

The Way Forward for ASEAN Students' Exchange Program Participation With South Korean Universities After the COVID-19 Pandemic: Focusing on the needs of non-participating students

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Abstract. The purpose of this research was to investigate the possibilities and opportunities for ASEAN and Korea student exchange programs in the post-COVID-19 pandemic era, by focusing on the needs of non-participating ASEAN students. To do so, this study conducted an online survey to analyze ASEAN students' understanding, views, expectations, and reasons for not participating in student exchange programs to Korea, while investigating their considerations and preferences for future participation. The findings revealed significant differences between ASEAN students in terms of nationality (especially Vietnamese students), academic field, and gender. They also highlighted the rising role and importance of hybrid and online modes of student mobility, that grew in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, there is a need for universities, government policy makers and educational scholars to reflect the emerging new needs of students concerning ASEAN-Korea exchange programs in the post-COVID-19 pandemic era.

Keywords: student mobility, ASEAN, Korea, hybrid education, COVID-19 pandemic

Introduction

According to the ASEAN-Korea Centre (2022), the ASEAN region is now the most visited region by

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South Koreans, while the Republic of Korea (hereinafter “Korea”) has also announced its New Southern Policy, signaling its increasing strategic focus on the ASEAN region. Along these lines, the Korean government decided to join the ASEAN International Mobility for Student (hereinafter “AIMS”¹) program in 2016, to promote further student exchange between Korea and ASEAN at educational and cultural levels. Nonetheless, the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 brought about abrupt changes to all facets of social activities, with education being no exception to these unprecedented changes (Hodges et al., 2020; Stewart & Lowenthal, 2021, 2022). The advent of the COVID-19 pandemic brought a sudden halt to all forms of student mobility and for a time being the future outlook seemed dim.

However, with the introduction of fully online and hybrid forms of student mobility at institutional and national levels, there seems to be new opportunities for student mobility in the post-COVID-19 pandemic era. The emergence of the hybrid education model provided intermediate solutions for educational delivery and student mobility during the pandemic and helped enable online education to create new teaching techniques within higher education (Skulmowski & Rey, 2020; Yıldırım et al., 2021). That being said, while the online and hybrid forms of student mobility may have great potential to enlarge the scope and modes of international student mobility, these new modes of student mobility are still in their infant stages, with lingering, divided opinions on the efficacy and effectiveness of such programs (Lorenzo-Lledó et al., 2021; Erliza & Septianingsih, 2022). Furthermore, there is limited research conducted on the needs of hybrid and online forms of student mobility from the perspective of ASEAN students, meaning there is a lack of research regarding what ASEAN students actually want to obtain from their international student exchange experience during the post-COVID-19 pandemic era. Previous studies on student exchange programs were mostly based on pre-pandemic student motivations, experiences, and outcomes (Teichler, 2004; DeGraaf et al., 2013; Fombona et al., 2013; Lesjak et al., 2015;), and predominantly focused on programs implemented in well-known destinations for student mobility, such as the ERASMUS program in Europe (Mizikaci & Arslan, 2019; Prieto-Arranz et al., 2021). Hence, there is a gap in the literature in terms of geographical focus as well as type of student exchange program.

Therefore, the purpose of this research is to investigate the new possibilities and opportunities for promoting student exchange programs between ASEAN and Korea in the post-COVID-19 pandemic era, by focusing on the needs of ASEAN students who have not yet participated in such programs (hereinafter “non-participating ASEAN students”). To achieve this goal, the study aims to answer the following research questions: (1) How do non-participating ASEAN students perceive the awareness and necessity for ASEAN-Korea student exchange programs?; (2) What do non-participating ASEAN students prefer in terms of study destination and mode of delivery?; (3) What are the reasons for non-participating ASEAN students having not yet participated in ASEAN-Korea student exchange

¹ During the 2019 AIMS review meeting, the ‘ASEAN’ wording of AIMS was changed to ‘ASIAN’ in order to reflect the participation of non-ASEAN countries in 2013 (Japan) and 2016 (Korea), respectively.

programs?; and (4) What do non-participating ASEAN students expect to achieve from participating in future ASEAN-Korea student exchange programs? By doing so, the study looks to provide practical implications to university and government policy makers as well as educational researchers, on how to improve international student exchange programs between ASEAN countries and Korea in the post-COVID-19 pandemic era.

Research Context and Literature Review

Research Context

ASEAN is a multilateral and regional alliance consisting of 10 countries located in Southeast Asia. The importance of relations between ASEAN and Korea is increasing year by year in many fields, such as politics, economy, and education. In terms of politics, ASEAN plays an important balancing role in relations between the three Northeast Asian countries, which often find themselves at odds with one another due to historical and territorial disputes (Kim, 2005). From an economic perspective, ASEAN is a large market with a population of nearly 670 million in 2021, and a GDP of nearly \$3 trillion in 2020 (ASEAN-Korea Centre, 2023). Korea invested nearly \$9 billion in the ASEAN region in 2021 alone, which was the third-largest investment after the United States and the EU, suggesting the Korean government's significant economic interest in the ASEAN's foreseeable future. At the educational level, considering that the number of ASEAN college students studying in Korea has increased significantly, from 8,946 in 2015 to 41,258 in 2021, ASEAN is a major provider of international students to Korea and contributes significantly to the internationalization process of Korean university campuses and curricula (Korean Educational Development Institute, 2021).

Given these increased political, economic, and educational relations with the ASEAN region, Korea has been striving for student exchange programs with ASEAN counterparts, with the most widely known program being AIMS. The AIMS program originated from the Malaysia-Indonesia-Thailand (M-I-T) student exchange pilot program launched in 2010, proposed and coordinated by the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization Regional Centre specializing in higher education and development (SEAMEO RIHED). Since 2012, the number of participating countries increased, resulting in the M-I-T program being renamed to AIMS. The academic discipline focus was also expanded to cover 8 major fields, including Hospitality and Tourism, Food Science and Technology and Agriculture (Korean Council for University Education, 2023). The Korean government began participating in 2016 and designated six Korean universities to implement student exchange programs with ASEAN counterpart universities. As a result, a total of 726 students (350 outbound, 376 inbound) participated in exchange programs between ASEAN and Korean universities from 2016 to 2020. In 2021, six new Korean universities additionally joined to the AIMS program, resulting in 12 total Korean participating universities. Moreover, since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, the modes of student exchange

programs between ASEAN and Korean universities have been diversified to include hybrid offline & online models of student exchange in addition to existing face-to-face student mobility programs (Ministry of Education of Republic of Korea, 2021).

