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Enhancing international student experience through innovative platform in Italy: A study
of innovation and marketing strategy

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Abstract

The internationalization of education has significantly increased a lot of students who are seeking new academic opportunities and studying globally. This globally education has introduced numerous challenges that require attention to positive and negative experiences for international students. Italy is fast becoming a preferred destination for students from across the world because of its rich cultural heritage, its high-quality education system, and the vibrant student life. However, the levels of international students in the country have revealed the needs for strong support systems that meet exactly to their issues. This thesis will argue how innovative support systems could be implemented and optimized to enhance the experiences of students for a smooth and fulfilling academic journey. The goal of this study is to suggest an integrated framework that can break down the international students' barriers and satisfaction among international students in Italy, with a focus on the student journey map and strategic marketing. This study begins by thoroughly analyzing the challenges international students face throughout their academic journey, By mapping these challenges, the study provides a comprehensive overview of the pain points in the international student experience. The research then analysis the current support systems offered by universities and third-party organizations, and evaluating their effectiveness in addressing the needs of international students by the data that collected from the international students. This evaluation provided both gaps and strengths of existing support systems and provide critical insights into areas needing improvement.

Then, this study designs and implements the innovate platform with goal of easy study without any barriers for international students. This platform connects international students together with the same university, nationality, degree and program to better understand each other and minimize or eliminate the challenges that face to new international students. Additionally, the study uses into advanced marketing strategy to effectively promote the platform. This includes the use of digital marketing techniques to reach and engage both prospective international students and current students interested in becoming advisors.

Keywords: International students challenges, foreign students, study abroad, support systems,

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background and Significance of the Study

Over the past couple of decades, the higher education landscape has changed drastically mostly because of increasing globalization and movement by students. According to the OECD, Over the past four decades, the number of students enrolled in tertiary education outside their country of citizenship, that is foreign students or those who left their country of origin and moved to another country for the purpose of study, that is international students, has risen significantly. This is a major trend among the next generation when it comes to appreciating what international students experience and face. There are also a variety of opportunities that come with studying abroad like experiencing other cultures, getting an education worth value and most importantly building up from where one gains perspective. Those opportunities, however, also present difficult obstacles that can greatly affect the academic success and overall wellness of students.

International students may face many challenges that would be difficult for them, some of these challenges such as: application process, academic difficulties, language barriers, financial, culture shock. and finding job and accommodation would be negative impact on their journey, study and life. It is very important to find these challenges and addressed consequently.

The application process is one of the biggest hurdles international students must overcome, it can be long and complicated. The number of people who nowadays go to the university from one country institution is high, and there is a lot greater pressure on those who will bring knowledge about their portfolio too. In a way, sending an email to their potential future academic advisor reflects the kind of experience they are going to have as study abroad students. Some students may experience quite severe challenges during this process leading directly to an escalation in stress and anxiety, negatively influencing their performance as well as mental health.

International students also face important challenges regarding adaptation and acculturation. When you move to a new country, first, it is possible that you are not as easily adjusted to the New cultural environment and feel culture shock. This can be even more problematic due to the presence of language barriers, impeding their ability to convey questions and concerns like so during academic discussions or in conversations with classmates. These barriers may prevent students from fully participating in the academic and social life of their new situation, impacting final educational success.

Finances are one of the most critical facets of life for international students, meaning international students have to pay a big portion of their living costs abroad, aside from highly increased tuition. The financial burden to meet the cost of education and living may be unaffordable for many foreign students as their access to financial aid and scholarships is limited. Visa-related rules that prohibit any employment opportunities further depress their ability to sustain themselves and their family. Many students drop out in the middle, while the financial burdens enhance stress.

One must consider service quality to international education to have a clear view of the quality of the support services provided to international students and to what extent their needs are met. The supports differ from one place to another, i.e. offering of counselling services, language support, orientation programs, housing, academic support, and accommodations adds to struggling students. With these resources, a lot of international students keep facing some problems that can really make their studies and learning tough. Furthermore, there still are a significant number of international students that are not capable of finding these types of support services because they are not aware of them.

The goal of this study is to propose an innovative peer-to-peer platform that can be developed to eliminate or minimize the challenges that will face international students based on the data that researchers collect from international students. Another important issue that should be solved is lower awareness of support systems that have to be proper advertisement both for platform and raise of awareness of students. It is expected that policymakers and educational institutions could use the data from this study to inform the development of support services for international students' academic achievement and general well-being.

1.2 Focus areas

The aim of the study is not only to we assess the diversity of the problems of international students from the moment of the application form up to the adaptation to the new environment and their entrance in the international community. It is our hypothesis in this research that the following factors such as campus teaching, peer relationships, and personal development impact students on a personal level. The main findings of the study include the restrains & barriers of different types that can question the student's motivations. The research views the aspects connected to these problems from different angles so that a comprehensive picture can be drawn.

Many of the resources that are available to help international students in these situations are already being used by them. Universities are happy to help newcomers become acquainted with their surroundings and learn about the expectations for academic achievement by offering orientation sessions. Cultural orientation, academic skill training, and university trips are a few possible inclusions in these programs. Universities provide a range of language support services to its foreign students in an effort to reduce this, such as English language classes, conversation groups in the language of the host country, and language teaching.

Students will also get help from financial aid offices, and advisors helping to find specific scholarships or grants that should be available for them by applying also working part-time. Students also rely on counseling and mental health services, especially international students. These services create a safe environment for students to discuss their fears and share stress relief tips or get open help on anxiety, depression, etc. Despite these existing support systems, there are often gaps in accessibility and effectiveness.

A platform directed to all the information and interaction of international students, where they interact with each other as well, set up a good environment for peer-to-peer support to provide help wherever required. The main purpose of the platform is to give students get access to valuable information, resources, and peer networks which can help faculty members reach out more effectively and cope with the different requirements international community. The main section of the platform is to peer program where new international students can find their specific students with the same nationality, degree, and program to communicate with each other. Based on the diverse requirements of the university and embassy in their own country the new students can connect with advisors (who are the old students) who are from their nationality to get useful information from them on the application process, on the other hand, there is a specific section that is available, along with guidelines for visas, requirements, and financial planning advice. the platform also will illustrate some resources for cultural adaptation such as videos and some international tours in comprehending and adjusting to their new environments.

One of the significant of this platform is to connect the new international students to the old students who can offer advice and support to eliminate or minimize the challenges that they will face. The new students can ask them for advice and guidance to how they fight with the challenges they face like finding house, academic problems and so on. This platform wants to improve the international students experiences to achieve academic and personal life success.

1.3 Population and Sample

International students attending Italian universities make up the study's sample. This wide cross-section provides an overview of the various resources and obstacles that impact international university transitions by include students from a wide range of nations, cultures, and academic fields. The study will include participants from undergraduate, graduate, and doctorate programs as well as national territorial areas of Italy to generate a more accurate sample. In order to account for significant demographic variables such as length of stay in Italy, field of study, and country of origin, the sample will be stratified. The information gathered from surveys and focus groups will be utilized to evaluate the success of the present policies in place as well as the problems encountered by overseas students. The purpose of this wide-ranging analytical approach is to increase the validity and trustworthiness of the study findings by collecting a wide range of experiences and viewpoints.

1.4 Importance of the Study

The study makes a significant contribution to enhancing the experience and outcomes of an increasing number of international students upon whom the global education industry is increasingly reliant. The research focus looks to support these students by identifying primary challenges and learning outcomes that are improved when those apprehensions are addressed. As the population of international students grows globally, these changes can really make a difference when it comes to higher education institutions maintaining steady retention rates, increasing academic success and facilitating campus-wide inclusivity.

Additionally, this study is important to inform and direct policymakers and educators as they create systems of support for international students. The research provides extensive examination of current support services and a blueprint for new ideas, offering researchers actionable policy recommendations to improve institutional practices. These insights can be used to provide more complete and proactive support from universities, to better care for international students academically and socially.

In order to successfully reach and engage the target audience, support systems must be promoted, and this is made possible via the use of marketing methods. This thesis will investigate several marketing strategies, mostly digital ones that deal with creating awareness and putting in place a support system. The ability to sell public institutions' support services to a larger number of overseas students should assist potential candidates better comprehend what they are getting themselves into. It will also collect feedback and evaluation data, from current

international students to evaluate the efficacy of proposed support system. The study will offer suggestions to help them continue improving and broadening the support systems, given this feedback. These initiatives will be designed to respond more effectively to the requirements of foreign students, for their integration and training in Italy.

Finally, this study concludes by discussing the critical requirement of effective marketing strategies to raise the international student's awareness of utilization of support services. The study looks at how digital marketing may be used to attract and maintain interested parties, highlighting the importance of outreach and communication in ensuring that students are aware of the tools at their disposal. To conclude the thesis aims to extend knowledge in a field dominated by adaptational models through an innovative and comprehensive new support model for international students. The research thus aims to combat the highlighted issues and enhancement of marketing strategies, by creating an improved international education experience in Italy that within itself is a more inclusive one.

Research questions

- 1) what challenges are for international students during their time abroad?
- 2) what support systems are for international students and how effective they are?
- 3) what innovative support system can address this international student problem? And how does it work?
- 4) what marketing strategy is used to raise awareness of support systems?

In summary, this study aims to find the challenges has been faced to international students and then provide the existing support systems which are helping to address these obstacles and then the researcher provides an innovative support systems based on the finding from the survey and from the participants (international students) to solve these kinds of challenges. Furthermore, the study provides the marketing strategy which is one the most significant act to raise the awareness of the platform for foreign students.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The internationalization of education in recent decades has been a notable phenomenon propelled by globalization and employers' rising demands for culturally knowledgeable employees. This phenomenon has resulted in more students pursuing educational prospects beyond their home nations, allowing them valuable worldwide exposure and familiarity. As academies and universities globally embrace these global students, comprehending the intricacies of their journeys becomes imperative to guaranteeing their scholarly and individual prosperity.

The presence of foreign students is enriching in itself. They bring varied perspectives, experiences and ideas which can not only make life richer for those of their own country but also provide an enriched learning environment for all students (Gu et al., 2010). Within their host country, the road to studying internationally is full of challenges. Indeed many different hurdles can greatly affect an international student's entire experience -- ranging from merely having an application process accepted: to mastering a new style of teaching, overcoming language barriers, and integrating oneself into the unfamiliar social and cultural context (Ward et al., 2001; Andrade, 2006; Yeh & Inose, 2003)

Given the above, the purpose of this literature review is to look deeper into the major challenges faced by international students and whether the supports currently available bring real relief. By finding and analyzing these challenges, universities can develop more effective treatment strategies for their international students. Current research reports on various difficulties international students encounter, such as bureaucratic obstacles in the application process (Andrade 2006), financial hardship (Yeh & Inose 2003), language barriers (Poyrazli & Grahame 2007), and the difference between education systems (Gu et al,2010).

Review's Next it delves into what new platforms and tactics aim to resolve these challenges. But these are paths none of them has yet set foot upon, so now is a very good time to go forward. Innovations in technology provide new opportunities and support systems for international students In a world where everything is going digital. Real-time assistance and mobile applications, on digital platforms, can create a sense of community among students who are far from home. The Cross-Cultural Peer Support Network, on the other hand, has proved an

effective way not only to help people make friends, but also to feel part of college life (Lee et al., 2014).

Another critical aspect covered in this review is the marketing strategies used to promote these support platforms to prospective international students. It is essential that students be aware of where their resources are located and encourage them to not waste them. Necessary digital marketing techniques to appeal to a global audience are social media campaigns and the use of search engine optimization. In addition, the content will be created like that shown at right which further shows that these service packages are superior yet incredibly profitable to normal people (Kotler et al., 2016).

Recommendations for improving the support systems that welcome international students with open arms conclude the review. Feedback from students as well as appraisals of existing services formed the basis of these recommendations, which are designed for educational institutions. Consequentially, they aim to arm themselves with an industry-oriented mission capable of satisfying the demands of international students (Forbes-Mewett & Nyland, 2008; Sherry et al., 2010).

The conclusion would be that, given the variety of requirements these students have, any guarantee of a good and fulfilling experience for foreign students must be really comprehensive. Even though foreign students encounter many obstacles, academic institutions and organizations may do a lot to improve their experience, according to recent creative problem-solving efforts by universities and efficacy tests of current support services. To this purpose, our assessment of the literature conducts a thorough analysis of the state of affairs and provides solid recommendations for advancement.

2.2 International student experience

The term "international student experience" describes the all-encompassing journey and influence of students seeking higher education in a nation other than their own. Apart from challenges, this journey provides some opportunities for personal development in a multi-cultural environment. Educationally, international students often encounter diverse forms of pedagogies, assessment policies, and learning expectations. These differences might influence their educational experiences and academic performance, bringing some opportunities as well as some challenges (Marginson, 2012). To integrate into the academic and social contexts of the host nation, students must culturally adjust to new social norms, habits, and communication methods.

The international student experience has a social dimension. This includes not only the experience of making friends with locals and other international students but also participation in cultural activities and joining charities working on campus Life. These contacts all help to broaden their horizons and deepen the value of the money they spend on studying abroad (DeWitt, 2019). Personal growth and development – is also a very important aspect. Self-discovery, intercultural competence, independence, resilience, and adaptability all flourish and develop with experience in unfamiliar environments. These are not only the key factors for academic success, but they similarly serve as an ideal preparation for future career and personal difficulties in today's increasingly globalized world (Ward, 2001).

In making a foreign student experience positive, institutional support is instant Effective support channels such as orientation programs, language assistance, academic advising, and counseling services can help students manage challenges, integrate into campus life and realize their academic and personal goals (Lee, 2018). A broader comprehension of what international students go through is essential for universities and governments who want their institutions to be both diverse yet also supportive environments where the wellbeing of these many different people is protected.

Globalizing the education of students from different cultures, the use of foreign perspectives, methods, and collaborations in educational institutions is the "internationalization" in education evolving. It is a trend that incorporates bringing international perspective to the curriculums, partnerships between institutions for education and research, student mobility, inclusivity and diversity promotion. Universities as they continue to seek and offer knowledge exchange, and introduce new innovations are forming stronger affiliations with foreign universities, creating more favourable conditions for students to go to other countries and return, and integrating global perspectives in educational materials (Knight, 2004; Altbach & Knight, 2007).

Globalization, the need for graduates with foreign experience, the quest for academic quality, and the advancement of cross-cultural understanding are the main forces behind the rise of internationalization. Candidates with a worldwide perspective are highly valued by employers, and universities want to build global networks to improve their academic standing. This movement improves students' academic experiences, broadens their understanding of culture, and equips them with the skills necessary to function well in multicultural environments (De Wit, 2011).

Educational institutions and politicians need to understand the opinions of the students as well as the policymakers. By altering such practices to the requirements of diverse students, it has facilitated student success and increased academic performance. Moreover, on the one hand, it is beneficial to the creation of efficient support networks, overcoming the arisen injustices, fostering inclusiveness and diversity, policy efficiency, and adjustment. On the other hand, the society will become more sustainable if the education system will take care of the issues. In times of uncertainty that are to be faced in the future, society can participate in the co-shaping of the school system. By utilizing this knowledge, a learning environment that encourages the success and wellness of all students by demonstrating to them their respect and support will be developed.

Application process

Different Italian universities require different ways of application, depending on which and what program one intends to attend. It is important to understand the application procedure and requirements for attending an Italian university. Italian universities have several programs available at different degrees of study. Identifying the right program, for instance, is the first step to satisfying overseas students' travels.

The language barrier is one of the main obstacles. Even though many Italian universities offer English-language programs, proficiency in Italian is frequently required for the application process, especially for undergraduate courses. For students who do not speak Italian well, this can be intimidating because they have to demonstrate their language skills with exams such as the CILS or CELI for Italian programs, or the IELTS/TOEFL for English programs. An additional challenge is navigating the application materials, which might only be available in Italian. The actual application process may be convoluted and burdensome with red tape. The Italian embassy or consulate in the non-EU student's home country has to handle a pre-application process for them. This process entails obtaining and translating several documents, including recommendation letters and academic transcripts. To prevent delays or rejections, this process can be laborious and demands close attention to detail (Education.com, 2024).

Another barrier for international students is getting visa before coming abroad. there are several documents that students should provide for the embassy include financial stability, health insurance, language certificate and so on. Besides, the students can be worried and disappointment because of waiting period maybe uncertain due to visa application process time, and also there is no guarantee that getting visa be accepted or not.

