

The Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on International Students: Focusing on Gender Differences*

Hwang, Dong-Jin**

Abstract

This study attempted to examine the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on international students in a situation where COVID-19 is intensifying around the world. Especially with the awareness that it may work differently depending on gender, the study performed the comparison and analysis with a focus on the gender differences. The research results can be summarized as follows. The level of depression was higher in women than in men. Based on the previous studies showing that women may be relatively more vulnerable to emotional problems than men, it was consistent with the argument that this problem would intensify due to the situational specificity of COVID-19. In addition, women were found to experience greater adaptation stress than men. Women experiencing emotional difficulties had relatively high stress in their adaptation to their life of studying abroad. This led to a difference between men and women in the level of satisfaction with life of studying abroad. Compared to men, women's satisfaction with life of studying abroad was found to be lower. Based on the findings, this study suggests that emotional health professionals should work to support international students considering their different characteristics and circumstances.

Keywords: *COVID-19 pandemic, International student, Gender differences, Acculturative stress, Life satisfaction.*

* This research was conducted in 2018 with the support of the Ministry of Education and the National Research Foundation of Korea (NRF-2018S1A5B8070580)

** E-mail : hwang1216@daegu.ac.kr

Ph.D. earned at: University of Daegu

Current position: Research professor, Center for Multiculturalism and Social Policy

Received : May 11, 2021, Revised : May 18, 2021, Accepted : May 28, 2021

COVID-19 팬데믹이 유학생에게 미치는 영향-성별차이를 중심으로

황동진

국문요약

본 연구는 전세계적으로 코로나 19 가 심화되는 상황에서 코로나 19 팬데믹이 외국인 유학생에 미치는 영향을 탐색하고자 하였다. 연구는 특별히 성별에 따라 다르게 작동할 수 있다는 문제의식을 가지고 성별차이를 중심으로 비교분석하였다. 연구결과를 요약하면 다음과 같다. 우울의 수준은 남성에 비해 여성이 높게 나타났다. 정서적 문제가 남성에 비해 여성이 상대적으로 취약할 수 있다는 기존의 연구를 바탕으로 코로나 19 라는 상황적 특수성으로 인해 이러한 문제가 더욱 심화되는 것으로 볼 수 있다. 또한, 적응스트레스 역시 남성에 비해 여성이 겪는 스트레스가 더 큰 것으로 나타났다. 정서적 어려움을 겪는 여성들은 상대적으로 유학생생활의 적응에서도 스트레스가 크게 나타났다. 이는 유학생생활 만족수준에서도 남성과 여성의 차이로 이어졌다. 남성에 비해 여성의 유학생생활 만족수준이 낮게 나타났다. 이러한 결과를 바탕으로 성별에 따른 개인적 특성과 상황적 맥락을 고려한 외국인 유학생 지원의 필요성을 제안하였다.

주제어: 코로나 19 팬데믹, 외국인 유학생, 성별차이, 적응스트레스, 유학생생활 만족도

I. Introduction

Since the official confirmation of COVID-19 (Corona virus disease 19, hereinafter COVID-19) in January 2020, more than 100 million confirmed cases and 2.7 million deaths occurred worldwide as of March 2021 when this manuscript was being written (WHO, 2021). The global spread has led to many changes in daily life. Each country has been making efforts to prevent the spread of the virus by taking urgent measures such as strengthening social distancing and restricting movement between countries. These measures led to movements for proactive response in the educational field, and the campus is seeking strategies for the safety and health of school members.

Measures such as campus closure, limited school attendance, and non-face-to-face classes have contributed to preventing the spread of COVID-19 and providing educational services in a safe environment. Behind these measures, however, there was a limit to dealing with individual students' social and emotional problems. In particular, international students' difficulties are expected to be greater due to the current situation in which face-to-face contact is limited when they need to adapt and form social relationships in the destination country for study.

In this regard, studies began to reveal how COVID-19 affects international students, and these studies showed that measures such as social distancing and campus closure may cause emotional pain and lower self-esteem of international students, or cause social and psychological pain such as anxiety and depression (Filippou, 2020; Misirlis et al, 2020). The studies also report that limited face-to-face relationship formation and guidance have a negative impact on the development of learning competencies (References). The above results emphasize that it is necessary to find countermeasures to support international students in the context of Corona-19.