Expectations and Effectiveness of Participating in Student Exchange Programs

Existing studies on student exchange programs mainly focused on the motivations, experiences, and outcomes of participants. Studies have reported that students decide to participate in student exchange programs due to their interest in the visiting country, interest in local language and culture, personal growth, professional benefits, and desire for travel and relaxation (Teichler, 2004; DeGraaf et al., 2013; Lesjak et al., 2015; Fombona et al., 2013). Furthermore, Lesjak et al. (2015) specified the motivation of students participating in the Erasmus program into two types: mobility motive and destination choice motive. Students tended to participate in student exchange programs “to experience something new,” “to grow personally,” and “to learn about different cultures and meet new people”. Meanwhile, safety, rich cultural heritage, natural attractions, and sights were reported as motivations for students deciding which institution to go to. As for the personal outcomes of participating in student exchange programs, participants reported experiencing personal development and professional growth (DeGraaf et al., 2013; Mizikaci & Arslan, 2019; Prieto-Arranz et al., 2021).

However, this prior literature, which focused on traditionally favored countries by students such as North America and Europe, had many limitations in understanding the motivation and experience of students participating in ASEAN-Korea student exchange programs. According to several studies, the motivation and experience of international students may vary depending on the characteristics of the student, such as country of origin and nationality (Sam, 2001; Rosenthal et al., 2007; Jon et al., 2014; Kim & Lee, 2011). Of these, the Western and Asian cultural differences have particularly been a major factor. Asian students feel a sense of social connection within the local community by mingling with people from similar cultures (Rosenthal et al., 2007; Alemu & Cordier, 2017). There are also differences in motivation for participation. Jon et al. (2014)’s study on international students who visited Korea revealed that Asian students had different motivations to choose Korea as a visiting country compared to North American or European students, such as low cost of living, safety, and geographical proximity. In the same vein, a study by Stewart (2020), which explored Korea’s pull factor as a visiting country, also revealed that socio-cultural similarity, proximity to one’s home country, and interest in Korean culture were the reasons why students from Asian cultures chose Korea as a destination country. Asian students also visited Korea for competitive overseas academic capital (Kim & Lee, 2011). The motivation for participation in exchange students may appear differently not only according to nationality, but also according to other characteristics of students such as gender and academic discipline. For example, Utomo (2012), who explored the gender gap in the Indonesian youth labor market, found that women were expected to play their role as good wives and mothers at home, and also remain as

secondary earners compared to men who could make career choices on their own in the labor market. As such, expectations for gender roles that apply differently to men and women will also affect college students, and thus their college life experience such as choosing to participate in student exchange programs.

As ASEAN-Korea exchange and cooperation have increased across all levels of society; studies focusing on ASEAN-Korea student exchange programs have also been on the rise. Nevertheless, most of these studies dealt with pre-COVID-19 pandemic circumstances (Kim, 2013; Lee, 2015), and rarely covered the transforming ASEAN-Korea student exchange landscape post-COVID-19 pandemic. Of the few studies (Shin et al., 2022) that did cover this topic post-pandemic, they did not reflect the precise needs of ASEAN students, and instead focused exclusively on the perspective of Korean students. For example, Shin et al. (2022) identified the needs of Korean students who had not yet participated in ASEAN-Korea student exchange programs after the pandemic but were likely to participate in the future. The study revealed the need for (i) a plan to revitalize the student exchange program by considering the characteristics of each group of students, (ii) an introduction of new modes of delivery such as online forms of student exchange, (iii) setting new major target countries, and (iv) actively promoting and managing student exchange programs. Nevertheless, this study was limited in that it only focused on the needs of non-participating Korean students, instead of the needs of non-participating ASEAN students. Hence, this study aims to address this gap in existing literature.

Student Exchange Programs during COVID-19 pandemic

The World Health Organization (WHO) designated COVID-19 as a pandemic on March 11, 2020, as the number of confirmed cases increased worldwide. Like other sectors of society, such as politics and the economy, the educational community was not free from the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic (Bista et al., 2022). In particular, the COVID-19 pandemic brought a shock to international student mobility. In most countries, including North America, Europe, New Zealand, and Australia, where many students preferred to visit before the COVID-19 pandemic, higher education institutions closed and student mobility was suspended, with students disappearing from campus (Mercado, 2020). According to a study of Asian students, about 85% of respondents reported that they wanted to study in Asian countries such as Hong Kong, Japan, and Taiwan in the post-pandemic period, rather than the US or UK which were traditionally preferred (Mok et al., 2021). Thus, it is suggested that the COVID-19 pandemic not only sharply reduced international student mobility, but also brought about many changes in the flow of international higher education.

During the COVID-19 pandemic period, almost all institutions switched from traditional face-to-face education systems to emergent online education systems (Stewart & Lowenthal, 2022). Many unexpected consequences occurred due to such abrupt changes to educational delivery and the higher education environment in general. Stewart & Lowenthal (2021, 2022) selected one Korean university to

reveal the experiences of international students visiting Korea via student exchange programs during the COVID-19 pandemic. Students were very confused about the new online teaching method, and the support they needed from the host institution was not properly provided. Moreover, since most of the classes were online, social interactions with peers on campus were significantly reduced and international students experienced isolation while spending time alone in dormitories (Stewart & Lowenthal, 2021, 2022).

This is similarly shown in other studies conducted after COVID-19. Students did not think that all types of student exchange programs were equally valuable, and considered in-person, immersive programs from a traditional perspective as the most valuable type (Basterretxea Santiso & Sanz, 2022). Since online exchange programs were yet to be familiarized, students considered virtual mobility programs as complementary or alternatives rather than the core aspect of exchange programs (Li & Ai, 2022). However, students gradually accepted the new forms of virtual academic exchanges that emerged during the pandemic, while expressing expectations for new types of exchange programs.

On the other hand, it was also discovered that some students were in fact satisfied with the new online and hybrid models of education, because it reduced the overall cost of tuition and enabled students to take classes regardless of time and space (Stewart & Lowenthal, 2021; Yıldırım et al., 2021; Koris et al., 2021). Thus, based on these advantages, the need to utilize virtual systems for international exchange in higher education was highlighted. One of the main examples was the Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL), whereby professors from different countries jointly developed and utilized lectures, and the ERASMUS+ Virtual Exchange Program, which extended the scope of existing ERASMUS+ programs online (Byun et al., 2021).