The problem may also be the difficulty of international students in obtaining validation of the past academic record to Italian colleges. Given the different schooling systems, students have to make certain that their degrees meet the concerned Italian criteria. This might also include obtaining official recognition, which is variously called "dichiarazione di valore", from the Italian Consulate, a process that can be quite costly and take months to complete.

Finally, there may be a large financial burden. Even though tuition costs are generally less in Italy than in many other Western nations, international students must nevertheless demonstrate their ability to pay for their education. This includes paying for living expenses, housing, and tuition—all of which can be difficult to do on one's own without financial aid or scholarships. An extra layer of pressure arises from the need to prove financial stability during the visa application process.

Culture adjustment

International students depart to the country of their choice via completion of the admission procedure and visa formalities to pursue higher studies in an alien language as well as environment. One of the most difficult things international students face while pursuing studies abroad is adjustment in the new culture. Following are some common issues that every student going abroad faces:

International students frequently experience social isolation as a result of language and cultural barriers that can make it challenging for them to fit in with their new social circles. Due to unfamiliar social norms, different communication styles, and a lack of confidence in their language skills, these students frequently find it difficult to connect with their peers. The difficulties of adjusting to a new academic and cultural environment can be exacerbated by this isolation, which can cause feelings of alienation and loneliness. Studies reveal that social isolation has an impact on students' emotional health as well as their academic achievement since it can be more difficult to manage the demands of studying overseas when there is a lack of social support (Sawir et al., 2008; Smith & Khawaja, 2011).

International students' interactions with professors and peers, as well as their comprehension of academic conduct, can be impacted by cultural norms that differ in regards to communication styles, classroom etiquette, and academic integrity. Smith and Khawaja's (2011) study investigated the relationship between foreign students' social integration and academic achievement and language competency. They discovered that poor English proficiency was linked to poorer academic performance and trouble making friends.

Language Barriers and Communication Issues

Communication barriers and language difficulties pose major challenges for international students studying in Italy. Numerous degree programs, particularly at the undergraduate level, hold classes solely in Italian even though some offer courses in English. For students lacking fluency in the language, comprehending lectures, completing assignments, and engaging in debates becomes exceedingly problematic. Higher education institutions in Italy often rely on specialized, convoluted academic terminology, rendering the material unintelligible for individuals having rudimentary vocabulary but insufficient for fully grasping the concepts discussed. However, certain students accept the hardships as opportunities to strengthen language ability and cultural familiarity, factors advantageous for future goals whether remaining in Italy or elsewhere. Determined attitudes along with utilizing supplemental language aids available on and off campus help numerous internationals to succeed despite the obstacles.

These linguistic obstacles impact social interactions outside of the classroom as well. Due to this, international students experience loneliness and frustration in trying a social media interaction with classmates or instructors/supervisors/anything of similar sort/current support personnel. Communication Barriers — Because they might not be able to communicate effectively, this means that their ability to take part in the academic community as well as cooperate on a group project and ask for help where necessary can be affected. This creates a lack of interfacing with other individuals and may make it impossible for someone to be part of the community as well as form relationships which in turn does not help whatsoever if you already feel like an alienated outsider (Smith & Khawaja, 2011; DeWitt, 2019).

If these issues are to be resolved, language support should be given priority by the receiving Italian institutions. Such examples include mentorship and tutoring services, Italian language classes with academic purposes, and opportunities for foreign students to practice their language in a non-threatening environment. In solving some of the communication and language problems, universities can provide a path for foreign students to reach academic success and full benefit from their studies in Italy during the time spent in the country.

Different educational systems

The differences between their home and foreign educational systems can be unsettling for international students studying in Italy. Italian universities typically place a larger focus on critical thinking, independent study, and active participation in discussions than do many other countries, where the emphasis is mostly on rote memorization and standardized testing. For students who are not used to such high academic requirements, this change can be frightening, making it difficult for them to adjust to the new learning environment (Li, 2007; Andrade, 2006).

The planning and development of the courses and tests is another difficulty. In Italian university courses, evaluations may be rare throughout the academic year, with a significant amount of the final mark coming from oral tests or a single comprehensive exam at the conclusion of the course. In contrast, it goes against the many other educational systems that use continuous assessment techniques, such as frequent student evaluation through assignments and quizzes as well as midterm examinations. It can be frightening for some overseas students to perform well on a high-stakes end-of-term exam, particularly for those who are still getting used to the academic standards in Italy (Altbach & Knight).

Another significant barrier is the instruction's language. Although English-language courses are offered in many Italian universities, a significant portion of their curricula, especially those at the undergraduate level, are taught in Italian. Even if students speak Italian as a second language, it can still be challenging for them to comprehend the formal language used in lectures and readings. This language barrier further complicates their academic experience, making it challenging for them to participate in group projects and class discussions in addition to finding it challenging to understand the course material (Sawir et al., 2008; Smith & Khawaja, 2011).

Finally, there can be variations in the academic life support systems. Some nations provide their students with extra help in the form of, say, far more thorough assignment feedback, proactive measures to help them navigate the course, or other forms of assistance from instructors or academic advisors. In contrast, the Italian system could anticipate that a foreign student will be more self-reliant and aggressive in seeking assistance. This expectation of independence, especially when combined with potential challenges transitioning to a new academic institution, adds to emotions of loneliness and dissatisfaction that eventually seep into their academic performance and experience (DeWitt, 2019).

Academic Support and Educational Resources

The accessibility and viability of scholarly back administrations for universal understudies change broadly over educate, but these administrations are significant for making a difference understudies overcome dialect obstructions, alter to diverse instructive frameworks, and succeed scholastically. Numerous colleges offer comprehensive back administrations, counting composing centres, mentoring, and dialect help programs particularly outlined for non-native speakers. Considers have appeared that these administrations essentially make strides worldwide students' scholastic execution and generally fulfilment with their instructive encounter. For occurrence, inquire about highlights that composing centres give personalized offer assistance that empowers understudies to move forward their composing abilities and get it scholastic traditions superior (Lee, 2018).

Furthermore, Introduction programs, mentoring, and mentoring administrations play imperative parts in facilitating the move for worldwide understudies and improving their scholastic victory. Introduction programs present understudies to campus assets, scholarly desires, and social standards, making a difference them acclimate more rapidly (Ward, 2001). Mentoring programs interface worldwide understudies with experienced peers or staff individuals who give direction, back, and a sense of community. This support system is essential for changing the way understudies discover obstacles and stay confined to their social and academic lives. Coaching services provide targeted academic support across a range of courses, which is particularly helpful for students who are struggling with language barriers or unfamiliar teaching techniques. Together, these administrations provide a consistent learning atmosphere that fosters academic excellence and personal growth. (DeWitt, 2019).

Student Engagement and Integration

To facilitate connections between local and international students, universities worldwide are making great efforts in this regard. fun culture events, workshops and social get togethers that bring students from various nationality together to learn how they are achiveing this. Intercultural workshops, for instance, provide an oppurtunity for international students to join and discuss their cultures and help about communication skills to make them feeling more welcoming (DeWitt, 2019).

Also, extracurricular activities and student groups are super important for helping students feel engaged and connected. Joining clubs or sports lets international students meet new friends & makes them feel like they belong on campus. There are student organizations that focus on

global & cultural interests which build a friendly network where everyone can share their stories and find helpful resources. Research shows that being part of these activities really helps international students feel less isolated and improves their overall experience at school (Lee, 2018). Plus, taking leadership roles in these groups allows students to gain skills that will help them later in life (Knight, 2004).

There are many great programs at universities that set great examples for supporting cross-cultural connections. At the University of Melbourne, there's a program called "Mates at Melbourne" that matches international students with local mentors. This helps them make social connections & get advice on life at university. Over at the University of British Columbia, the "Global Lounge" is a lively spot for intercultural events and workshops that help everyone understand each other's cultures better (Altbach & Knight, 2007). Another cool program is at Macquarie University called the "Global Leadership Program". This combines learning in the classroom with cultural experiences and leadership training so students can build skills to work with different cultures (DeWitt, 2019). These programs really show how important it is to have support and chances to get involved, making life more joyful for international students!

Financial challenges for international students

International students may face a financial problem during the time abroad. These financial problems make them difficult to have a great time during the time abroad. One of the significant financial problems is tuition fees. Even the tuition fee in Italy is lower than many countries like the United States, Canada, England they are still a little high for the international students. Public universities normally charge between the 900 Euro and 4,000 Euro per year, other hand, the private universities charge like 15,000 Euro per year. Living expenses add up too, especially in big cities such as Rome, Milan, and Florence. Things like rent, food, transportation, & health insurance can be pricey. A study found that international students need about €700 to €1,200 monthly to get by. That depends on where they live & how they like to spend their money. Accommodation costs vary a lot, especially with rents being sky-high in major cities.

Some students depend on help from home to cover costs. But here's the catch: currency prices can change fast. If exchange rates shift suddenly, it can throw off their budget plans. For instance, if their home currency loses value compared to the Euro, the money sent for education and living expenses doesn't stretch as far. Financial struggles for international students in Italy come from many angles and can affect both their studies & social life quite a bit. Tackling

these issues means we need smart solutions like more financial aid options, flexible job rules, and better support services at Universities. This way, international students can focus on learning and enjoying their time away from home!

Conclusion

The international student experience is full of different challenges & chances. It's not just about university work. There are social things, and personal growth that happen along the way. When it comes to academics international students often face new teaching styles, ways of grading, and what teachers expect from them. This can be exciting but also hard, and it can impact how well they do in school (Marginson, 2012). Culturally, getting used to new social rules and ways of talking is super important. It helps them fit in with both the school environment & local community (Ward, 2001). Personal growth matters a lot for these students. They develop skills like independence and resilience along their educational journey. This growth can boost their ability to understand different cultures (DeWitt, 2019).

Many studies show common themes about what's important for international students. Language skills are huge! They often struggle with language barriers that can impact their education and how they connect with others. On the social side, making friends with locals & other international students is key. Joining in on cultural events and getting involved in the community helps them see things from a fresh perspective and build cultural understanding (Lee, 2018).

universities need to offer good support systems. Things like orientation programs & language help can make a big difference. Academic advising & counseling services are also really important to help students deal with issues & reach their goals (Lee, 2018). For universities, this means they have to work hard. Creating a friendly and welcoming atmosphere is essential. They should come up with strong support programs tailored to specific needs. These programs could help with language skills and provide academic help while encouraging cross-cultural fun and learning opportunities (Knight, 2004; Altbach & Knight, 2007). Policies should aim at helping international students thrive by looking after their special needs & challenges. When universities do this right, they can become more respected academically. Plus, they attract a mix of talents & prepare all students for success in an interconnected world (De Wit, 2011).

2.3 Opportunities for International Students

Studying abroad is super popular with students who want to broaden their learning and cultural experiences. Engaging with a new education system, learning another language, and diving into a different culture all of these things can truly change a person. Of course, there are challenges too. It's not always easy to adapt to various academic rules, tackle language differences, or adjust to new social settings. Yet, the long-term benefits are so worth it! Things like greater global awareness & cultural understanding, plus making valuable international friends, can really transform a student's life (Altbach & Knight, 2007; DeWitt, 2019; Smith & Khawaja, 2011).

Another great opportunity available to students from abroad includes networking. Spending time with peers from a myriad of backgrounds extends one's point of view and allows one to form contacts that might come in handy in the future professional life of the student (Lee 2018). In a bit to make international students feel closer to the campus and more at home, various colleges organize cultural exchange events or even establish organizations specially for them. Such networks have the potential to provide both technology needs that will go on to enhance the whole process and emotional vulnerability issues. Studying abroad offers high-quality education and resources hard to find back home. Many students choose to go overseas for special programs, famous teachers, or cutting-edge labs that aren't available where they come from. This change lets them dive deeper into their studies and get involved in exciting research while learning about new tech (Altbach & Knight, 2007).

Language skills improve a lot too. Living in a place where another language is spoken pushes students to use it daily and get better fast. Being bilingual or multilingual opens many doors career-wise since many companies look for people who can speak multiple languages nowadays (Sawir et al., 2008). Plus, it boosts cultural competence—a major asset in today's world. Another great plus of studying abroad is developing a global mindset. Employers often appreciate this kind of thinking! Students who have experienced different education systems and cultures tend to work well in teams and handle cross-cultural challenges smoothly. They think critically and solve problems creatively because they see things from various viewpoints valued traits in many workplaces (DeWitt, 2019).

Finally, let's talk about personal satisfaction. Living independently in another country teaches so much. Facing new challenges and building friendships with folks from different backgrounds often gives people an amazing sense of achievement. Lots of international

students feel they grow a lot during this time gaining confidence and becoming more open-minded about life. These personal insights hold as much value as academic & professional benefits do leading to an overall enriching educational adventure (Smith & Khawaja, 2011).

2.4 Support Systems Importance for International Students

The support systems play a very important role in helping the international students with their academic challenges, but also in the development for the adjustments that come along with the demand of living abroad. There are several issues faced by international students during the adaptation to a new environment, and some of them may influence the general well-being and academic success. Support systems based upon this concept will hence be the ones capable of offering students just the kind of help and resources that will make university a welcoming, inclusive, and encouraging place.

Academic support services form one of the main factors of support systems. The purposes of these programs are to help the learners to overcome the language obstacle, as well as the differentiation in the proposed lecture and marking way process which are entirely different in the well-known ones. For instance, writing centers provide peer-to-peer help to students for them to develop their academic writing skills which is a requisite for their success in post-secondary education. By providing specialized assistance, as well as tutorial and linguistic courses, they play the roles of both bearers of difficult ideas in the learning process, as well as effective participants within the class boundaries (Smith & Khawaja, 2011; Andrade, 2006). These services aid positive performance in university while overcoming language and logistical barriers in the face of the academic system thus allowing the deserving students to take control of their own learning and study without fear of limitations.

Moreover, orientation programs are essential components of a strong support system. These courses, which are intended to assist students in acclimating to their new surroundings, are typically offered at the start of the university year. They give vital information that helps students adjust to their new surroundings, such as expectations for their academic performance, campus resources, and cultural norms. These programs frequently include workshops on academic skills like time management and study techniques, giving students the tools they need to succeed in the classroom. Furthermore, social activities are a common feature of orientation programs, which promote peer interaction and assist newcomers in creating a support system right away (Ward, 2001; Zhou et al., 2008). This early intervention is key to reducing the stress

and anxiety experienced by many international students and creating a positive academic climate.

Matching programs bring international students together with the teachers and the colleagues who have high knowledge and the needed support and guidance, which is like creating another protective layer. Students need these vital connections so that they may be able to transcend social and cultural barriers and at the same time to deal with the more complicated issues which are often in their academic classes. It also offers a better understanding of the university's academic, campus cultural, and university policies to the students by the mentors. They are those who help students in realizing the feeling of their own participation in the university environment. It has been demonstrated that providing students with individualized support through mentoring programs enhances their sense of belonging, which is crucial for both their general well-being and academic success (DeWitt, 2019; Li, 2007).

Lastly, in order to help international students successfully transition from academia to the workforce, career services specifically designed to meet their needs are crucial. These services aid in their job market navigation, comprehension of work visa requirements, and development of highly employable skills. Career workshops that cover networking, interviewing, and resume writing are especially helpful because they teach students how to effectively market themselves to potential employers. Furthermore, career services frequently serve as a bridge between students and alumni or business professionals, offering beneficial networking opportunities that may result in internships and employment (Altbach & Knight, 2007; Sawir et al., 2008).

2.5 Support systems gap

Support systems are crucial to the success of overseas students. Nevertheless, they are less successful due to certain limitations and gaps. That they are not equally easy to use is a major issue. The amount of help offered varies each university. Even within the same institution, there are instances when certain services are easier to obtain than others. For instance, it might be challenging for a student who struggles to speak the language to get mental health assistance if it is not offered in their native tongue. Furthermore, compared to students attending larger, more international institutions, individuals enrolled in less popular programs or in quieter locations sometimes don't receive as much assistance (Sawir et al., 2008; Li, 2007).

There's also the issue of varying quality in support services. Some universities have great orientation programs, mentoring, and academic help, while others struggle with poorly run

services. Similarly, if academic assistance isn't designed to meet the specific needs of international students, it might miss the mark completely. Adjusting to new teaching styles or dealing with language barriers is tough enough without extra difficulties (Ward, 2001; DeWitt, 2019). Another significant gap exists in the lack of awareness about foreign students and their utilization of the available services. Cultural dissimilarities provoke feelings of shame among certain individuals when seeking assistance. In some cultures, the topic of mental health holds a lot of stigmas thereby many of these students might not want to be seen as the 'feeble' ones if they should be the first to meet with the counsellor. They also do not know the services their schools have and find the process of accessing those services cumbersome. This is especially true for those whose native language is not English. At the same time (Smith & Khawaja, 2011; Andrade, 2006).