On the other hand, there is a need to consider the psychological and emotional difficulties caused by Corona-19 vary according to gender. There have been many studies showings that emotional problems, such as depression, have gender differences. This could be further aggravated in the Corona-19 situation. Gebhard and his colleagues (2020) reported that COVID-19 becomes a powerful stress factor for those experiencing fear and isolation over a long period of time, increasing their vulnerability to anxiety, depression, and stress and having a greater impact women than men. Liu and his colleagues (2020) also report that women have more serious symptoms such as anxiety, depression, and stress than men. These results suggest that psycho-emotional problems may vary depending on gender in the Corona-19 situation.

Based on the above awareness of a problem, I am to explore the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on international students. As discussed earlier, urgent measures, such as social distancing due to COVID-19, may pose even greater difficulties for international students who are asked to adapt to a new environment. They may suffer from anxiety, depression, and other emotional pains as well as academic difficulties. Moreover, this could work as a factor that hinders the overall level of satisfaction in life of studying abroad.

Also, the level of the above problems may vary depending on the gender. It is necessary to explore how the COVID-19 situation works for women who may be relatively vulnerable to depression and stress. Therefore, this study seeks to analyze the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on international students depending on gender. Based on this, this research suggests a number of practical ways to support international students.

II. Literature Review

1. Current Status of International Students in COVID-19

The rapid economic growth of modern society has brought about many changes in life. In addition, rapid globalization broke down national boundaries and enabled transnational movement. This has led to the internationalization of higher education, and each country has established various strategies to attract international students. Each country's efforts enabled the quantitative expansion of international students.

In the 2000s, the Korean government was also interested in attracting international students and began to actively respond through the Study Korea Project. Through this, the number of international students started to increase from 2006 and reached 190,000 in 2019 (Ministry of Education 2020).

However, the COVID-19 pandemic has brought about many changes in daily life and has a great influence on international students and study abroad environment. In fact, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the number of international students decreased significantly compared to 2019 in several countries, including the U.S., Australia, China, and the United Kingdom, and the number also 150,000 in Korea, down from the previous year (Ministry of Education, 2020; UNESCO 2019).

In response to COVID-19, the study abroad market began to come up with countermeasures for each country. Response strategies operate at two main levels. One is a safety protocol for the prevention and management of COVID-19, and the other is a support strategy for life and health caused by COVID-19.

First, with regard to safety protocols, each country controls or restricts movement and inflow between countries in order to prevent and manage their citizens from COVID-19. In Canada, immigrants are required to submit a COVID-19 (PCR) negative confirmation, and the U.S. restricts entry if they stayed in a country at risk of COVID-19. In the UK and Ireland, self-isolation is mandatory, while in Australia and New Zealand, foreigners except citizens and immediate family members are prohibited from entering the country. In Korea, COVID-19 (PCR) tests are required three times before and after entry, and self-isolation is mandatory during the test period to strengthen quarantine (IDP 2021).

In relation to life and health support, medical and financial support is provided. In Canada, tests are supported, and meals and living expenses are provided to international students during the self-isolation period (Marisa 2020), while in Australia, living expenses (accommodation, transportation, and food expenses, etc.) and computers and laptops for study are provided (IDP 2021). The Korean government is also supporting the COVID-19 test for international students, and is working hard to ensure a stable life through financial support such as scholarship support.

In short, the strategies for responding to international students due to COVID-19 vary from country to country and from school to school, but in common, they are thoroughly responding to the safety of prevention and management, while support is provided to minimize difficulties in studying abroad through medical and economic support for international students. However, it is somewhat inadequate when it comes to students' mental health. Measures such as restrictions on movement between countries and social distancing have placed many restrictions on daily life. It has been reported that this may have negative effects such as depression and anxiety on the psycho-emotional side as well as pain due to physical restrictions (Ustun 2020). Support for maintaining a minimum life through financial support

for urgent situations is also important, but it is the time to raise the need to provide support for emotional support, etc.

