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Ways of Improvement in Support Networks for Foreign Students to Realize Multiculturalism in Korea

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Introduction

Recently, the number of foreign residents has rapidly increased in Korea. The figure has increased from 747,467 in 2005 to 2,245,912 in February of 2022, an increase of about 3 times for 17 years. In 2022, the ratio of foreign residents in Korea is up to 4.3% of the total population (Statistics Korea, KOSIS). In order to cope with the increase of foreign residents, the government enacted related laws and has been promoting related policies after setting the transition to a multicultural society as a national task in 2006. After announcing “a plan for supporting multicultural education” in 2006, the Ministry of Education has revised it every year. The Ministry of Justice enacted a law on treatment of foreigners in Korea in 2007; the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family legislated a law for protection and improvement of cultural diversity in 2008. Defining people with migration background as the “foreign residents,” the Ministry of the Interior and Safety is promoting a resident policy for them. As the international human movement has routinized in Korean society, the government has been making various changes to transform the nation into a multicultural society.

The policies for transition to a multicultural society so far have focused on people, such as immigrant marriages, foreign workers, and children of multicultural families. It is because the problems of rural bachelors, labor shortage in the 3D industries, and school education for children of multicultural families were social issues. The emergence of steep population decline and aging as major social problems have directed people’s attention to a group foreigners. They are “foreign students studying in Korea.”¹

As of 2022, foreign students occupy up to 11.1% of the foreign residents (Korea Educational Development Institute, KESS). Faced with the unprecedented situation of a rapid decrease in the school age population, they caught the attention from not only the area of human resource development in the perspective of expert training but also the field of the nation’s industries as a whole. Even while the birth rate in Korean society has been declining, the

number of “foreign students” of the school age (ages 6–21) has been steadily increasing. The Korean government, in fact, has constantly pursued a policy aimed at expanding the attraction of foreign students for the past two decades. Since the Ministry of Education announced the “comprehensive plan for expanding the attraction of foreign students” which meant the policy transition from “sending students out” to “receiving students” in July of 2001, the ministry continuously presented “Study Korea Project (’05–’12)” in 2004, a plan to develop the “Study Korea Project” in 2008, the “Study Korea 2020 Project (’13–’20)” in 2012, and a “plan to expand the attraction of foreign students (’15–’23)” in 2015. Each time, the government set a higher target for attracting foreign students and built a supportive “network”² to achieve the target. As the supportive network was established and developed, the number of foreign students in Korea has steadily increased since 2000. The number of foreign students was as small as 3,418 in 1999, but the figures were 22,526 in 2005 and 50,000 in 2010, reaching the target early on. The figure was expanded to 197,234 in December of 2022 (Korea Educational Development Institute, KESS). Due to the increase of foreign students, the conflict surrounding them has been worsening. The sectors of higher education and local government-related industries that are detrimentally impacted by the decrease or change in population, such as low birth and aging, actively support the increase in foreign students. They maintain that the increase in foreign students not only contributes to the overcoming of the college financial crisis, the raising of the international competitiveness of the nation and colleges, enhancement of the positive image of Korea and improvement of the international exchange, and expansion of skilled manpower for aging and a decrease in the working-age population, but also plays a positive role in the transition of the country into a multicultural society by improving the Korean students’ international capability through their contacts with foreign students. Local governments even urge the activation of discussions on the establishment of immigration offices to deal with the population crisis. On the contrary, some sectors have negative opinions about the social changes caused by foreign students regarding them as “others.” These are Korean people suffering from the rapid influx of foreign workers

1 In this paper, “foreign students” refer to foreigners residing in Korea with the foreign nationality and devoting themselves to the goal of studying using the educational system of Korea. “The educational system” includes language training and undergraduate’s, master’s, and doctoral courses at higher education institutions.

2 A network is a set of connections existing among specific people. It refers to relationship to exchange support. “Support” generally encompasses instrumental support (actual and material help), emotional support (emotional help), and social support (help from social environment or ecological environment).

and residents. As a matter of fact, there is a prevailing view to differentiate and hierarchize foreign students from Koreans. Such people emphasize that the interests and culture of “Koreans” should come first. There also exists a sense of rejection against different cultures and religions of foreign students. They raise concerns about illegal employment caused by the indiscriminate expansion of foreign students, deterioration in the reputation of higher education, the lowered quality of college education, and damage to employment of Korean college students. They worry about issues of security in communities as well as falling real estate prices (Yuk and Lee 2022). In Korean society at present, an important task is to create a multicultural society in order to prevent conflicts between Koreans and foreigners and help them develop together following the increase in foreign students. It is time to accept foreign students as new immigrants in Korea’s multicultural society and prepare a support measure for their desirable stay and settlement.

Accordingly, this study is aimed at reviewing the policy to attract more foreign students pursued by the government until now and problems of the following support network and suggesting the perspective of the improvement of the support network help the nation develop into a multicultural society. Specifically, efforts will be made to examine the following contents. The first is to understand the social position of foreign students in the multicultural society of Korea; in other words, to understand the importance of foreign students in the task of the transition to the multicultural society. The second is to investigate the foreign student-related policy pursued by the Korean government and the present situations of the network to support foreign students and to analyze their problems. It is to understand problems endured by foreign students in the process of experiencing Korean society and education. The third is to suggest the direction which the network to support foreign students should take in order to realize a desirable multicultural society. It is about proposing the perspective of the network to support foreign students for development of the Korean multicultural society.

Transition to a Multicultural Society and Social Position of Foreign Students

What do the foreign students in Korean society mean for the transition to the

Korean multicultural society and its development? It can be seen through the scale and characteristics of the foreign student population.

First of all, as of 2021, the number of “foreign residents” (foreigners of long-term stay, naturalized persons, and children of foreign residents) is about 2,130,000, almost 4.1% of the Korean population. They mostly reside in the Metropolitan area, 710,000 (33.5%) in Gyeonggi-do and 430,000 (20.0%) in Seoul. The foreigners of long-term stay³ occupy the largest ratio of “foreign residents” and about 9.7% of those foreigners are foreign students.⁴ In addition, international students are important students of the Korean higher education. As of 2022, they occupy about 4% of college students. The number of foreign students in Korea was 12,314 in 2003, the figure gradually increased to 16,832 in the next year, and recorded 49,270 in 2007, showing a sharp rise of over 50% from the previous year. After this, the figure rose to 166,892 in 2022. In comparison, due to the decrease in the Korean school-age population, the enrollment rate of new students in higher education institutions is declining. After marking the highest point with 101.4% in 2001, the figure has decreased to 84.8% in 2022. As a result, the ratio of foreign students in the students of the nation’s higher education institutions is gradually increasing. The ratios were 0.22% in 2003 and 4.0% in 2021. With regard to individual universities (undergraduate programs), Sungkyunkwan University had the largest number of international students in 2022, followed by Kyung Hee University and Yonsei University, and the ratio of foreign students in the total students was 26% (4,751), 17% (4,439), and 21% (4,084), respectively (Korea Educational Development Institute, KESS). These schools built new separate dormitories for international students and there are many restaurants around these universities according to their tastes. After 2016, in particular, the number of foreign students in colleges grew 35.9% annually for the recent six years. After 2026, the figure is expected to grow up to three times of the present (*News 1 Korea*, October 6, 2022). The number of foreign students in higher education institutions in Korea by year and the ratio of those international students in the total students of each university are shown in the following Figure 1 and Table 1.⁵

3 As of 2021, the foreigners of long-term stay occupy about 77.5% (650,000) of foreign residents.

4 Ministry of the Interior and Safety announced “The Present Situations of Foreign Residents in Local Governments in 2021” on November 11, 2021.

