

**INTERNAL PR STRATEGIES SUPPORTING INDONESIAN STUDENTS'
ACADEMIC COMMUNICATION CHALLENGES AT WOOSONG
UNIVERSITY**

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ABSTRAK

Kesulitan berkomunikasi dan kesalahpahaman antar budaya merupakan hal yang umum dialami mahasiswa internasional ketika beradaptasi dengan sistem akademik dan administrasi di universitas Korea Selatan, khususnya saat kemampuan bahasa Korea dibutuhkan di luar kelas. Strategi Public Relations (PR) internal yang dilakukan oleh Woosong University untuk mendukung mahasiswa internasional Indonesia yang menghadapi tantangan komunikasi akademik dalam bahasa Korea dikaji dalam penelitian ini. Wawancara semi-terstruktur telah dilakukan menggunakan metode kualitatif yang melibatkan satu Student Service Representative dan empat mahasiswa internasional Indonesia. Data wawancara dianalisis menggunakan analisis tematik yang dijelaskan oleh Braun and Clarke (2006). Tujuh tema utama diidentifikasi: saluran komunikasi; kejelasan informasi; akses ke informasi; masalah komunikasi akademik dalam bahasa Korea; layanan dukungan untuk siswa; kesenjangan antara strategi universitas dan pengalaman mahasiswa; dan rekomendasi untuk meningkatkan komunikasi dan dukungan siswa. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa Universitas Woosong telah mengadopsi strategi komunikasi dan dukungan yang memberikan bantuan positif kepada mahasiswa internasional Indonesia. Meningkatkan konsistensi komunikasi, multi-bahasa dan koordinasi antar unit universitas juga dapat memperkuat pengalaman akademik dan komunikasi mahasiswa di dalam universitas.

Kata Kunci: *Public Relations Internal; Komunikasi Pemangku Kepentingan; Mahasiswa Internasional; Layanan Dukungan Mahasiswa; Woosong University*

ABSTRACT

Both communication difficulties and intercultural misunderstanding are common with international students who are adjusting to academic and administrative institutions in South Korean universities, especially when the university requires Korean language skills outside of class. This study examines the internal Public Relations (PR) strategies employed by Woosong University to support Indonesian international students facing Korean language-related academic communication challenges. Semi-structured interviews were carried out using a qualitative method which involved one Student Service Representative and four Indonesian international students. Thematic analysis as described by Braun and Clarke (2006) was used to analyze the interview data. Seven key themes were identified: communication channels; clarity of information; access to information; academic communication problems in Korean; support services for students; gap between the university's strategies and students' experiences; and recommendations for

improving communication and student support. In general, the results showed that Woosong University has adopted certain communication and support strategies, which provide positive assistance to the Indonesian international students. Enhancing the consistency of communication, multi-lingual and coordination among university units can also reinforce the students' academic experiences and communication within the university.

Keywords: *Internal Public Relations; Stakeholder Communication; Student Support Services; International Students; Woosong University; Korean Language Barriers*

A. INTRODUCTION

Woosong university is a recognized destination for international students, including students from Indonesia. The Times Higher Education (THE) World University Rankings has consistently put Woosong University at the top position of International Outlook in South Korea for several years (Woosong University, 2025). International students are expected to adjust to the educational systems, as well as the communication culture of the host country. In the Woosong University environment students' use of language and communication is essential to understanding academic information, obtaining help, and communicating with faculty and staff, and to participating in campus life.

It is possible for Korean language-related communication difficulties to persist in international or English medium classes for Indonesian students. Academic life doesn't only happen in the classroom. Students must also read the university announcement, speak to the administrative offices, question the academics regarding academic requirements, and engage in group work activities with the Korean language speakers within the university. As a result, the language barrier of the Korean language may affect the overall student experience.

From previous studies, it has been revealed that language, culture, support services and academic quality are factors that affect international students' satisfaction and adjustment in South Korean universities. Alemu and Cordier (2017) have identified three factors that affect international student satisfaction: learning experience, living experience and support services. Hasanah, Djafri and Nugraheni (2025) also point out the connection between Korean language and culture learning and students' awareness of South Korean society. As for this, Kim (2016) proposes to re-establish institutional systems to promote equity, diversity and inclusiveness in Korean universities for international students.

From a PR perspective, student services are not just administrative units. They also serve as communication linkages between the university and its students. Through orientation, announcements, advising, help desks, and direct communication, student services promote awareness about university systems and support to international students. Therefore, this study aimed to examine how Woosong University student services communicate with and support Indonesian international students who face challenges in Korean language-related communication problems.