2. The Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on International Students

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed the landscape of the whole society. As mentioned earlier, policies such as restricting movement between countries and strengthening social distancing were put forward as countermeasures. In everyday life, people are limited in their actions taken for granted. This was the same for international students. The study abroad market was bound to shrink, and international students' problems with the movement and overall adaptation to life are intensifying. During the pandemic period, not only simple restrictions on physical activities but also invisible study, life satisfaction, and mental health are affected (Tran 2020).

During the COVID-19 pandemic, studies on the daily lives of international students began to appear. Most schools prevented the spread of COVID-19, closed their campuses, and switched to non-face-to-face online classes. These changes in the educational environment also pose various challenges for existing students' adaptation. For international students, however, the difficulty in adaptation may be even greater (Azorin 2020). This is because international students do not only have to adapt to new system changes. International students experience challenges in all areas of their life of studying abroad, including food, clothing, shelter, values, living habits, and social relations in an unfamiliar environment. In such a situation, it is highly likely that the COVID-19 pandemic will make them suffer a double pain in which they have to adapt even to system changes according to national measures such as social distancing. For example, the government's actions against the COVID-19 pandemic may lead to international students' financial problems such as living conditions and living expenses, and disconnection of community and social relationships may intensify emotional problems such as isolation, depression, and anxiety (Raaper and Brown 2020). In other words, it works as a mechanism to further increase the complexity of the existing problems international students are facing.

Currently, medical support and financial support are provided to international students in each country. Although it varies from country to country and from university to university, support such as COVID-19 examination expenses, scholarships, and living expenses are supported. This may be expected to contribute to solving the difficulties international students are facing to some extent.

Compared with local students in the destination country for study, however, international students face many difficulties in the level of mental health due to the COVID-19 pandemic (Alharbi and Smith 2018; Chen, et al., 2020). Language barriers, information limitations, or cultural differences put them in a relatively poor position when it comes to the benefit of support policies. Even within universities, international students are likely to be excluded from these support policies or to be ignored in a relatively in-depth discussion as minorities.

The status of international students and the special context of the COVID-19 pandemic make it more difficult to meet the psychological needs of international students. Especially in recent years, as the cause of COVID-19 has been specified, hate and discrimination have rapidly increased. Crimes related to Asian hate clearly show this situation (Cheng 2020). International students who are exposed to such discrimination experiences may have more difficulty in adapting to the destination country for study, which may act as a factor that hinders the level of satisfaction with overall life of studying abroad.

In addition, this situation may make international students feel alone, increase anxiety, and lead to emotional problems such as depression (Richardson, et al., 2012). It may act even significantly because it is a situation where they have to adapt to an unfamiliar environment individually. Although universities provide early adaptation and support programs to ensure international students' successful life of studying abroad and reduce the stress of adaptation, the problem may worsen as these programs are restricted due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, it is necessary to pay attention to international students' personal problems such as life of studying abroad, adaptation stress, and depression due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

3. The Impact of COVID 19 Pandemic by Gender

The COVID-19 pandemic may work differently depending on the gender. It may be approached mainly from a biological perspective and a gender perspective. It is true that COVID-19 is causing great damage regardless of gender, but some studies report that there are differences in transmission power and severity of damage due to biological differences. From a gender perspective, studies have reported that as the time spent at home increased due to measures such as social distancing, resistance to gender roles increased in the case of married couples, which could lead to problems such as domestic violence (Oleschuk 2020; Wenhamm, et al.,2020).

On the other hand, in relation to psycho-emotional characteristics, studies (Asher, et al., 2017; Salk, et al., 2017) showing that women are relatively more vulnerable to problems such as depression and anxiety than men increase the likelihood that these factors may have a greater impact on women in the COVID-19 situation. If so, how will these gender differences work for international students.

It is predicted that international students will be relatively far from issues such as gender roles or domestic violence because they are somewhat far from issues such as marriage, childbirth, and parenting. However, psycho-emotional problems may act as an important factor for international students who are in a context where they have to adapt to a new environment. With this awareness of the problem, studies focusing on gender factors in the COVID-19 pandemic situation began to emerge (Ausín, et al., 2020; González-Sanguino, et al., 2020; Losada-Baltar, et al., 2020). These studies report that women have a relatively high correlation with emotional difficulties such as depression and isolation in the COVID-19 pandemic.

