts, the implementation of an effective international curriculum is a challenging task. In essence, facilitating communication and utilizing new forms of instruction such as SIOP are the keys to enhancing education for diverse learners. While increasing events and providing information about new pedagogical techniques is helpful, significant changes cannot be expected without proper social training for all parties involved. The education of diverse learners in a Confucian environment such as South Korea will require substantive behavioral changes on the part of professors, Korean learners, and international students.

As explained by Newcomer (2009), new behaviors and social skills may be instilled through the identification of need, modeling, rehearsal, feedback, and generalization. By using data obtained from this study, targets for new behaviors have been identified for professors, students from Confucian backgrounds, and other international learners. Case studies have also been designed to facilitate discussion and role-play, which may promote the vital social and behavioral changes needed for reform. It is hoped that such information will provide a template for the implementation of effective intercultural training programs in Korean contexts, or other contexts in which the Confucian philosophy predominates.

6.3 Training for Professors

In order to effectively implement strategies that promote communication and enhance international education, professors must identify and rehearse new target behaviors needed for success. After these behaviors have been identified, case studies such as those in Table 3 may be used to elicit discussion, role-play new behaviors, and brainstorm innovative solutions to problems.

Table 3. Target behaviors and case studies for social skills training of professors

Target Behaviors for Korean Professors	Teacher Case Studies for Role-Play and Discussion
1. Make PowerPoint presentations and handouts easier to read (simplified language, use of visuals, and bilingual definitions) (scaffolding).	A student from Ghana is having trouble understanding the main concepts of a lecture about international trade, which is conducted in Korean. How can the lecture be changed to make it more understandable for her? Could any handouts be used to make the lecture easier to understand? Could language resources be provided in her native language? If so, where could such resources be obtained?
2. Begin a lecture with simplified main points and follow with more detailed examples (spiral logic to linear logic).	A professor has planned a talk on business ethics. He will start off by discussing specific cases of lying, cheating, and embezzlement that have occurred in several different companies. At the end of the talk, he will show how all of these cases are examples of just one theme, business ethics. Will his talk be equally beneficial for all learners? Why or why not? How might learners from Western countries react to such a lecture?
3. Help students to brainstorm before an activity or lecture (building background).	There is only one international student from Mongolia in your class. She is extremely quiet, and you suspect that she may be having trouble communicating. You are also presenting concepts about Korean business practices in class, but she doesn't seem to follow what you are talking about. Are there any ways to activate her prior knowledge to help her better understand what you are talking about? Can information (e.g., handouts) be provided to help her better understand how to communicate in either Korean or English? How can you facilitate friendship and cooperation with Korean and other international students?
4. Use cooperative learning strategies to achieve a class objective with both Korean and international learners (groupwork and class discussion).	(See Above)
5. Provide unbiased assessment for all students regardless of language difficulties.	A Tajikistani student seems to speak English really well, but is having trouble reading and writing in English. You found out that in his native country, reading and writing in English is never taught in public school, while in Korea it is taught from elementary to high school grades. What strategies could be used to prevent this student from falling behind his Korean peers? Could any allowances be made (e.g., more time for tests) during assessment to ensure that he has an equal opportunity to succeed in the class?

6.	Assist/encourage international students who ask frequent questions and Confucian learners who ask few or no questions.	A student from France keeps asking questions during the class. He seems really eager to discuss class concepts, but the Korean and Chinese students don't seem interested in participating. Why do you think these students are behaving differently? What steps can be taken to encourage more interaction between the professor and students? Can group study outside class facilitate communication and cooperation within the class? What can be done to facilitate the participation of all learners?
7.	Communicate in-class and extracurricular announcements to all learners.	You have students from Nigeria, the United States, Korea, and China. You have an important announcement about an addendum to some class homework. You contact all the Korean students by text message and send a Chinese translation to your Chinese learners. You then designate one Korean student to contact the other international learners to let them know. Is this an effective means of disseminating information? Would international learners from non-Chinese countries perceive this behavior as fair? What could happen if the Korean learner does not relay information clearly or correctly? What are other ways to ensure that class requirements are clearly communicated to all students?
8.	Help international and Korean learners establish friendships outside class through study groups, clubs, etc.	A student from Kenya has complained that she doesn't have any Korean friends. Can you establish study groups or extra-curricular activities that may help this student cultivate friendships with Korean peers?
9.	Learn about foreign cultures, customs, and beliefs.	An Islamic student within a class does not appear to be interested in discussions about alcohol or Friday night parties. Why might he not be interested in this subject?

From the target behaviors and case studies in Table 3, useful behaviors which are relevant within a Confucian cultural context may be brainstormed and rehearsed. Professors, for example, may develop and test a new form of spoken evaluation for learners with few Korean literacy skills. To promote class participation, a professor may design a scaffold for the discussion process. Confucian learners, who often feel uncomfortable asking questions, may be prompted to write a few questions with a partner at the end of class. Learners may then present their questions to the class with their partner. Conducting discussion in this way gives Korean and Chinese learners more time to practice the new behavioral skill while decreasing the "risk" that asking a question may be deemed inappropriate by the professor or other students. Finally, professors may brainstorm and develop lectures that make input comprehensible, through structuring the input (e.g., simplifying text, using video, or using images), sharing bilingual resources, and clearly explaining lectures.

