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Academic adjustment of international students studying in South Korea: the Global Korea Scholarship program perspective

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Abstract: The study was to investigate the academic adjustment of international students studying in South Korea under the Global Korea Scholarship Program. Previous research has shown that academic adjustment is linked to the achievement and satisfaction of international students at higher education institutions. Two research questions shaped the current study: (1) examining the correlations between the variables included in the study and (2) identifying the significant variables that contributed to international students' academic adjustment. The Multicultural Personality Survey and Academic Adjustment Survey were utilized as the primary instruments and were administered online over one and a half months. A total of 100 participants from diverse demographic backgrounds were involved in the data collection. Correlational analysis and regression analysis were employed to answer the two research questions. The results of the correlational analysis revealed that there were higher correlations observed between multicultural personality and GPA, preferred language and multicultural personality, as well as multicultural personality and the Academic Adjustment Survey. Additionally, the regression analysis indicated that Korean language proficiency and preferred language proficiency emerged as significant variables that impacted international students' academic adjustment. The results provided further insights into the factors contributing to academic adjustment among international students in South Korea.

Keywords: academic adjustment; international students; Multicultural Personality Questionnaire; Academic Adjustment Survey; correlation; regression

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1 Introduction

Academic adjustment of international students has been extensively studied in the field of intercultural communication (Ahmad and Shah 2018; Anderson et al. 2016; Bastien et al. 2018; Ke et al. 2022; Kim and Lah 2022; Tam and Ayhan 2021; Waluyo and Panmei 2021). Shapiro et al. (2014) defined international students as individuals who relocate to foreign countries to pursue better educational opportunities. Academic adjustment, broadly defined, refers to the process of overcoming obstacles in a learning environment (Lewthwaite 1996). For both international and local students, this transition can be challenging due to differences in university management, teaching style, and unfamiliar social circles. As globalization progresses, countries are increasingly welcoming international students for educational purposes, providing opportunities for students worldwide to join their university systems. UNESCO (2019) reported an increase from two million international students in 2000 to 5.3 million in 2019, reflecting global effort to provide high-quality education.

International students seeking better education prefer Western countries, such as the United States, United Kingdom, and European Union (UNESCO 2019). Asian countries, however, have experienced a remarkable influx of students since 2010, driven by the region's growing economy and job prospects (UNESCO 2013). Asian higher education institutions have attracted international students with scholarships and living opportunities. South Korea, with over 152,000 international students enrolled in its higher education institutions, has emerged as a top destination in Asia (Korean Statistical Information Center 2023). In recent years, international students have enrolled in Korean language institutions and pursuing higher education through scholarships (Lee 2023).

The Korean Government Scholarship Program, formerly known as the Global Korean Scholarship, is considered as one of the world's most prestigious programs. It presents international students with numerous opportunities in South Korea. Initially established in 1967, this program provided scholarships to 3,000 students from 157 countries and evolved into its current form in 2010 (Jon et al. 2014). These scholarships are available to international students pursuing various majors in South Korean universities. Each year, approximately 2,000 international students from 150 countries are selected as successful candidates and over 7,000 students have come to South Korea for academic degrees in the past five years (Istad et al. 2021). Kwon (2013) conducted a comprehensive analysis of government policies and university internationalization in South Korea to assess international students' mobility. This study highlighted key factors in attracting international students, including the development of English classes, the establishment of global campuses, and the organization of academic programs supporting diversity on campuses. Korean host

institutions may be motivated to conduct various research studies to improve their hosting conditions and attract more international students. Consequently, such studies could offer practical recommendations to both hosting institutions and international students in South Korea.

The purpose of the study was twofold: (1) examining the correlations between the variables used in the study and (2) identifying the significant variables that contributed to the academic adjustment of international students. The aim of the study was to investigate the correlates and potential predictors of international students' academic adjustment. It is hoped that the findings of this study will help identify international students experiencing challenges, allowing for timely intervention, thereby improving their academic environment.

2 Literature review

The study aimed at examining the academic adjustment and achievement of international students under the Global Korea Scholarship (GKS) program. The process of academic adjustment involves overcoming obstacles in a learning environment (Lewthwaite 1996). Anderson et al. (2016) noted that establishing oneself as a student is already a difficult process, and doing so in a foreign country may make it even more difficult. Several prior studies have been referenced in this section to address major issues and challenges related to international students' academic adjustment and to shape the current study.