Although studies have been conducted on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on international student mobility over the past several years, there are still few studies on student mobility between ASEAN-Korea. Students' motivations to participate in ASEAN-Korea student exchange programs are expected to be different from other programs, based on previous studies (Jon et al., 2014; Kim & Lee, 2011; Rosenthal et al., 2007; Sam, 2001). In particular, since the existing studies were conducted based on the experience of participating students, it is also likely to be significantly different from the actual needs of non-participating students who are likely to participate in ASEAN-Korea student exchange programs in the near future, as mentioned by Shin et al. (2022). Thus, examining the motivation and commitment of non-participating students can help determine how to support exchange students more effectively, while helping university and government policy makers to better understand how to prepare for student mobility in the post-COVID-19 pandemic era.

Research Methods

Data Collection and Analysis

The survey was conducted online from November 1–19, 2021. For the data collection, the researchers limited the scope to four major ASEAN countries: Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, and Vietnam, because the 4 countries provided important implications for student mobility with Korean universities. Malaysia, Indonesia, and Thailand played a leading role in launching the M-I-T program, the aforementioned predecessor of AIMS, which is one of the largest student exchange programs in all of Asia. Furthermore, Vietnam is considered an important country, as it sends the most students to study in Korea out of all the other ASEAN countries (Kim, 2013). The survey targeted ASEAN students who had not yet participated in student exchange programs with Korean universities but were likely to participate in the near future. Four ASEAN researchers who served as co-researchers confirmed, that it was unfortunately impossible to accurately estimate the population because it was difficult to identify the entire population of students who had no experience of exchange student programs with Korea but were still interested in future participation. Therefore, the researchers utilized a multi-pronged strategy to (i) secure as many respondents as possible, (ii) select non-participating ASEAN students from specific departments and colleges (majoring in one of the 8 academic fields outlined within the AIMS program) at AIMS-designated member universities, as they were more likely to participate in future student exchange programs with Korean universities compared to non-member universities, and (iii) avoid concentrating the survey respondents in any one institution or country. Nevertheless, since the sample of this study was not based on a strict sampling method, careful caution should be exercised in interpreting the results of this study.

The questionnaire was first developed by the Korean research team with reference to previous research (DeGraaf et al., 2013; Lesjak et al., 2015), and then reviewed by the co-researchers to ensure that it was appropriate for the regional context. The reviewed questionnaire was then pretested with students in each country, and the questionnaire was revised and supplemented based on the results. The final questionnaire consisted of questions on motivations and expectations for participation, preferred modes of exchange programs and study destinations, and reasons for not participating using a 4-point Likert scale, with 4 being the highest value. The survey was implemented through Survey Monkey, an online survey platform. The online survey link was sent to students with the help of coordinators at each university in the four ASEAN countries. Specific details on respondents' characteristics can be found in Table 1 below.

A total of 415 non-participating ASEAN students from 42 universities across the 4 ASEAN countries responded to the survey. The respondents hailed from 15 universities in Indonesia, 10 universities in Vietnam, 10 universities in Malaysia, and 7 universities in Thailand. The researchers tried to balance the number of survey respondents from each institution and country, in order to provide an accurate, overall representation. Although the survey found that the number of respondents at all universities could not be evenly matched, there was no extreme situation in which the number of respondents at one specific institution overly dominated the number of respondents in a single country.

Table 1. Respondents' characteristics

	Variables	Frequency	%
Academic Field	H/SS (Humanities & Social Science)	190	45.78
	E/NS (Engineering & Natural Science)	225	54.22
Nationality	Indonesia	80	19.28
	Malaysia	129	31.08
	Thailand	68	16.39
	Vietnam	138	33.25
Gender	Male	131	31.57
	Female	284	68.43
N		415	100

In the process of reaching the final sample size ($n = 415$) for data analysis; 22 responses were excluded as they consisted of incomplete responses or nationalities other than the selected 4 ASEAN countries.

For data analysis, all 415 respondents were categorized into 3 main groups by academic field, nationality, and gender², and then into further sub-groups. Descriptive statistical analysis was initially conducted to investigate the mean and standard deviation for responses to each question, and for each group. It was then followed by a *t*-test and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) to examine the difference in response values within each group and to look for any statistically significant differences. For items that showed significant differences within groups, an additional post-hoc analysis was conducted to confirm specific differences between sub-groups.

Findings

4-1. How do non-participating ASEAN students perceive the awareness and necessity for ASEAN-Korea student exchange programs?

Overall, ASEAN students who did not participate in international student exchange programs to Korea, had both a relatively good understanding (2.90) of such programs and believed that participation in such programs was highly valuable (3.53). An interesting note was that their belief in the value of the program was much higher than their actual understanding of the program. Vietnamese students held the highest understanding of international student exchange programs to Korea (3.14) compared to the other groups ($F = 18.401, p < 0.001$) with a small effect size ($f = 0.296$). On another note, although Thai students overall held a high belief in the value of Korea-ASEAN exchange programs (3.31), it was relatively lower than Malaysian (3.50), Vietnamese (3.62), and Indonesian (3.63) students ($F = 4.775, p < 0.01$).

² The responses had also been originally grouped by 'Grade' as well, however it was not considered for data analysis nor included in the findings, because the Grade group did not provide significant implications to the study.

And in terms of gender, female ASEAN students showed a higher belief (3.58 vs. 3.44) in the value of student exchange programs to Korea, compared to their male counterparts ($t = -2.183, p < 0.05$) with a small effect size ($d = 0.221$).

Table 2. Understanding & View of student exchange programs to Korea

	Variables	Understanding	Value
Total		2.90 (0.63)	3.53 (0.64)
Academic Field	H/SS	2.93 (0.63)	3.47 (0.63)
	E/NS	2.88 (0.63)	3.59 (0.64)
	t	0.819	-1.966
Nationality	Indonesia(a)	2.66 (0.65)	3.63 (0.49)
	Malaysia(b)	2.88 (0.71)	3.50 (0.80)
	Thailand(c)	2.74 (0.73)	3.31 (0.65)
	Vietnam(d)	3.14 (0.35)	3.62 (0.49)
	F	18.401***	4.775**
	scheffe	a, b, c < d	c < a, d
	effect size f	0.296	0.182
Gender	Male	2.85 (0.65)	3.44 (0.62)
	Female	2.92 (0.62)	3.58 (0.64)
	t	-1.133	-2.183*
	effect size d		0.221

Note: The responses are based on a 4-point Likert scale (1 strongly disagree ~ 4 strongly agree).