Lastly, there's a problem with how well support systems work with academic departments and faculty members. Often these support services work on their own which creates a gap between what students need academically and what support they get. This can mean students who need help with their courses don't get referred to tutoring or counseling when they should be. A better plan would be for academic staff to actively help guide students toward the resources they need—they can really make things easier this way (Altbach & Knight, 2007; Zhou et al., 2008).

Supporting systems are very important for international students studying in foreign countries becoming very successful at schools and growing individually. Through providing many excellent services such as tutors and mentorship for student's university can develop a climate that allows the students to learn the skills needed to handle problems while at the same time strengthening their learning environments for students to be responsive to behaviour challenges. These support systems contribute a lot to the success of international students not only academically but also personally and professionally and it is particularly positive during their studies and beyond! However, there are still some gaps in the system. Difficulties in access to support and the fact that services are of different quality, are problems that should be corrected—not to mention that there are issues of awareness among students that are sometimes forgotten. Closing these gaps is crucial for every foreign student to enjoy all the resources that are there and will be a perfect formula for their academic gain and overall growth. universities will be given the chance to upgrade their assistance models so that they can meet the various needs of the different international students who participate in their programs.

2.6 Innovative Support Platform

Most international students are found to face a lot of challenges when they are in a new country for their studies. The need to adapt to a new culture, to feel isolated at times, and the acquiring of a tough academic level must be faced. Some innovative platforms that have emerged to mitigate these are devised just for their problems. Besides, support systems and digital tools that are peer-to-peer in helping make the journey better for students at home and abroad reveal amazing results.

One great idea is peer-to-peer support networks. These platforms connect students with each other. They can share their stories, ask for advice, & give each other emotional support. (Glass et al.2014) point out that these networks really help international students feel less alone & fit in better socially. When students meet others who understand what they're going through, it helps create a community and a feeling of belonging. That's so important when adjusting to a whole new culture. There's also feature that pairs new international students with older ones who have already been through it all. The mentors can share tips about school expectations, culture shocks, and how to live well in a new place. It's best if this mentorship has regular check-ins and clear goals so that both sides get something good from it (Smith & Khawaja, 2011).

Imagine a space where students can meet peers interested in cultural exchange & language practice. They could work together on learning each other's languages or organize fun events to share their traditions and experiences. This not only boosts language skills but also builds friendships and understanding across cultures (DeWitt, 2019). Furthermore, it's really pleasant to interact with people of the same nationality in order to support one another through the difficulties of being away from home. Another wise move is to form study groups or peer tutoring sessions under the direction of more seasoned pupils. These groups can aid foreign students in better understanding the course material, getting ready for tests, and adjusting to various teaching philosophies. It might also seem less intimidating and more friendly to ask colleagues for assistance. (Ward, 2001). It would also be awesome to group them by their degree and program. Training is important too, Those who want to help out should learn about communication skills, being sensitive to different cultures, & keeping things private. This training will make sure they can really support their peers and handle various issues well. On top of that, giving ongoing help and guidance for these peer leaders will keep everything running smoothly(Altbach & Knight, 2007).

Digital Media Solutions represent a very significant step towards assisting the international student population. Another way to comprehend them is the use of the internet as well as mobile technologies such as smart phone apps that will provide easy to access information and virtual support device tools that are essential in overcoming challenges that are part of living in a foreign environment. This is where the work done by (Li and Chen,2014) comes to the forefront where they look at how all these e-tools turn out to be very beneficial indeed since they enable the enhancement of engagement and accessibility in students through very specific interventions such as language support, academic support as well as social and other information that can be provided in a nearby. These solutions enable international students to easily seek help that they require; as and when enabled and those are not dependent on any geographical constraints such as distance or time zones. Using digital platforms—like social—is super important for today's tech-savvy students. A cool social media campaign can spark interest in the platform. This could include fun stuff like student stories, helpful videos, & interactive posts that show how great peer-to-peer support can be. Teaming up with university social media accounts helps too. Plus, you can use paid ads on Instagram, Facebook, & Google Ads that target international students based on where they are and what they like (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2019). Working with influencers who are popular among students is another great way to get the word out. Student bloggers, YouTubers, or Instagram stars can share their experiences with the platform. They might talk about its benefits & encourage their followers to join. Also, creating a peer ambassador program where current users promote the platform is really effective. These ambassadors can run workshops & join orientation events, sharing their good experiences which build trust & authenticity (Keller, 2016).

University-Led Initiatives matter a lot too when it comes to helping international students. Many universities have set up their own tools & resources just for them! For example, dedicated offices for international students often have online portals with helpful info about visa rules, academic aid & social events. These efforts bridge the gap between students & schools, making sure international students have solid support systems in place. Research by Mazzarol and Soutar (2002) shows that these initiatives really help improve student experiences and keep them enrolled. Social Media & Online Communities have turned into incredible sources of support for international students looking to connect with others. Platforms like Facebook groups, Reddit & special forums let students reach out to a wider community for advice and information sharing. A study by Chen and Jones (2014) found that social media helps form informal support networks where students can chat about challenges

and solutions together. These online spaces work hand-in-hand with formal support systems—helping everyone feel connected and informed.

To sum it all up, platforms like peer-to-peer networks along with digital solutions are super important for overcoming the challenges faced by international students. By using these methods, schools and communities can offer better assistance & create friendly spaces for all students from around the globe. Lots of studies point out that these platforms not only boost social integration and academic success but also help ease the feelings of loneliness and stress many international students face.

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The goal of this research is to find the international students' experiences pursuing their bachelor master's and PhD studies in Italy. This study aims to identify and sort these challenges and analyze them by international students' feedback. Additionally, the research investigates the effectiveness of existing support systems in addressing these challenges and provides an innovative and useful support system to minimize or eliminate barriers for international students. The purpose of this study's conclusion is to guide in focused tactics that will improve Italian support networks for international students. This study aims to propose an innovative peer support platform to break down the barriers by identifying the challenges and international student's problems and evaluating them. These suggestions will be based on information and the student's experiences, and guarantee that they are practical and responsive in the real world. Furthermore, this research is aimed to help new international students come to abroad and study in a new environment without any barriers and challenges in Italian higher education institutions.

This research will use to data and information which is received from current international students from other nationalities, for the effectiveness and responsiveness of the proposed support systems. These data were collected through interviews and surveys from current international students who are of diverse nationalities and who used the support systems. Then analyzing the data first will help to find the significant challenges for international students and then help to find the strengths and weaknesses of existing support systems and some suggestions to improvement and expansion. By using the qualitative and quantitative approaches, the researcher can understand how international students are satisfied with the existing support systems, what gaps they have, and how they still face the challenges with current support systems. Hsieh, H. F., & Shannon, S. E. (2005).

To better understand the challenges for international students and identify the effective solution to address these challenges the researcher divided this study into four sections and each section is in one research question.

3.2 Research questions

- 1) What challenges are for international students during their time abroad?
- 2) What support systems are for international students and how effective they are?

3) What innovative support system can address this international student problem? And how does it work?

4) What marketing strategy is used to raise awareness of support systems?

To better understand the challenges for international students and identify the effective solution to address these challenges the researcher divided this study into four sections and each section is in one research question.

The first question is for identifying the specific challenges faced by foreign students and sorting them from the most significant problems to the least based on feedback gathered through surveys and interviews. The second question focuses on the existing support systems and how effective they are. the students' feedback will be used to evaluate the available support systems and how they meet the student's needs.

In the third question, the study provides an innovative peer support platform to minimize or eliminate international student's challenges based on the gap and weaknesses of current support systems and the needs of international students. The last question is to the awareness of support systems for international students, Based on their feedback, the study aims to increase the awareness of the support systems for international students and feedback, will be used to refine marketing approaches and improve visibility and accessibility.

3.3 Research design

This study uses mixed methods both quantitative and qualitative to provide a comprehensive analysis of the research problem. For the qualitative method, the study provides interviews with some international students of diverse nationalities on the other hand for the quantitative part, the researcher created a survey to better understand the challenges and analyse them. The study looked at how these students handle these challenges and evaluated how support services help to meet these difficulties.

First, the study started with interviews with international students from different nationalities. 30-minute interview with each student made answering and responding effective. After gathering data from the interviews, the study designed carefully the surveys ensuring to make effective questions with numerous international students to better understand to address issues. The survey is distributed to a larger group of international students who are currently studying in abroad.

The combination of interviews and surveys makes the study reliable finding and increases the ability of this study to analyse the data comprehensively. The interview was divided in three parts that is include first part challenges faced before and after coming abroad and how address these challenges, and second part begins with how address these challenges, and last part the researcher asked the support services how was helpful to them and finally ask about the recommendation to the new international students. This communication was deep, and the questions were made specifically, and the researcher ask every single question from them and asked the audience to answer deeply with more explanation. after receiving the data from the interviews with international students, the survey was carefully designed to address the following key areas:

Information for international students is in the first section. The purpose of the survey's first section was to gather background and participant-specific information. As a result, it included eleven questions designed to give a thorough insight of the individuals. The nationality, age range, gender, city of residency, degree, program, and length of time overseas are a few of the questions in this respect.

The second section is for international experiences abroad. The second part of the survey was made to understand the international student's experience and challenges during their time abroad. This survey has been designed with seven questions, based on the data that collected from the interviews with the international students, each of the questions provides a specific challenge that international students face, this section included questions on a range of topics, such as cultural adaptation, academic performance, language proficiency, social integration, and interactions with local students and faculty and so on. By analysing this area, the study aimed to identify the obstacles that international students encounter, including language barriers, different educational systems, financial and social integration, and ... The response in this section provided quantitative data and offered a thorough picture of the international students' real-world experiences.

The third part of the survey is for support systems and utilization. The final section of the survey assessed the availability, accessibility, and effectiveness of support systems provided by the universities, third organizations, friends, and This included academic support services (such as tutoring and academic advising), health services, language support, cultural integration programs, and peer support networks and so on.

The researcher has also been inquiring into the aspects of awareness, accessibility, and satisfaction about the present support system so as to comprehend their assessment. The survey, therefore, asked the students to identify other resources they felt were needed or should be developed/improved. This section tries to assess the adequacy of current support structures and identifies areas that could be developed. At the end of the survey, the researcher designed two conceptual questions with the yes and no questions. Aimed of these two questions provide us with demand of the peer support system where older students become mentors and help new international students with the same staff and provide a gap in support that could be filled by creating interaction platform, and based on the answers we understand that how many students needs to talk with experienced students to eliminate the challenges

3.4 Participants and Sample

The participants of this study were selected by the method of non-probability. In this study the participants first should be international students who are from another country instead of Italian, and the researcher focus on Asia and middle east and east countries. The participants in this study were chosen in the method of purposive sampling which is a type of non-probability sampling. This method is appropriate for this study because the researcher is targeting especially international student who are from countries rather than Italy and is targeting international students who are currently studying in abroad.

In this study, participants are chosen from different countries with the number of 50 international students. These students were selected from a different university to ensure a broad spectrum of experiences and perspectives. The universities where the participants are currently students are Ca' Foscari University of Venice (the university where the researcher of this study is), University of Padova, the University of Bologna, the University of Trento, Sapienza University of Rome, Messina University and IUAV University of Venice. The basis for selecting these universities was their diverse student populations and their reputations for having large numbers of international students.

Furthermore, the participants were selected based on some variables related to the study topic. This is such as the status of students as an international student, their enrolment in the universities where selected, and their willingness to share their experiences and information.

It attempts to provide a range of experiences that international students have in Italy, along with suggestions for how to overcome obstacles and hurdles of this nature. The research attempts to gather perspectives from students at several institutions in order to obtain a diverse

variety of experiences and information, which would offer a deeper and more complex understanding of the problems.

3.5 Instrumentations

First, the researcher interviewed selected international students from different nationalities and met them in campuses or university environments with face-to-face communication in person. The duration of the interview normally was 30 minutes, and the interviews were recorded by camera and with two microphones for both persons. So, the videos of the interview were all recorded and published in YouTube channel. Ten questions were asked from the applicant the first 2 questions were about the personal information and the reason for coming abroad to study, and then 4 questions for the challenges that encountered before and after coming to abroad, the last 3 questions for solving these challenges and share their experience with support services that you use and the last question was about the future plan and share experiences.

Q 1: Introduce yourself and what motivated you to study abroad. (2 questions asked)

Q 2: share challenges before and after coming in the host country. (4 questions asked)

Q 3: how to fight these challenges. (2 questions asked)

Q 4: Advice for future students and plans for future. (2 questions asked)

According to the information and data obtained, then the online survey was conducted by using a self-administered questionnaire which was given to the participants through the Internet. Both the close-ended questions and Likert scale were used to get more detailed and quantifiable answers to this survey. Google Forms is a secure choice provided by Google for creating a survey, which, by just sending the link electronically to the participants, can be answered. Based on this, three general research questions led the interview questions:

Q 1: Personal information

Q 2: What challenges do international students face?

Q 3: How do international students address these challenges through support systems?

The online survey is part of the quantitative research techniques that have emerged in recent years. Some other newer techniques according to (Mora,2010) are real-time chats, research blogs, video journals, bulletin boards, web intercepts/chats amongst others. Mora explained that studies using these online techniques can be deployed quickly because the method is faster

and cost-effective. Hence, the use of the online survey as the data collection instrument for this study.

3.6 Reliability and Validity

The idea of reliability and validity are essential to ensure the credibility and accuracy of the result and findings. Reliability refers to the consistency and stability of the research tools in the studies.” A reliable instrument or method yields consistent results when repeated under similar conditions” (Heale & Twycross, 2015). On the other hand, “validity concerns the extent to which a measurement tool accurately measures what it is intended to measure” (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Both reliability and validity are crucial to determine the quality and trustworthy of the research.

For the qualitative methods such as interviews, making sure the findings are reliable means that the questions should asked in a same step to each person. This could reduce personal bias and focus on the participants’ experiences (Patton, 2002). For the quantitative methods such as surveys, the researchers can use calculations and numbers and use the tools which is related to measuring and analysis the data, this makes sure the surveys are consistent, and answers are reliable (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011).

Reliability

The researcher took measures to minimize personal opinions and reflections that could impact on the result and findings to assure the validity of the study. The purpose of the researcher is to limit own opinions and ideas and focus more on the data and information of the participant’s voices. This approach helps to ensure that the finding and results are true presentations of participants’ experiences, rather than being influenced by the researcher’s perspective.

Reliability, as defined by (Tejumaiye,2003), refers to the consistency of a particular technique in producing the same results when applied repeatedly to the same subjects. Tejumaiye states that "a measure is reliable if it consistently gives the same answers at different points in time"

For the reliability of the in-person interview, the researcher prepared the same ten questions to ask from the participants and the participants received the questions before the interview to train and prepare themselves to reduce stress because of this structure interview guide, this study ensure the validity of this interviews. On the other hand, the researcher uses Pilot method for increase the reliability of interview, it means before doing interviews with ten international

students, the researcher were done the interview with 2 international students. This approach helped to avoid any confusing questions and make the right questions. Furthermore, all interviews were recorded with their permission

For the reliability of the survey, first, based on the result of the interviews, the survey was designed by effective set of questions and was designed with the standards set of questions that adapted from existing and validated instruments that is found in the literature. This means that the survey questions also were designed on the other surveys that had already tasted and proven to work, this could be helping to ensure the reliability. Second, in order to guarantee reliability, the researcher asked consistent questions from the participants and use the Likert scale question to better understand the same answers and ensure that the same core questions were asked in multiple formats. This approach helped to provide that the responses are reliable and consistent. The third one, all the questions were designed clear and simple to avoid any confusion and influence the participant's answers. Moreover, the researcher put some buttons to someone who doesn't like to answer such as: prefer not to answer and neutral or nothing, this helped to not force the participants to answer without feeling pushed toward a certain answer.

Validity

For the validity of the interview, the researcher was designed the questions carefully to match the topic and looked to the other research and interviews to make sure the right questions, this helps the interviews to reflect to the main topic. Furthermore, the researcher asked from the experts who are old international students to check the right questions and make sure cover the main topics in my study. On the other hand, the researcher selected international students from diverse backgrounds, programs, degree and nationalities to make sure the result could apply to a bigger group of people. To ensure the validity of the study, the researcher created a table with some checklists to ensure transparency and accuracy in the findings (See Table 1).