5 Ministry of Education released “The Announcement of the Results of 2022 Survey of Basic Education Statistics” on August 31, 2022.

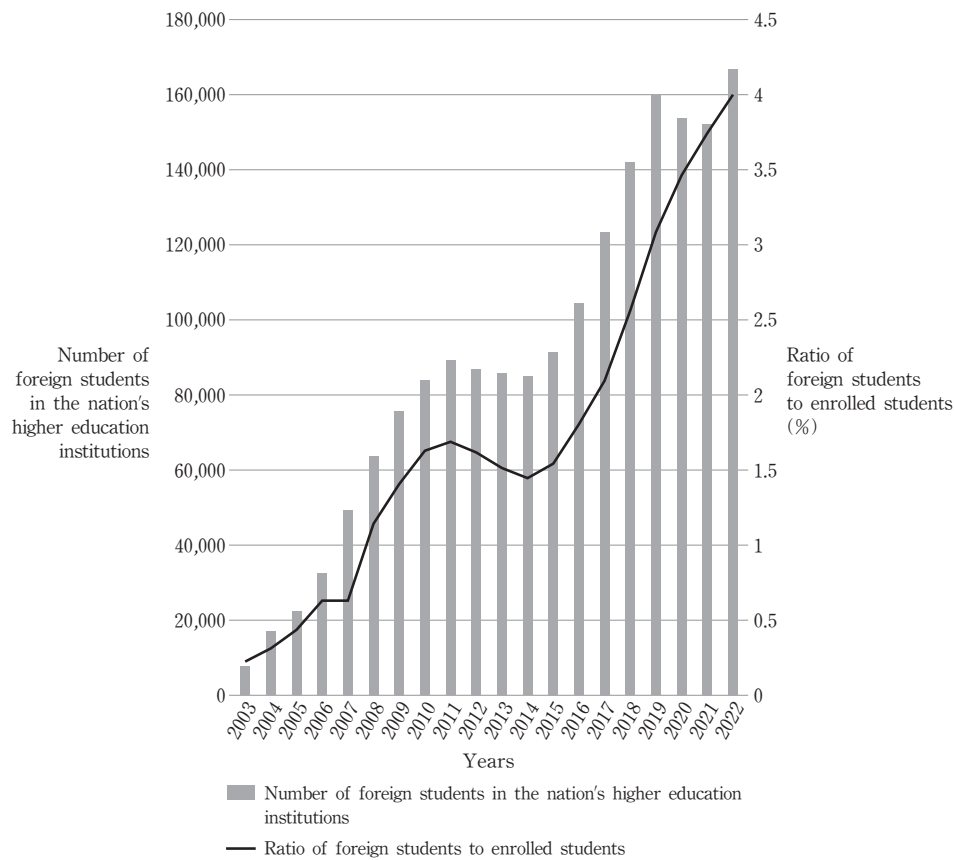


Figure 1. Number of Foreign Students in the Nation's Higher Education Institutions and the Ratio of Foreign Students to Enrolled Students

Table 1. Number of Foreign Students in the Nation's Higher Education Institutions and the Ratio of Foreign Students to Enrolled Students

Years	Number of Enrolled Students in Higher Education Institutions ⁶ (persons)	Foreign Students			Ratio of foreign Students to Enrolled Students in Higher Education Institutions (%) ⁷
		Number of Total Students (persons)	Year-on-Year Growth (%)	Number of Students in Degree Courses (persons)	
2003	3,531,721	7,962	37.8	7,962	0.22
2004	3,555,115	16,832	36.7	11,121	0.31
2005	3,548,728	22,526	33.8	15,577	0.44
2006	3,545,774	32,557	44.5	22,624	0.64
2007	3,558,711	49,270	51.3	32,056	0.64
2008	3,562,844	63,952	29.8	40,585	1.14
2009	3,591,088	75,850	18.6	50,591	1.41
2010	3,644,158	83,842	10.5	60,000	1.65
2011	3,735,706	89,537	6.8	63,653	1.70
2012	3,728,802	86,878	3.6	60,589	1.62
2013	3,709,734	85,923	-1.1	56,715	1.53
2014	3,668,747	84,891	-1.2	53,636	1.46
2015	3,608,071	91,332	7.6	55,739	1.54
2016	3,516,607	104,262	14.2	63,104	1.79
2017	3,437,309	123,858	18.8	72,032	2.10
2018	3,378,393	142,205	14.8	86,036	2.55
2019	3,326,733	160,165	12.6	100,215	3.10
2020	3,276,327	153,695	-4.0	113,003	3.45
2021	3,201,561	152,281	-0.9	120,018	3.75
2022	3,117,540	166,892	9.6	124,803	4.00

6. Higher education institutions include general universities, education colleges, industrial colleges, graduate schools, junior colleges, broadcasting and correspondence colleges, technical colleges, various schools, lifelong education facilities at cyber universities, cyber universities, in-house colleges, polytechnic colleges, and specialized colleges.

7. In 2017, the average ratio of international students to enrolled students of domestic higher education institutions in OECD member nations was 6% (Korea Educational Development Institute 2019).

For universities suffering from financial difficulties due to the declining school-age population and the frozen school fees for over 10 years, international students who can be additionally recruited without the approval from the Ministry of Education are practically helpful for solving financial problems. Some regional universities and colleges, which are suffering from shortage of quotas, are making desperate efforts to attract foreign students. This is because, as of 2022, the ratio of international students attending universities located in the metropolitan area is up to 51% of all foreign students (*News 1 Korea*, October 6, 2022).

Then, what are the characteristics of foreign students in Korean society? It is that the majority of those foreigners are from Asian nations, China and Vietnam in particular. Specifically, about 88.3% of international students are from Asia in 2022. The number of international students in Korea by country of origin in 2022 is shown at Table 2.

Table 2. Number of Foreign Students in the Nation in 2022 by Country of Origin

Nations	China	Vietnam	Uzbekistan	Mongolia	Japan	U.S.A.	Others	Total
Number of Foreign Students (persons)	67,439	37,940	8,608	7,348	5,733	3,369	36,455	166,892
Ratios (%)	40.4	22.7	5.2	4.4	3.4	2.0	21.3	100.0

Besides, the dominant proportion of foreign students are taking the undergraduate courses. In 2022, the number of international students in the degree course was 124,803, about 74.8% of all foreign students, and the number of non-degree course students (language trainees, curriculum management students, exchange trainees, and visiting trainees and other trainees) was 42,089, about 25.2%. The ratio of degree students to non-degree students was about 3:1. Regarding degree programs, the ratio of bachelor's programs to master's and doctorate is about 2:1. In terms of majors, 83,250, about 66.7%, international students were in the courses of humanities and social sciences compared to 618 medical students, just 0.4% of all international students. This can be shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Number of Foreign Students in Korea in 2022 by Continent of Origin and Major Field (unit: persons)