Values in parentheses are standard deviation

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

4-2. What do non-participating ASEAN students prefer in terms of study destination and mode of delivery?

Preferred exchange program destination countries for ASEAN students

ASEAN students mostly preferred to go to the East Asian region such as Korea, Japan, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and China rather than the other adjacent ASEAN region, with Korea being the most preferred destination. According to survey results, the two most important reasons for ASEAN students preferring to go to East Asian countries were the *Opportunity to travel to a foreign country* (3.66) and *Experiencing local culture* (3.65) in East Asia. However, the other 6 reasons presented in Table 3 below were all regarded as being very important as well. In other words, ASEAN students wanted to visit and experience a completely new, different region and culture besides ASEAN. Thus, when considering students' high preference to participate in exchange programs to Korea, there is great potential to expand and further develop existing Korea-ASEAN student exchange programs, especially in the post-COVID-19 pandemic era.

Another interesting finding was, out of the ASEAN countries, the least preferred countries were relatively less economically developed countries such as Cambodia (2.40), Myanmar (2.50) and Laos (2.58), compared to relatively more economically developed ASEAN counterparts such as Singapore (3.41) and Malaysia (2.96). This indicates that there may be even a disparity in preferences amongst ASEAN countries, with students preferring to go to relatively more developed countries. Moreover, this finding is further substantiated by the fact that students also stated *Beneficial for my future career* (3.52) as a major reason for preferring to go to such countries.

Table 3. Preferred Countries in ASEAN+3 region & Reasons for Preference

Preferred countries in ASEAN+3 region	Reason for High Preference	Reason for Low Preference
Korea (3.62)	Opportunity to travel in a foreign country (3.66)	Experiencing local culture (3.11)
Japan (3.54)		Beneficial for my future career (3.07)
Singapore (3.41)	Experiencing local culture (3.65)	Opportunity to travel in a foreign country (3.05)
Hong Kong (3.12)	Beneficial for my future career (3.52)	
Taiwan (3.11)	Interaction with local students (3.48)	Beneficial for English language learning (3.03)
China (3.02)	Quality of education (3.41)	
Malaysia (2.96)	Beneficial for English language learning (3.40)	Interaction with local students (3.02)
Indonesia (2.82)	Region or country relevant to my major (3.38)	Region or country relevant to my major (2.95)
Thailand (2.82)		
Philippines (2.69)	Beneficial for local language learning (3.30)	Quality of education (2.91)
Brunei (2.66)	Beneficial for local language learning (2.87)	Beneficial for local language learning (2.87)
Vietnam (2.66)		
Laos (2.58)		
Myanmar (2.50)		
Cambodia (2.40)		

Note: Values in parentheses are mean.

Preferred types of international student exchange programs with Korean universities

The majority of ASEAN students were more interested in fully in-person (offline) than fully online programs. Overall, the most preferred types of programs by ASEAN students were *In-person (offline) intensive program participation during summer & winter breaks* (3.31) and *In-person (offline) program participation in Korea during a regular semester* (3.25). Thus, the results of this study only further substantiated the fact that ASEAN students overall preferred an in-person student exchange program compared to a fully online experience.

However, this study also revealed the possibilities and opportunities for hybrid exchange programs in the post-COVID-19 pandemic era. For example, as shown in Table 4 below, ASEAN students overall

had nearly similar preferences for hybrid programs (3.19) as they did for traditional offline programs (3.25).

Adding to this train of thought, responses by Vietnamese students provided even further implications. Vietnamese students, unlike those from the other ASEAN countries, preferred hybrid, or online programs, in particular, for programs implemented during a regular semester. For Summer/Winter programs, Vietnamese students held similar levels of preference for the three different types of student exchange programs (*in-person* 3.23 vs. *online* 3.22 vs. *hybrid* 3.34). These findings may seemingly be interpreted as the part of evidence that showed the potential interest and openness Vietnamese students have towards online & hybrid models of student exchange program. Nevertheless, when considering that Vietnamese students have a higher preference for *Online* (3.35) and *Hybrid* (3.36)

Table 4. Interesting types of student exchange programs

Variables		During Regular Semester				Summer/Winter Intensive Program		Reg. + Sum./Win.
		Offline at host	Online incl. cultural learning	Online at home only course taking	Hybrid mainly online at home + partially at host	Offline at host	Online at home	Hybrid online at reg. sem. + short visit at sum./win.
Total		3.25 (0.66)	2.73 (0.82)	2.72 (1.03)	3.19 (0.80)	3.31 (0.75)	2.89 (0.89)	3.08 (0.83)
Academic Field	<i>t</i>	-1.301	0.461	0.436	-0.884	-0.936	-0.436	-0.313
Nationality	Indonesia (a)	3.43 (0.84)	2.55 (0.88)	2.39 (0.95)	3.11 (0.78)	3.43 (0.78)	2.70 (0.93)	3.01 (0.88)
	Malaysia (b)	3.41 (0.66)	2.73 (0.91)	2.47 (1.00)	3.24 (0.80)	3.37 (0.78)	2.84 (0.93)	2.95 (0.87)
	Thailand (c)	3.16 (0.84)	2.40 (0.88)	2.29 (0.93)	2.85 (0.83)	3.19 (0.78)	2.54 (0.95)	2.85 (0.92)
	Vietnam (d)	3.04 (0.24)	3.01 (0.51)	3.35 (0.85)	3.36 (0.74)	3.23 (0.69)	3.22 (0.66)	3.34 (0.64)
	<i>F</i>	16.221** *	14.135** *	32.063** *	6.692***	1.989	14.008** *	7.701***
	scheffe	d < a, b	a, b, c < d	a, b, c < d	c < b c < d		a, b, c < d	a, b, c < d
effect size <i>f</i>		0.252	0.276	0.482	0.222		0.121	0.231
Gender	<i>t</i>	-1.262	0.911	1.429	0.273	-1.277	1.610	-0.013