6.4 Training for Students from Confucian Backgrounds

Learners from Confucian backgrounds need training to help them communicate more with international learners both inside and outside of class. The case studies included in Table 4 may be used for discussion and rehearsal of new behaviors.

Table 4. Target behaviors and case studies for social skills training of Korean and Chinese students

Target Behaviors for Students from Confucian Backgrounds	Korean/Chinese Student Case Studies for Role-Play and Discussion
1. Ask questions during class time.	You can't understand the lecture completely. What should you do? Is it important / acceptable to ask questions in class? Why or why not?
2. Learn to interact with students that do not consider factors such as age, gender, or major to be important factors to	You met a student from Romania. She hasn't told you her age and you don't really know how you should treat her, so you decide just to avoid her. Do you think this is an acceptable strategy? How might it make her feel? Is it important to know her age to become friends? Why or why not? How might you develop a close relationship with her, without

	interact with others.	considering age?
3.	Learn about differences in learning style.	Another student from your class is from Nigeria. He keeps asking questions and talks too much in class. You think he is "pushy" and should be quiet. Why do you think he is behaving this way? How may his class expectations and ways to interact with other people be different from yours?
4.	Learn means of being sensitive to foreign cultures.	You saw a documentary about Mexico 10 years ago. Most people you saw looked poor and rode bicycles to work. You met a Mexican student in your class and asked him how he could afford university tuition since he lives in such a poor country. Why might the Mexican learner consider this statement offensive? Can one documentary give you a complete understanding of Mexican culture? What are some positive questions that can help you gain a better understanding of Mexico and the Mexican culture?

6.5 Training for Other International Learners

International students that have not been raised in a Confucian society must receive behavioral training that promotes effective interaction with Chinese and Korean peers. Through the case studies included in Table 5, diverse learners can better understand the behaviors of Confucian learners, as well the language and organizations needed to develop lasting relationships within the Korean social system.

Table 5. Target behaviors and case studies for social skills training of other international learners

Target Behaviors for Other International Learners		International Learner Case Studies for Role-Play and Discussion
1.	Learn polite ways to ask questions to professors.	You have problems understanding the main point of a lecture. You asked a question to the professor, but he seemed unhappy about answering it. Why might he feel uncomfortable in this situation? Instead of asking the question in class, would it be possible to ask him the question in another way (e.g., after class or at his/her office)?
2.	Learn in detail, forms of polite language in Korean and situational contexts in which they should be used.	You want to ask a professor a question. What Korean expressions can be used to make him feel respected and react positively to your question? (e.g., "That was a fantastic lecture. I was also wondering if you might be able to tell me why….?")
3.	Learn about the importance of respect to superiors in Confucian society.	You joined a tennis club, but week after week there have been cancellations. The first week, there was an orientation. The second week, the members had to meet a senior classmate for lunch. In the third week, the same thing happened. It seems unnecessary and you don't understand why they are wasting so much time on these outings. Why do you think the Korean learners are cancelling the club class? Is it because they are lazy? How are superiors treated in Korean society?
4.	Learn about clubs, web boards, and other places where international learners can seek out Korean friends.	You want to find a club or another organization where you can meet Korean friends. Does the university have an online website with information about clubs? Who can you call to get more information about these things?

7. Conclusion

Research conducted at a South Korean University reveals an educational context that differs significantly from those of Western countries. Data suggests that Korean professors and learners adhere to distinct roles which are assigned according to a strict Confucian hierarchy. Korean professors serve as superior content experts, while

their students serve as passive recipients of knowledge. Although Chinese learners appear to understand and follow the hierarchical system, other international learners may have difficulty adjusting. The lack of a position for diverse learners within the traditional Confucian social framework has left these learners isolated from their Korean and Chinese peers. Strict hierarchical relationships and an emphasis on harmony have also limited class participation and discussion, further intensifying non-Chinese international learner perceptions of isolation and inhibiting the education process.

To improve international education in this and other contexts where the Confucian philosophy predominates, intercultural communication and class participation must be facilitated. This is a daunting task within a Confucian society, since strict hierarchical relationships and an emphasis on harmony appear to discourage discussion and the implementation of new forms of pedagogy. In addition to techniques such as SIOP, extracurricular events should be augmented to enhance international education. Diverse learners should also be given the opportunity to present aspects of their culture (e.g., food, dress, customs, geography, etc.) at all-inclusive, mandatory orientation sessions for Korean students, international learners, and professors, so that a mutual understanding and appreciation of cultural differences can be cultivated. While such reforms are important, they cannot be successful without social skills training for Korean professors, Confucian learners, and non-Confucian international learners. Thus, a tripartite system of training for these three groups, which uses case studies, role-plays, and discussion to achieve set behavioral objectives, is essential. Such reform may significantly increase the effectiveness of international education within Asian countries that embrace a Confucian philosophical paradigm.