Regions	Language Training	Degree Courses										Other Training Programs	Total	
		Humanities and Social Sciences		Engineering		Natural Science		Physical Education and Art		Medicine				Subtotal
		Bachelor's	Master's and Doctorate	Bachelor's	Master's and Doctorate	Bachelor's	Master's and Doctorate	Bachelor's	Master's and Doctorate	Bachelor's	Master's and Doctorate			
South America	373	183	197	48	91	22	40	31	14	-	4	630	211	1,214
North America	660	751	582	92	113	88	77	86	52	32	47	1,920	1,900	4,480
Asia	23,510	54,261	24,256	10,293	5,517	4,190	2,576	8,909	7,074	30	470	117,576	6,252	147,338
Africa	347	289	887	211	516	54	197	26	9	-	22	2,211	151	2,709
Oceania	68	75	64	16	8	15	9	15	8	4	3	217	25	310
Europe	2,236	956	749	118	123	62	75	129	31	2	4	2,249	6,356	10,841
Total	27,194	56,515	26,735	10,778	6,368	4,431	2,974	9,196	7,188	68	550	124,803	14,895	166,892

Looking at the total number of foreign students by study type in 2022, the students studying at their own expenses accounted for about 90.9%. On the contrary, only about 0.5% of foreign students were dispatched by their governments. This is shown in Table 4.

Table 4. The Number of Foreign Students in the Nation by Studying Abroad Type in 2022

Studying Abroad Type	2021 (number of persons)	2022 (number of persons)	Increase and Decrease (number of persons)	Ratios (%)
Students studying at their own expenses	139,161	151,628	12,467	90.9
Scholarship students invited by the Korean government	3,262	4,062	800	2.4
Scholarship students invited by universities	6,291	7,030	739	4.2
Scholarship students dispatched by their governments	258	232	-26	0.1
Others	3,309	3,940	631	2.4
Total	152,281	166,892	14,611	100.0

To summarize, the demographic characteristics of foreign students in Korea are that many of them are from Asian countries, such as China and Vietnam, and a large proportion of them are taking the bachelor's courses, major in humanities and social sciences and study at their own expenses. In general, international students in Korea are from Asian nations, study at their own expenses and come to Korea to get the bachelor's degrees in humanities and social sciences. The increase in the international student population in Korea with such demographic characteristics results in the increase in related international graduates. The number of international students increased about four times in 2022 from 2004, and those in the degree programs increased about 13.6 times and those in non-degree courses about eight times. Accordingly, the proportion of foreign students (9,860) in graduates from the nation's higher education institutions (539,996) was about 1.78% of all graduates from higher education institutions in 2010, but the number of foreign graduates was 20,722, about 3.17% of 653,388 graduates from higher education institutions, in 2019.

However, in Korean society at present, the need to actively settle foreign students is becoming more important due to the declining population and lacking manpower. The international students apparently are "foreign residents" whose settlement is needed by Korean society. The domestic employment rate of international graduates is estimated to be about 1% (*Korea Journal of Study Abroad*, May 22, 2020). It means that most of foreign graduates do not settle in Korea. The government is promoting policies to induce foreign graduates to settle in Korea. The government is making efforts to diversify majors of international students and to push for policies aimed at supporting their employment. For example, local governments, universities, and companies cooperate to expand the "regionally specialized visa linkage project"⁸ for nurturing international students with specific majors and supporting them to settle in the regions and has extended the hours allowed for part-time work on weekdays for those students from 25 hours to 30 hours. Discussions have been made with the Ministry of Justice on a plan to extend the cycle for renewing the D-10 visa from six months to a year for foreign students with excellent Korean

proficiency (*Hankook ilbo*, April 16, 2023). In addition, the government has pushed for the International Education Quality Assurance System (IEQAS) (hereinafter, the Assurance System)⁹ and added career and employment support for foreign students to the evaluation index as qualitative indicators. As of 2022, in particular, about 10% of science and engineering graduate students are international students, and almost 60% of foreign PhD graduates from science and engineering universities in Korea return to their countries after obtaining their degrees. To cope with such a situation, the government and the Ministry of Justice are working on expanding employment and permanent residency for foreign master's and doctorate students in the high-tech industries¹⁰ (*Seoul Economic Daily*, November 25, 2022).

In our current times, international movements of labor have become commonplace in the world. Overseas, a new pattern of talent competition is to actively support domestic employment of international students in order to secure high-quality manpower, and a global trend is to pursue a policy to embrace foreign students as their own citizens considering the foreign student policy as one of immigration policies (Min et al. 2014). It is because international students are meaningful not only in terms of economy but also in terms of society, culture, and education. To attract foreign students is not important just for supplying new students to universities. It is more meaningful in that the nation's international competitiveness can be strengthened and social changes, such as labor markets and population structure, can be secured. Now is the time when Korean society should envision a national policy on attraction, management, and settlement of international students for a future multicultural society.

8 The "regionally specialized visa linkage project" is a system for issuing the F-2 or F-4 visa on the condition that foreigners equipped with specific conditions should reside or get jobs at areas suffering population decline during a specific period.

9 The "International Education Quality Assurance System" (IEQAS) was introduced in 2012 as a system for setting and evaluating standards for attracting and managing foreign students of each university and granting the government assurance to schools satisfying the standards.

10 It was found that about 42% of foreign students who obtained doctoral degrees in Korea in 2022 were employed in the nation and the rest left Korea to return their home countries or to be employed abroad (*Seoul Economic Daily*, November 25, 2022).

Realities and Problems of the Foreign Student Support Network

Focused on Symptomatic Prescriptions

Since announcing a “comprehensive play to expand the attraction of foreign students” in July of 2001, the Korean government presented the “Study Korea Project (’05–’12)” in 2004, “Plan to Develop the Study Korea Project” in 2008, “Study Korea 2020 Project (’13–’20)” in 2012, and “Plan to Expand the Attraction of Foreign Students (’15–’23)” in 2015. Afterwards, the city of Seoul established a network for helping these students enter Korean universities in order to carry out those projects. However, the government’s policy to attract foreign students and the following network to support their admission have functioned as a means to solve the social problems faced by Korea at the time.

In other words, the 2004 “Study Korea Project” was established by the Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development in November of 2004, regarding the President’s directive to devise mid- to long-term measures to reduce the trade deficit in January of that year. The 2015 “Plan to Expand the Attraction of Foreign Students (’15–’23)” was prepared by the Ministry of Education in consideration of the facts that the balance of study abroad deficit reached \$3.7 billion (approximately 4.8 billion won) in 2014, the working-age population (ages of 15–64) of the nation was drawing a downward curve from 2016, the competitiveness of Korean universities was remaining below the top 50, and the number of foreign and Chinese students was declining after executing the “Assurance System” (Ministry of Education 2015). Later in 2022, the Ministry of the Interior and Safety designated 89 of the nation’s 229 cities, countries, and districts as “areas of population decrease” and pursued policies to respond to crises of population reduction and local extinction.¹¹ As aging and population decrease have become serious social problems like this, the government also promoted customized policies to attract international students following social problems through the Ministry of Education. Regarding graduate schools, efforts were made to attract students of strategic countries, such as India, Vietnam, and Indonesia, through strategies and systematic PR activities specialized for engineering and science graduate schools.