These results may be applied equally to international students. As discussed earlier, international students are facing various challenges. In this situation, the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic are more complicated. In addition, measures that impose restrictions such as social distancing deepen psycho-emotional problems, which may work differently depending on gender. Despite these probabilities, however, there is a lack of support in consideration of these differences or discussions to reduce problems. Based on the above awareness of the problem, this research discusses the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on international students with a focus on gender differences. Details of the analysis will be described in the next chapter.

III. Methods

1. Data Collection and Subjects

In this study, I attempted to explore the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on international students. To this end, I conducted a survey for international students to predict the influencing factors. The data collection methods and subjects are as follows: First, for data collection, a cluster sampling method was used, which randomly samples universities across the country and samples international students from that university. The survey was conducted over two months from March 2 to April 31, 2020, and a survey was conducted for international students by recruiting a person in charge of the university. When face-to-face surveys were difficult, additional surveys were conducted through an online questionnaire. The survey was translated into six languages to improve understanding in responding to the survey.

During the survey period, the COVID-19 situation worsened, causing many difficulties in the survey, and the number of questionnaires collected was 250 cases. Of them, 234 cases were finally utilized in the analysis, except for the fixed and missing responses.

2. Main Variables

2.1 Dependent variables: Satisfaction with life of studying abroad, adaptation stress, depression

To find out the overall characteristics of life of studying abroad according to gender, I measured satisfaction with life of studying abroad, adaptation stress, and depression. Not limiting life of studying abroad to inside the school, I attempted to measure the elements of daily life to find out satisfaction with life of studying abroad. Therefore, a total of 11 areas were surveyed, including housing, jobs inside and outside the university, dormitory services, university scholarship systems, safety, medical-related systems, legal support such as immigration and stay, prices, social network formation, and Korean cultural experience. A 4-point Likert scale was configured with 1 point = very dissatisfied, 2 points = dissatisfied, 3 points = satisfied, and 4 points = very satisfied. All the questions were summed and re-coded to mean that the higher the score, the higher the satisfaction level.

To find out the adaptation stress, I surveyed the adaptation stress in a total of 9 areas, including Korean language comprehension, food, clothing, shelter, understanding of mindset, values, economic adaptation, experiences of discrimination and prejudice, lack of information, homesickness, and incompetence. A 4-point Likert scale was configured with 1 point = not stressful at all, 2 points = rarely stressful, 3 points = a little stressful, 4 points = very stressful. All the questions were summed and re-coded to mean that the higher the score, the higher the adaptation stress.

Depression was surveyed in 8 questions such as 'I feel depressed without energy', 'I feel difficulties in everything', and 'I cry often.' A 4-point Likert scale was configured with 1 point = absolutely no, 2 points = no, 3 points = yes, 4 points = absolutely yes. All the questions were summed and re-coded to mean that the higher the score, the higher the level of depression.

2.2 Independent variable: Gender

In order to measure the psycho-emotional level of international students according to gender under the COVID-19 pandemic, a gender variable was introduced. Gender was analyzed by coding as male = 1 and female = 0.

3. Analysis Method

In order to analyze the general characteristics of the subjects, a descriptive statistical analysis was conducted, and an independent sample t-test was conducted to determine the differences in satisfaction with life of studying abroad, adaption stress, and depression according to gender. For the analysis, the STATA 16 statistical program was used.

IV. Results

4.1 General status

The general status of the subjects is shown in <Table 1> below. By gender, men accounted for 50.4% (118) and women 47.4% (111), and by nationality, China accounted for the largest proportion with 35.5% (83), followed by Nepal 28.2% (66), Vietnam 35.5% (33) and Uzbekistan 7.3% (17). By grade, juniors were the most, 35.5% (83 students) followed by seniors 16.7% (39 students), sophomores 14.5% (34 students), freshmen 13.2% (31 students) and those higher than seniors 3.0% (7 students).