In general, previous studies indicate that language issues, cultural adaptation, assistance, and inclusiveness in institutions impact international students' experiences in South Korea. These studies are helpful as they help to describe the problems that international students encounter. But most of them are mainly on the adjustment experiences, satisfaction or cultural adaptation of the students. There are very few studies that focus on the role of university student services as an Internal PR communication activity that strategically communicates with and supports international students as stakeholders. Hence, this study aims to fill this gap, focusing on the planning, communication and support of student services for Indonesian students experiencing academic communication challenges related to the Korean language.

University Internal PR and Student Support Services

University Public Relations are not just external promotion or public image. It also includes communication internally with the stakeholder groups inside the university environment. In this study, international students are seen as internal stakeholders due to them interacting regularly with university systems, staff, academic information, and support services. Internal PR helps the university develop understanding, trust, and good relationship with the stakeholders.

Welch and Jackson (2007) explained internal communication through a stakeholder approach, which shows the need for organizations to communicate strategically with internal stakeholder groups. In university settings, student services can be seen as a part of this communication function because they help students access information, solve problems, and understand institutional procedures. For international students, this role is crucial because language and cultural differences can make university communication more difficult.

The excellence approach to Public Relations also supports the importance of two-way communication and relationship building between an organization and its publics (Grunig, 1992). Applying this to Woosong University means student services should not only deliver information to international students, but also listen to student needs and adjust support based on their experiences. This makes Internal PR relevant to studying how Woosong University supports Indonesian students.

Relationship management theory strengthens this Internal PR perspective because it views public relations as the management of relationships between an organization and its publics (Ledingham, 2003). In this study, the relationship is between Woosong University and the Indonesian international students as a stakeholder group. This implies that the study does not ask only what services are available, but also how communication can help to reinforce trust, understanding, and support between the University and students.

It is also argued from the perspective of PR relationship measurement that there are opportunities for organisation-public relationships to be comprehended via trust, satisfaction, commitment, control mutuality and responsiveness (Hon & Grunig, 1999). These concepts have been useful in this study to determine if communication and support services are not only available, but also experienced by Indonesian students as easy to access, supportive and responsive.

Strategic internal communication literature also emphasizes the importance of communication channels, symmetrical communication, and stakeholder

satisfaction (Men, 2014). This is relevant because student services need to choose communication channels that international students can understand and use, while also creating opportunities for feedback instead of only sending one-way information.

Stakeholder prioritization is also crucial in PR, as it is essential for organizations to determine who is the priority with regard to their PR efforts. Specific attention and communication strategies are needed to be developed for stakeholder groups (Rawlins, 2006). Woosong University students that are Indonesians can be regarded as a special stakeholder group, because they may have specific academic communication requirements with regard to the Korean language barriers.

In this context, the use of several communication channels can be understood as more than a practical method of distributing announcements. Different channels serve different purposes and may reach students in different situations. Formal university email and student information systems can provide official records, while academic advisors, teaching assistants, and messaging platforms can provide clarification when students need immediate or more personalized explanations. For internal stakeholders who are adapting to a new academic environment, access to several channels may reduce dependence on a single source of information. However, the existence of multiple channels also creates a need for consistency. If information differs between channels or is delivered at different times, the advantage of having many communication options may become a source of uncertainty.

Two-way communication is therefore particularly relevant to student support. International students may need opportunities to ask follow-up questions because their difficulties are not always visible from the original announcement or procedure. Feedback can help university staff recognize recurring questions, unclear wording, or administrative processes that require additional explanation. In this sense, feedback is not only an evaluation activity conducted after a service has been delivered; it can also function as an ongoing Internal PR mechanism that allows the university to adjust communication according to stakeholder needs. This is consistent with the relationship-oriented perspective described by Grunig (1992), Ledingham (2003), and Hon and Grunig (1999), in which communication quality is connected to responsiveness, understanding, and the maintenance of relationships between an organization and its publics.

Korean Language, Culture, and Student Experience

Language is closely related to cultural awareness and social involvement. Hasanah et al. (2025) argue that Korean language and culture could help students to become aware and understand the social problems in South Korea. It implies that language is not just a set of technical skills, but a way to comprehend social and cultural situations. Limited knowledge of Korean may impact on the understanding of campus culture and communication with members of the Woosong university for Indonesian students there. Language barriers can manifest themselves in various ways in an academic context. Written announcements might not be understood, academic instructions might be misinterpreted, and students may not feel like they can communicate with university staff or whether they need a high level of

formality in their communication. These issues can cause students to be uncertain and lose confidence in their academic journey when they need support.