Note: Values in parentheses are standard deviation. In the case of ‘academic field’ and ‘gender’, descriptive statistics were omitted as the analysis results were not statistically significant. However, researchers can provide if requested.

p* < 0.05, *p* < 0.01, ****p* < 0.001

compared to *Offline (3.04)* programs during a regular semester, and that even amongst offline programs they prefer having them during *Summer/Winter Breaks (3.23)* rather than during a *Regular Semester (3.04)*—there may be 2 possible explanations. The first being that Vietnamese students are relatively more interested in and open to online & hybrid models of student exchange programs, or it may mean that Vietnamese students simply prefer programs that enable more convenient ways to obtain academic credits and ultimately lead to faster job employment. Further research needs to be conducted for more refined explanation, as prior studies have shown that Vietnamese students on average tend to be more pragmatically inclined when it comes to their study abroad experience, meaning they are more interested in achieving better qualifications to boost their job prospects upon graduation (Nghia, 2015; Khai, 2017; Hoang et al., 2019), rather than just for the sake of obtaining diverse life experiences.

4-3. What are the reasons for non-participating ASEAN students having not yet participated in ASEAN-Korea student exchange programs?

Overall, the most important reasons for having not yet participated in student exchange programs with Korean universities were *Financial Cost (3.20)* and *Safety Concerns (3.04)*, while the lowest reason was *Do not see benefit of participating in program (2.10)*.

An interesting finding was that Vietnamese students showed much higher averages – meaning they agreed much more – than the other 3 ASEAN nationalities across nearly all categories, with the only exception being for *Financial Cost*, whereby Vietnamese students showed a much lower average – meaning they agreed much less – than the other 3 ASEAN nationalities. These differences across all categories were shown to be statistically significant at the 0.001 level.

Further analysis revealed that the Vietnamese students' highest reason for having not yet participated in student exchange programs with Korean universities was due to *Safety Concerns (3.90)*. In addition, Vietnamese students were the only nationality that did not see the benefit of participating in exchange programs with Korean universities ($F = 291.240, p < 0.001$) and highly preferred to experience cultures through other opportunities besides ASEAN-Korea exchange programs ($F = 42.690, p < 0.001$). However, with a small effect size of both responses, it implies that Vietnamese students' response does not differ substantially from that of other countries. Moreover, Vietnamese students also highly stated *Time schedule not available (3.59)*, *Delay of Graduation (3.38)*, and *Focus on getting a job (3.30)* as major reasons for choosing to not participate in ASEAN-Korea exchange programs with considerably large effect sizes. Thus, when considering the findings on Vietnamese students as listed above, it can be carefully assumed that there are unique social and environmental conditions that influence Vietnamese students' decision to participate in ASEAN-Korea exchange programs, especially compared to the other 3 ASEAN nationalities. Therefore, there is a need to delve further into such phenomena and findings in future research through a more detailed research design.

When breaking down the results by academic field; Humanities & Social Science students stated, *Delay of Graduation* (2.94 vs. 2.65, $t = 3.409$, $p < 0.01$) and *Do not see benefit of participating in program* (2.32 vs. 1.92, $t = 3.426$, $p < 0.01$) as a higher reason for not participating in exchange programs with Korean universities, compared to Engineering & Natural Science students. On the other hand, Engineering & Natural Sciences students considered *Financial Cost* (3.26 vs. 3.13) more importantly ($t = -2.095$, $p < 0.05$), compared to their counterparts. The differences by academic fields were all shown with small effect sizes, suggesting that these differences are not that significant in substance.

As for major differences between genders, male students on average felt more strongly about choosing not to participate in exchange programs with Korean universities due to *Prefer to experience cultures through other opportunities* ($t = 2.545$, $p < 0.05$) with a small effect size, compared to female students.

4-4. What do non-participating ASEAN students expect to achieve from participating in future ASEAN-Korea student exchange programs?

Overall, there was no stark difference between any of the 8 total categories with the average across all categories being 3.37 out of the 4-point Likert scale. The highest expectation was *Unique experience of studying abroad in Korea* (3.55), while the lowest expectation was *Deeper understanding of Korean culture* (3.20).

In terms of differences between nationalities, Vietnamese students had higher expectations for *Improve Korean language* ($F = 10.053$, $p < 0.01$) and *Inform career choice and get a job* ($F = 20.783$, $p < 0.01$) compared to the other 3 ASEAN nationalities, whereas Malaysian, Indonesian, and Thai students had higher expectations for *Diverse life experiences* compared to their Vietnamese counterparts ($F = 29.141$, $p < 0.01$). Although a small effect size implied small differences between countries, this still meant that Vietnamese students, to a certain degree, were more focused on the practical benefits of such programs in terms of future employment and foreign language improvement, rather than just gaining unique life experiences as the other ASEAN students were expecting.

Another interesting finding was that Malaysian students had much higher expectations for *Deeper understanding of Korean culture* (3.49) than other ASEAN students ($F = 15.182$, $p < 0.001$). Furthermore, Malaysian students had higher expectations to *Improve Korean language* ($F = 10.053$, $p < 0.001$) compared to Indonesian students, and also had higher expectations to obtain *Unique experience of studying abroad in Korea* ($F = 10.065$, $p < 0.001$) than Vietnamese students. Malaysian students even held higher expectations to *Enhance understanding of major* ($F = 4.537$, $p < 0.01$) compared to Thai students. Hence, the findings revealed that Malaysians students possessed very unique expectations for Korea-ASEAN exchange programs, especially compared to Vietnamese, Indonesian and Thai students, even though the effect sizes were relatively small. This study was limited in its scope to analyze further as to why such expectations were concentrated amongst Malaysian students, and so

Table 5. Reasons for still having not participated in student exchange programs with Korean universities