Regarding universities, measures were taken to diversify the countries of origin of international students through preparing strategies to attract students of science and engineering colleges, supporting programs specialized for individual schools and strengthening PR activities. About junior colleges, efforts were made to foster schools leading education of international students in connection with overseas companies through attracting foreign students specialized for fields related to vocational training and linking employment in local Korean companies. In this way, policies to attract international students were promoted as strategies to cope with each problem (Ministry of Education 2015).

Until now, since the “Study Korea Project” was launched in 2005, the number of foreign students gradually increased through such policies to attract foreign students, but there has been no change about details of support. The nation’s policies to attract foreign students began as a means to cope with social problems, and subsequent changes have been made just to the extent of modifying the number of foreign students to be attracted and response strategies in order to handle social problems faced by the nation. In conclusion, the Korean government, facing problems of the trade deficits, financial deficits in universities due to frozen tuition fees and declining school-age population, and regional extinction and industrial structure collapse caused by population decrease and concentration in the metropolitan area, tried to competitively attract more foreign students as a means to cope with such circumstances and, for the purpose, has established a network to support international students.

Such establishment of a network as a symptomatic prescription was the same in establishment of a network aimed at supporting foreign students’ study and life. The government has promoted policies to manage international students from 1999. The Ministry of Education announced “guidelines for managing international students” as a standardized measure to manage foreign students in December of 1999 (Ministry of Education 1999) and prepared “guidelines to manage foreign language trainees” in 2004 when the number of language trainees increased.¹² In May of 2008, the ministry prepared “guidelines for handling standard jobs about foreign students and language trainees” by deleting immigration office-related matters which were included in the existing management guidelines and supplementing details of regulations for

11 The Ministry of the Interior and Safety released “Enforcement Decree of the Special Act on Support for Areas of Population Decrease, Approved by the Cabinet of Ministers” on December 20, 2022.

12 The Ministry of Education released “The Guidelines for Standard Job Treatment for Foreign Students and Language Trainees” on December 5, 2019.

administration in universities about foreign students (Ministry of Education 2008). In the late 2000s when the number of foreign students rapidly increased, social problems, such as expedient inducement of foreign students by some universities, poor management, poor academic performance, dropouts, and illegal employment, emerged. In such circumstances, the Ministry of Education, jointly with the Ministry of Justice, implemented the “Assurance System” to manage foreign students in domestic universities and check the conditions of assistance in universities and junior colleges in 2011.¹³ As a means to prevent the current problem of foreign student management, policies to manage these students were implemented and a network for supporting these students’ study and life was established according to the policy purpose. Accordingly, the “Assurance System” was far from matters requested by foreign students in each university in their daily lives, which was shown by the realities of universities after the “Assurance System” was implemented. At present, the third cycle (2020–2023) of the “Assurance System” has been implemented following the first (2012–2015) and second cycle (2016–2019). The universities and graduate schools which adopted the “Assurance System” were given incentives, such as the simplification of the visa issuance process, the granting of high priorities for projects related to the Ministry of Education, and support for organizing study abroad fairs for overseas universities. On the contrary, universities which did not adopt the system are classified as schools of visa issuance restriction and disclosed to the public. The evaluation indicators of the “Assurance System” include the illegal stay rate, the rate of tuition burdens for international students, the dropout rate, the official language proficiency of international students, and support for study, life, career and employment. After evaluating the “Assurance System,” the number of universities with visa issuance restriction has been increasing annually, from three in 2016 to 15 in 2017, 24 in 2018, 53 in 2019, and 63 in 2020; the number of illegal immigrants increased over six times from 1,419 to 9,408. In addition, as of 2019, only 13.6% of all international students acquired Level 4 in the Test of Proficiency in Korean (TOPIK), which means that they can perform the language functions needed to maintain social relations within Korean society (*Joongdo ilbo*, October 2, 2019). In 2016–2018, the dropout rate of foreign students in Korea increased from 5.0% to 6.3% and

6.6% (*Gyeongbuk maeil*, June 13, 2019).

To summarize, policies for foreign students and the support network promoted by the Ministry of Education and other public organizations until now were established as a means to solve social problems. Various projects by government agencies for supporting foreign students also were promoted to immediately solve current issues without social discussion or consensus on foreign student policies and assistance. Each ministry just added foreign student-related jobs to their own tasks regarding foreigners.

At present, Korea is gradually enhancing its status as a target country of foreign students who want to study abroad. Due to the so-called Korean Wave, Korea is recognized as an attractive nation and is emerging into an alternative to the United States or Europe in terms of economy as well. To Asian students, in particular, Seoul is known as a close and interesting city. In 2019, Seoul was ranked 10th in the ranking of cities preferred by international students announced by a British university evaluation agency QS (Quacquarelli Symonds). However, the ranking of university education in the national educational competitiveness is still at 46th, far behind the national educational competitiveness of 29th (Korea Educational Development Institute, KESS). Korea actually is in low status in terms of general higher educational competitiveness compared with the size and preference of international students. The support network in the level of symptomatic prescription has limitations for development of the foreign student environment. In this condition, presenting a clear vision, direction or principle of Korea’s higher education for the future society is implausible. Accordingly, strengthening the educational competitiveness and the support network; and creating optimal conditions for foreign students in their academic and daily lives are at stake.

One-sided Adaptation Method

The network aimed at supporting foreign students’ admissions, study, and life has been rapidly established in each university, as the “Assurance System” was first implemented in the 2000s when the number of international students began to grow. Such a situation happened because the evaluation indicators of the “Assurance System” included not only quantitative evaluation, such as the illegal stay rate, the rate of burdens from foreign students’ tuition fees, and the dropout rate, but also qualitative evaluation on plans of internalization projects

13 The Ministry of Education released “The Announcement of the Basic Plan for Evaluation System of the 3rd Cycle International Education Quality Assurance System (IEQAS)” on December 5, 2019.

and infrastructure and assistance for foreign students' study, life, career and employment.

Subsequently, each university has tried to prepare a support network to help international students adapt to their campus life. Hanyang University is operating its own system to manage from foreign students' admission to employment. The university also has a club which helps foreign students and foreigners visit the school and a "buddy" system aimed at matching Korean students or senior foreign students as one-on-one advisors for freshmen. Sookmyung Women's University and Soongsil University have systems aimed at connecting foreign students and Korean students and learning each other's languages. Hankuk University of Foreign Studies organized a student association of foreign students from various cultures in the global one-stop service promotion center to help those students adapt to campus life (*Cheonji ilbo*, January 12, 2011). Chungnam National University provides customized psychological service by placing dedicated counselors who can speak English and Chinese at the student counseling center. They analyze learning strategies, academic abilities, and psychological problems based on psychological tests and offer specialized counseling services to help international students adapt to their new campus life (*Asia News Agency*, November 8, 2017).

Each school also tries to support their study and tuition fees. The international cooperation headquarters of Chonnam National University, after recruiting foreign students for the first time in 2006, has been assisting a budget of about 2 billion won a year for them. The university has prepared various scholarship programs, such as Korean language ability scholarship, dormitory scholarship, and research scholarship for graduate students and has established support networks, including Buddy Buddy for making friends with Korean students, a study community gathering named "Nurideuri" and "Korean education travel" to experience Korean culture (*Kyunghyang Shinmun*, March 9, 2011). Jeonju University is operating a mentoring talent service camp to improve foreign students' Korean language skills in the international student service center (*Newsis*, January 23, 2019).