The communication environment also involves more than a simple distinction between Korean and English. International students may receive information in English but still find formal academic wording difficult, while other information may combine Korean and English or require students to interpret unfamiliar administrative terminology. This means that a language-related challenge can occur even when a message is technically available in a language that the student understands. Clarity, context, and the possibility of asking for clarification remain important. Translation applications, peer explanations, and direct communication with professors or staff can therefore become practical strategies for filling gaps in understanding.

For this reason, the present study treats Korean language-related academic communication challenges as varied experiences rather than as a single barrier shared equally by all participants. Some students may depend more on translation tools, while others may rely on professors, classmates, or staff members. A student who is comfortable with classroom English may still need assistance with administrative communication, and a student who understands basic Korean may still find institutional terminology difficult. This distinction is important because communication support that is effective for one student may not be sufficient for another. It also supports the need for flexible communication practices that consider differences in language proficiency, communication context, and the complexity of the information being delivered.

International Student Satisfaction and Support Services

The academic quality, living experiences, and support services at the university all have an impact on international student satisfaction in South Korea. Alemu and Cordier (2017) demonstrate that support services make up the satisfaction of international students in Korean universities. This is significant for the present study, because the support services at university can be important to mitigate communication challenges and enhance adaptation.

International Office, orientation programs, academic advising, help desks, and student support offices are examples of support services. However, these services do not necessarily reflect students' sense of support. Whether support is effective depends on students' understanding of the information, the ease with which they can access support and how they feel their individual needs are being met.

international Student Adjustment in Korean Universities

Choi and Kim (2014) examined how international students from Central Asia cope in a globalized Korean university and demonstrated that internationalization policies have an effect on setting up academic and cultural spaces for international students. Their study is relevant as it demonstrates the need of international students to adapt themselves not only to the classes but the institutional culture of the university. This is to affirm the importance of studying adaptation of Indonesian students to the university communication system in South Korea.

Choi and Chung (2014) also found that international students in South Korea experience acculturative stress, which indicates that the experience of

communication in another culture can cause a psychological and social strain. The present study is not primarily a mental health study; however, this literature suggests that communication barriers could have an impact on how well students adapt and how well they are doing on mental health.

From the overall literature on the satisfaction and adjustment of the international student, one can conclude that the academic communication, cultural adaptation and support services are related. In fact, it is sometimes not the communication strategy of the university, but rather the difficulties faced by the students that are explained in these studies. This means that on the student services side, a new approach of looking at student services from an internal PR perspective is needed, particularly through the lens of students' key informants – the university's staff.

Equity and International Student Support

Kim (2016) states that educational internationalization should not only aim to attract foreign students to study in South Korea, but also to provide an equal and inclusive learning environment. The argument is relevant to this paper because communication support is one of the ways in which the academic environment is made inclusive for international students at the university. Students may be unable to grasp important information or access help, thus leaving them without equal access to the university's communication.

Literature Synthesis and Research Gap

This literature review reveals three key findings. First, the foreign students in South Korea face language, cultural, academic adjustment and institutional problems. Second, university support services are important factors that influence the satisfaction and adaptation of international students. Third, literature in Public Relations and organizational communication gives attention to the importance of strategic internal communication, stakeholder relationship, two-way communication and feedback between the organization and its publics. However, there still remains a gap between these two bodies of literature. Studies on international students tend to emphasize students' adaptation, satisfaction, and acculturative stress, while internal communication and stakeholder relationships are frequently discussed in a broader organizational context. There are fewer studies that relate these perspectives by looking at the university student services as an Internal PR for the international students. To fill in that gap, this study focused on how Woosong University's student service team communicates with and supports international students from Indonesia, and on confirming the strategies that WSU provides to support Indonesian international students based on students' experiences.

The focus on Indonesian students is also relevant because international students do not experience university communication only as recipients of information. They interact with academic staff, teaching assistants, administrative offices, advisors, and other students while trying to understand academic procedures and daily university expectations. From an Internal PR perspective, these interactions form part of the relationship between the university and its internal stakeholders. Communication therefore becomes meaningful not only when information is distributed, but also when students can understand the

message, identify the appropriate person to contact, and receive a response that helps them act on the information. This perspective makes student services an important area of communication research because administrative support, academic guidance, and interpersonal communication can influence how students interpret the university's responsiveness toward them.

The present study also places communication challenges within the broader international student experience without assuming that every Indonesian student encounters the same difficulty. Students may differ in Korean proficiency, English proficiency, academic background, familiarity with university systems, and preferred communication channels. As a result, the same announcement or support service may be experienced differently by different students. Examining both the university representative's explanation and the students' experiences allows the study to consider the intended communication strategy together with its practical implementation. This comparison is important for identifying where institutional communication works as expected and where additional clarification, coordination, or support may still be needed.