Demographic summary	Yes	No
Do you study abroad as an international student?		
Is this first time to study abroad?		

Table 3-1 First questions for participant's eligibility

Note: Participants must answer yes to these requirements to be considered eligible to fill the survey. Furthermore, the researcher designed the questions on the survey based on the findings and results on the interviews to make sure is relevant for the bigger group and make sure that

each question is related to the main topic and covers the main purpose of this study. Again, like the interview questions, the researcher got help from the old international students to check the clear and making sense. Then it would be helpful for the participants to understand the questions well and answer the right things.

3.7 Data Collection and Analysis

A standard questionnaire with closed-ended questions was utilized to collect the data on experiences and challenges of the international students. The online questionnaire targeting international students at different academic levels, nationalities, and programs was then shared on various social media applications such as Telegram international student groups, WhatsApp, and Facebook to make sure participation is wide. This was done in order to provide respondents choices for their responses and to ensure that the survey was viewed by as many people as possible. The survey was designed to be more user-friendly and thorough, requiring only 7–10 minutes to complete. The participant was informed that the data would only be used for academic study and that their identity would be preserved to guarantee their honesty.

To illustrate a broad picture of the data, descriptive statistics were calculated such as Frequencies, percentages and means. This analysis allows the researcher to provide a summary of the features of the participants in the population. For example, the distribution of students of various nationalities, academic levels and programs, and so on. For the next part of the survey, international students' experiences, the researcher used the calculation and percentages to provide the most significant of the challenges by foreign students and identify how many percentages of students have the challenges and how many people do not. Furthermore, for the support systems question's part, the descriptive analysis helped to identify the common answers of awareness, satisfaction, accessibility, and ease to use of support systems. For Example, the analysis provided by 75% of the students answered that communicating with peers, friends, and old students to advise services, was more "Very Accessible" than the university support systems, third-party organizations online resources and social media.

On the other hand, the researcher used Cross-tabulation which is one the important methods for examining the connections between the different survey variables. This method allows the researcher to compare the responses of the participants from the various demographic categories like how satisfied with the university support systems. Dissatisfied, neutral, satisfied, and very satisfied. Cross tabulations provide insight into how attitudes and experiences among the various foreign student's categories. The goal of the study was taken

into consideration while interpreting the findings of descriptive analyses. The answers and findings were checked against the existing literature on foreign students to consistent trends or new insights. This analysis helped to understand not only the most significant international students' challenges but also predict how this study can provide innovative peer support services to enhance the international students' experiences to minimize or eliminate the challenges.

3.8 Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to better understand the real-life experiences of foreign students who are studying in Italy, with an emphasis on the many difficulties they encounter and the efficiency of the sources available to them. Furthermore, the study collected comprehensive data on numerous significant data of experiences of international students at several Italian Universities using a qualitative method that includes the distribution of an online Survey to these students

In the study, it was stated that international students face many different aspects during their study time abroad. These challenges are adapting to a new culture, integrating into the local community, and managing financial difficulties, academic problems, and so on. In the survey data, some particular issues like cultural shock, language barriers, academic stress, social isolation, and so on were emphasized in the first part of the survey to identify the most significant problems.

The study discovers that, although there is a range of support systems offered, there are significant gaps in their effectiveness. Many students reported being unaware if the resources that were accessible to them, having trouble obtaining the support services, and receiving enough or insufficient assistance for their needs.

To address these issues, an innovative approach was presented. Through this platform, it will connect international students with other same nationality, program, university, and language. And asking for advice and assistance from more advanced students, find a customized way to meet the special needs of international students. The study also recommended targeted marketing initiatives to improve support services. This would include using social media campaigns, online outreach programs, digital marketing, and network marketing as effective means of engaging with prospective international students in raising awareness about this innovative support system available to them.

Regarding this study ahead, there are multiple potentials for improvement with the innovative support platform that links international students with the same nationality, degree, program, and universities. Moving forward, it is crucial to integrate advanced matching algorithms that refine these connections by considering a broader range of criteria, such as personal interests and career goals.

Stronger feedback mechanisms will be established to continuously improve with user inputs, so that the platform remains useful and relevant. The partnership with universities or third-party organizations is going to provide wider access and capacity for the platform; similarly, focused marketing campaigns raise awareness and engage more people. With a focus on this set of improvements, the platform will be increasingly effective in addressing the needs of its target audience: international students.

The research makes a significant contribution to the field of international student support with new platforms of support systems in enhancing students' experiences that have common characteristics, such as nationality, degree program, and language proficiency. This will lead to further personalization of support provided for international students regarding academic problems, culture, languages, jobs, and accommodation. This innovative support platform therefore represents an instructive development in understanding how technology can help foster community and support to eradicate challenges in studying easily within the host country. The conclusion of this study improves not only our knowledge in the needs of foreign students but offers actionable recommendations for creating effective and responsive support structures in other categories.

4 RESULT AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

This part of the study represents the result of the study with the aim of understanding the international student's challenges in Italy and evaluating the effectiveness of existing support systems to address these challenges. This research was driven by the increasing recognition of the special difficulties faced by international students, particularly such as language barriers, financial problems, diverse education systems, accommodation and overall satisfaction. This study involved diverse foreign students who are from different nationalities, programs, degrees, and universities. From the mixed methods both survey and interviews, the researcher captured a wide range of experiences and opinions among these participants. And find the best way to address these challenges. The primary objective of the research was to identify the most pressing challenges faced by international students and to propose an innovative support system designed to connect them and raise awareness of available resources through strategic marketing efforts. It also attempts to obtain information on the levels of awareness and utilization of a support system, such as university support services, third-party organizations, peer assistance or senior students, and online communication through social network sites. The students determine the effectiveness of the above systems, establishing whether certain things work and which might need further improvement.

In addition to understanding the current landscape of support systems, this study also sought to evaluate the potential for new, more interactive platforms that could better serve the international student community. This includes the development of digital tools and mobile applications that facilitate easier access to support services, peer networks, and cultural resources. By leveraging technology and strategic communication, the proposed system aims not only to minimize the existing challenges but also to foster a more inclusive and supportive environment for international students in Italy. The results are structured to first provide an overview of the demographic profile of the participants, followed by a detailed examination of the key challenges they reported. Additionally, the findings delve into the levels of awareness and usage of existing support services, alongside insights into how strategic marketing could enhance the visibility and accessibility of these services. Each section of the results is supported by relevant data, including statistical analyses, tables, and figures, to provide a clear and objective presentation of the findings. The results aim to offer valuable insights for educators,

policymakers, and university administrators to enhance the support mechanisms for international students, thereby improving their academic and social experiences in Italy.

4.2 Participant Demographics

For the interview part of study A total of 10 international students participated in the in-person interview with different backgrounds and academic levels and study. four nationalities were chosen to take an interview. The Participant nationalities are including Iran, Turkey, Kazakhstan and Mongolia. They are divided in five boys and five girls. With an average age of 25 years. Below is the list of interview participants. The ten questions ask from them, the first two questions were about personal information and motivation to study, and the next four questions were about challenges that they faced during in abroad. The next three questions were asked about how to address these challenges, and the last 2 questions were for future and advice.

The researcher collected data from the interviews and analysed the data based on the findings of international students. Then categorized by the most significant answers based on the repetition answers that they did. As a result on the interviews, the survey was designed to focus on specific challenges and support systems to find the scope of these systems for the larger group. Based on the flowchart below, the study started to focus on the details to better understand the needs of international students and find a specific way to predict the challenges and minimize or eliminate them.

The researcher provides the most important and most frequent answers from the participants' own quotes in 4 categories. For the introduce themselves and discission to study abroad, the question was:

	Name	Nationality	Gender	Age	University	Degree	program
1	Parmis	Iran	Female	34	CA' Foscari	Master	Language science
2	Gabby	Mongolia	Female	21	CA 'Foscari	Bachelor	Business administration
3	Mohammad	Iran	Male	25	CA' Foscari	Bachelor	Business administration
4	Mahya	Iran	female	25	Padova	Master	ICT
5	Robert	Kazakhstan	Male	22	H-farm	Bachelor	Digital Management
6	Shina	Iran	female	23	H-farm	Bachelor	Digital Management
7	Ali	Turkey	Male	28	CA Foscari	Master	Management
8	Mohamad	Iran	Male	37	Padova	Master	IT science
9	Keyvan	Iran	male	31	CA Foscari	Bachelor	Business administration
10	Ali	Iran	male	23	Messina	Bachelor	Data science

Table 4-1 Participants information

Question: what motivated you to study abroad?

Gaby From Mongolia in CA 'Foscari said: “Before I graduated in high school, I was straight decided not to go abroad, I wanted to study here in Mongolia, because of finance, economics, and so on. And I saw a post on social media that said: Do you want to go to Italy with full scholarships? and then I decided to go to Italy. And Then I love everything about Italy such as architecture, food, cities, and everything. And I always love to live in Europe totally”.

Mohamad from Iran in CA' Foscari said: “Italy is a good opportunity to study in international environments and especially study in the English programs in bachelor, and there is financial aid that can cover all tuition fees and cost for living in Italy”.

Robert form Kazakhstan in H-Farm said: “my program is digital management and I always explained to people who ask the blend of entrepreneurship, marketing, economics and computer science and that was the mix of all of these, so I searched a lot about finding this program where I would like to learn the technological side, because I was literally zero about it, and I am also really interested about making businesses, start-up and all those sort of projects and the economic part and entrepreneurship cover that so a good plan that why I made this choice”.

Mahya from Iran in Padova said: “The university that I chose, has very good reputation and is one of the best universities in Italy, and on that time when I was applying to this university in a computer science program, the University of Padova was a third rank in Italy, and it is always in the fourth high-rank universities in Italy. And other thing was the language of my program it was in English in my master’s. furthermore, the tuition fees in Italy is not too much expensive, on the other hand there is chance to get scholarships to cover your expenses. These are the good points for me to select the Padova university in Italy”.

Questions: Did you face any challenges before, during, and after coming to abroad?

Keyvan from Iran in CA’ Foscari said: “I can divide the challenges in two side, One side is in academic challenges and another one living in abroad challenges. The first part is about the different education systems in my country and here in Italy, that is totally different. On the other side, living alone in abroad would be a challengeable for me. Another thing is for accommodation, I didn’t know how I can find the room what is contract what is rules in Italy what documents are needed. Another problem that I had was how can I control my cost. And finally finding part job to cover my costs was difficult due to limitations and language barriers”.

Parmis from Iran in CA’ Foscari said: “First, I arrived here, I had to find a place to live, that I want to say it was the most difficult part of my life during in abroad. the next one is education systems, in my first semester I didn’t understand anything in the lessons and there were a lot of projects assignments, and presentations that were different from my country. After a few months, I encountered financial problems and I decided to find a part-time job unfortunately, I couldn’t find a general job in the English language. Then after searching and applying a lot of jobs finally I found a job to cover my expenses but as you know studying and working is impossible and difficult especially in abroad.

Robert from Kazakhstan in H farm: “I really believe that there were a lot of challenges but mostly to getting my Visa done and coming here it was the biggest challenge, but I was doing everything in Time, and I was the first student who came here in Italy from my country that year in August. So, the main problem for me was with the Italian embassy in my country and visa centre because there is a huge cue there. When I arrived here at first time, I have got lost on my way to college and I was in bus, and I didn’t know how the public transport works here, and I didn’t know that I need to press the button to make the stop. So, The navigations was another problem for me.

Question: How did you manage your challenges?

Shina from Iran in H-Farm said: “at first when I arrived here, I had a problem with finding the right accommodation, with low cost, single room and good location. And I realized that there is a housing office in CA’ Foscari and after I talked with them I prefer to don’t rent accommodation from them, first of all, the student dormitory was too expensive for example a single room was 500 euros per month and then second one the houses that provide me in city was also expensive, a single room in a house was 520 euro include and with other 4 students who are living in double rooms. After I talked with my friends and old students, they suggest me some channels, social media groups and websites to find the right room so I decided to find a room by myself and finally I found a single room with the price of 400 euro include. So, I want to say they didn’t help me a lot”.

Ali from Turkey in CA Foscari said: “One of the biggest challenges was the study permit called Permesso di soggiorno here in Italy. I didn’t know how I take this and what documents we needed to request for them, after I talked with university support, they told me there is a checklist of documents and you must take Kit di Permesso di soggiorno from the post office. I even didn’t know how I can take the insurance what is the legal contract and how can I do it without the Italian language. So, after preparing the documents, I sent my kit to post office and I realized that my appointment is in after 6 months, and after receiving my study permit, it had just 3 months expiry. For the next year, I wanted to go abroad for my internship, and I needed a study permit for exiting the country. So I got an appointment after 8 months but it didn’t work for me, so I communicated with the university support to address my problem and they told me just, you have to wait we cannot do anything but I asked my problem from some students who have the same problem with me, they advise me to check and do something to postpone your appointment”.

Parmis from Iran said: “I realized that the important thing here in abroad is knowing their language, so I decided to learn the Italian language. After I searched, I realized there are some classes in my city that I can register for and participate in with low tuition fees. After one year one of my friends told me the university has language classes you can participate in free, they give you this option to learn the Italian language, I just said I didn’t know there is language support for students, and I was unaware of this opportunity that the university has”.

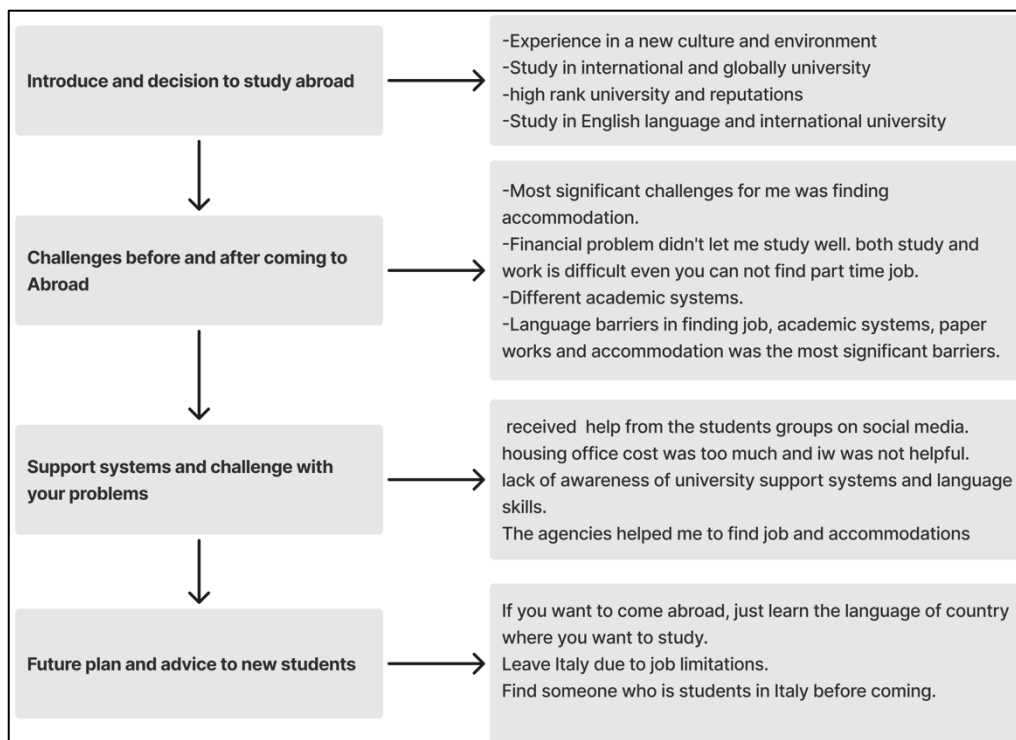
Question: Do you have any advice for the new international students and what is your plan for future?

Robert said: “I think it just general advice of being accountable for your actions like taking responsibility in your own hands, making plans, visualizing stuff, and then acting on them. There is no way around the challenges you will always face challenges and it is about the way that you approach those challenges and treat them and how you solve the problems that you face rather than complaining about them because sometimes something happens that you didn’t expect it, just make preparations and if something goes off out of your way be ready for that and just accept it and try to solve it. I have one piece of advice, that is also generally applicable to everyone who wants to go anywhere, find the person who is already here sometime connect contact get some advice from them like experience, and ask the questions you are interested in once you get answers if you are satisfied give it a shot. And my plan is to come back to my country and continue my Master there, the reason is because I combine right now my studies and my work which I have in my country”.