Table 1. General status of survey subjects

		Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	118	50.4
	Female	111	47.4
	Missing	5	2.1
Nationality	Vietnam	33	14.1
	China	83	35.5
	Uzbekistan	17	7.3
	Nepal	66	28.2
	Pakistan	5	2.1
	India	4	1.7
	Bangladesh	4	1.7
	Others*	10	4.3
	Missing	12	5.1
Grade	Freshman	31	13.2
	Sophomore	34	14.5
	Junior	83	35.5
	Senior	39	16.7
	Higher than senior	7	3.0
	Missing	40	17.1

* Others (Japan, Indonesia, Malaysia, Iran, Italy, Russia, Turkey, South Sudan, the United States, Peru) are 1 person per country.

4.2. Descriptive Statistical Analysis of Main Variables

The results of descriptive statistics analysis of the main variables used in the analysis are shown in Table 2 below. First, in the case of the level of depression, the score of the question 'I have a lot of worries about everything' was the highest with 2.18 points, followed by 2.16 points for the question 'I feel depressed without energy', and 2.12 points for 'I feel difficulties in everything'. Generally, the level of depression was average 16 points (standard deviation = 5.4), indicating that the level of depression was not high. However, the great deviation could be interpreted that there is a difference in the level of depression among international students.

In the case of the level of adaptation stress, the score of the question 'I don't understand Korean well' was the highest with 2.74 points, followed by 2.67 points for 'Hard to understand the way Koreans think', 2.63 points for 'Economically difficult', 2.62 points for 'My heart hurts at the thoughts of the family I left in my home country.' Generally, it can be seen that adaption stress is relatively high with an average of 22.9 points (standard deviation = 4.93).

As for the level of satisfaction with life of studying abroad, the level of satisfaction for each area of life of studying abroad was surveyed. The result of the analysis showed that the satisfaction of safety-related areas was highest with 3.16 points, followed by housing 2.96 points, legal support for immigration/stay 2.93 points, and scholarship system 2.92 points. The level of satisfaction with life of studying abroad was found to be generally high. Like the level of depression, however, there was a large deviation among individuals in the satisfaction with life of studying abroad.

Table 2. Descriptive statistical analysis of main variables

Classification ¹	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
Depression 1	1	4	2.16	0.85	0.23	-0.65
Depression 2	1	4	1.82	0.84	0.54	-0.90
Depression 3	1	4	1.89	0.86	0.56	-0.63
Depression 4	1	4	2.01	0.85	0.34	-0.73

1 -Depression 1=I feel depressed without energy, Depression 2=I cry often, Depression 3=I feel like I can't escape from a trap, Depression 4=I easily blame myself, Depression 5=I have a lot of worries about everything, Depression 6=I feel difficulties in everything, Depression 7=Sometimes I am suddenly scared for no reason, Depression 8=Sometimes I feel fear.

-Adaptation stress 1=I don't understand Korean well, Adaptation stress 2=I feel difficulty because living conditions such as food, clothing and shelter are different, Adaptation stress 3=Hard to understand the way Koreans think, Adaptation stress 4=Hard to understand their values or lifestyle, Adaptation stress 5=Economically difficult, Adaptation stress 6=I experienced discrimination and prejudice, Adaptation stress 7=Lack of information necessary for life in Korea, Adaptation stress 8= My heart hurts at the thoughts of the family I left in my home country, Adaptation stress 9=I feel incompetent

-Satisfaction with life of studying abroad 1=Housing, Satisfaction with life of studying abroad 2=Finding a job inside the university, Satisfaction with life of studying abroad 3=Finding a job outside the university, Satisfaction with life of studying abroad 4=Dormitory service, Satisfaction with life of studying abroad 5=University scholarship system, Satisfaction with life of studying abroad 6=Safety, Satisfaction with life of studying abroad 7=Medical-related system, Satisfaction with life of studying abroad 8=Legal support for immigration, stay, Satisfaction with life of studying abroad 9=Prices, Satisfaction with life of studying abroad 10=Formation of social networks with Koreans, Satisfaction with life of studying abroad 11=Opportunity to experience Korean culture