B. RESEARCH METHOD

Research Design

The research design of this study is qualitative descriptive research. The study is qualitative since it seeks to gain an understanding of communication strategies, staff perspectives, and an in-depth student experience. The problem is not measured numerically, but rather in the words of Woosong university staff to explore the description of their communication and support services and how Indonesian students experience those services at Woosong University.

A qualitative descriptive approach was considered appropriate because the objective of the study was to describe communication practices and participant experiences in a direct and contextual manner. The study did not attempt to measure the frequency of communication problems or statistically test the effectiveness of a particular service. Instead, it focused on how communication strategies were explained by the university representative and how those strategies were experienced by Indonesian students. This approach allowed the researcher to retain the practical details of the participants' experiences, including the channels they used, the types of support they received, and the situations in which they experienced difficulties.

Purposive sampling was used to ensure that the participants had direct experience with the communication environment being studied. The university representative was included because the research required an institutional perspective on student support and communication strategy, while the four Indonesian students were included because they had experienced Woosong University's academic and administrative communication as international students. Including these two perspectives supported comparison between institutional intention and student experience. The study did not aim to represent all international students at Woosong University, but rather to obtain detailed accounts from participants who were directly relevant to the research focus.

Participants and Sampling

Purposive sampling was used for the research. The choice of subjects was made based on first-hand knowledge of the research area. Five participants were interviewed, including one representative from Woosong University's Student Service and four Indonesian international students. At Woosong University, Teaching Assistants (TAs) are part of Student Service and assist international students with academic and administrative matters. The student participants represented different academic backgrounds and study experiences, allowing the researcher to obtain diverse perspectives.

Data Collection

Semi-structured interviews were used to gather data. This strategy gave the researcher the opportunity to develop some guiding questions, while ensuring the participant is able to share their experiences in great detail. Interviews were conducted through different formats based on participants' availability and location, including face-to-face interviews, online calls, and direct messages due to scheduling constraints. The first stage of interviews was conducted with Woosong University staff to understand the university support strategy. The second stage was conducted with Indonesian students to compare the university explanation with the actual student experience.

The semi-structured format also allowed the researcher to maintain a common focus across the interviews while adapting follow-up questions to each participant's experience. Questions addressed communication channels, clarity and accessibility of information, language-related challenges, support services, feedback, and recommendations. When participants raised specific experiences, additional questions were used to clarify the situation and understand how they responded to it. This flexibility was useful because the participants had different academic experiences and did not necessarily encounter the same communication problems.

The use of different interview formats was determined by practical considerations rather than by differences in the research questions. Face-to-face interviews, online calls, and direct messages were all used to obtain responses to the same overall research focus. Conducting the staff interview first provided an initial description of the university's intended support and communication practices. The student interviews were then used to examine how those practices were encountered in everyday academic and administrative situations. This sequence supported the study's comparative purpose without treating the staff account or the student accounts as the only source of explanation.

Data Analysis

Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis was used to analyze the data from the interview. The researcher identified repetition of concepts and patterns in the responses of the interviews and organized them into seven themes: communication channels, information clarity and accessibility, Korean language-related academic communication challenges, student support services, feedback and evaluation, gaps between university strategy and student experience, and recommendations. The analysis was also guided by concepts from Internal PR and stakeholder communication.

The analysis was conducted by reading the interview responses repeatedly and identifying statements that were relevant to the research questions. Similar statements were grouped according to recurring ideas, such as the use of communication channels, clarity and timing of information, language support, access to university staff, and student feedback. These recurring patterns were then organized into broader themes that could represent both common experiences and important differences among participants. The seven final themes were retained separately because each theme addressed a different part of the communication process, even though some of them were related to one another.

During interpretation, attention was given to differences between participants so that a theme was not treated as a universal experience when the interviews did not support that conclusion. For example, the language-related theme included different forms of difficulty and different coping strategies rather than assuming that all students experienced Korean as the same level of barrier. Similarly, positive experiences with support services were considered together with concerns about responsiveness, staffing, or information consistency. The concepts of Internal PR and stakeholder communication were used to interpret how these experiences related to organizational communication, but the themes themselves were developed from the interview material. This allowed the analysis to connect the participants' practical experiences with the theoretical focus of the study while keeping the findings grounded in the data.

Trustworthiness

To enhance the credibility of the findings, the researcher compared information obtained from the Student Service representative and the student participants through data triangulation. Follow-up questions were also conducted whenever clarification was needed to ensure the accuracy and consistency of participants' responses.