Keyvan said: “If you want to come to study abroad just learn their language, some people said we are studying in an English program and we don’t need the Italian language, but they faced problems finding jobs, doing the normal things in life and so on. The Italian language is the most significant thing more than everything and English is just a benefit for you and without being unaware of the Italian language you cannot live here”.

Mohammad from Iran: “When you are in your country, I mean before coming to Italy, just learn the Italian language even if you want to study in English. My other advice is to study as hard as you can and don’t postpone studying at the last minute, study during your semester, and if you are a student you must know that your first job is studying not working outside. My plan is to continue my studies as a master’s student but in another country. I want to explore new cultures, environments, and new people. But I prefer to go to a country where their first language is English”.

The researcher categorized the funding and results from the participants in interviews in four parts provided in the chart in figure 11. The answers are sorted by the most significant and frequent answers reflecting on the common experiences and opinions shared by participants. The answers highlighted the areas that had the biggest impact on their decision-making processes, challenges faced, and overall study-abroad experiences.



Survey

The study surveyed a diverse group of international students currently enrolled in various universities across Italy. A total of 50 participants took part in the study, representing a wide range of nationalities, academic levels, Fields of study, Genders, and age ranges. Due to this diversity, the researcher could receive a comprehensive view of the experiences and challenges encountered by international students in Italy and offer how they can address these challenges to study better without any problems and barriers.

Nationality

The sample was drawn from 8 countries, and Asia was the most represented region. Most of the students came from Iran amounting to about 70% of the sample thereby ensuring that the study reflects a broad cultural perspective as well as challenges experienced by international students in Italy. In addition to these top three countries, research participants hailed from lesser-known countries of origin to portray the true international nature of the international student community in Italy. Such a wide range of nationalities provided a unique opportunity to explore how students from different cultural and educational backgrounds experience their stay in Italy. Additionally, this diversity in terms of national origin also made it possible to carry out a comparative analysis on how students form different regions perceive and use the

existing support systems; how their cultural challenges may affect their general satisfaction level and assimilation process. Iran 35, Azerbaijan 4; Turkey 4; India 3; Georgia 1; Mongolia 1; Mexico 1; Ecuadorian 1.

Age range

The age range of the participants indicated a diverse cohort of students at different stages of their academic and professional pursuits, spanning from 18 to 44 years old. 56% of the participants were in the 25–34 age group, indicating that a significant portion of the sample consisted of graduate students, including those seeking master's and doctorate degrees. 32% of participants, however, were between the ages of 18 and 24, most likely reflecting undergraduate and early graduate students. The remaining 12% of students, who ranged in age from 35 to 44, were either more seasoned students seeking further courses later in life or returning to school after working for a while.

This age distribution not only helps to the diversity of the international student community but also, identifies that it would significantly differ the challenges and problems to the different life stages of students. Also, new students who are younger than the others and who are the first time experienced the immigration to new country may have more problems and challenges in adapting to university life abroad or culture diversity and so on to old students who might be balancing their academic responsibilities. It is crucial to understand the needs of every stage student to design the support systems.

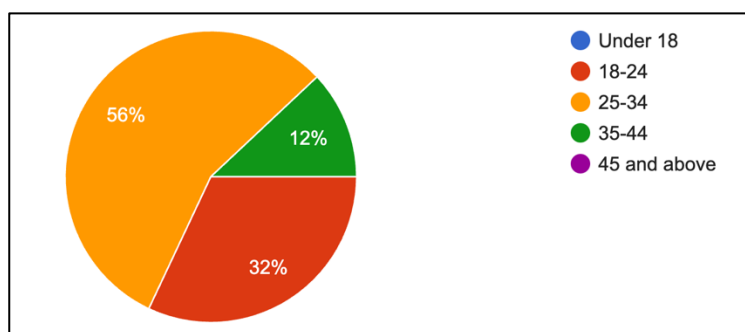


Figure 4-2 Participant age

Gender distribution

The distribution of the gender was approximately balanced, with 54% identifying as female and 44% as male. Furthermore, an additional 2% of the participants preferred not to say their gender. To examine if and how these experiences change across genders, this balanced gender representation offers a thorough view of the difficulties and experiences encountered by foreign students in Italy.

The participants who preferred to not show their gender, are the importance of inclusivity in research and support services. It emphasizes how important it is to have support systems that are considered of and sensitive to the diversity of gender identities to guarantee and respect to that every student regardless of gender, feels accepted and supported. This distribution also allows to study to discover the potential gender diversity challenges and the effectiveness of the existing support systems in solving them.

Academic Level

Participants are in two levels of academics; distributions were in the undergraduate students who have to study at least three academic years and the others are in master levels who enrolled in two years of academic levels. For the educational level breakdown, the 40% of them were undergraduates while about 60% were master's students. Note that, there were not any participants who enrolled in PhD.

The students who are studying in master program make a considerable percentage of international students in Italy. They have unique issues that arise from their different academic program intensities, fast-track purposes of adapting to the new education system within which they find themselves and cultural diversities. Undergraduate students, while comprising a smaller portion of the sample, provided valuable insights into the initial challenges of transitioning to university life in a foreign country, such as adapting to new academic expectations and building social networks.

The lack of doctoral students in the sample indicates a possible research area, as their experiences and needs for support may significantly differ from the undergraduate and master's level students. Nevertheless, the undergraduate and master's level summaries provide a full portrait of the support needs of students in this category. In fact, this study will be helpful in tailoring support services that specifically support international students while taking into consideration their needs at different stages of their studies.

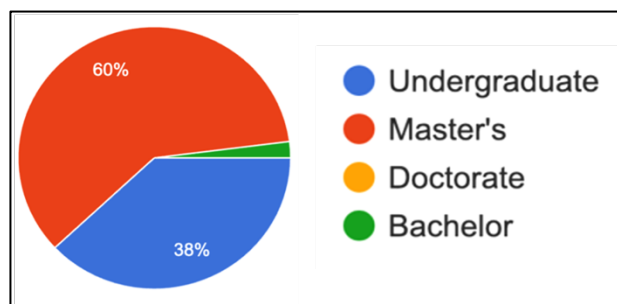


Figure 4-3 Participants degree

Field of study

A broad array of academic disciplines was represented by the study participants, which showed the different interests and educational pursuits on the part of international students in Italy. The fields of study distribution were as follows: 18% were studying Business administration; 8% were enrolled in Economic and 6% were pursuing degrees in Data analysis. Other fields of study in the sample included Bioengineering, language science, computer science, urban planning philosophy, and environment among others. Business administration represented the largest proportion at 18% indicating that there is a global demand for professionals in this field as well as an attraction towards programs offered by Italian universities within these areas. Students taking this course often face challenges concerning its technical nature requiring specialized academic support and resources oftentimes.

The second largest field of study, Economic, is also popular with international students, focusing especially on global business, economics as well as management's areas. Certain students in these branches may struggle with aspects such as the appreciation of international business and its economic policy, the concerned students may also have trouble switching educational formats. This migration to different fields of study also justifies providing appropriate intervention strategies that are not only aimed at assisting their struggles due to the walls of an academic setting or cultural setting but rather the intersection of the two. Laying out these barriers encountered within each of the above categories particularly would aid university organize better resources and strategies for their international students to improve their offerings both academically and professionally.

4.3 participants challenges finding

This survey was conducted to explore the experiences and challenges faced by international students during their studies abroad. It aimed to gather detailed insights into various aspects of their journey, including personal demographics, the difficulties they encountered, and the support services available to them.

The first part of survey consisted of questions probing into the respondents' background. This encompassed age, gender, nationality of international students who responded to the survey, academic level and their field of study. These would help gaining a full understanding of the backgrounds of the respondents that contextualized the analysis of experiences and challenges faced during their study abroad.

The second part of the survey comprised seven questions focused on exploring the experiences and challenges encountered by international students during their study abroad. The initial two questions aimed to identify the most significant challenges students encountered and to assess the level of difficulty they experienced in adapting to these challenges. The remaining five questions provided a deeper examination of specific challenges related to: financial difficulties, academic challenges, social integration, accommodation issues and finding job. This section aimed to provide a comprehensive view of the multifaceted nature of the international student experience, highlighting both the broad challenges and the specific areas of difficulty.

Biggest challenges

The survey results indicate that financial issues were the most significant challenge faced by international students, with 68.6% of respondents identifying it as their biggest obstacle. Finding a job followed closely, reported by 60.8% of students, while 56.9% experienced difficulties in finding accommodation. While 54.9% faced the problem of language barriers.

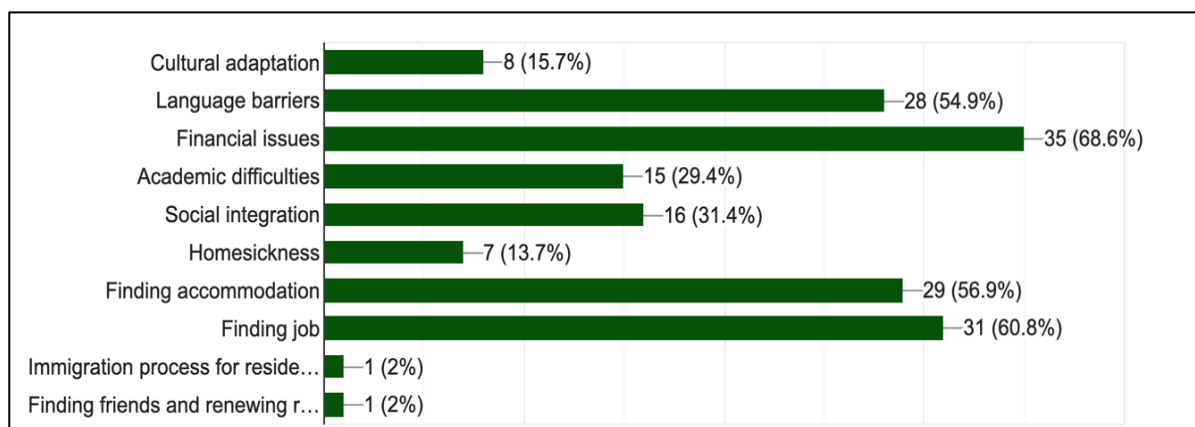


Figure 4-4 Biggest challenges faced by international students

Among the remaining problem areas, 31.4% of the students had difficulty in social adjustment, and 29.4% faced various academic challenges. In addition, 13.7% felt homesick, and 15.7% had cultural adaptation issues. These figures thus represent that these are very few but significant problems that were faced by an international student during their study abroad.

Adaption challenges

The findings of the survey provide an all-encompassing analysis of the many challenges respondents experience during adaptation in a workable sense across many areas of life.

In fact, the most significant challenge was finding a job, with 25 respondents indicating, "Very Difficult," which speaks to the degree to which barriers stand in the way of individuals securing employment. The second most prominent challenge was financial burden, as 21 found this

"Very Difficult" and 19 reported the label, "Difficult," both of which show the breadth of financial burden among survey respondents. There was also a substantial number of respondents that reported finding accommodation to be "Very Difficult" or "Difficult."

The second most prominent challenge was financial burden, as 21 found this "Very Difficult" and 19 reported the label, "Difficult," both of which show the breadth of financial burden among survey respondents. There was also a substantial number of respondents that reported finding accommodation to be "Very Difficult" or "Difficult." In terms of the previous 2 hardships, respondents face similar challenges with language difficulties, with 30 respondents stating it is "Difficult," and 9 respondents find it "Very Difficult." This indicates that for many individuals' language impairment interfered with their ability to effectively adapt to their ordeal. Furthermore, there is the challenge of academic difficulties embellished by a wide distribution of neutral or other assessments by the respondents with 12 labelling as "Very Difficult," but also a rather substantial reporting neutral response. The varied distribution of experience developed into participants of academic issues described divergent variables. The experience of social integration generates a familiarity of experiences. While some participants

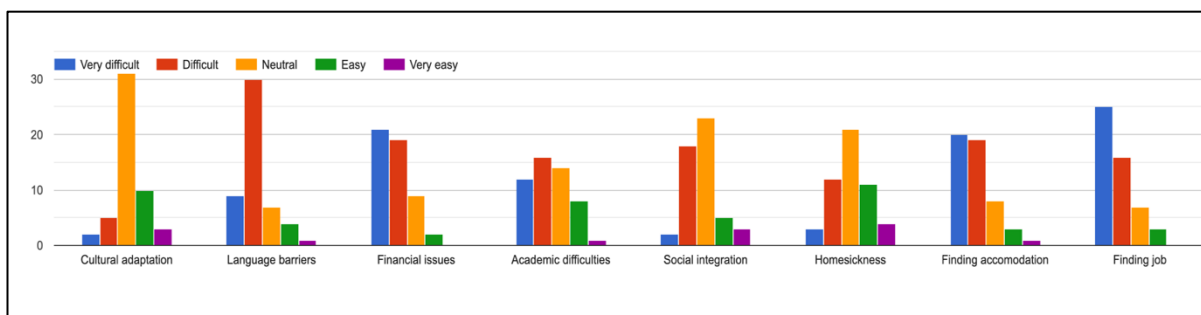


Figure 4-5 adoption to the challenges to difficulties

report socialization to be difficult there are enough reported neutral responses to suggest for many the corresponding challenges are manageable.

There are also varied of experiences looking at homesickness, with many neutrally happy or stating it was easier to cope, though for a small portion it remained difficult. Cultural adaptation for several was trailed throughout challenge related engagements however a majority experience deflation neutral responses finding handling cultural adaptation feasible to manage.

Overall, survey respondents express the highest level of issues entails finding employment opportunities, managing financial burden, securing an accommodation, etc. Language issues, schooling challenges, etc. are not as important as primary issues. In contrast, respondents

expressed less barriers with accommodation difficulties, cultural adaptation, homesickness, and had neutral opinions or reported the barrier an easier experience.

Managing finance

The data illustrate that most participants (78.4%) indicated scholarships have made feasible their funds for studying abroad. Of 51 respondents, 40 identified scholarships as their primary source of funds needed for studying abroad. This underscores that for most international students, scholarships were a significant source of informing their funds for studying abroad. Another noteworthy finding was a reliance on work part-time. Thirty-three respondents (64.7%) indicated that they had a part-time job to direct funds towards themselves while studying. Again, this raised the issue of the potential role of employment opportunities for international students to make up some fund deficiency while studying abroad.