The Ministry of Education has established "international student service centers" at regions with high accessibility and transportation convenience for international students, in order to support their language and employment, provide life and legal information, and help them with experience of Korean culture and cultural events by nation. Those "international student service

centers" are operated in collaboration with agencies for foreign residents, such as "a multicultural family support center," "a foreign resident support center," and "an international exchange center" in each region or government agencies. As of 2020, "Busan City International Students Support Center (BCISSC)" established in 2014 and "Global International Students Support Center" installed in Jeonbuk National University in 2015 for foreign students in the Jeonbuk area were in operation (*Jeonbuk maeil sinmun*, December 17, 2015). Additionally, the Ministry of Education has been establishing "global exchange centers" which are dormitories for foreign students and support centers in collaboration with local governments since 2014. "Gyeongbuk Global Exchange Center" established in Yeungnam University in 2014¹⁴ and "Iksan Global Exchange Center" established in Wonkwang University in 2016 are currently being operated.¹⁵ Other government agencies, in addition to the ministry, also have supported international students as foreign residents. First of all, "1345 Information Center for Foreigners" of the Ministry of Justice supports life of foreigners including international students and provides counseling support (*The Korea Foreigner Broadcasting*, December 12, 2007). The "foreign resident support center" established by each local government also provides life counseling and information for international students, in order to provide administrative support for them.

However, many of foreign student support programs executed by universities, government agencies and local governments are insufficient and far from solving the daily problems experienced by these students. It is because most of such foreign student support networks in Korea were established based on Korea (blood ties, regions)-centered thinking. Most of international student support networks were prepared to handle management of foreigners and administrative jobs related to them. These networks are aimed at being used for vertical communication between various institutions and foreigners or between government agencies and university offices in charge of foreign students or used as a window for benevolent help. These networks were set up with Korean society-centered viewpoint according to the needs of Korean society. The

14 The Ministry of Education released "Opened a Dormitory for Foreign Students 'Gyeongbuk Global Exchange Center,'" on September 4, 2014.

15 The Ministry of Education released "Opened a Dormitory for Foreign Students 'Iksan Global Exchange Center,'" on May 25, 2015.

present foreign student support networks are inadequate to meet the viewpoints or implement ways of mutual communication. These networks were established with the viewpoint to utilize international students while placing locals as the main center. This means that foreign students are considered as instrumental beings who should adapt to their destination country.

Following this viewpoint, each network provides information for their study and life, but it is not interested in solving of problems experienced by foreign students during the process in their positions. In other words, foreign students are experiencing difficulties in adapting to life due to changes in the national, regional, social, and individual environment and are finding it difficult to adapt to study due to differences in language and academic background. They experience difficulties in maintaining daily social relations due to their poor Korean language skills and suffer problems of discrimination and prejudice climate (Baek 2016) in Korean universities and their maladjustment to the main-stream culture which is different from their distinctive culture (Ju and Kim 2013). There are various support networks, but they are not sufficient to solve those problems. Although foreign students frequently cannot understand their lessons due to insufficient procedures to verify their academic abilities and low admission criteria, they are not sufficiently managed or supported. Programs, such as tutoring for basic subjects or classes in their native languages, to improve their academic achievement so that those selected foreign students can safely settle down in their study are lacking too. There also are not sufficient systems to recognize their special characteristics and manage their registration that caters to their needs by dividing classes, operating flexible semesters, and changing graduation terms. Those networks have not been maintained in portals in various languages for international students, so there are limitations for them to cope with the adaptation problem. The legal basis for providing multilingual information to international students is lacking and there is no pertinent standardized system. The mobile web to provide multilingual services is far from being developed.

As of 2022, the dormitory acceptance rate actually was as low as 23.1% in comparison with general colleges and education colleges. The other students need to find their accommodation themselves. They should sign monthly rent contracts using the translation programs or get help from their Korean friends (*Yonhap News Agency*, March 19, 2023). Each network is known to have a system, such as a distress management center, with which international students

can solve difficulties and requests while studying in Korea, but it cannot be used in real life. The difficulties faced by foreign students can only be guessed as counseling materials to be submitted for the “Assurance System” (Lee et al. 2019, 41). Korea emphasizes foreign students’ duties to be observed in their study and life, but there is no detailed information about their management. When they suffer damages in their study and life, it is difficult for them to cope with them (Lee et al. 2019, 15). In Korean society, the support networks in the foreign students’ viewpoints are far from being established.

Temporary Stay-oriented

The foreign student support networks of the Ministry of Education are focused on the currently enrolled students. There is lack of concerns about the steps after studying in Korea. The fact that there is not sufficient support for the stage after studying in Korea can be clearly shown in the network for supporting their employment. Local governments are sporadically conducting projects for supporting settlement of those students, but they are unable to present the official employment route after their graduations.

The government, of course, has promoted policies for supporting foreign students’ employment, but most of foreign students are employed in industries (logistics/ delivery, manufacturing, shipbuilding, etc.) which cannot hire sufficient locals, local companies with shortage in domestic manpower, or seasonal work. Since 2014, the Ministry of Justice has fostered technical manpower among foreign students in the six “root industries” (casting, molding, welding, plastic processing, surface treatment, and heat treatment) which are called 3D industries and has promoted a project to issue the E74 visas for skilled manpower if they get jobs (*Etnews*, March 21, 2023).¹⁶ From 2022, the ministry has pursued a “regionally specialized visa policy” to issue the F-2 visas to international students getting jobs in local companies (*News 1 Korea*, March 17, 2023). When foreign students graduating from science and engineering courses want to work for the shipbuilding industry, they will get jobs without verification of their practical skills through the “E-7 visa special system for international students” (*Yonhap News Agency*, February 21, 2023). Accordingly,

16 Those who work for root industries over five years after graduation can obtain the right of permanent residence.)

many local governments and industries suffering from labor shortage are eager to recruit foreign students. Such employment of foreign students, however, is assistance taken completely to solve manpower shortage in Korean society. In other words, international students can get only limited opportunities to create added value after finishing the degree programs and get jobs in the necessary industries by utilizing their majors. Usually, the maximum stay period for foreign students with D-10 visas is six months, and the period can be extended to a year, six months at a time, for foreigners holding bachelor's degrees, and to two years, six months at a time, for foreigners holding master's and doctoral degrees. However, a majority of foreign students complain of inconvenience caused by the condition of six-month renewal cycle. In accordance with this, in 2017, surveys showed that about 24% of all foreign students wanted to stay in Korea after graduation and to get jobs,¹⁷ but the number of students who were employed in the nation was less than 100 among foreign graduates reaching over 10,000 a year, and just 11.8% of Korean companies were hiring foreigners (*Korea Journal of Study Abroad*, May 22, 2020). In the case of foreign students who obtained doctoral degrees in Korea, the ratio of foreigners who got jobs in Korea was just 42% (*Seoul Economic Daily*, November 25, 2022).