Depression 5	1	4	2.18	0.93	0.13	-1.08
Depression 6	1	4	2.12	0.91	0.20	-1.02
Depression 7	1	4	2.05	0.89	0.38	-0.78
Depression 8	1	4	2.01	0.86	0.25	-1.04
Sum of depression	8	32	16.20	5.50	0.19	-0.56
Adaptation stress1	1	4	2.74	0.82	-0.51	-0.09
Adaptation stress2	1	4	2.51	0.84	-0.13	-0.55
Adaptation stress3	1	4	2.67	0.79	-0.47	-0.11
Adaptation stress4	1	4	2.41	0.78	0.03	-0.39
Adaptation stress5	1	4	2.63	0.89	-0.26	-0.64
Adaptation stress6	1	4	2.39	0.87	0.05	-0.67
Adaptation stress7	1	4	2.48	0.76	-0.20	-0.36
Adaptation stress8	1	4	2.62	0.93	-0.20	-0.81
Adaptation stress9	1	4	2.53	0.89	-0.28	-0.69
Sum of adaptation stress	9	36	22.97	4.94	-0.38	0.76
Satisfaction with life of studying abroad1	1	4	2.96	0.59	-0.55	1.68
Satisfaction with life of studying abroad2	1	4	2.71	0.63	-0.51	0.48
Satisfaction with life of studying abroad3	1	4	2.72	0.66	-0.45	0.38
Satisfaction with life of studying abroad4	1	4	2.72	0.73	-0.32	0.01
Satisfaction with life of studying abroad5	1	4	2.92	0.70	-0.73	1.13
Satisfaction with life of studying abroad6	2	4	3.16	0.62	-0.12	-0.49
Satisfaction with life of studying abroad7	1	4	2.92	0.68	-0.42	0.46
Satisfaction with life of studying abroad8	1	4	2.93	0.61	-0.47	1.18
Satisfaction with life of studying abroad9	1	4	2.69	0.72	-0.37	0.08
Satisfaction with life of studying abroad10	1	4	2.73	0.67	-0.38	0.27
Satisfaction with life of studying abroad11	1	4	2.90	0.68	-0.31	0.20
Sum of Satisfaction with life of studying abroad	18	44	31.41	4.56	0.23	1.35

4.3. Differences in International Students' Depression, Adaptation Stress, and Satisfaction with Life of Studying Abroad by Gender

The results of analyzing the differences in international students' depression, adaption stress, and satisfaction with life of studying abroad by gender are shown in Table 3 below. The result of the analysis showed that first, in the case of the difference in depression, males scored 15.0 points and females 17.3 points, indicating that females had higher levels of depression than males. The result of t-test showed that there was a statistically significant difference ($t=3.073$, $p=.002$). This can be seen as a point consistent with previous studies reporting that there will be difficulties in mental health of women compared to that of men due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

In the case of adaption stress, males scored 21.9 points and females 23.7 points, indicating

that females had higher adaptive stress than males. The result of t-test showed that there was a statistically significant difference ($t=-2.785$, $p=.006$). International students' adaptation stress was a difficulty that appeared even before COVID-19, and is similarly appearing in the COVID-19 pandemic. In particular, emotional difficulty may act as a factor that makes adaptation difficult, and it can be seen that it is in line with the results of previous studies reporting that females experiencing emotional difficulties relatively more than males in the COVID-19 pandemic will also have higher adaptation stress (Gebhard, et al., 2020; Liu, et al., 2020).

The result of comparing the level of satisfaction with life of studying abroad showed that males scored 32.0 points and females 30.6 points, indicating that males had higher satisfaction with life of studying abroad than females. This difference was statistically significant ($t=2.112$, $p=.036$). Raising the level of satisfaction with life of studying abroad has to do with how well you adapt to your new environment. In other words, if you show difficulty in adaptation or if the level of stress is high, your level of satisfaction with life of studying abroad may be lowered. In addition, if there are difficulties in the emotional aspect, the quality aspect of life of studying abroad is highly likely to be hindered. The results of the analysis showed that women's depression level and adaptation stress were higher than those of men. In this regard, women's satisfaction with life of studying abroad was also lower than that of men. It can be interpreted as a point that shows the need to consider gender factors when considering support policies and programs for international students in the COVID-19 pandemic.