Triangulation in this study involved comparing the institutional explanation provided by the Student Service representative with the accounts of the four student participants. Agreement between the two perspectives helped identify practices that were recognized by both the university and the students, while differences between them helped reveal areas where implementation was experienced differently. The researcher also compared experiences across the student participants rather than relying on a single interview to describe a broader communication pattern.

Follow-up questions were used when a response required clarification or when the researcher needed to confirm the meaning of a participant's statement. This was particularly important for distinguishing between problems related to language, timing, staff availability, and the communication channel itself. The study also retained differences between participant experiences instead of forcing all responses into the same interpretation. These steps were used to strengthen the credibility of the findings and to make the relationship between the interview data and the final themes more transparent.

C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Communication Channels

The results show that there are several communication channels in Woosong University to share academic and administrative information with international students. The Student Service Representative (SSR) reported that important information is provided via official University email, the Student Information System (SIS), departmental announcement, messaging system, and academic advisor. The university not only chooses a medium to communicate but also intentionally adopts a multi-channel communication strategy to enhance better access of students to academic information and university services.

This institutional approach was generally reflected in the findings of the interviews. While individuals differed in their preferred platforms for academic and administrative information, everyone said they used more than one. Axel and Fernando mainly used group chats on the message app KakaoTalk for academic updates, and Maclaren used a mixture of LMS, university email, and KakaoTalk to keep up to date with academics. However, Edbert found his main mode of communication to be the University email, and professors were often used to reiterate key academic news. The results indicated that students did not exclusively use official communication channels; they also used informal communication channels to get accurate and timely information.

More than one communication approach is used, in line with the concepts of Internal Public Relations, which are based on the concept of communicating effectively with the elements within the organisation. Official communication channels were the main sources of information from the institution while students often used to use professors, their TAs, their classmates and KakaoTalk groups to clarify announcements and reinforce their learning. This also confirms the Stakeholder Theory, in which international students are considered significant internal stakeholders who are affected by the availability and efficiency of the institutional communication.

The results indicated that Woosong University's multi-channel communication strategy assists international students in obtaining their academic and administrative information from multiple formal and informal communication channels. Students showed a variety of communication preferences, but invariably used a variety of communication channels to supplement each other's academic work and stay informed during their academic pursuits.

The combination of formal and informal channels also shows that access to information is partly relational. An official message may provide the original information, while professors, TAs, classmates, or group chats help students interpret what the information means for their own academic situation. This does not necessarily indicate that official communication is ineffective. Rather, it suggests that international students may use a communication network in which institutional and interpersonal sources support one another. From an Internal PR perspective, this reinforces the importance of considering not only where information is published but also how internal stakeholders move between channels when they need clarification.

At the same time, a multi-channel system requires coordination. Repeating information through different platforms can improve visibility, but the benefit is reduced when messages are inconsistent or when students are uncertain about which source is authoritative. The findings therefore suggest that the strength of Woosong University's communication system lies in the availability of several access points, while its effectiveness also depends on maintaining consistent information across those access points.

Information Clarity and Accessibility

The evidence suggests that Indonesian international students generally perceived academic and administrative information at Woosong University as accessible through multiple communication channels. However, participants reported that the quality of communication varied in terms of clarity, consistency, and timeliness. While some students found the information easy to understand, others experienced difficulties due to delayed announcements, inconsistent communication, or the use of complex academic language. These findings suggest that information accessibility was influenced not only by the availability of communication channels but also by how information was delivered and explained.

According to the Student Service Representative (SSR), university staff provide additional explanations and one-on-one guidance to ensure that international students understand important academic and administrative procedures. This adaptive communication approach aims to accommodate students from different language backgrounds and improve their understanding of institutional information.

The participants' experiences reflected both strengths and challenges in communication quality. Axel explained that the clarity of information often depended on the responsiveness of individual teaching assistants, while Fernando noted that some announcements were delivered at the last minute, making it difficult to prepare for academic or administrative requirements. In contrast, Maclaren generally perceived university communication as clear and timely, although he occasionally sought clarification through KakaoTalk discussions with classmates. Edbert also considered most information understandable but reported that formal academic English used in official announcements could sometimes be difficult to comprehend.

These findings align with the principles of Internal Public Relations, which emphasize that effective organizational communication depends not only on disseminating information but also on ensuring that messages are clear, timely, and understandable for internal stakeholders. Overall, the findings suggest that while Woosong University has made information widely accessible through multiple communication channels, differences in clarity, consistency, and responsiveness continued to shape students' communication experiences.