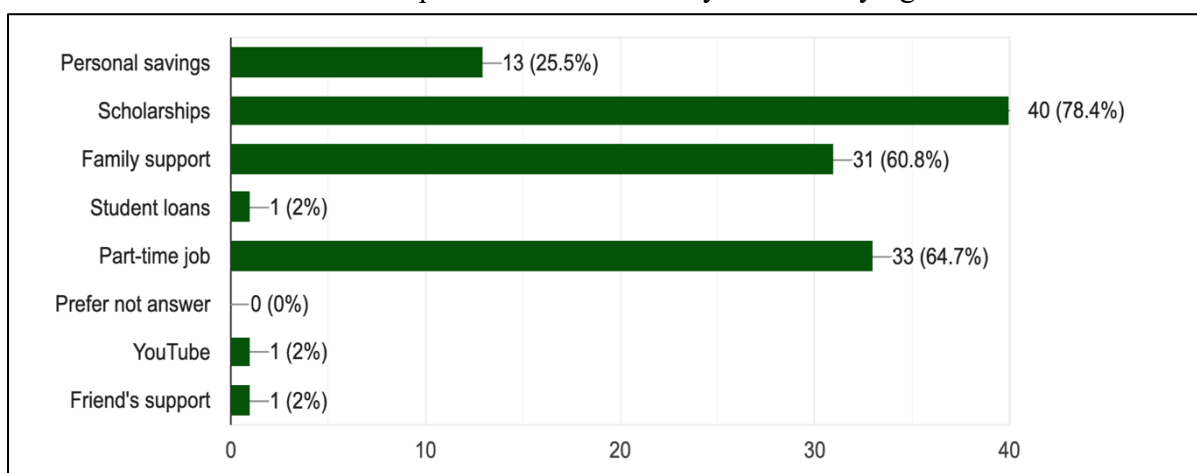


Figure 4-6 Managing finance

Family support was a commonly referenced source of funding, with 100 students (60.8%) reporting familial assistance of their study abroad costs. This signifies those funds received from families was an important source of funding for students who identified borrowing from family members as a strategy to pay for their studying abroad. Other sources of managing finances to study include savings (13 respondents [25.5%]), and a very small number of students using student loans (2%), funds received from YouTube (2%), or friends (2%) that they used to study abroad. None of the survey respondents selected the "Prefer not to answer" option.

academic challenges

The image illustrates a bar chart with a title of "What specific academic challenges have you encountered?" here is the participants answers Different teaching styles: 29 responses (56.9%), Understanding course material: 21 responses (41.2%), Language barriers: 14 responses

(27.5%), Access to academic resources: 13 responses (25.5%), Interacting with professors: 5 responses (9.8%), Prefer not to answer: 4 responses (7.8%). Other options, each with 1 response (2%), include "No problems," "Lack of motivation due to mental health," "Managing to study

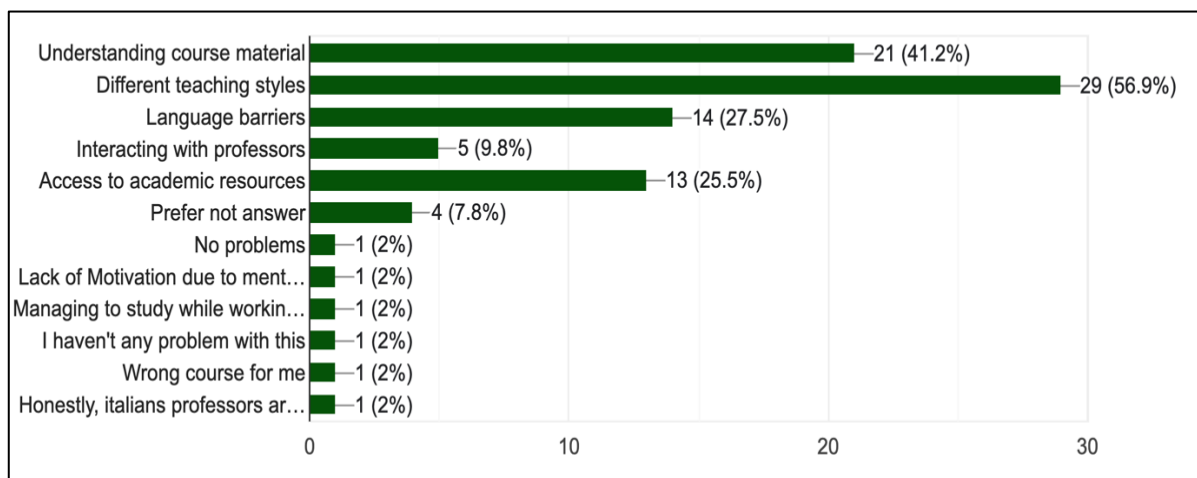


Figure 4-7 Type of academic challenges

while working," "I haven't any problem with this," and Wrong course for me.

Social integration

The findings of this survey suggest that language differences pose the most significant challenge to social inclusion faced by 72.5% of respondents (number=51). Communication issues appear to be the most significant barrier for many. The second-most significant challenge was relating and making friends, at 33.3%, indicating that the challenge of creating interpersonal personal relationships can be significant in a new context. Barriers also included participation in community events (21.6%), and understanding social norms (19.6%), indicating that cultural adaptation and being involved in community events also represents a challenge. A small number of respondents chose not to respond (5.9%). Additionally, a couple

of respondents cited issues of unfair behaviour or being rude. The findings indicate language and cultural context are the greatest barriers to social inclusion.

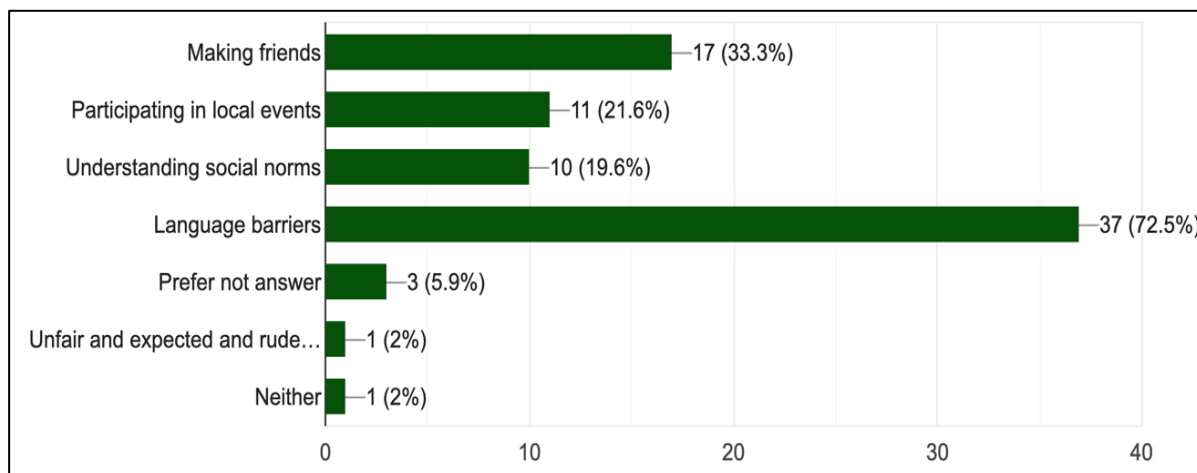


Figure 4-8 Social integration challenges

Finding accommodation

The findings of the survey indicate the most pressing issues regarding accommodation identified by respondents. The most cited issue was availability, with 78.4% citing availability as an issue; closely followed by cost, which was reported by 64.7% of participants as an issue still, which was identified as the second most reported issue related to accommodation. Approximately 39.2% of the respondents were concerned about the quality of the housing, while 35.3% identified location as an issue related to accommodation. Among the surveyed respondents, 31.4% of the respondents identified language as an obstacle. The opposing side is that a smaller percentage of the respondents (7.8%) stated that they found ease in locating accommodation, and 3.9% of the survey respondents chose not to answer a query regarding difficulty. Lastly, a very small number of the surveyed respondents (2%) stated that they received push back from landlords regarding renting to certain groups.

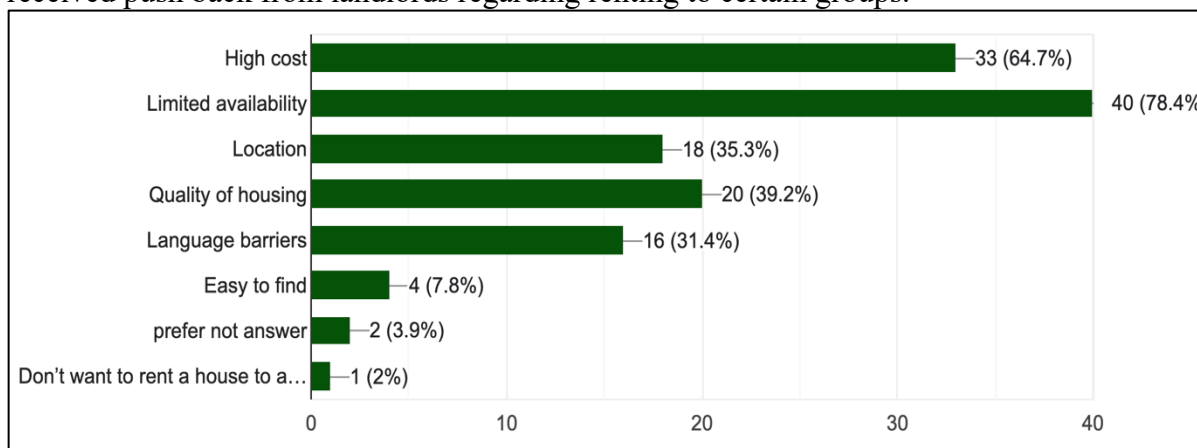


Figure 4-9 Accommodation challenges

Finding job

The survey data illustrates the considerable barriers participants encounter when seeking employment. Language barriers serve as the overwhelming barrier, referenced by 72.5% of respondents as a major issue.... Work permit concerns were another strong barrier, impacting 52.9% of respondents.... Limited job opportunities were an issue for 49% of respondents, as were complications with competing work and study commitments. Inexperience with local job opportunities was cited by 25.5% of respondents.... Only 3.9% of respondents said they don't wish to answer and, 2% of participants mentioned difficulties with understanding the employment market as a challenge they faced. There was a multitude of barriers that difficulties limit an individual's opportunities to successfully job extent.

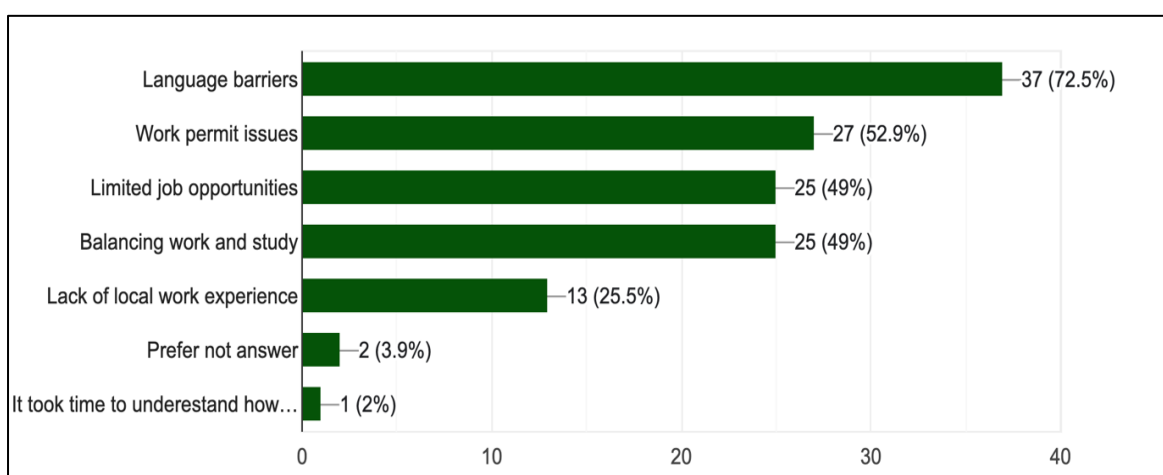


Figure 4-10 Finding job challenges

4.4 Use of support systems finding

The third part of the questionnaire, comprising seven questions, was meant to probe what type of support international students typically access while overseas. The first question was designed to assess the awareness of the students about any available university support mechanisms. There were then two questions on the support systems the student had ever used and the type of service they have utilized. The last four questions were for an in-depth understanding of helpfulness, approachability, and ease of use of these support systems. It also aimed to give a deeper insight into the different supporting systems that an international student may have and the general effectiveness these systems tended to have in supporting students' overall adjustment.

University Support services awareness

The pie chart indicate the reported level of awareness that international students have regarding the support services offered at the university. Of the total 51 respondents to the survey, 62.7% (or 32 respondents) indicated that they are not aware of the support services. closely, 37.3% (or 19 respondents) indicated that they are aware of the support services offered by their university. This awareness gap indicates that a larger portion of international students (over a third) may not be informed of the support services that could aid them during their studies. Consequently, these evidence-based facts demonstrate the need for improved communication and outreach to ensure all international students know about existing support services.

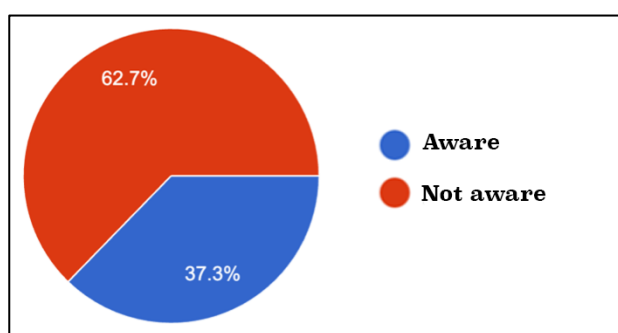


Figure 4-11 Support systems awareness

Type of support systems

The bar chart illustrated the types of support systems that were used by international students when studying. A total of 51 respondents indicated 37 (72.5%) relied on peers, friends or old students, while online communities or online resources were reported by 18 respondents (35.3%) and 14 (27.5%) indicated University support systems; although some students believe this cannot effectively provide the support systems that their previous relied on friends and

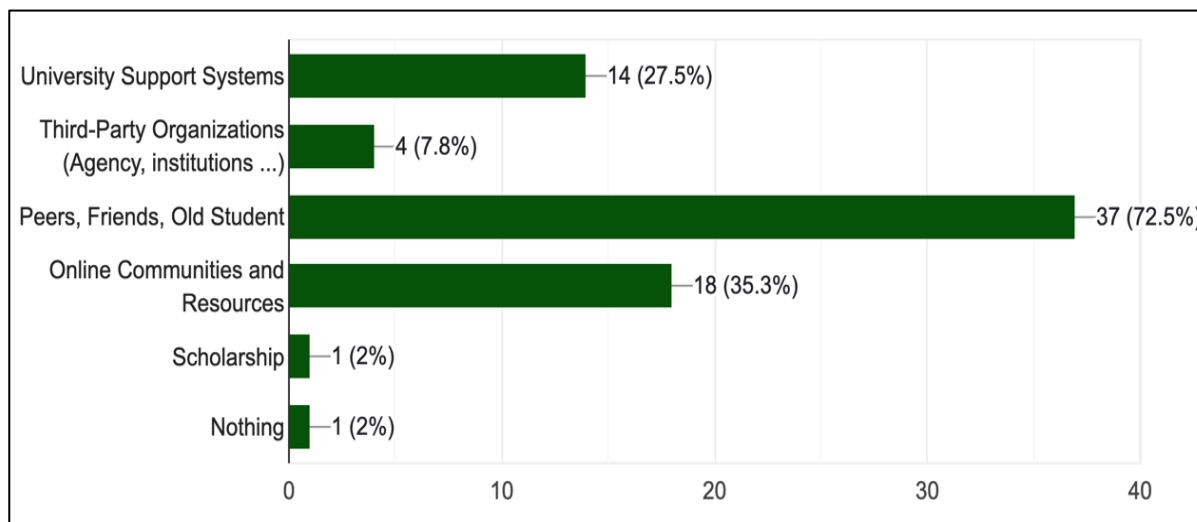


Figure 4-12 Type of support systems

peers for support, institutional support systems, are utilized. The second group of support systems were third-party organizations (agencies or institutions), which reported 4 (7.8%) of respondents utilizing this type of support; external support systems were much less formally utilized. Only 1 (2%) respondent support systems indicated applying scholarships for support while another individual did not indicate anyone or an application of nothing at all. In conclusion, while support systems through support units or resources are utilized by one quarter, and third-party organizations are very rarely used to support international students, normal networks of friends or peers that include and provide informal networks or resources may be a crisis in providing support and may limit international students' successful educational experience.

Type of support services

The bar chart demonstrates the different support services of which international students take advantage. The most used service used is academic advising, with 43.1% (22 respondents) indicating they had used that service. Career services were also widely used, with 27.5% (14 respondents) accessing career services. Financial aid had been utilized by 19.6% (10 respondents) and language support was mentioned by 17.6% (9 respondents). Counselling services and housing assistance were used by 15.7% (8 respondents). Health services and cultural exchange programs had been accessed by 9.8% (5 respondents). Job placement services mentioned by 7.8% (4 respondents) and a large majority, 25.5% (13 respondents) had indicated they had not used any support services. There were a few respondents, 2% (1 respondent) that indicated no services were used. The intent of the bar chart depicts that with the many support services presented to international student populations, academic advising and career services are by far the most utilized; thus, indicating their importance to international

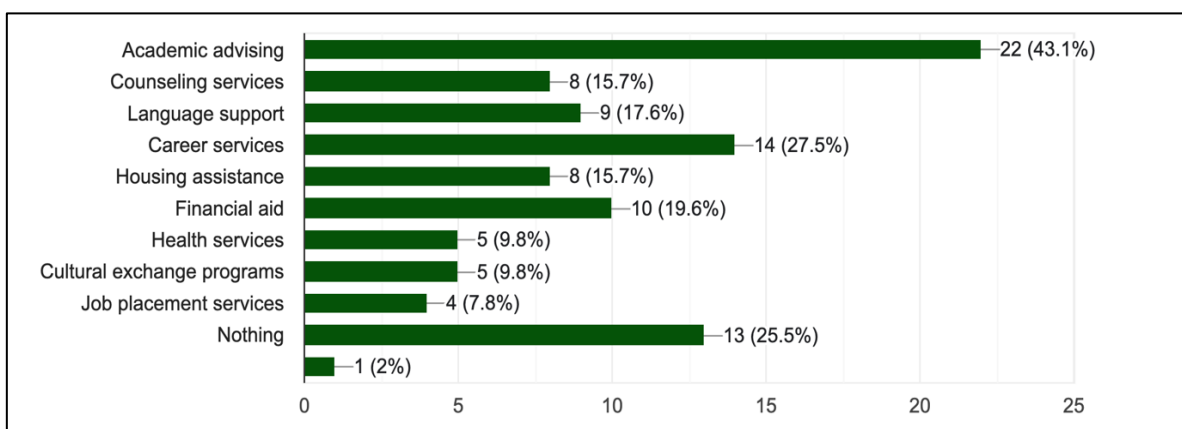


Figure 4-13 Type of support services

students. It is important to note that many students are not utilizing any of the support services which may indicate gaps in knowledge or accessibility.