2.1 Factors affecting academic adjustment

Language barriers have been identified as one of the most crucial factors affecting international students' academic adjustment (Andrade 2006). Studies on the relationship between academic achievement and language proficiency has been conducted among international students. In a study conducted at a US university, GPA was positively correlated with advanced English language proficiency among international students (Martirosyan et al. 2015). Similarly, Waluyo and Panmei (2021) conducted a study that revealed a positive relationship between improvement in English proficiency and better academic achievement among international students when English classes were provided. These findings suggest that enhancing English language skills can positively impact international students' academic performance.

Additionally, other key aspects of academic adjustment include becoming familiar with the new educational system, adapting to professors' teaching methods, and receiving support from departments or institutions (Varpahovskis 2022). In their

study on the influence of institutional support, Yilmaz and Temizkan (2022) examined the connection between the quality of higher education and the challenges faced by international students when adapting to a new culture at a Turkish university. Analyzing data from 413 participants using SEM, they discovered a significant relationship between students' adjustment and their satisfaction with educational services. This finding suggests that contentment with the hosting institution is crucial to academic success for international students. Culture also plays a significant role in creating cultural conflicts and adjustment issues for international students, both socially and academically (Wu et al. 2015). In foreign countries, it can be difficult to establish friendships and engage in social activities due to communication gaps, language proficiency, and limited cultural knowledge (Johnson and Sandhu 2007; Yilmaz and Temizkan 2022).

Similarly, Cong (2017) conducted a study investigating how satisfaction with educational services affects international students' academic, social, and personal adjustment in American education institutions. Participants were invited to complete the Academic Adjustment Survey via email, and hierarchical multiple regression analysis was used to explore the correlation among the variables. The survey demonstrated good internal consistency (Cronbach's Alpha > 0.7). The findings indicated that educational service augmentations and traditional predictors influenced international students' adjustment at different levels.

Dos Santos (2020) explored the challenges experienced by international students in South Korea, considering their backgrounds, and personal characteristics. The study emphasized the importance of academic support in helping international students overcome challenges during their time in South Korea. Further Yilmaz and Temizkan (2022), Lee and Bailey (2020) investigated how intercultural communication on campus is facilitated through interaction between international students and local Korean students. Their study revealed that international students' willingness and personality significantly influenced their ability to engage in friendly and beneficial communication with Korean students. These factors may enhance their adjustment to the new academic setting and foster a deeper understanding of intercultural relations.

Recent research has highlighted the profound impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on international students' academic experiences and adjustment. Moscaritolo et al. (2022) found that the pandemic has posed challenges such as difficulties with online learning, limited access to campus resources, and increased social isolation among international students. Furthermore, Ke et al. (2023) reported that the pandemic had adverse effects on international students' mental health and overall well-being. These findings suggest that the post-pandemic period may introduce new challenges and adjustments for international students studying in South Korea, potentially affecting their language learning and interaction with the local community.

Literature review in this section examined factors affecting international students' academic adjustment, with an emphasis on language proficiency, institutional support, cultural adaptation, and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Above all, language barriers significantly affected academic adjustment, as evidenced by studies that link GPA to English proficiency. Additionally, the review emphasized the importance of institutional support in aiding students' adjustment to a new educational system and culture. Students from diverse cultural backgrounds faced challenges such as cultural conflicts and social difficulties, emphasizing the need for effective intercultural communication. The review in this section also discussed recent research suggesting that the COVID-19 pandemic has contributed to additional challenges for international students, including difficulties with online learning and increased social isolation.

2.2 Influence of personal characteristics and personality traits

In addition to cultural differences, personal characteristics and personality traits are also influential in adapting to a new culture (i.e., Van der Zee and Van Oudenhoven 2001; Van Oudenhoven and Van der Zee 2002). The results of these studies suggested that open-mindedness, communication skills, and engagement in social activities are crucial factors in successful adjustment processes among international students. For example, a study conducted with international students in the US found that open-mindedness facilitated easier adaptation to the host country (Yakunina et al. 2012). In a similar vein, a study among international students in Turkey demonstrated that open-mindedness was strongly correlated with university adjustment compared to other factors (Kağnıcı 2012).