These differences among participants are important because they show that accessibility and clarity should not be treated as identical concepts. Students may be able to access an announcement while still needing additional explanation before they can act on it. Conversely, information that is clearly written may still be less useful if it arrives too late for students to prepare. The participants' experiences therefore indicate that communication quality involves several connected elements:

availability, understandable wording, consistency, timing, and access to someone who can provide clarification.

The SSR's description of additional explanations and one-on-one guidance is relevant to this issue because personalized support can respond to difficulties that cannot always be anticipated in a general announcement. However, Axel's and Fernando's experiences also show that the usefulness of this support can depend on staff responsiveness and the timing of information. The findings therefore suggest that communication accessibility is not a fixed characteristic of a particular platform; it is shaped by the way information and human support work together in practice.

Korean Language-Related Academic Communication Challenges

The results show that the problem of communication in Korean language still affected the understanding of academic information and adjustment of Indonesian international students in the university environment. The language situation and context of communication, however, presented different challenges to the participants. The findings in this study do not confirm that language is an obstacle to understanding academic communication, but rather indicate that the Korean and English language skills of students influenced their understanding of academic communication and their capacity to seek assistance when required.

The Student Service Representative (SSR) at Woosong University attempts to overcome these issues with the help of simplified explanations, English language support and one-to-one guidance for international students. These strategies helped students gain better knowledge of academic and administrative rules and regulations, and cater for diverse language backgrounds.

Students shared their experiences with communication barriers and solutions when they communicate in languages. Some of the announcements were made in Korean and some in English, which required further explanation by the international students, Fernando said. In the interim, Maclaren and Edbert also shared their experience of using translation applications like Papago and Google Translate in order to comprehend the academic information. Edbert also said that sometimes body language was employed to communicate. However, when communication problems arose, Axel stressed the importance of communication with professors, implying that interpersonal communication was also crucial for students to get over language-related challenges.

The results are in line with the principles of Internal Public Relations, highlighting the need to tailor communication to the needs of internal stakeholders. The university's multilingual support, simplified explanations, and personalized advice reflect a commitment to enhancing communication accessibility for international students. However, the results showed that the students still used translation applications and interpersonal communication when faced with more complex academic communication. In general, language related communication difficulties were addressed by a variety of institutional supports and adaptive strategies of students, but not by one specific way of communicating.

The variation in these experiences is particularly significant for interpreting the language theme. Fernando's experience with mixed Korean-English communication differs from Maclaren's and Edbert's reliance on translation

applications, while Axel emphasized support from professors rather than identifying Korean itself as the central difficulty. These differences show why the findings should not be interpreted as evidence that all Indonesian students experience the same Korean language barrier. Instead, language-related communication challenges appear in different forms depending on the student and the situation.

This finding also has implications for university support. A single solution, such as translating every message, may not address difficulties involving academic terminology, unclear procedures, or the need for individualized explanation. Multilingual resources can improve access, but interpersonal clarification remains important for complex or unfamiliar information. The university's use of simplified explanations and one-to-one guidance therefore complements formal language support by recognizing that comprehension involves both language and context.

Student Support Services

Participants' responses demonstrate that Woosong University has various types of support services for Indonesian international students to support students to adapt to academic and administrative life. The services offered by the Student Service Representative (SSR) consist of orientation programs, academic advising, Korean language classes, counseling services, departmental coordinators and assistance from the International Office. The university also provides individual counselling to guide students through academic processes and to address individual issues. The services are designed to help students settle into the University and make the most of their university life.

Overall, the participants did recognize the availability of these support services, but their experience with the various types of services was different. Fernando thanked the International Office for its support during the Alien Registration Card (ARC) application process and Maclaren praised the assistance provided by the teaching assistants in the class scheduling process. Edbert also said that he got support from the teaching assistant and the dorm office for administrative problems. When there were problems with communication, Axel also got academic advice from professors. The results illustrate that students were looking for the help from different university representatives based on their needs.

These support services are intended to demonstrate the University's commitment to effective internal communications and support of its internal stakeholders and help to achieve that goal. Academic and administrative support were available to assist students to overcome any challenges faced while studying; however, the efficacy of the support provided was partly dependent on the students' personal experiences and responsiveness of academic staff members.

The results indicate that the role of student support services is important in facilitating the adaptation of Indonesian international students in Woosong University in general. Participants spoke well of the various support providers, but also showed how effective support needed to be timely and responsive to student interactions with university staff.

The findings also demonstrate that student support is distributed across several university actors rather than located in one office. Participants sought help from the International Office, teaching assistants, professors, the dormitory office,

advisors, and other staff depending on the issue they faced. This distributed support structure can be useful because different problems require different forms of expertise. At the same time, students need to know where to seek help and must be able to reach the relevant person when support is needed.