Support services satisfaction

The pie chart presents the degree of satisfaction of international students with university support services. Out of the total 51 respondents, the largest proportion reported being neutral (45.1%) of the quality of support services. Of the remaining responses, a third (33.3%) reported being dissatisfied, while a further 11.8% were categorised as extremely dissatisfied, meaning they were unhappy generally with the services offered. Conversely, 9.8% suggested that they were somewhat satisfied, with a sizeable 0% reporting that they were extremely satisfied. We can surmise that while some students are certainly satisfied with their access to support services, a considerable proportion of students are either indifferent to support services offered or not satisfied with the quality of service they receive, suggesting an opportunity for improvement of either the quality of service or access to the quality of service.

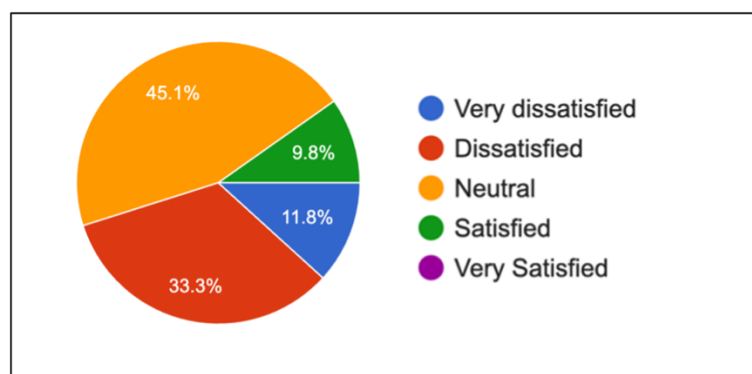


Figure 4-14 Support system satisfaction

Support system helpfulness

The outcomes of the survey provide further insight into the various ways students perceive helpfulness of different advising resources available to them. Peers, friends, and students who have already taken a course rated this as the most helpful, as 16 highlighted it as "Very Helpful," while 22 stated "Helpful." This demonstrates the importance of relying on informal networks for good, relatable advice to students. Online communities and resources were similarly rated as helpful: 9 students rated as "Very Helpful" and 22 as "Helpful," which shows a developing awareness concerning the need and availability of support to students who pursues online communities and resources.

In contrast, the support directly from the university service system was generally seen as less effective, with mostly neutral responses (22). There were 10 respondents who viewed

university support systems as "Helpful," and only 1 rated as "Very Helpful," which seems to imply university support services are available, but not necessarily meeting student needs. Third party organizations (agencies, institutions, etc.) sent to gain the least helpfulness, with the most answers were neutral (24), but just as importantly the total of "not helpful" (15) or "Not very helpful" (7) responses given. Based on these findings, there were no responses indicating third-party organizations as "Very Helpful," demonstrating a clear gap in perceived help from these locations.

Overall, these findings suggest students are looking to peer networks and online communities for helpful advice, while formalized university services, or third-party organizations are perceived to be less helpful, and in many cases neutral or not helpful by student's assessments.

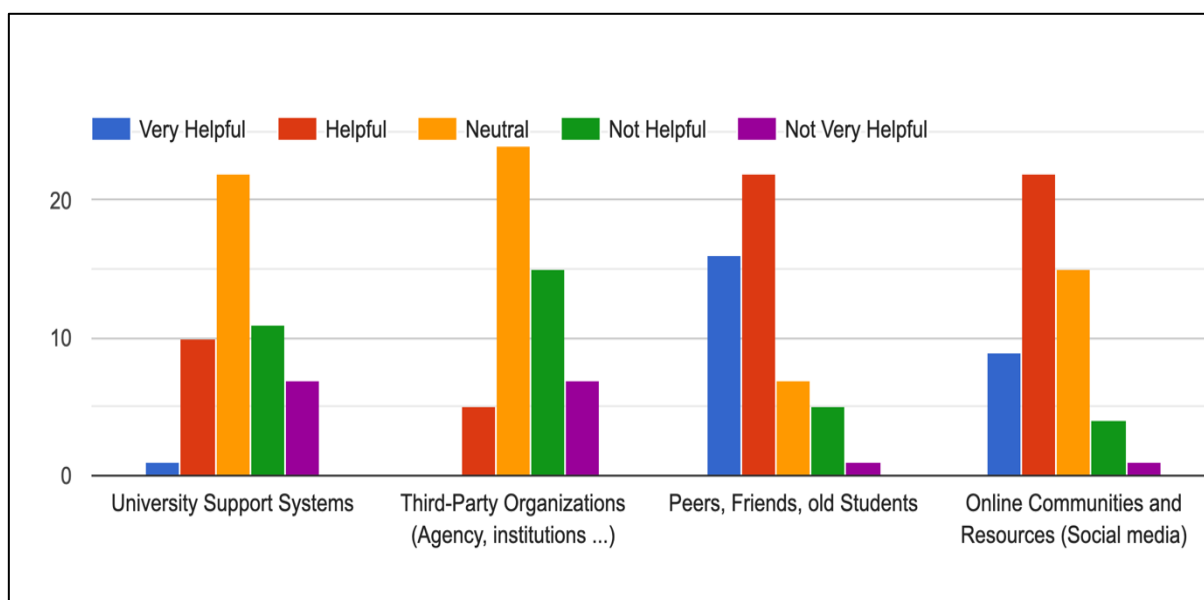


Figure 4-15 Support systems satisfaction in terms of helpful

Support system Accessibility

Findings from the review provide insight regarding how students rate the accessibility of different advising options. Peers, friends, and/or former students were rated as the most accessible, with 9 respondents marking as "Very Accessible," and 28 as "Accessible." This indicates that students felt they could access assistance from an informal support system relatively easily. Likewise, online communities and resources (social media), were also positively rated when accessing assistance, rated with 8 respondents as "Very Accessible," and 24 students as "Accessible." Given this, both peer networks and online communities are viewed as highly accessible resources by students.

University support systems are rated more mixed. While 3 respondents rated University supports as "Very Accessible," and 18 rated them "Accessible," a sizable number of respondents rated the services neutral (15). This suggests that many students do not perceive supports from the University to be accessed easily. In terms of perceived accessibility, third-party organizations (agencies, institutions, etc.) were perceived as the most inaccessible. Here, many respondents rated their accessibility as neutral (29), with only 10 respondents rating them as "Accessible." Additionally, a high number of respondents rated the third-party organizations as "Not Accessible" (6), and "Not Very Accessible" (6), suggesting to us that many students may struggle with accessing services.

Overall, the results suggest that informal support systems, such as peers and online communities, are the most accessible compared to university supports and third-party organizations, with many students rating these services' accessibility as neutral, or lower.

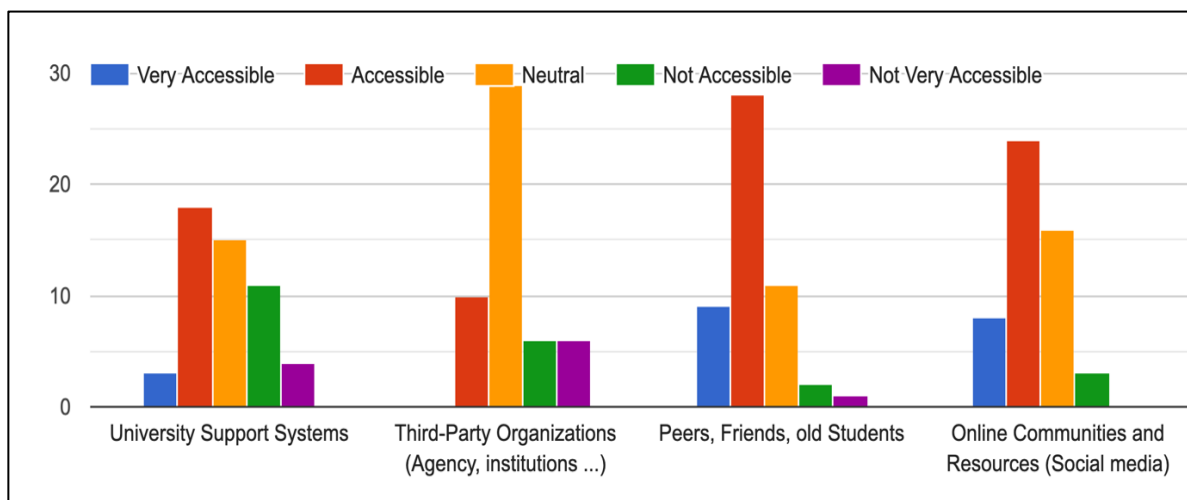


Figure 4-16 Support systems satisfaction in terms of accessible

Support system usability

The results of our survey reveal students' perceptions regarding ease of use of the different means of advising support. Peers and friends and former students were rated the easiest to use, with 13 marking this support type as "Very Easy," and 25 marking it as "Easy," indicating that informal networks are easy to access and user-friendly. Similarly, online communities and resources (i.e., social media) were rated with high levels of ease to use; society members reported ratings as follows: 12 "Very Easy," with 21 "Easy."

In contrast, the survey feedback in response university support systems revealed more divergent feedback. While 3 reported "Very Easy," and 10 "Easy," a substantial number rated a neutral response of 18. Indicating that these services did not seem (to this reported)

particularly "Easy" or "Not Easy." Responses related to third-party organizational institutions seem to be the least user-friendly advising services, as 23 reported a neutral response, and reported 16 "Not Easy," and 5 "Not Very Easy." Very few (7) reported "Easy," and none reported "Very Easy," which account for classification as difficult to use.

Overall, still implies that informal support system advising services, especially peers and online resources, were rated easiest to use in advising contexts. But, both formal university through organizational services are seen as much less user-friendly in advising contexts overwhelmingly so with many students rating "Neutral," or "Difficult."

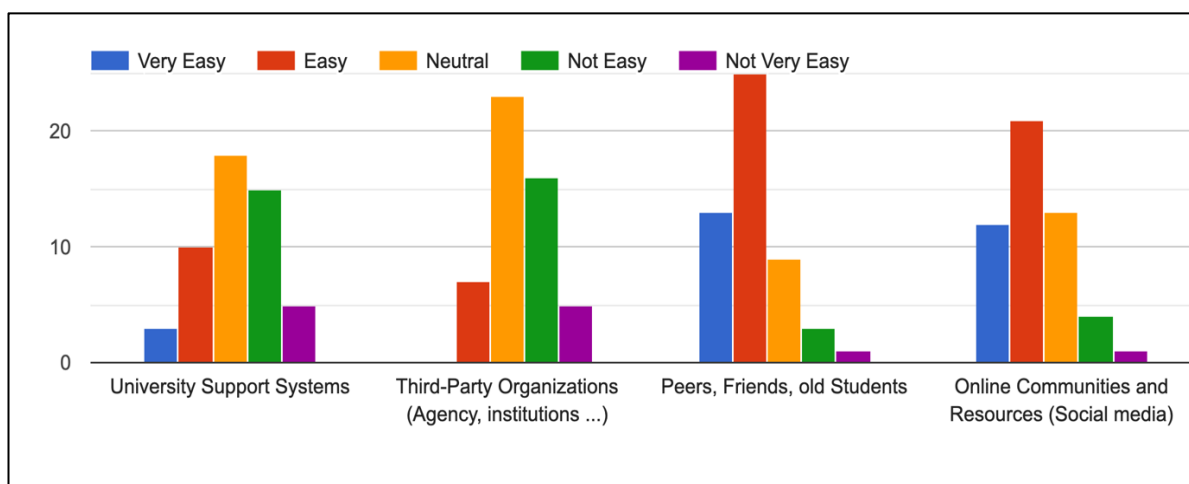


Figure 4-17 Support systems satisfaction in terms of easy to use

High Interest in Peer Connections

The pie chart indicates that a significant majority of respondents, 88.2%, are interested in peer connections to previous students who have experienced similar situations; while just 11.8%, or 6 respondents, stated they are not interested in peer connections. The high interest students have in peer connections implies the importance students give to peers who have experienced similar experiences and the peer support this offers. It suggests offering peer connections with alumni or or more senior students may be a valuable peer support strategy within the university.

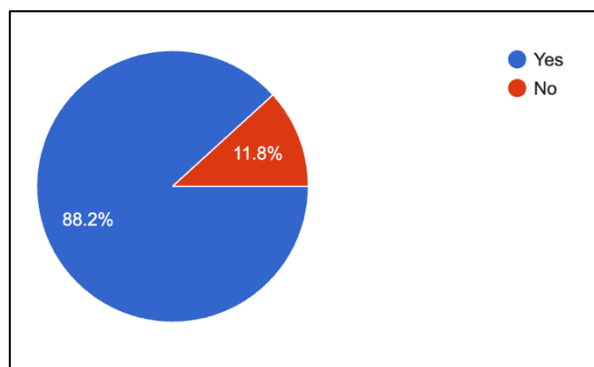


Figure 4-18 Interesting in sharing the experience

High Willingness to Support Future Students

The pie chart shows that 90.2% of participants (46 of 51) are willing to share their experiences and help new students if they have assistance from older students. The percentage of respondents who said they would not be willing to pass on this help is small at 9.8%, (also 5 respondents). This strong willingness to help illustrates the potential for a strong, supportive community within the study body where experience and knowledge is transferred between peers across different cohorts of students.

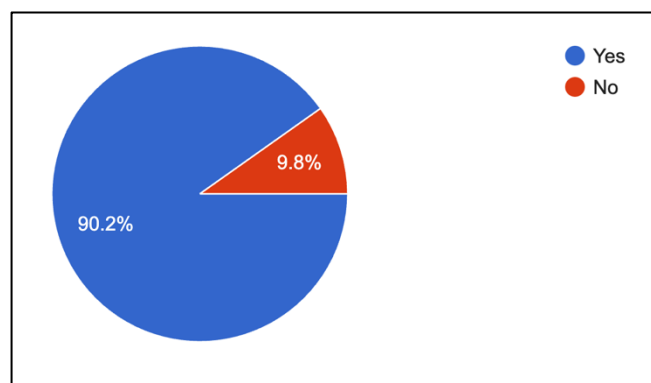


Figure 4-19 Interesting to help new students

4.5 Discussion

Studying overseas is not always easy, particularly for international students who face complex and multi-faceted barriers. It can be academic, financial, social, and cultural that culminate in the overall experienced abroad. The aim of this study is not only finding the common difficulties through the heterogeneous sample of international students in Italy, but also is to evaluate the existing current support systems in helping the new and current international students to navigate these challenges. The results, which are based on both qualitative interviews and a large-scale survey, show a variety of issues that international students' struggle with, including financial problems, language difficulties, finding a job and accommodation and social integration. The aim of this part is to place these findings in the context of the wider academic discussion of international student life, reflecting on the results and proposing possible solutions and areas for improvement.

The discussion part begins with the mention of the main obstacles chosen in the study: Financial problems, language barriers, finding job and accommodation and adapting to the new academic systems and social environments. Each of these challenges explore in detail, with emphasis on thinking about the causes and the way in which they affect the daily lives and academic success of international students. Moreover, the support systems both university

support systems and the peer networks and online communities are highlighted, the later begin used to scope with stressors identified by the discussion, more often. To find out how effectively these programs are meeting students' requirements, differences in their perceived efficacy and availability are examined, along with differences in how they are used.

The financial burdens faced by international students are one of the most striking findings from this study. With 69.2 % of those surveyed saying that money problems are the main cause of them, all the costs living, tuition fees, and the impossibility of finding part time jobs severely restrict students' engagement in academic life and social activities. Additionally, financial problems are magnified by the fact that this population of students has a problem with scholarship application or obtaining financial aid. For example, most students stated that they were dependent on scholarships to cover their expenses, but the fact that this source of funding is often scarce is a big problem. Besides, the part timers who want to work are restricted by the language barriers and work permit limitation issues, with 73.1% of the respondents pointing out that language matters were the main reason that they could not find a job.