Table 3. differences in international students' depression, adaptation stress, and satisfaction with life of studying abroad by gender

		Mean	Standard Deviation	t value	p
Depression	Male	15.00	5.43	-3.07	.002
	Female	17.32	5.36		
Adaptation stress	Male	21.95	5.10	-2.78	.006
	Female	23.79	4.47		
Satisfaction with life of studying abroad	Male	32.00	4.93	2.11	.036
	Female	30.67	3.92		

V. Conclusion

5.1. Discussion on Findings

This study attempted to examine the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on international students in a situation where COVID-19 is intensifying around the world. Especially with the awareness that it may work differently depending on gender, the study performed the comparison and analysis with a focus on the gender differences. The research results can be

summarized as follows:

The level of depression was higher in women than in men. Based on the previous studies showing that women may be relatively more vulnerable to emotional problems than men, it was consistent with the argument that this problem would intensify due to the situational specificity of COVID-19 (Gebhard, et al., 2020; Liu, et al., 2020). In addition, women were found to experience greater adaptation stress than men. Women experiencing emotional difficulties were relatively stressed out in their adaptation to their life of studying abroad. This led to a difference between men and women in the level of satisfaction with life of studying abroad. Compared to men, women's satisfaction with life of studying abroad was found to be lower. As argued in recent studies focusing on gender factors in the COVID-19 pandemic (González-Sanguino, et al., 2020; Losada-Baltar, et al., 2020), the above results show that the gender factors need to be considered in the COVID-19 response strategy.

5.2. Suggestions

Based on the above results, this study makes the following suggestions: In relation to the existing COVID-19 pandemic, the international student support policy is focused on economic support. Many will agree that countermeasures to maintaining safety and minimum living in urgent situations should be a top priority. Each country is supporting international students with active response strategies such as medical support including COVID-19 testing and treatment or economic support including living expenses and scholarships. However, there is relatively little interest in the emotional aspect. It is a reality that there are many difficulties such as counseling and information provision under limited face-to-face services. For international students who are experiencing various challenges in a new environment, restrictions in their current daily life may act as a factor that makes it even more difficult. In this respect, there is a need for a support policy to improve the emotional stability and health of international students.

In addition, there is a possibility that the emotional difficulties of men and women will appear differently. Current support programs do not fully take this point into account. The feelings of depression or anxiety experienced by social isolation may vary depending on the gender. At the school level, it is necessary to form a separate COVID-19 Pandemic Crisis Response Team for international students and to prepare support programs according to individual characteristics and circumstances. It also requires community-level efforts to overcome school-level limitations. Economic and emotional support at the school level is bound to be limited. In order to compensate for this, the effect of the international student policy can be enhanced by establishing a system of regard and support for international students at the community-level.