From an Internal PR perspective, these interactions are part of the student's relationship with the university. A positive administrative experience, such as receiving assistance with the ARC process or class scheduling, can strengthen the perception that the institution is responsive to student needs. In contrast, difficulty contacting a TA or uncertainty about which office is responsible can weaken the practical value of an otherwise available support system. The findings therefore suggest that support quality depends on both the existence of services and the accessibility of the people responsible for delivering them.

Feedback and Evaluation

Collectively, the findings reveal that Woosong University offers opportunities for international students to give feedback on their academic and administrative experience. The Student Service Representative (SSR) gathers student feedback at orientation sessions, through academic advising, surveys, and through informal conversations. Feedback is utilized to discuss pupils' needs and determine the effect of current support services.

The participants agreed that they did receive feedback in their learning, but the ways were different. Fernando completed a long Google Form survey on students' experiences before the end of semester, and Maclaren and Edbert did surveys and orientation evaluations. From these results it could be supposed that the university has created several ways to gather feedback from students and international students can express their experiences and concerns in both formal and informal ways.

Feedback is a significant two-way communication between the university and its internal stakeholders from an Internal Public Relations point of view. Actively giving students a voice helps the university understand students' needs, and assess how effectively current communication and support services are working. But the results also show that feedback without follow-up is not enough, as students' experiences highlight the need for feedback to drive ongoing improvement of services.

In general, the results indicate that feedback and evaluation are part of Woosong University's communication strategy for international students. The university offers opportunities for the students to share their experiences through surveys, advising sessions, orientation programs and informal communication, and continuous evaluation of academic and administrative services.

The different feedback mechanisms described by participants suggest that the university collects student perspectives at several points in the academic experience. Formal surveys can provide structured evaluation, while advising sessions, orientation feedback, and everyday conversations can reveal issues that may not appear in a standardized form. Using both formal and informal feedback can therefore provide a broader understanding of student needs.

However, the Internal PR value of feedback depends on whether students can see that their concerns contribute to communication or service improvement. Two-

way communication is not completed simply by asking students to provide comments. The organization must also be able to interpret recurring concerns, communicate responses where appropriate, and adjust practices when a problem is identified. In this study, the existence of feedback opportunities is a positive feature, while the student accounts of communication gaps indicate that feedback can continue to be used as a basis for improving consistency and responsiveness.

Gaps Between University Strategy and Student Experience

The interview findings indicate that Woosong University has prepared several communication strategies and support services for international students, but there was still a noticeable gap between the university's communication support strategy and the international students' experience. The Student Service Representative (SSR) states that the university wants to be available for communication via different channels, offer personalized guidance and support throughout. However, the participants' experiences revealed that application of these strategies, however, was not necessarily consistent across departments and situations.

Some of the challenges reported by the participants were indicative of these differences. Axel said that the availability of teaching assistants sometimes affected how well they could provide information, last minute announcements by teaching assistants were an issue Fernando faced and that the International Office didn't have enough staff during busy administrative periods.

According to Maclaren, some campus event information was still done in the traditional manner with physical posters, making it a little hard to notice for students as they mostly use digital platforms. Edbert also shared that there had been conflicting emails regarding volunteer issues, which created confusion despite generally clear communication. The results of this study show that, at times, it was not the lack of a communication channel, but the lack of consistency and implementation of the current communication practices that led to communication difficulties.

Effective communication involves not only the fact that channels of communication are available but that they are implemented in a consistent manner across organizational units, from an Internal Public Relations point of view. Although the participants' experiences indicated that responsiveness, coordination and information delivery may have an impact on how these communication strategies are perceived by international students, Woosong University has established comprehensive communication strategies for international students. Overall, the results revealed that it is the consistency with which communication policies are implemented rather than the policies themselves that is the primary focus of concern in the university. Minimizing such differences can further enhance the effectiveness of communication and the experiences of the Indonesian students who are studying overseas.

The gap identified in this study can therefore be understood as a difference between communication design and communication experience. The institutional strategy described by the SSR includes multiple channels, personalized guidance, and continuing support. The students generally recognized these resources, but they also described situations in which staffing, timing, or inconsistent messages affected the usefulness of the system. This suggests that the problem is not simply

whether a communication strategy exists, but whether it is implemented consistently across the points where students interact with the university.