Variables	Financial cost	Parents' worry	No time schedule	Safety concerns	Delay of graduation	Getting a job	Maintain relationships	Don't see benefit	Experience via other opportunities
Total	3.20 (0.61)	2.66 (0.80)	2.78 (0.95)	3.04 (0.95)	2.79 (0.87)	2.53 (0.93)	2.56 (0.92)	2.10 (1.17)	2.94 (0.98)
Academic Field									
H/SS	3.13 (0.61)	2.71 (0.84)	2.85 (0.94)	3.11 (0.98)	2.94 (0.88)	2.62 (0.94)	2.66 (0.98)	2.32 (1.21)	2.99 (0.98)
E/NS	3.26 (0.62)	2.61 (0.77)	2.72 (0.96)	2.98 (0.92)	2.65 (0.84)	2.46 (0.92)	2.48 (0.86)	1.92 (1.10)	2.89 (0.99)
<i>t</i>	-2.095*	1.161	1.416	1.320	3.409**	1.740	2.013*	3.426**	1.093
effect size <i>d</i>	0.206				0.336		0.198	0.338	
Nationality									
Indonesia(a)	3.28 (0.67)	2.26 (0.84)	2.16 (0.82)	2.50 (0.81)	2.38 (0.88)	2.11 (0.78)	2.13 (0.77)	1.38 (0.64)	2.54 (0.94)
Malaysia(b)	3.34 (0.71)	2.49 (0.84)	2.36 (0.78)	2.67 (0.84)	2.55 (0.82)	2.05 (0.72)	2.17 (0.82)	1.38 (0.63)	2.62 (1.08)
Thailand(c)	3.15 (0.74)	2.56 (0.95)	2.65 (0.84)	2.62 (0.93)	2.50 (0.87)	2.41 (0.97)	2.25 (0.76)	1.62 (0.85)	2.82 (0.96)
Vietnam(d)	3.05 (0.30)	3.09 (0.37)	3.59 (0.61)	3.90 (0.35)	3.38 (0.54)	3.30 (0.63)	3.34 (0.61)	3.44 (0.65)	3.52 (0.58)
<i>F</i>	7.860 ***	39.930 ***	102.107 ***	158.706 ***	56.272 ***	91.920 ***	77.078 ***	291.240 ***	42.690 ***
scheffe	d < a, b	a, b, c < d	a, b, c < d a < c	a, b, c < d	a, b, c < d	a, b, c < d	a, b, c < d	a, b, c < d	a, b, c < d
effect size <i>f</i>	0.195	0.410	0.770	0.797	0.537	0.705	0.737	1.356	0.463
Gender									
Male	3.17 (0.61)	2.69 (0.83)	2.76 (0.95)	3.02 (0.97)	2.78 (0.91)	2.66 (0.89)	2.71 (0.88)	2.22 (1.13)	3.11 (0.87)
Female	3.21 (0.62)	2.64 (0.79)	2.79 (0.96)	3.05 (0.94)	2.79 (0.85)	2.48 (0.94)	2.50 (0.93)	2.05 (1.18)	2.86 (1.02)
<i>t</i>	-0.721	0.543	-0.363	-0.228	-0.110	1.815	2.214*	1.399	2.545*
effect size <i>d</i>							0.234		0.269

Note: Values in parentheses are standard deviation.

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

future research needs to delve further into the economic, social, and environmental conditions underlying the Malaysian student mobility context.

Moreover, as for differences by academic field; there were hardly any differences between the expectations of Engineering & Natural Science students compared to Humanities & Social Sciences students, with the only significant difference in expectation being *Enhance understanding of major* ($t = -2.046, p < 0.05$) with a small effect size. This difference revealed that on average, Engineering & Natural Science students were relatively more interested in gaining in-depth knowledge in their major of study through their exchange program experience.

As for gender, overall, there were barely any differences between the expectations of male and female students. Nevertheless, female students did however have slightly higher expectations to *Improve Korean language* ($t = -2.566, p < 0.05$) and obtain *Unique experience of studying abroad in Korea* ($t = -2.568, p < 0.05$) compared to their male counterparts, each with a small effect size. Thus, it can be understood that female students on average are relatively more interested in gaining the opportunity to study at a Korean university and in the process improve their Korean language abilities.

Discussion

There have been many previous studies on student mobility programs involving EU countries via ERASMUS (Mizikaci & Arslan, 2019; Prieto-Arranz et al., 2021) or North American universities. In contrast to the findings of these studies dealing with western students going to Western countries for exchange programs (e.g., ERASMUS), ASEAN students have unique motivations for choosing to participate in exchange programs to the Korea as well as other ASEAN countries. Whereas Western students are more inclined to participate in exchange programs to obtain diverse life experiences (DeGraaf et al., 2013; Fombona et al., 2013; Lesjak et al., 2015; Mizikaci & Arslan, 2019; Prieto-Arranz et al., 2021), ASEAN students are more inclined to visit relatively more economically developed countries for pragmatic benefits, such as gaining better academic capital and employment opportunities (Kim & Lee, 2011; Jon et al., 2014; Lee, 2015). Furthermore, this study discovered that there was even a difference in preferences amongst ASEAN countries, with ASEAN students preferring to visit relatively more economically developed countries such as Singapore and Malaysia. Therefore, to promote a more balanced student mobility outlook for the region, relevant agencies including SEAMEO RIHED and the ASEAN secretariat need to actively look into providing additional incentives to ASEAN students (e.g., financial support, initiatives for lessening safety concern, innovative educational delivery modes). It would encourage them to choose to participate in exchange programs to universities situated in relatively less favored ASEAN countries.

Secondly, the results of this study revealed that, first of all, the majority of ASEAN students had both a good understanding of ASEAN-Korea student exchange programs and believed that participation in such programs was highly valuable. These findings were in line with previous studies that discovered

Table 6. Expectation for achievement in student exchange programs with Korean universities