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Appendix A

International Student Interview Questions

I)   Preliminary Questions:

The target is to obtain background information, such as the nationality, ethnicity and school life, which may be relevant.

1)   What is your nationality?

2)   What is your ethnicity/race?

3)   What is your age?

4)   Why did you come to Korea?

5)   When did you come to Korea?

6)   Have you studied at any other institute of higher learning in Korea?

7)   How long have you been studying at this university?

8)   Are you on any kind of scholarship at this university?

9)   What course of study are you pursuing at this university?

10)   Which classes do you take at the moment?

11)   What nationalities and ethnicities are your professors for current courses?

12)   Which classes have you taken in the past at this university?

13)   What nationalities and ethnicities have your professors been for previous courses?

II)   Staff Have Positive Attitudes and Expectations

Where relevant follow up questions to illicit details of the course, professor, nature of the problem etc. may be appropriate.

Professors

1)   Are professors interested in your country, race, culture or religion?

2)   What are the professors' attitudes towards your country, race, culture or religion?

3)   Do professors appreciate differences in opinions?

4) What kind of difficulties do you have learning in Korea? Are professors aware of these difficulties? Do professors do anything to help you with them? What more could professors do to help you with them?

5) Have you had any misunderstandings with other students because of your country, race, culture or religion? Are professors aware of these misunderstandings? Do professors do anything about them? What more could professors do about them?

6) Can you think of any ways in which relationships between Korean students and international students can be improved at this university?

7) Do your professors expect you to perform well on the courses? Is this different from your professors' expectations towards other students?

8) Can you think of any way professors' attitudes towards international students could be improved?

III) The Curriculum is Transformational and Action Focused

The interviewer should explain to the interviewee what we mean by curriculum, so it is not confused with textbooks.

1) Can you understand the curricula?

2) Do you talk about international issues in your class?

3) Are you asked to talk about your own experiences in class?

4) Do the classes promote a greater understanding of other countries, cultures, races, or religions?

5) How do the curricula treat other countries, cultures, races, or religions?

6) Do the curricula encourage greater contact between you and other countries, cultures, races, or religions?

7) What are the problems with the curricula?

8) Can you think of ways in which the curricula could be improved for international students?

IV) Teaching Strategies are Constructivist, Personalized, Empowering, and Participatory

1) How do your professors teach class?

2) Do you think that your learning style matches the teaching style of the professor?

3) Do teachers help you improve your learning habits?

4) Do international students participate equally in activities and discussions?

5) Do you ever hold back from participation in activities and discussions? Why?

6) Do you feel that you are ever treated differently in class?

7) Have your professors been responsive to your needs?

8) How do professors help you understand things better/easier?

9) How will your classes benefit you?

10) Can you think of ways the class is taught which could be improved?

V) Teaching Materials Present Diverse Racial, Ethnic, and Cultural Perspectives on Events, Concepts, and Issues

An explanation of what we mean by materials should perhaps be given to distinguish them from curricula.

1) What types of materials have the professors used?

2) Are these materials appropriate for the type of class?

3) Do the materials present ideas from different national, cultural, racial, or religious perspectives?

4) Is there anything about the materials you are uncomfortable with?

5) What have you liked about the materials?

6) What have you disliked about the materials?

7) Can you think of ways in which the materials could be improved for international students?

VI) Monitoring

1) Have you ever been given an opportunity to provide feedback on your professors/textbooks/curricula/courses/or other services?

2) Do you feel that your feedback was seriously considered?

3) Can you make any suggestions for improving feedback?

Appendix B

Consent to Participate in Research

Project Name

A study to investigate multicultural education in Korea.

Introduction

You are invited to participate in this research study. We wish to know your views about your experiences here at this university.

This form will describe the purpose and nature of the study and your rights as a participant in the study. The decision to participate or not is yours. If you decide to participate, please sign and date the last line of this form.

Explanation of the Study

Approximately ten international students enrolled at the university will participate in this study. As part of the study, you will meet with a researcher for an oral interview. Your replies will be recorded during the interview. The researcher may request additional meetings after the first interview.

Confidentiality

All of the information collected will be confidential and will only be used for research purposes. This means that your identity will be anonymous; in other words, no one besides the researchers will know your name. Whenever data from this study is published, your name will not be used. The data will be stored on a computer and only the researchers will have access to it.

Your participation

Participating in this study is strictly voluntary. Your decision to participate will in no way affect your grade. If at any point you change your mind and no longer want to participate, you can tell one of the researchers. You will not be paid for participating in this study. If you have any questions about the research, you can contact:

Andrew Schenck by email schenck@hotmail.com, or in person.

Ramy Mottalib by email rmottalib@pcu.ac.kr, or in person.

Matthew Baldwin by email, mattpaulbaldwin@hotmail.com, or in person.

Investigator's statement

I have fully explained this study to the student. I have discussed the activities and have answered all of the questions that the student asked.

Signature of investigator _____ Date _____

Learner's consent

I have read the information provided in this Informed Consent Form. All my questions were answered to my satisfaction. I voluntarily agree to participate in this study.

Your signature _____ Date _____

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