Previous research demonstrated the usefulness of the Multicultural Personality Questionnaire (MPQ) in understanding international students' adjustment to a foreign country (Kağnıcı 2012; Leong 2007; Yakunina et al. 2012). These studies have broadly defined a multicultural personality as the ability to engage in social activities with individuals from different cultural backgrounds, demonstrating empathy towards diverse cultural aspects, and being willing to communicate with both residents and foreigners in the host country. Van der Zee and Van Oudenhoven (2001) developed the Multicultural Personality Questionnaire and Van Oudenhoven and Van der Zee (2002) conducted a study to assess the reliability and validity of its revised 78-item version among 257 students, identifying categories such as Cultural Empathy, Emotional Stability, Social Initiative, Open-mindedness, and Flexibility. They found that Cultural Empathy and Open-mindedness were the major factors influencing international students' academic success. In Van der Zee et al. (2013), further developed the Multicultural Personality Questionnaire-Short Form (MPQ-SF)

using a split-sample scale validation design among 511 participants. Confirmatory factor analysis revealed a reasonably good fit for the data, and the coefficient alphas and correlations with the original scales are satisfactory. The Multicultural Personality Questionnaire (MPQ) is referred to as a useful tool, but its limitations and potential biases are not analyzed in this article. It would be beneficial to address any areas where the questionnaire might not capture the full complexity of multicultural personality traits. Because other aspects of international students' experiences, such as social integration, mental health, and overall wellbeing, were not taken into consideration.

Despite the existing literature, few studies have specifically addressed international students' academic adjustment in South Korea. Therefore, this study focused on analyzing the correlation between individual characteristics, multicultural personalities, and academic adjustment among GKS students. By conducting research within the Korean educational system, this study aimed to improve international students' experience in South Korea. In the current study, GKS students were asked to complete the Multicultural Personality Questionnaire and Academic Adjustment Survey, targeting a unique group with specific educational goals. Based on the literature review, the study formulated the following research questions.

- (1) What is the correlation between individual characteristics (gender, age, language proficiency, and length of stay), multicultural personality, academic adjustment, and academic achievement (GPA) among GKS students?
- (2) To what extent do individual characteristics, multicultural personality, and academic adjustment influence their GPA in higher education?

3 Methodology

3.1 Participants

The study included 107 participants who were currently enrolled in either a 1-year intensive Korean language program or undergraduate, master's, or doctoral degree programs. A total of 100 responses were included in the analysis after excluding seven incomplete responses. The Snowball sampling was used to select participants who were asked to voluntarily participate in the online survey. One of the researchers contacted students through previously acquainted GKS scholars in South Korea. The survey revealed that the participants represented 53 different countries and had diverse linguistic backgrounds (L1). They were pursuing degrees in various professional disciplines.

3.2 Instrument

3.2.1 Demographic information

A questionnaire consisting of 12 demographic questions was administered to collect basic information about the participants. Examining international students' backgrounds can provide insights into their academic adjustment within the GKS program. The demographic information collected included participants' gender, age, nationality, L1 background, language proficiency in both English and Korean, and the duration of their stay in Korea.

3.2.2 Multicultural Personality Questionnaire

In the current study, the Multicultural Personality Questionnaire developed by Van der Zee and Van Oudenhoven (2001) was employed in its original form without any modifications. Five subscales were included in the questionnaire: Cultural Empathy, Open-mindedness, Emotional Stability, Social Initiative, and Flexibility. The subscales each contained eight items, resulting in 40 items in total. The internal consistency of the questionnaire, as measured by Cronbach's alpha, was 0.743, indicating a moderate level of reliability.