The Ministry of Education provides information on employment through job fairs on the "Study in Korea Site of National Institute for International Education." Such employment information is to simply convey information and does not play a substantial role as an employment support network. The government has not planned activities to create demands and provide accurate information to support foreign students' employment by regularly surveying the demands of Korean companies for foreign students and sharing the results with universities and students, in order to expand the opportunities of foreign students to get jobs like Japan (Lee et al. 2019, 39). Furthermore, no efforts have been made by government agencies, such as Korean embassies abroad and KOTRA, to plan activities to survey manpower demands for local companies and provide the results through university and alumni networks, in order to encourage foreign students who returned to their home countries to get jobs at Korea-related companies. Many universities in Korea are leaving foreign students' job seeking activities to them. The "Assurance System"; evaluation

indicators which judge the management of foreign students in universities and the information announcement items of each university do not mention the employment rate of foreign students. As a result, the universities are not interested in foreign students' employment after graduation (Lee et al. 2019, 46).

In advanced countries, policies for international students are changing to policies for social integration linked to study abroad-employment-immigration. As the Korean government restrictively allows social and economic activities limited to specific purposes according to the foreigners' stay purposes (employment, marriage, education, humanitarian reasons, etc.), it is difficult for them to properly form their identities or membership as members of local societies. When there is no established system of social rights and qualifications and duties which residents with multi-layered identities can enjoy as foreigners and, at the same time, as local residents of Korean society, foreign students cannot easily settle and be integrated as residents (Jung et al. 2022, 4). Unlike regular students, international students tend to be isolated due to weak social relations and networks. The situation worsens after graduation. Korea is lacking connectivity in the support networks leading to attraction → stay → settlement → integration (Jung et al. 2022, 91). The foreign student support networks of Korea remain just at the point of studying in Korea.

Perspectives on Improvement of Foreign Student Support Networks to Realize a Multicultural Society

Recognition of Foreign Students as Important Human Resources of a Multicultural Society

As the work-age population has rapidly decreased in current times, the government began to discuss an active immigration policy. In the report¹⁸ for making the "4th Foreigner Policy Basic 5-Year Plan," which would be applied from 2023, the Ministry of Justice proposed that "Foreigner Policy" had to be

17 Statistics Korea released "Results of the 2017 Immigrant Status and Employment Survey" on December 20, 2017.

18 When this report is finalized through deliberation by the foreigners policy committee, it will serve as the basis of basic plans to be established by the multicultural family policy committee, foreigner manpower policy committee, cultural diversity policy committee, and overseas Koreans policy committee, as a standard for promoting policies for foreigners.

changed to “Immigrant Policy” and “foreign residents” had to be regarded as “new Koreans.” According to the ministry, “the attitude to consider foreigners or immigrants as substitutes for Koreans is a serious obstacle to sustainable development of the country” (*Yonhap News Agency*, November 20, 2022). To the government’s disappointment, however, Korean society’s acceptance rate of foreign residents is not high. The social exclusion sentiment “not to accept” foreign immigrants grew from 5.7% in 2018 to 12.9% in 2021 (Korea Institute of Public Administration 2022).

Korean society currently is lacking institutional channels to mediate conflicts between locals and foreigners or to reflect foreign residents’ requests because of low acceptance of foreign residents, a strong sense of distance, and a lack of mutual communication and networks (Jung et al. 2022, 49–50). It means that the nation needs a social integration policy which is based on the foreigner engagement policy and, at the same time, considers the importance of management for securing social safety and solving conflicts. In this era greeting the present society, a pressing task is to establish policies which benefit both the domestic and foreign residents. Korean society should induce foreign residents to voluntarily participate in the society and to settle in it and design policies to expand the openness and diversity of the existing community. It is necessary to provide guidelines to guarantee universal rights for residents with a migrant background, instead of selective policies according to types of stay, and create a social atmosphere for mutual development through mutual understanding and respect between locals and foreigners.

It is the same with policies for foreign students who belong to foreign residents. Social interests in attracting and settling foreign students has recently been increasing. Faced with population decrease and aging, active measures have been devised to help foreign students settle as new, young, and able citizens. They, however, still are regarded as “others” in universities and the society. In fact, according to a Delphi survey of university members’ awareness of internalization, the biggest obstacle to internalization at universities was the lack of “their members’ awareness of internalization.” The lack of consensus on internalization efforts among university members was the biggest problem in the promoting of internalization. Accordingly, it is a common phenomenon that universities hand over all jobs related to foreign students to the international departments (Lee et al. 2019, 39–40). As the number of foreign students in universities grows, the quality and quantity of services for foreign students will

be inevitably limited.

Besides, the problems of foreign students so far have been isolated in the problems of multicultural educational of Korea. The problems of foreign students have not been considered as educational problems, but as economic problems or problems of exchange among universities. Education for foreign students, however, is part of higher education and multicultural education of Korea. In order to transform Korean society to a multicultural society, multicultural education should be considered not only in elementary and secondary education which is compulsory education, but also in higher education. The Korean university society needs education to enhance members’ multicultural awareness and capabilities. Education for strengthening special capacities of related departments and concerned persons is also necessary. The universities should operate a curriculum to strengthen multicultural capabilities for all students. Foreign students should be supported so that their rights can be secured in the university society through opening a human rights education curriculum to guarantee the human rights of minorities (Choi and Jo 2014, 343). In Korean society, foreign students are subjects adapting to higher education of Korea and accepting higher education culture of Korea in an aspect that they are foreigners who experience educational socialization, but they are also subjects that spread new culture and knowledge in the higher education field. Foreign students should be perceived as subjects producing knowledge of a new multicultural society (Madge and Noxolo 2009).

The government currently just provides “symbolic support” in terms of legal treatment of foreign students. Korean society focuses only on the construction of systems to institutionally support foreign students, and there are not sufficient programs to help them feel their identities as members of the university society and Korean society. Korean society treats foreign students as a means for coping with the declining school-age population. As Korean society has transformed into a multicultural society, many people agree that various cultures and nationalities are helpful for social development; however, there is a view that Korean students will lose jobs when a large number of foreign students settle in the nation. As a justification, between two factors of national identity, the ethnic factor and civic factor, the civic factor appears to be more important, but only limited welfare and employment are allowed to foreign students (Jung et al. 2022, 337–38). The government actually has granted limited qualifications and rights like subscription to the national health

insurance, emergency medical treatment, and part-time employment, and they can neither become the insured in the employment insurance nor join the national pension system. However, foreign students are migrants living in various field of life, such as local communities, labor sites, religious institutions, and cultural and leisure facilities (Im et al. 2015), and, at the same time, they are subjects of migration creating multicultural space (Jung et al. 2022, 2). Focused on their lives and families, foreign students have settled in Korea for various migration backgrounds and reasons, in addition to strategies for reproducing classes. In other words, foreign students are not only educational actors but also migrant actors (King and Raghuram 2013).

Foreign students in Korea usually study at their own expenses and are from middle- or low-income countries. They are not just students. In the case of students from nations of early marriage, including Mongolia and Myanmar, they make multilayered experiences of roles, such as family formation and labor. It is necessary to refrain from approaching them as temporary policy targets, such as aging of Korean society, population decrease, and local extinction, and adopt a universal approach of social integration to move toward a multicultural society. Efforts should be made to design a policy for helping them enter the society and labor markets, or a long-term policy for residents with a migration background in adolescence. To do so, utmost efforts should be exerted to establish a network to support foreign students in Korean society, in order to help them settle in Korea after graduation as professional manpower (Park 2011). Many foreign countries since long time ago have implemented policies for linking foreign students' education, employment and immigration, in order to cope with population decrease and to secure excellent future human resources (Lee et al. 2019, 1). In the case of Australia, the government has promoted an immigration system linked to foreign students through an immigration program for professionals and skilled migrants (Lee et al. 2019, 15). The support for foreign students is closely related to education, industries, labor, and population policies. Networks for supporting foreign students should be established based on the recognition that they are important human resources for formation of a multicultural society in Korea.