Reference

- Alharbi, E. S., and Smith, A. P. 2018. "Review of the literature on stress and wellbeing of international students in English-speaking countries." *International Education Studies*, 11(6), 22-44.
- Asher, M., Asnaani, A., and Aderka, I. M. 2017. "Gender differences in social anxiety disorder: A review." *Clinical psychology review*, 56, 1-12.
- Azorin, C. 2020. "Beyond COVID-19 supernova: Is another education coming?" *Journal of Professional Capital and Community*. Terbit pertama online(hlm. 1-10). DOI: 10.1108/JPCC-05-2020-0019.
- Ausín, B., González-Sanguino, C., Castellanos, MÁ., and Muñoz, M. 2020. "Gender-related differences in the psychological impact of confinement as a consequence of COVID-19 in Spain." *Journal of Gender Studies*. Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09589236.2020.1799768>
- Chen, J. H., Li, Y., Wu, A. M. S., and Tong, K. K. 2020. "The overlooked minority: Mental health of International students worldwide under the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond." *Asian Journal of Psychiatry*, 54, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ajp.2020.102333>.
- Cheng, R. 2020. "The COVID-19 Crisis and International Students." <https://www.insidehighered.com/views/2020/03/19/higher-ed-institutions-arent-supporting-international-students-enough-during-COVID>.
- Firang, D. 2020. "The impact of COVID-19 pandemic on international students in Canada." *International Social Work*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0020872820940030>.
- Gebhard, C., Regitz-Zagrosek, V., Neuhauser, HK., Morgan, R., and Klein, SL. 2020. "Impact of sex and gender on COVID-19 outcomes in Europe." *Biol Sex Differ* 11(29). doi: 10.1186/s13293-020-00304-9.
- González-Sanguino, C., Ausín, B., ÁngelCastellanos, M., Saiz, J., López-Gómez, A., Ugidos, C., and Muñoz, M. 2020. "Mental Health Consequences during the Initial Stage of the 2020 Coronavirus Pandemic (COVID-19) in Spain." *Brain, Behavior, and Immunity*, 87, 172–176.
- IDP(International Education Specialists). 2021. COVID-19 information, URL: <https://www.idp.com/korea/covid-19-information/>
- Liu, N., Zhang, F., Wei, C., Jia, Y., Shang, Z., Sun, L., Wu, L., Sun, Z., Zhou, Y. Wang, Y., and Liu, W. 2020. "Prevalence and predictors of PTSS during COVID-19 outbreak in China hardest-hit areas: Gender differences matter." *Psychiatry Research*, 287, 112921. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.psychres.2020.112921>.
- Losada-Baltar, A., Jiménez-Gonzalo, L., Gallego-Alberto, L., Pedroso-Chaparro, M. D. S., Fernandes-Pires, J., and MárquezGonzález, M. 2020. "We're staying at home. Association
- 65 Vol.64 No.2 *Studies in Humanities and Social Sciences*.

of self-perceptions of aging, personal and family resources and loneliness with psychological distress during the lock-down period of COVID-19.” *The Journals of Gerontology*. Series B, Psychological Sciences and Social Sciences. doi:10.1093/geronb/gbaa048.

Marisa C. 2020. “How the pandemic has disrupted the lives of international students in Canada.” <https://www.macleans.ca/education/how-the-pandemic-has-disrupted-the-lives-of-international-students-in-canada/>

Ministry of Education. 2020. Announcement of 2020 *Basic Education Statistics Results*. Ministry of Education.

Misirilis, N., Zwaan, M. H., Weber, D. 2020. “International students’ loneliness, depression and stress levels in COVID-19 crisis. The role of social media and host university.” *Journal of Contemporary Education, Theory and Research*, 4, 20-25. Available online: <https://arxiv.org/abs/2005.12806> (accessed on 6 June 2020).

Oleschuk, Merin. .2020. “Gender Equity Considerations for Tenure and Promotion during COVID-19.” *Canadian Review of Sociology*, 57(3), 502-515.

Raaper, R., and Brown, C. 2020. “The COVID-19 pandemic and the dissolution of the university campus: Implications for student support practice.” *Journal of Professional Capital and Community*. Terbit pertama online (hlm. 1-7). DOI: 10.1108/JPC-06-2020-0032

Richardson, M., Abraham, C., and Bond, R. 2012. “Psychological correlates of university students' academic performance: a systematic review and meta-analysis.” *Psychological bulletin*, 138(2), 353.

Salk, R. H., Hyde, J. S., and Abramson, L. Y. 2017. “Gender differences in depression in representative national samples: Meta-analyses of diagnoses and symptoms.” *Psychological Bulletin*, 143(8), 783.

Tran, L. T. 2020. “Teaching and engaging international students: People-to-people connections and people-to-people empathy.” *Journal of International Students*, 10(3). xii-xvii.

UNESCO. 2019. *Higher education*. Diakses tanggal 18 Agustus 2020 dari. <http://data.uis.unesco.org/Index.aspx?queryid=172>

Ustun, G. 2020. “Determining depression and related factors in a society affected by COVID-19 pandemic.” *International Journal of Social Psychiatry*, doi: <https://doi.org/10.1177/0020764020938807>

Wenham C, Smith J., and Morgan R. 2020. “COVID-19: The gendered impacts of the outbreak.” *Lancet*. 395(10227), 846-848.

WHO. 2021. *Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) Situation reports*.