3.2.3 Academic Adjustment Survey

In addition to the Multicultural Personality Questionnaire, a survey developed by Cong (2017) was added to the current study to examine the relationship between multicultural personality and academic adjustment among GKS international students. The original survey consisted of 31 items, but one item was removed from the study (#14 *I am satisfied with the campus environment and infrastructure.*) as it did not align with any other factors in the factor analysis (Vanchinkhuu and Shin 2022). Therefore, a total of 30 items were used, categorized into five components: Academic & Faculty Support Services (9 items), Social Interaction Support Services (6 items), Academic Adjustment (6 items), Personal & Social Adjustment (6 items), and Friendship (3 items). The survey demonstrated a higher level of internal consistency, as indicated by a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.958 (30 items), compared to the Multicultural Personality Questionnaire.

3.3 Data collection procedure

The surveys used in this study, which included demographic information, the Multicultural Personality Questionnaire, and the Academic Adjustment Survey, were

created using Google Docs and distributed to participants online. The survey was conducted during the spring semester of 2022, targeting GKS international students from various universities in South Korea. Social media channels such as Kakao Talk, or Facebook were used to send a link to participants who took part in the survey. A consent form was provided to all participants to ensure that they understood the purpose of the study and their data would be kept confidential. It took one and a half months to collect the data. Participants were asked to assess the statements on a five-point Likert scale from 1 (*Strongly Disagree*) to 5 (*Strongly Agree*).

3.4 Data analysis

This study used IBM SPSS Statistics 27.0 analysis software to analyze the data. To address RQ 1, a correlational analysis was conducted to examine the relationships between all variables in the study. Regarding RQ 2, a multiple regression analysis was conducted to examine how variables affected participants' academic achievement. Regression coefficients and statistical significance were used to determine how these variables relate to academic achievement variation.

4 Results and discussion

4.1 Results of descriptive statistics

Table 1 provides an overview of descriptive statistics for demographic information including gender, language proficiency, educational level, duration of stay, and preferred language. The nationality of the participants and their L1 background are not included in Table 1 due to the diverse range of participants from 53 different countries with various L1 backgrounds. Furthermore, the collected data included the participant's GPA, which was measured on a 4.5 grade scale ($M = 4.06$, $SD = 0.368$). It was observed that most GKS scholarship students had relatively high GPAs. The participants had an average age of 25.11 ($SD = 4.182$). The average duration of their stay in Korea was 2.11 years ($SD = 0.762$). In general, the GKS scholarship lasts four years for undergraduates, two years for master's students, and three years for doctoral students, depending on the degree program. Regarding Korean language proficiency, a significant number of participants demonstrated proficiency in Korean, with approximately 60 % exceeding TOPIK 4. Approximately half of participants selected English as their preferred language.

Table 2 displays descriptive statistics for the Multicultural Personality Questionnaire and the Academic Adjustment Survey. The results of the Multicultural

Table 1: Overall demographic information ($N = 100$).

Type	Details	Frequency (#)	Percent (%)
Gender	Male	30	30.0
	Female	70	70.0
English language proficiency	Early intermediate	4	4.0
	Intermediate	18	18.0
	Early advanced	39	39.0
	Advanced	39	39.0
Korean language proficiency	TOPIK1	1	1.0
	TOPIK2	11	11.0
	TOPIK3	19	19.0
	TOPIK4	21	21.0
	TOPIK5	40	40.0
Educational level	Intensive Korean program	20	20.0
	Undergraduate program	14	14.0
	Master program	51	51.0
	Doctoral program	15	15.0
Period of staying in Korea	Less than 1 year	22	22.0
	1–2 years	58	58.0
	3–4 years	18	18.0
	More than 4 years	2	2.0
Preferred language	English	50	50.0
	Korean	8	8.0
	Not answered	42	42.0

Personality Questionnaire showed that the Social Initiatives subscale scored the highest ($M = 3.67$, $SD = 0.446$), which suggests that international students are willing to participate in social groups. In contrast, the Flexibility subscale received the lowest

Table 2: Descriptive statistics of the two surveys ($N = 100$).

Type	Subscales	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Multicultural Personality Questionnaire	Cultural empathy	3.45	0.384	2.50	4.63
	Social initiative	3.67	0.446	2.50	4.88
	Open mindedness	3.49	0.454	2.50	4.75
	Emotional stability	3.52	0.425	2.38	4.63
	Flexibility	3.44	0.417	2.50	4.63
	Multicultural personality (total)	3.52	0.290	2.78	4.28
Academic Adjustment Survey	Academic & faculty support	3.72	0.801	1.56	5.00
	Social interaction	3.25	0.982	1.00	5.00
	Academic adjustment	3.43	0.910	1.00	5.00
	Personal & social adjustment	3.58	0.849	1.40	5.00
	Friendship	3.01	1.077	1.00	5.00
	Academic adjustment (total)	3.40	0.747	1.56	5.00

score ($M = 3.44$, $SD = 0.417$), which indicates that international students face challenges adapting to their new environment.