Variables	Deeper understanding of Korean culture	diverse life experiences	improve Korean language	inform career choice and get a job	unique experience of studying abroad in Korea	interact with local Korean students	enhance understanding of major	have diverse cultural experiences with relatively low cost
Total	3.20 (0.60)	3.38 (0.63)	3.32 (0.80)	3.38 (0.77)	3.55 (0.62)	3.41 (0.66)	3.33 (0.71)	3.39 (0.70)
Academic Field	H/SS (0.61)	3.32 (0.63)	3.32 (0.80)	3.35 (0.78)	3.52 (0.60)	3.41 (0.66)	3.25 (0.73)	3.39 (0.68)
	E/NS (0.58)	3.42 (0.62)	3.33 (0.80)	3.40 (0.76)	3.57 (0.64)	3.41 (0.67)	3.40 (0.69)	3.38 (0.72)
<i>t</i>	-0.571	-1.638	-0.166	-0.752	-0.857	0.025	-2.046*	0.105
effect size <i>d</i>							0.202	
Nationality	Indonesia(a) (0.66)	3.44 (0.74)	2.98 (0.94)	3.16 (0.77)	3.63 (0.62)	3.43 (0.67)	3.34 (0.73)	3.24 (0.80)
	Malaysia(b) (0.63)	3.63 (0.57)	3.34 (0.72)	3.21 (0.84)	3.73 (0.56)	3.50 (0.66)	3.41 (0.82)	3.41 (0.71)
	Thailand(c) (0.70)	3.43 (0.72)	3.21 (0.94)	3.24 (0.77)	3.51 (0.70)	3.34 (0.70)	3.06 (0.67)	3.19 (0.76)
	Vietnam(d) (0.32)	3.08 (0.40)	3.57 (0.60)	3.73 (0.55)	3.36 (0.58)	3.35 (0.64)	3.38 (0.58)	3.54 (0.56)
<i>F</i>	15.182 ***	29.141 ***	10.053 ***	20.783 ***	10.065 ***	1.549	4.537 **	5.692 **
scheffe	a, c, d < b	d < a, b, c	a, b, c < d a < b	a, b, c < d	d < a, b	-	c < b, d	a, c < d
effect size <i>f</i>	0.332	0.360	0.261	0.336	0.249	0.101	0.173	0.191
Gender	Male (0.63)	3.33 (0.64)	3.18 (0.87)	3.40 (0.72)	3.43 (0.69)	3.36 (0.73)	3.31 (0.72)	3.32 (0.79)
	Female (0.58)	3.40 (0.62)	3.39 (0.76)	3.37 (0.79)	3.61 (0.58)	3.43 (0.63)	3.34 (0.71)	3.42 (0.66)
<i>t</i>	-0.800	-1.050	-2.566*	0.471	-2.568*	-1.060	-0.481	-1.199
effect size <i>d</i>			0.271		0.271			

Note: Values in parentheses are standard deviation.

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

that students from Asian cultures were interested in visiting Korea due to socio-cultural similarity, proximity to home country, and interest in Korean culture (Stewart, 2020). However, a unique aspect that was revealed via our study was that their belief in the value of the program was much higher than their actual understanding of the program. This shows that there is a need to expand the scope and reach of promotional activities for Korea-ASEAN student exchange programs at both national and institutional levels (e.g., Korea & respective ASEAN governments, Korean Ministry of Education and SEAMEO RIHED, AIMS member universities), since many ASEAN students are aware of the value of participating in such programs but have relatively limited access to further information and details.

Thirdly, the study revealed that ASEAN students overall preferred an in-person (offline) or at least a hybrid (online & offline) form of exchange program, compared to a fully online experience. These echoed previous studies conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic, which showed that students still valued the traditional in-person form of student exchange programs (Basterretxea Santiso & Sanz, 2022). In fact, in many cases, online mobility programs were still just seen as alternate or complementary aspects of the overall student exchange experience (Li & Ai, 2022). Nevertheless, at least some student group, in particular students in Vietnam, unlike those from the other ASEAN countries, preferred hybrid or online programs implemented during a regular semester. Thus, considering the fact that the COVID-19 pandemic has changed the higher education landscape worldwide (Bista et al., 2022); there is a need to explore new modes of international student mobility such as the hybrid model. Although online and hybrid forms of student exchange had existed during pre-pandemic times (e.g., COIL); its usage and relevance was fast-tracked during the pandemic, and it is still an ongoing developmental process (Erliza & Septianingsih, 2022; Lorenzo-Lledó et al., 2021; Skulmowski & Rey, 2020; Yıldırım et al., 2021).

That being said, the hybrid model of student mobility provides various upsides as it not only alleviates pre-pandemic concerns on student exchange programs such as financial cost, but it also provides new educational delivery methods and pedagogies that are innovative, and help faculty engage with students more efficiently regardless of class time and physical space. This means that in the past, only a small number of students who could afford the time and money were able to participate in high-impact programs such as an international student exchange programs, but in the post-pandemic era, when the online or hybrid model is properly utilized, many more students will be able to participate in similar programs. In fact, there have been many successful cases of hybrid models in other countries before/during/after the pandemic such as the Association of Pacific Rim Universities Virtual Exchange Program (APRU VSE program, n.d.) and COIL (SUNY COIL Center, 2023). Despite the initial growing pains (e.g., inadequate administrative support, lack of social interactions, technical problems, etc.), the hybrid model provides educational scholars and practitioners with a new educational platform suited to the post-COVID-19 pandemic era. The Vietnamese government and universities should especially conduct closer investigation into the possibilities for hybrid student exchange programs, as survey results showed Vietnamese students having the most interest in the hybrid model compared to their ASEAN counterparts, and even more so than traditional offline forms of student mobility.

Fourth, ASEAN students overall did not participate in student exchange programs with Korean universities because of *Financial Cost* and *Safety Concerns*. However, ASEAN students still held very high expectations across the board for future Korea-ASEAN student exchange programs (average score being 3.37 out of 4). This proves that there is still a demand for Korean academic services, as previous studies have shown that many Asian students visit Korea in order to achieve competitive academic capital (Kim & Lee, 2011). And so it could be assumed that there is great potential for future participation in Korea-ASEAN student exchange programs by ASEAN students, as long as financial burdens and safety concerns are properly addressed and alleviated. This can be done via providing government-sponsored scholarships and individual universities adhering to strict COVID-19 preventative protocols. Academic-Industry collaboration can also be fostered in order to obtain company-sponsored scholarships for excellent academic students as well as needs-based students. Such collaboration can be sustainable as it provides stable financial funding for students seeking overseas experience and boost in career opportunities, while providing companies with privileged access to larger pools of human resources upon the students' graduation.

Fifthly, it must be noted that ASEAN students' needs starkly differed by nationality. Vietnamese students, in particular, had a much better understanding of Korea-ASEAN exchange programs and believed much more that participation in such programs was valuable compared to the other 3 ASEAN nationalities. This finding is backed by studies that identify growing political, economic, cultural, and educational exchange between Korea and Vietnam (ASEAN-Korea Centre, 2023) and indicate that this may have led to Vietnamese students having a higher understanding of exchange programs to Korea. As for reasons for not participating in Korea-ASEAN exchange programs, Vietnamese students had quite different reasons compared to the other 3 ASEAN nationalities (See Table 5). Moreover, Vietnamese students had higher expectations for *Improve Korean language* and *Inform career choice and get a job* compared to the other 3 ASEAN nationalities, whereas Malaysian, Indonesian, and Thai students had higher expectations for *Diverse life experiences* compared to their Vietnamese counterparts. And so, a one-size-fits-all approach should be avoided when designing and implementing future ASEAN-Korea student exchange programs, as different nationalities may have different needs. Even under the overall design, individual programs can be tailor fitted to students from different countries. For instance, Korean universities can adjust their programs to place more emphasis on Korean language classes and job fairs for Vietnamese students, while focusing more on cultural tours and experiences for the other 3 ASEAN nationalities.