This distinction is important for Internal PR because stakeholder relationships are shaped through repeated experiences. A strong policy or communication system may still be perceived differently when students encounter delays or conflicting information during an important academic or administrative process. Addressing these implementation gaps does not require replacing the entire communication structure. The findings instead point toward improving coordination, clarifying staff responsibilities, and ensuring that existing channels provide consistent and timely information.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the university representative and the Indonesian international students identified some areas for enhancing the communication and support services at Woosong University. Improvements that were recommended by the Student Service Representative (SSR) included increasing the quality of multilingual communication, more peer mentoring opportunities, and keeping the lines of communication open between the university staff and the international students to ensure that important information is being communicated effectively to them.

The participants also shared their experiences and provided recommendations. Axel recommended improving responsiveness and availability of TAs to offer more consistent support to international students. Fernando suggested expanding the International Office staff to improve coordination among departments and eliminate communication delays. Maclaren meanwhile suggested using digital communication rather than physical posters for campus activity related information (e.g. campus festivals announcement). Edbert said it is important to remind them and make announcements regularly to reduce confusion over academic and extracurricular activities.

These recommendations point to the need for ongoing evaluation and enhancement of organizational communication from an Internal Public Relations standpoint. Increased coherence in communication, increased coordination amongst university units and the use of more accessible communication modalities might help improve students' understanding of academic information and contribute to students' university experiences.

The overall results indicate that efforts to increase communication quality should include involvement of the University employees and students. The results found in this study can be utilized in enhancing the internal communication strategy of Woosong University and also in supporting the adaptation of Indonesian international students in university by applying the recommendations that have been issued.

Taken together, the recommendations are closely connected to the problems identified in the previous themes. Calls for more responsive TAs and additional International Office staff address accessibility and staffing concerns. Greater use of digital communication responds to the possibility that physical posters may not reach students who depend primarily on online channels. Routine reminders and improved multilingual resources address the need for clearer and more consistent

information. These recommendations therefore do not represent unrelated suggestions; they identify specific ways in which existing communication practices could be strengthened.

The recommendations also reflect the two-way nature of Internal PR. Both the university representative and the student participants contributed ideas for improvement, indicating that communication strategy can be informed by institutional knowledge as well as stakeholder experience. Continued dialogue between staff and students may help the university recognize emerging communication needs and adjust support as the international student population and academic environment change.

D. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

This study was aimed at examining the internal public relations strategies employed by Woosong University in assisting Indonesian foreign students who are studying at the university in the context of academic communication problems related to the Korean language. The results show the university is implementing a number of communication strategies and related services that include the use of multiple channels in communicating, orientation programs, academic advising, Korean language support and personalized assistance to support students in their academic adaptation.

The study also revealed that the effectiveness of communication was not only dependent on the available means of communication but also on the clarity, consistency and timeliness of the information. The communication system in the university was seen positively by most participants, but there were some issues in using it in some departments and in communication practices that created problems for students. While these communication challenges were not the same for all participants, they were unique to participants in relation to their language proficiency, academic environment, and preferred ways to request assistance.

In general, the results indicate that the efforts of internal public relations done at Woosong University have been beneficial in supporting the Indonesian international students. But further improving the consistency of communication, coordination between the different units of the university, and multilingual communication can enhance the academic experience of students. The conclusions drawn from the results of this study indicate the need for effective internal communication between universities and international students to build good relations with international students and to help them adjust to their universities and complete their university education well.

The findings further suggest that the value of Internal PR in a university setting can be observed through ordinary academic and administrative interactions. Email announcements, advising, translation support, teaching assistant communication, and student feedback may appear to be separate activities, but together they influence how international students understand the institution and how easily they can participate in university processes. For Indonesian international students, effective support therefore involves both communication systems and the interpersonal responsiveness of the people who represent those systems.

The study also indicates that international student communication should not be approached through a single assumption about language ability. Participants experienced different combinations of Korean language issues, academic English difficulty, translation needs, timing problems, and staff accessibility. Recognizing these differences can support more flexible communication practices. While the study is limited to a small number of participants, the findings provide a detailed view of how institutional communication strategies are encountered by a specific international student group and identify practical areas that can be considered in future communication planning.

Recommendations for Future Studies

In this study, the authors only used Indonesia's international students with a small number of subjects in Woosong University, which used a qualitative approach. Future studies could include participants from other countries and/or participating universities to give a wider picture of the communication experiences of international students in higher education. Comparative studies between universities or countries can also provide useful information on the various ways of internal PR and student support at other institutions.

Furthermore, future research can use a mixed method or quantitative method to investigate the effectiveness of specific communication channels or multilingual communication strategies or student support on a larger scale. This study may help the understanding of the effect of internal public relations strategies on international students' learning adaptation and their general university experience.

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