The Academic Adjustment Survey showed that the Academic and Faculty Support subscale obtained the highest score ($M = 3.72$, $SD = 0.801$), which indicates that participants received adequate assistance and support from their Korean universities throughout their academic journeys. The Friendship subscale, on the other hand, had the lowest score ($M = 3.01$, $SD = 1.077$), implying that participants found it difficult to interact with other foreign or local students. Figures 1 and 2 illustrated the Multicultural Personality Questionnaire and Academic Adjustment Survey score patterns for each subcategory.

4.2 Results of correlational analysis

To address RQ 1, a correlation analysis was conducted among all variables. The results of the study in Table 3 exhibited several notable correlations. Firstly, both GPA and Korean language proficiency correlated positively, as did GPA and education level. Accordingly, a high level of Korean language proficiency and educational level is associated with better academic performance. This finding is consistent with previous research (Andrade 2006), which suggests that language proficiency is a key factor in facilitating a smooth educational experience in a host country.

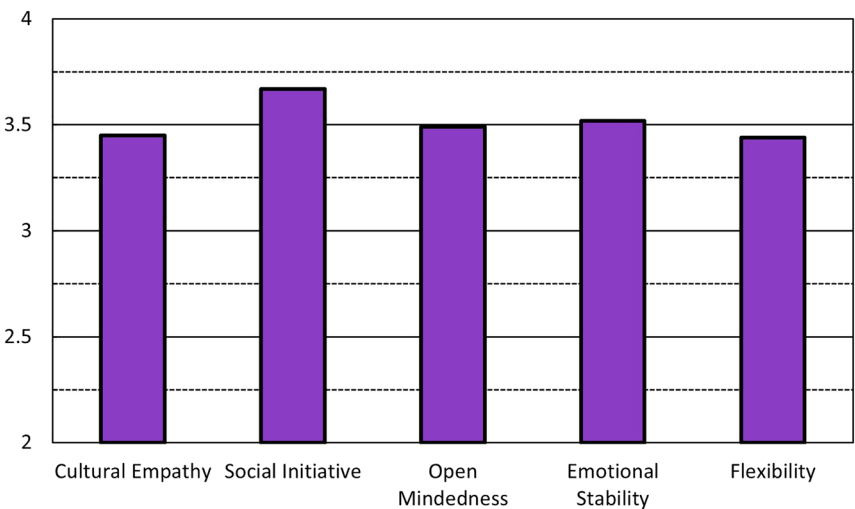


Figure 1: Score patterns of Multicultural Personality Questionnaire.

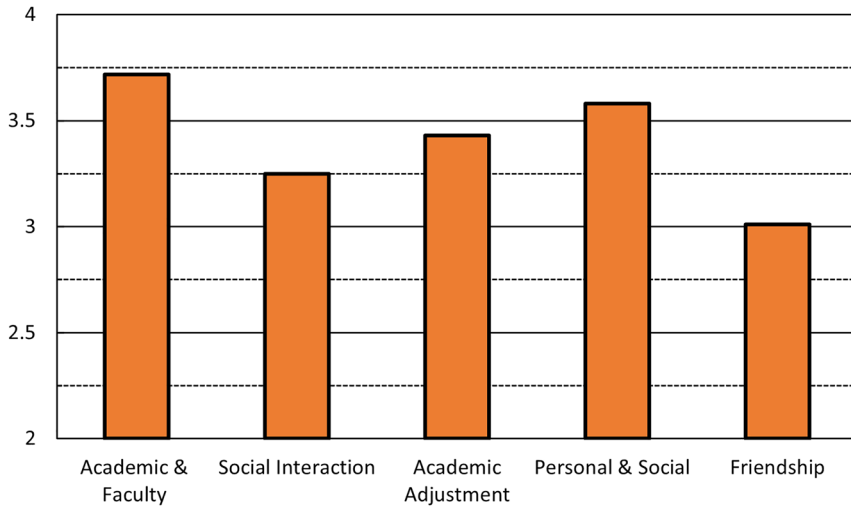


Figure 2: Score patterns of Academic Adjustment Survey.