Establishment of a Mutual Communication System Based on Viewpoints of Foreign Students

The government's immigrant integration policy in a multicultural society is to design local societies considering rights and duties which should be enjoyed and observed by both of locals and foreigners (Jung et al. 2022, 51–52). It aims to make locals and foreign residents in the host country share common norms, wishes, ways of thinking, and a sense of responsibility (IOM UK and Home Office 2020, 62). For the purpose, above all, a process of connecting and integrating foreign residents, indigenous residents of the local community and other related interested people is necessary (Klarenbeek 2021). Foreign residents, as members of the local society, have equal rights as locals regarding daily issues, such as education, health, housing, and employment in the relevant society, and can maintain favorable relationship with neighbors and members in the same local society and actively participate in activities of the civil society (UNHCR Ecuador 2015, 6). Such a process is not a one-way process for foreign residents to adapt to and assimilate into the host country. It is a process proceeding under a premise that interested persons conduct mutual communication and dialogue in a transparent and open manner about the benefits and various challenges which can happen in the local communities of the host country (Jung et al. 2022).

Such a communication process is equally necessary for foreign students. International students are foreign residents. These foreign students, as transnational migrants of the young generation, experience and choose the identity of tourists, students, laborers, and migrants. Therefore, it is necessary to support foreign students to improve their participation in fields of education, society, economy, culture, and politics of their destination country and to achieve integration with education, society, economy, politics, and culture of the destination country (IOM UK and Home Office 2020, 6). The policies related to foreign students should be changed to social integration policies, in order to raise social tolerance, pursue cultural diversity, and promote social harmony.

To this end, first, there should be a system to listen to foreign students' thoughts and voices. The level of their Korean language proficiency is a variable with the most significant effect on communication with foreign students. Considering such an aspect, a network to improve their Korean abilities should be expanded. The network should be established in a way to systematically accept requests for Korean education by nation, university, region, major, and level.

Second, a network is necessary so that foreign students can conveniently

ask for help about their problems and solve them. The foreign student support networks should be flexibly and densely established so that they can make professional and direct mutual communication in various fields. Each university should activate various mentoring systems using older students of the same nationality, Korean students, and employees in government agencies and companies and should build a network in collaboration with diverse outside professional agencies so that foreign students can get practical help in critical situations. Through those networks, foreign students should be able to express their thoughts and experiences about the actual study and life of future foreign students and to openly discuss problems among foreign students from various countries. As transnational youths, foreign students should be able to understand reasons why they drop out and cannot settle in the nation through understanding their multiple identities. Counseling networks through which foreign students and applicants can conveniently communicate should solve problems of study, career, residence, and adaptation. The counseling networks should be diversified from preventive and light stages to crisis handling and professional stage support according to multicultural knowledge and viewpoints without discrimination or prejudice.

Third, foreign students should be able to join communities in which they can share research activities, hobbies, religious activities, and employment activities with Korean students (Oh and Lee 2018, 113–14). According to a study on university programs which foreign students want to improve, the largest number, or 48%, of those students chose the expansion of opportunities to engage in program activities shared with Korean students (Im et al. 2021, 295). In addition, they should be allowed to actively communicate with regional residents by participating in the home-stay system, voluntary service, travel, and cultural events.

Fourth, it is necessary to prepare self-sustaining support networks among foreign students. There, of course, are foreign student networks established by foreign students, separately from networks built by universities. Foreign students launched “International Students Association In Korea (ISAK),”¹⁹ a meeting of international students, on August 27, 2011, for the first time in Korea, and have provided information exchange on university life and study in languages

like English, Chinese, Vietnamese, and Mongolian and promoted exchanges among students (*NewsWire*, August 27, 2011). Chinese students established the “Chinese Students Association in Korea (CSAIK)”²⁰ and made the “Chinese Students in Korea Online Portal” for a network for managing all matters, such as study abroad brokering, employment and part-time jobs, welfare benefits like hospitals, and discounts around universities. Mongolian students made the “Mongol Students Association in Korea,” Vietnamese students “Vietnamese Students Association in Korea (VSSAK),” and Pakistani students the “Pakistani Students Association in Korea.” As of 2023, most of these networks are not active, and only the “Korean Chinese Students Network in Korea (KCN),”²¹ is active. Hence, efforts should be made to prepare an environment where those foreign students can enjoy and actively share their cultural identity. In addition, there should be a network so that foreign graduates can interact with foreign students who are still studying. As seniors who experienced study in Korea earlier, they have a deeper first-hand understanding of the difficulties of foreign students.

Long-term Design Considering Life of Foreign Students After Studying Abroad

The key tasks of the Korean government’s 4th basic plan for foreigner policy (2023–2027) includes the attraction of international students based on policies for fostering immigration. It is about designing strategies for fostering immigration policies through predicting the life routes of foreign students in the long-term viewpoint and improving the connectivity between temporary stay and settlement to set them accordingly.

As a matter of fact, since the early 2000s, studies have been executed about student migration in the field of higher education, in order to consider foreign students as “transnational” young migrants; and to understand characteristics and differences in experiences of foreign students settling in

²⁰ This is accessible at <http://www.csaik.com>.

²¹ Accessible at <http://www.kcn21.net>, the “Korean Chinese Students Network in Korea” is a network launched in November of 2003, to find the identity of Korean Chinese and to seek harmony and coexistence with Korean society. Through this network, Korean Chinese students in Korea are engaged in activities, such as paper presentations, seminars, and activities for improving the status of Korean Chinese (*Yonhap News Agency*, November 18, 2005).

¹⁹ This is accessible at <http://www.isak.com>.

Korea through various roles (such as students, migrant workers, friends, and parents) performed by foreign students in Korean society (Kim 2019). The studies pointed out that it was possible to diagnose limitations of foreign student support policies and improvement plans by studying in Korea, a non-English Asian economic country, and studying the trajectory of life of foreign students after graduation (Kim 2019, 43). In other words, the foreign student support policy needs a paradigm change to the strengthening of support by life cycle. With regard to the foreign students, support programs should be designed considering the fundamental aspects of their lives as foreign residents of Korean society from the viewpoint of respect for human beings, recognition of their abilities, interpersonal relationships, and growth and happiness. Instead of instrumentalizing the foreign students, an approach is necessary to start with a critical mind about “the life” led by them in Korean society as foreign residents of the society (Oh and Lee 2018, 201). Foreign students should be recognized as people who live as members of Korean society from the moment they enter Korea, not “others” who disappear after staying for a while. Some settle in Korea for their lifetime, and even when they return to their home countries or leave to third countries, they will live in relationship with Korean society for the rest of their life.