In addition, although not to the dramatic extent of nationality, there were also significant differences in responses according to gender and academic field. According to gender, female students had greater expectations to *Improve Korean language* and obtain *Unique experience of studying abroad in Korea*. Female students also had a higher belief in the value of Korea-ASEAN exchange programs. These findings are quite interesting when considering that similar studies have shown Korean female students also having a higher belief in the value of participating in student exchange programs, compared

to their male counterparts (Shin et al., 2022). As for male students, on average, they felt more strongly about choosing not to participate in exchange programs with Korean universities due to *Prefer to experience cultures through other opportunities*, compared to female students. It may then be carefully assumed from previous studies, that Confucian values still prevalent in East Asian society may cause Korean and ASEAN male students to feel the need to prepare for job placement after graduation as the ‘bread winner’ of the family (Utomo, 2012), and thus may lead to relatively lower interest in student exchange programs that are not directly related to employment. As such, ASEAN-Korea student exchange program practitioners should strive to make sure their programs are multi-faceted and appeal to both male and female students alike. This would mean providing both soft and hard skills to students via their program, in the form of language courses and culturally-immersive experiences (relatively more favored by female students) and career-enhancing internships and job fairs (relatively more favored by male students).

Furthermore, there were also differences in responses according to academic field. For instance, Humanities & Social Science students stated *Do not see benefit of participating in program* and *Delay of Graduation* as higher reasons for not participating in exchange programs with Korean universities, while Engineering & Natural Science students stated *Financial Cost* as the highest reason for not participating in exchange programs with Korean universities, and also had greater expectations for *Enhancing Understanding of Major* compared to their Humanities & Social Science counterparts. Such findings were somewhat deviated from the results of prior literature based on Korean students that had not yet participated in exchange programs with ASEAN universities (e.g., Shin et al., 2022), which showed that in contrast, Korean Engineering & Natural Science students were more concerned about *Delay of Graduation* compared to their Humanities & Social Science counterparts, and it was even greater than their concern for *Financial Cost*. Moreover, in stark contrast to the ASEAN students, Korean Humanities & Social Science students held greater expectations for *Enhancing Understanding of Major* than their Engineering & Natural Science counterparts. Thus in the future, ASEAN-Korea student exchange programs need to reflect the academic fields of both inbound and outbound students (e.g., going to Korea & going to ASEAN), as they have different expectations and preferences. It can be done by providing various tracks of exchange programs (e.g., academic credit program vs. culturally immersive program; regular semester program vs. summer/winter break program).

Conclusion, Limitations & Recommendations for Future Research

The purpose of this research was to investigate the potentials and opportunities for ASEAN-Korea student exchange programs in the post-COVID-19 pandemic era, by focusing on the needs of non-participating ASEAN students. All in all, this study was significant in that it proposed the need for university and government policy makers as well as educational scholars to reflect the emerging new needs of ASEAN students concerning exchange programs between ASEAN and Korea, by taking their

nationalities, academic disciplines, and genders into closer consideration, while also exploring the possibilities and opportunities for hybrid and/or online models of exchange programs in the post-COVID-19 pandemic era. And in stark contrast to the Western-model of international student mobility; it emphasized the need for the ASEAN context to be further analyzed at educational, cultural, and economic levels when designing student exchange programs, since ASEAN students hold unique motivations and preferences for student mobility – especially compared to Western students.

Despite unprecedented efforts to investigate the needs of non-participating ASEAN students concerning ASEAN-Korea student exchange programs; this study was limited to only quantitative data and relied heavily upon basic statistical analysis such as T-test and one-way ANOVA. Therefore, further follow-up qualitative research is needed to provide in-depth understanding as to why such survey answers were given by each nationality, academic field, and gender. For example, subsequent qualitative studies may delve deeper into the underlying factors that influenced the survey results: (1) why did Vietnamese students show such stark differences across the board compared to other ASEAN students?; (2) what were the individual, organizational and environmental factors that influenced such phenomena?; and (3) why is there a disparity in preferences even amongst ASEAN countries?

In fact, in order to provide further background and context on such unexpected findings by academic field, gender, and especially nationality (i.e., Vietnamese students); a post-survey interview was conducted with three professors in ASEAN countries who were part of the research team. Among these, in particular, a Vietnamese professor provided insightful information and subsequent interpretations on the findings of the study during the interview. First, during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Vietnamese government demonstrated excessive control and limitations on the populace, which led students to become hesitant on participating in exchange programs. Second, pragmatism and practicality are common ideals found across Vietnamese society and have a tremendous influence on peoples' way of thinking and living. Thus, Vietnamese students are more interested in practical activities that will actually enhance their career and job prospects, rather than abstract ideas such as obtaining diverse cultural experiences through meeting students from other countries. Third, compared to relatively secular ASEAN countries, Vietnamese female students occupying the majority of students in the Humanities & Social Science sample are still faced with traditional expectations by society such as marriage after employment, and so it may help explain why Vietnamese female students were hesitant to participate in any Korea-ASEAN exchange programs that may possibly delay their graduation. A delay in graduation would eventually delay their job placement, which would then ultimately delay their marriage.

Taking this interpretation in mind and also given the fact that the survey respondents of this study had a large representation of Vietnamese students (138 out of 415), and when considering that Vietnamese students expressed much different responses compared to the other 3 ASEAN nationalities, there is a need for future research to deeply analyze whether such differences were caused by either nationality, academic field or gender, or even all three. Nonetheless, it is difficult to come up with

concrete answers with this research alone, and so there is a need for future research to further investigate and identify the specific characteristics of Vietnamese society compared to the other three ASEAN countries and how it ultimately affects the needs of non-participating Vietnamese students. In the end, it will help provide a more well-balanced analysis of the overall findings and thus better inform practitioners and scholars.

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