Furthermore, a significant correlation was observed between the Multicultural Personality Questionnaire and GPA, indicating that multicultural personalities may impact international students' academic success. This finding is consistent with the results of Van Oudenhoven and Van der Zee (2002)'s study, who also found a strong correlation between these two factors. In addition, Korean language proficiency and educational level were highly correlated with the duration of stay in Korea. The findings of the study have shown consistency with previous research (Anderson et al. 2016; Bastien et al. 2018; Waluyo and Panmei 2021) in that better language proficiency is positively associated with higher academic achievement among international students. Longer stays have been also shown to contribute to language proficiency and educational level. This finding further supports the notion that a longer duration of stay can contribute to language proficiency and educational advancement in a hosting country.

Another significant correlation was found between preferred languages and the Multicultural Personality Survey. When students have a high level of language ability, they are more likely to engage in a variety of social activities, such as building friendships with people from different cultures. In addition, the Multicultural Personality Questionnaire and the Academic Adjustment Survey demonstrated higher correlations, indicating a direct relationship between multicultural personality and academic adjustment. The significant correlation found between the Multicultural Personalities Questionnaire and the Academic Adjustment Survey supported previous research indicating that multicultural personalities impact international students' academic performance (Cong 2017; Kağnıcı 2012; Lewthwaite 1996; Wu et al.

Table 3: Correlational analysis of the variables.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Gender	1								
2. Age	-0.140	1							
3. English proficiency	-0.183	-0.032	1						
4. Korean proficiency	0.355^a	-0.058	-0.057	1					
5. Educational level	0.041	0.567^a	0.010	0.324^a	1				
6. Period of staying	-0.031	0.265^a	0.171	0.262^a	0.617^a	1			
7. GPA	-0.045	-0.072	0.085	0.297^a	0.263^b	0.161	1		
8. Preferred language	-0.187	-0.093	-0.079	0.036	-0.046	-0.085	-0.291	1	
9. MPQ (total)	-0.062	0.007	0.167	0.112	0.109	0.185	0.300^a	-0.233	1
10. AAS (total)	-0.116	-0.037	0.033	-0.055	-0.081	-0.088	0.065	-0.276 ^b	0.203^b

Values in bold indicate statistical significance with ^a $p < 0.01$; ^b $p < 0.05$. MPQ: Multicultural Personality Questionnaire, AAS: Academic Adjustment Survey.

2015; Yakunina et al. 2012). Overall, the correlation analysis sheds light on the importance of host country language proficiency (Korean), educational level, and multicultural personality in international students’ academic experience.

4.3 Results of regression analysis

In response to RQ 2, a regression analysis was performed to determine which variables contributed to academic achievement. Table 4 presented the results of the regression analysis.

The first model, which included Korean language proficiency and GPA, yielded a R^2 value of 0.128. Korean language proficiency emerged as a significant predictor of students’ academic adjustment ($\beta = 0.358, p < 0.001$). This suggests that Korean language proficiency may significantly influence international students’ academic achievement. The second model expanded upon the first model by including preferred language, which encompassed both Korean and English. The inclusion of this variable resulted in a higher R^2 value of 0.225. Based on Model 2, academic achievement was significantly predicted by both Korean language proficiency ($\beta = 0.045, p < 0.01$) and preferred language ($\beta = 0.146, p < 0.01$).

GKS international students’ academic success was greatly influenced by their ability to communicate in both English and Korean during classes. The regression and correlational analyses consistently indicated a significant correlation between language ability and academic achievement. Therefore, it is advisable to provide additional support activities that prioritize the development of English and Korean language skills, ensuring both academic success and successful social integration for GKS students. Consequently, it is evident that Korean proficiency and preferred language (English) have a positive impact on international students’ academic

Table 4: Regression analysis of variables predicting academic achievement (GPA).