Therefore, foreign students should acknowledge that they are global members of Korean society and prepare a network through which they can actively exert influence in the domestic society, furthermore in the international society. Studying abroad is an academic exchange among cultures and a human exchange among cultures. Foreign student support networks basically are networks as academic communities which jointly own Korean culture. Even if they live in different environments and awareness, they are connected to one another based on the common experience which is studying in Korea. Such experience community networks are foreign student networks. As international students use transnational networks, they plan a role of brain circulation (Saxenian 2005), and those students are social members creating transnational social space and multicultural space (Gargano 2009). The most important reason that foreign students come to Korea is they want to make academic achievements. Their academic activities or influence after they return to their home countries or graduate from universities certainly will become more active. In Korea or in their home countries, they will live their lives as mediators who spread Korean culture and learning with their history of studying in

Korea. Foreign students, as the young generation of selective transnational movements, are subjects in the process of creating the identity and settlement patterns through various experiences. Foreign students have the characteristics of students who are education actors and young migrants who have crossed borders at the same time. Foreign students do not move in a certain direction, such as their home countries – destination countries for study, or their home countries – destination countries - home countries, but they are shuttle migrants who frequently cross their home countries and destination countries (Rizvi 2005).

As a result, in the future, they need networks to maintain exchanges as members of academic communities who experienced studying in Korea. After graduating from schools or returning to their home countries, foreign students should actively try to establish networks which support them to continue mutual exchange. After finishing their studies, they should create an environment in Korea to research through joint research between foreign students and Korean students and post-doctorate networks. In addition, through the establishment of global research networks among graduates, they should continue human exchanges through studying in Korea after their graduations or their returning to their home countries. To do so, it is necessary for the government to create a foreign student database, enter data of foreign graduates from each university, and continuously convey national events or news in the future. Through continuous follow-up management like this, it is necessary to help them maintain interest in Korea after returning to their home countries. Overseas diplomatic missions need to expand local high-level networks by operating alumni organizations for graduates from Korean universities by country (Lee et al. 2019, 41).

Conclusion

The number of foreign students in Korea was as small as 1,983 in 1995, but the figure grew to 166,892 in 2022, 84 times more from 1995. As of 2022, the number of international students in Korea accounted for about 11.1% of foreigners staying in Korea, about 4% of the total students enrolled in higher education institutions.

The government, in fact, has steadily pushed a policy to attract more

foreign students from 2004. The Ministry of Education has pursued the Study Korea Project to attract foreign students and set a goal of attracting 200,000 foreign students till 2023. For the purpose, the ministry prepared standard work handling guidelines about foreign students and language trainees and adopted the “Assurance System” to help universities prepare systems for managing and supporting foreign students. On the other hand, the Ministry of Education established the “comprehensive system for studying in Korea” in the “National Institute for International Education” to help foreign students provide information on Korean universities, apply for admission, and get visas one-stop. The ministry also provides online counseling and job support services. Besides, the ministry prepared a “global exchange center” for foreign students studying at regional universities in association with local governments and universities to offer housing support. In addition, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family, and local governments which deal with matters related to foreign residents also have established support networks for Korean education, employment, and living of foreign students.

These foreign student support networks of government agencies or universities are planned and operated with the purpose of strengthening international competitiveness and improving international balance of payments through attracting foreign students. It can be seen as an intention to use foreign students for the nation’s economic development. This has perspectives of focusing on symptomatic prescriptions, one-sided adaptation methods, and the timing of stay to study abroad. It is a viewpoint which has limitations in an environment where international human movements are commonplace. In other words, it is difficult to prepare optimal environments for foreign students to study and interact just by parochially viewing studying abroad with the purpose of creating national economic profits. There are difficulties in preparing an environment where foreign students would prefer studying in Korea and changing Korean society to a multicultural society to live together with global citizens. Therefore, the directions for improving foreign student support networks in the future are as follows.

First, it is necessary to establish networks considering development into a multicultural society with foreign students. The government is investing a lot of money for the establishment of foreign student support networks. However, it is not sufficient in the multicultural viewpoint. Networking is not a simple task which ends with establishing a DB and providing preferential help. Networks

are basically connecting humans and qualitative connection among humans. In order for foreign students to continuously come to Korea, foreign students should have academic, psychological, and cultural satisfaction. Therefore, the government and universities should remove discriminative elements inside universities by improving the multicultural sentiment of university members and recognize foreign students as subjects of knowledge production and migration. The government and universities should make efforts not only for foreign students’ participation, but also for awareness change and participation of members of universities and the society and should establish networks taking this into account.

Second, networks should be built from the viewpoint of a system for mutual communication with foreign students. The existing foreign student support networks are based on Korea (blood ties, region)-centered thinking. Most of the networks are centered on the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Education to deal with jobs to manage foreign students and are used as vertical exchange channels between government agencies and foreign students, or between university institutions in charge of foreign students, mostly in Korean. Foreign student networks, however, should essentially be networks as academic communities jointly owning Korean culture. The hub of foreign student networks is in Korea, but they should be established with the perception that they are networks with foreign students equipped with a sense of solidarity for studying in Korea or foreign agencies. The Korean government, Korean students, Korean universities, and private organizations and companies in Korea need to consider establishing networks through which they can mutually interact with foreign students or foreign colleges.

Third, it is necessary to establish networks to secure long-term continuity considering the life of foreign students. The existing networks are not enough to maintain continuity of exchange as academic communities among foreign students. Most of them have been established just for foreign students who are staying in Korea and, in most cases, exchange stops when they return to their home countries. The government needs to eradicate the viewpoint that foreign students reside in Korea just for a short period of time. It is necessary to recognize them as global members of Korean society from a long-term perspective and to prepare networks to help them communicate with Korea in various countries and exert influence. In order to use foreign students as professional manpower in the nation, utmost efforts should be made to establish

networks for their settlement in Korea after graduation. Even after they return to their home countries, they should be supported to actively participate in networks related to studying in Korea.

The higher education system in which foreign students actively interact with their surroundings without discrimination in the social environment of Korea can be considered as a blueprint of higher education of Korea for the nation to realize a multicultural society. In other words, from the viewpoint of the transition to a multicultural society, it is necessary to support the foreign students in various aspects to help them develop to full potential and have interest in their problems of adaptation in their daily lives as foreign residents and of settlement after graduation. In reality after being driven out due to a demographic crisis, when Korea, a host country for marriage immigrants or migrant workers, changes into a country where they want to live and work, Korean people will be able to coexist with foreign students. It is time to prepare for cultural diversity and inclusiveness to socially integrate foreign students as foreign residents and transnational youths, beyond the frames of attracting foreign students and managing their stay.

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Abstract

This study is aimed at examining problems in the supportive networks according to the policy for expanding the attraction of foreign students, which has been so far promoted, and proposing the task for improving the network to support foreign students, in order to develop into a multicultural society. To this end, the first step was to examine social positions of foreign students in the Korean multicultural society. In other words, it was found that the attracting of foreign students had a social meaning as a task to strengthen international competitiveness of colleges of the nation, beyond the supplying of freshmen to colleges and guarantee social changes in the labor market and the demographic structure. Next, there also were problems of the foreign student-related policies promoted by the Korean government and the following network for supporting foreign students that they were focused on symptomatic prescriptions, they had a one-sided adaptation method and they were concentrated on the timing of residence. Through this, the study suggested three tasks of the network for supporting foreign students, in order to realize a desirable multicultural society. First, a network considering the development into a multicultural society to share with foreign students should be established. Second, the network should be established in the perspective of mutual communication with foreign students. Third, the network should be established in a way to secure long-term continuity considering the life of foreign students after studying in Korea.

Keywords: foreign student, higher education, multicultural society, support, network