Variable	Model 1		Model 2			
	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients		Unstandardized coefficients	
	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	β	<i>B</i>
(Constant)	3.597		0.199	3.953	0.248	
Korean proficiency	0.116	0.047	0.358	0.121	0.371	0.045
Preferred language				−0.328	−0.312	0.146
<i>R</i>	0.358			0.474		
R^2	0.128			0.225		
<i>F</i>	19.973			13.194		

Dependent variable: GPA. Values in bold indicate statistical significance with $p < 0.05$.

achievement (Martirosyan et al. 2015; Waluyo and Panmei 2021). Lower-skilled students were less satisfied with their academic performance at their host institutions.

5 Conclusion

In the first research question (RQ 1), we investigated the relationship between individual characteristics (gender, age, language proficiency, and length of stay in South Korea), multicultural personality, academic adjustment, and academic achievement (GPA) among GKS students. According to the correlational analysis, (1) a positive correlation was observed between GPA and Korean language proficiency, and between GPA and education level, indicating that higher proficiency in Korean and greater educational level result in better academic performance. (2) The Multicultural Personality Questionnaire and GPA are strongly correlated, suggesting that international students who are more open to multicultural attitudes perform better academically. (3) Extended stays in Korea were associated with higher levels of Korean language proficiency and educational level, suggesting beneficial effects of extended stays.

The second research question (RQ 2) examined how individual characteristics, multicultural personality traits, and academic adjustment affected academic achievement, specifically GPA, in higher education. The results revealed that both Korean language proficiency and preferred language proficiency played a significant role in predicting students' academic adjustment. These findings highlight the importance of providing students with language support activities to improve their language skills both in English and Korean. The reason behind this is that English is used as a medium to acquire academic knowledge or skills in Korea whereas Korean can be used to communicate with friends outside of the classroom.

Indeed, GKS students intend to achieve academic success in South Korea, given that they are fully funded by the Korean government. Therefore, the results of the current study hold significant value for hosting institutions as they provide insights into the factors that influence international students' academic adjustment in South Korea. Language ability, as indicated by regression and correlational analyses, is significantly correlated with academic achievement.

The findings of the study imply that the 1-year intensive Korean language program has been identified as a vital component in facilitating the successful academic adjustment of international students. This is because the majority of course materials and resources are distributed in Korean, which requires not only basic interpersonal communication skills but also technical and academic cognitive proficiency in the language. It is essential to recognize diverse language proficiency levels among international students and provide adequate classroom support to foster their language development. By acknowledging the significance of the intensive Korean

language program and prioritizing the improvement of English and Korean language skills, educational institutions can greatly enhance the academic adaptation and overall success of international students. Likewise, individuals learning the Korean language from different countries can provide valuable perspectives to policymakers and program developers involved in designing and implementing effective language policies or programs in South Korea. This can be achieved through the provision of language courses, tutoring services, implementation of language exchange programs, or other relevant resources aimed at improving language proficiency and effective communication within educational contexts.

The current paper, however, has several limitations. Firstly, it was primarily intended to analyze major problems in academic adjustment difficulties using online survey. However, it would be beneficial to complement these findings with data collected through focus group interviews to gain a comprehensive understanding of the issues. This combination of research methods would provide a more holistic view of international students' academic adjustment issues in South Korea. Another limitation is that it could not classify students from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Culture may potentially influence how students adapt to academic life in South Korea. Unfortunately, the diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds represented in the 53 countries in the survey make it difficult to include this variable in the analysis. It may be further necessary to redefine cultural-linguistic diversity to achieve clearer and more specific results. By doing so, it became possible to observe how diverse cultural-linguistic backgrounds may impact academic adjustment in South Korea.

A mixed-method approach such as interviews or case studies can be used to understanding of the perceptions of international students. Furthermore, it may be beneficial to collaborate with GKS's head institution, NIIED (National Institute for International Education), which is responsible for international students in South Korea. Collaboration would allow students from various regions across the country to participate in a more comprehensive study in the future. In conclusion, addressing these limitations by incorporating focus group interviews, refining cultural diversity classification, utilizing a mixed-method approach, and working with NIIED can strengthen future research efforts and provide a more nuanced understanding of international students' academic adjustment process in South Korea.

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