Another significant challenge in the form of a high difficulty of getting suitable accommodation appeared, with the 56.9% of the students dutifully reporting problems in this aspect. The question of increasing the number of affordable houses together with the language barriers as well as the ignorance of the local rental procedures make it worse. Several students shared stories about their problems with accommodation upon arrival in Italy, which usually led them to perform social media groups or peer networks to get a place to stay. Through university housing offices are available, many of them are generally considered expensive or insufficient, due to this student go for alternatives that are more compatible with their budgets.

As for academic challenges, 29.4% of respondents reported the difficulties that come with the divergence in the teaching styles and academic schedules. A lot of international students are coming from countries whose education systems are a lot different from that of Italy, and this could make them have some difficulties in the transition, especially when you add the language barriers to this. Grasping of course materials and conversing with professors were also the stated common academic challenges, especially for students who have a limited command in Italian. The contradictory thing is that, even though language barriers were a common theme in both academic and social contexts, 54.9% of participants pinpointed language difficulties as a serious challenge during their adaptation process. This reflects the urgency of the need for language support services to be made available for learners to be able to cope both with their

academic work and everyday life in Italy. Another key area of concern is social integration. As indicated by the results, language and cultural barriers stand out as the primary obstacles to meaningful social contacts; 72.5% of students named a problem with communication as a serious obstacle that hampered the processes of the students' integration into the social environment. Moreover, a significant share of respondents also experienced difficulties in making friends and participating in social activities. Specifically, these effects have been evident in students who studied in countries outside Europe because of the implied additional layers of cultural adjustment. Although less reported by 13.7% of respondents, the lack of social support networks is an influential factor upon isolation and homesickness and still constitutes a big problem for some of the students.

Nevertheless, research has confirmed the concerns that many international students are either not aware of or are not availing of the services offered by their universities. More than 60% of students said they didn't know about the services they could have had from the university, such as academic advising, career services, the language support, etc. This not only points out the issue of communication faults between universities and their international students but also holds many other complexities. Not surprisingly, those who had faced those services complained that they were ineffective, with a single digit, 9.8% of the total entries, approved by their institution as the satisfactory service. Interestingly, the study came up with the result that informal support systems for example peer networks and online communities were mostly used and picked as more effective than the formal university services. A considerable multitude of students were counselled by fellow students, friends, or former students to overcome their shortcomings. This finding points the crucial role that networks and peer communication can be effective in support international students and lets the researcher make the platform that has both networking communication and advice for the international students by finding each other in a same university, degree, program, nationality and language.

In summary, the researcher provides a consultant advisory platform for international students to break down the barriers and help them to study abroad without any obstacles. Additionally, based on the data received from the participants, the researcher realized that the platform should be online with a community of international students and peer network, on the other hand, the students can earn money to solve the financial problems without any language difficulties and also received the good information to solve the challenges. In the last part of the thesis, the researcher explore this innovative and new advisory platform to discuss and find the positive points for international students.

4.6 Financial Challenges Analysis

The research results depict that financial challenges are one of the most common problems experienced by the international students from other countries in Italy. The analysis shows that as high as 69.2% of the respondents listed financial issues as their main worry. Together with the living expenses and universities fees, the chance finding a job and especially part-time jobs were very few so the students who had to juggle study and personal life during this period faced an overwhelming amount of stress.

Number	Biggest challenges	responded	Percentage
1	Financial issue	36	69.2%
2	Finding job	32	61.5%
3	Finding accommodation	30	57.7%
4	Language barriers	29	55.8%
5	Social integration	16	30.8%
6	Academic difficulties	15	28.8%
7	Culture adoption	8	15.4%
8	Homesick	8	15.4%

Table 4-2 Biggest challenges

One of the factors driving financial strain in Italian cities is the very high cost of living, especially in big city areas where universities are found. Besides the rent, the amount that students staying in Italy must spend on their food, transport, and just other expenditures is usually much more than what the foreign students predicted. Besides, while most students are financed by scholarships, these scholarships are not numerous and also, the application process is really competitive. And though students may get some aid, it usually does not cover all their daily expenses.

One of the main reasons that make financial problems of international students even worse is their inability to find part-time jobs. The interview was an incredible success, enabling the research to get underway. In most cases, students need to have a good command of the Italian

language, as most of the job opportunities in local areas are related to fluency in Italian. This language barrier is the most significant factor that prevents them from getting jobs. Those without proper language skills are only hired in the foreign sector for example in international environments and further, they face high competition.

To students from other countries seeking employment, the issue of work permit restrictions is the next major cause for concern. Numerous students can only work for a small number of hours every week because of their visa regulations. This is a further letdown in their ability to upgrade economic challenges. The ones who manage to find work are faced with the hard job of doing their academic requirements and working part-time, especially if they are going through financial difficulties.

Charges for tuition and other living expenses are not the only financial burden that the students must shoulder after their arrival in Italy. One example is the difficulty of getting through the local banking system and transferring money from the country of their nationality which in addition to more charges can cause even more expenses and delays. Also, students usually have to deal with unexpected costs such as health insurance, visa renewals, and administrative fees which arise because of their living in different countries. These additional expenditures, along with the culture shock of learning to manage one's money in a foreign country, make it extra difficult for students who are already trying to stay within a low budget.

Chain Circle of international student

The international students' journey usually facing financial challenges can be likened to a complex chain circle where each barrier move to the next one, creating a cycle of problem. A sizable number of students reported that they could not dedicate themselves completely to their studies due to the continuous pressing workload of sorts they needed to manage. Upon the international students arrived in abroad, they face with financial barriers and start to search a part time job. Moreover, the problem is however that many students do not easily get jobs due to factors like the language barrier, restrictions on work permits, limited job availabilities, and not having local work experience. This is the initial and major problem in their academic journey.

The second difficulty for individuals who are lucky enough to land a part-time employment is the limited hours that are required of students. Even when they start making money, it frequently isn't enough to pay for everything. In addition, students become exhausted trying to strike a balance between employment and school since they are working during their little free time rather than studying. This puts in contradiction the need to succeed academically and the need to make money to survive.

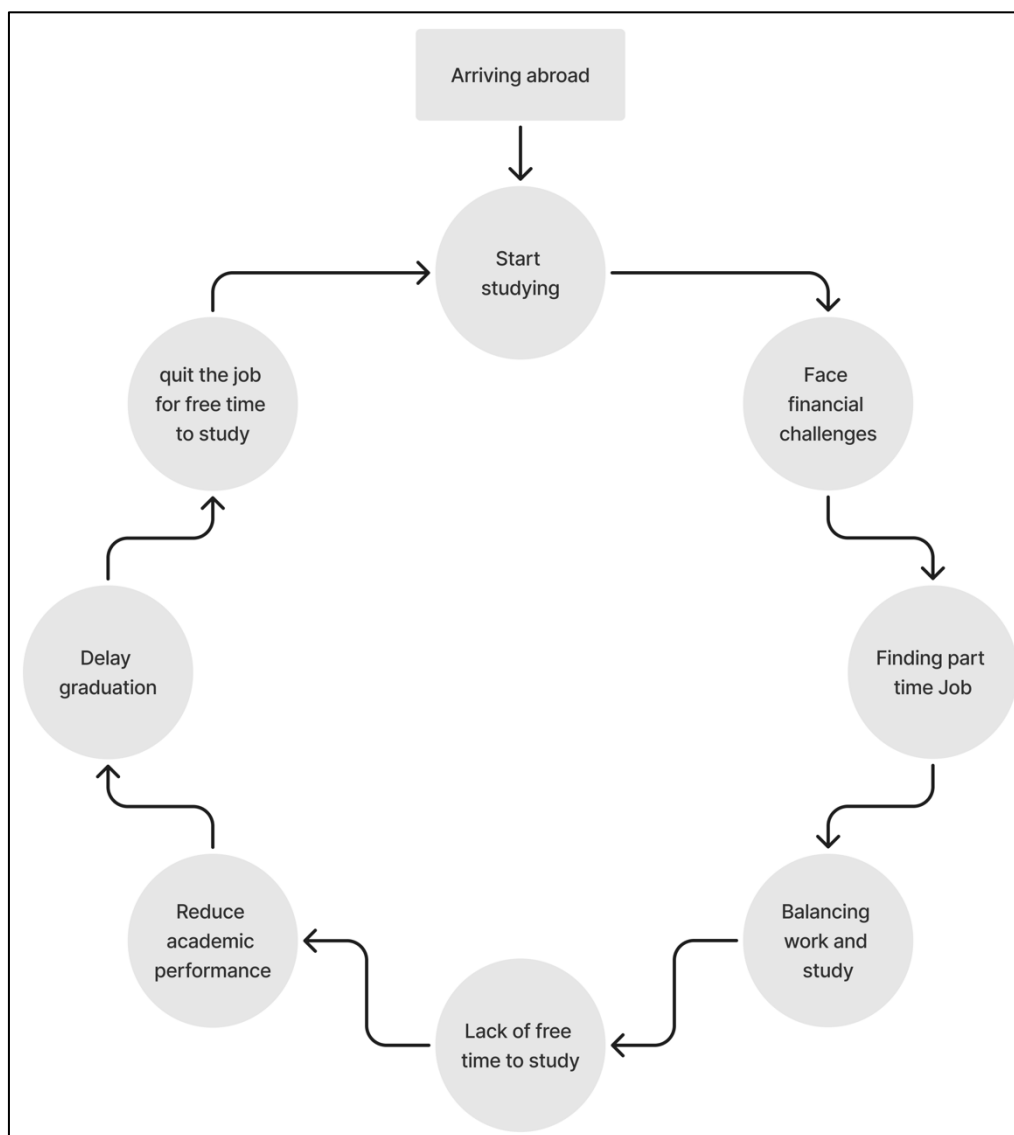


Table 4-3 International students life Circle during time abroad

Most of the time, when students are tired and overwhelmed, they start facing the problem of poor academic performance which leads to postponement of their graduation and makes them even more disheartened to go on. Since their journey in school becomes longer, the initial idea of studying abroad—to gain knowledge and make adaptations—fades and is not mentioned. A lot of learners are unable to come out of this cycle where issues of money and the need for more work do not go away. They find no time to study, and they take a shot at delayed

graduation, meanwhile struggling to keep their motivation high. Breaking the cycle demands real time as students are expected not to only reprioritize time but also to make university the focus of decision.

Financial Impact

Many a time, foreign students are restricted by insufficient matter finance when they happen to touch down in another country. Tuition fees and the incredibly high costs of living put a great deal of strain upon the students, a lot of whom depend on the part-time jobs working. However, the limited number of working hours allowed by student visas often restricts students from earning enough to cover their basic expenses to manage finances, work part-time, and study at the same time creates a constant source of stress that significantly impacts academic performance.

The financial strain is the underlying factor that compels so many students to choose employment over classes, taking part in academic conversations, as well as participating in additional academic activities such as study groups and research projects. This fact is confirmed by studies which prove that foreign students who under financial crunch are prone to suffer from burnout, which results in worse grades, not meeting the deadlines, and poor performance in academics. In the article, (Beine, Noël and Ragot,2014) write about the truth that students in the case of financial hardships suffer delays in their academic development and most of them need more time to graduate because they cannot afford to completely focus on their studies only.

Moreover, financial difficulties can lead to mental weariness and anxiety, which also distracts students from doing their work well. Consequently, the cognitive energy of the students is consumed in the contemplation of ways of their survival rather than in their studies. That is why students are affected by the situation which leads to the downslide of the level of academic performance. The continuous pursuit of success through the pressure very often ends with a lack of interest in doing something, whereas some students quit their studies because of inability to keep up if they have not.

International students' financial crisis like their poor academic performance is the other reason for their social disintegration. Financial pressure is the most common problem faced by these students. Therefore, they can't join in various activities which are supposed to help them form a social network and fit into that new nation. Activities such as cultural and social event games, sports events and different student organizations have costs associated with them, for example,

membership fees and/or transportation is needed. Students who can barely manage their finances might not be able to pay for such activities which might lead to feelings of loneliness.

Research has shown that being socially integrated is the main factor that international students are measured for their mental health. In fact, societies are important for the provision of emotional support and the regulation of cultural and academic loads. Besides, in cases of financial difficulties students are often unable to participate in clubs or activities, and thus, not only do they miss the opportunity to make friends with others but also, they are limited in their chance to get familiar with the local environment. It is a well-known fact that, isolating international students, not only does it increase their feelings of isolation and homesickness, but also it makes matters worse.

The limitation in the absence of social gatherings can likewise adversely affect the students' mental health, as the financial burden has been shown to be linked to the greater emotional disturbances of anxiety and depression among international students. A lot of students find themselves in the vicious circle where the financial pressure is a source of coping and is at the same time being left alone, which is the reason for a negative influence on their academic performance, as they cannot be paired with the peers and get the necessary resources for their social connection. Interaction with society, which is constantly missing in the foreign student's life, converts into a severe symptom of a student's mental disorder, which refers directly to worse academic scores and a lower level of satisfaction with their study abroad.

The first row of the table outlines how work hours negatively affect the academic performance of international students. The situation is such that a lot of foreign undergraduate students require part-time jobs to pay for their college piece and living expenses. Nevertheless, the prolonged hours spent on their jobs diminish the total time, availability for studying, attending classes and assignment completion. The work-life schedule becomes so disorderly that it leads to excess fatigue and burnout hence the possibility of undergraduates coping with the challenges decreases. Changes in their behaviour reflect the increased difficulty students experience in keeping up with the coursework material and their subsequent final grades which are not optimal. Besides failing to allocate enough time to concentrate their studies, this also reduces their ability to ensure the achievement of the high scores limited to themselves and to find the best academic tracking systems.

In the second row, the table explores the role of different income levels in students' lives. A lack of money to cover living expenses or for leisure activities is one of the key areas of concern

faced by international students. They are subjected to a range of living costs: things like tuition fees, rent, food, and other general living expenses. In the situation whereby students do not earn enough money from part-time jobs, or they are not financially supported enough by their (scholarships), they often experience money pressure. This tension is a significant factor in both their emotional and intellectual growth. Students are in a situation where they are forced to work a higher number of hours instead of studying or become confused and unhappy about their financial state which in turn negatively affects their academic achievements.

The third line of the table expresses that the lack of financial resources results in a decrease in academic participation. Many foreign students, who are running out of money, miss various kinds of academic activities including team projects, office hours, or sometimes even participation in academic events that occur outside the classroom. This is due to their private time being used on catching up with the studies, not "playing" other activities that are very useful in developing new skills or generating friendships. Destroying the time for the completion of the leaves no space for the full engagement of students in additional learning opportunities. So daunting is the fact that students cannot chat more freely with professors about the latest highs and lows of their lives or problems that stop them from being active learners. Salvation comes through the idea that they miss out on comprehending and seeing the context of the course, or they find it hard to socialize with and keep up with peers, are likely to be the outcomes of this scenario. As a result, they may have lower grades and deteriorated academic performance due to the lack of engagement.

Looking at the financial issue from the angle of social integration, the fourth row is the most striking one. Such social activities as clubs, sports, and cultural events require extra money that is not always affordable for students who are economically disadvantaged. These activity gatherings are essential for forming connections and forming a supporting network as well as integrating into the university and city communities. If students are deprived of their participation due to financial limitations, they may start feeling social outcasts, so it drives loneliness and alienation even more. These students, apart from the emotional damage, also will be deprived of accessing informal academic oncology support, as their peers are less able to provide it.

The fifth row underscores the strong connection between financial strain and mental health. Financial problems often interfere with anxiety, depression, and burnout, which are harmful to the student. Success in school is a student's most important objective. Continual financial stress

leads to demotivation, problems with concentration, and the very hassle of attending to the studies. While the students' mental health continues to deteriorate, so do the academic performances. They cannot retain information or complete assignments and may also not be that participatory in class. Psychiatric disorders keep students away from school; being away from school is a potential deterrent to keeping pace with class studies and obtaining good grades.

Lastly, the final row of the table expresses the relationship between monetary problems and the postponement of graduation. If pupils spend too much time on work or live through prolonged financial stress periods, they may not be able to complete their coursework on time, and thus they will have to extend their study periods. One major problem that international students usually face is delaying their graduation, as they experience difficulties in either managing their financial obligations or their academic duties. These actuations also take a stand such that more time elapses their stay oversea, which results in the augmented cost of tuition, and it brings long state of stress. Furthermore, the duration can dent their career and academic ambitions, because they might miss many opportunities to establish a quality academic background and meet other people working within the same field.

Area of Impact	Description	Outcome
Work Hours	Long hours working to cover expenses	Reduced study time, fatigue
Income Levels	Insufficient income to cover tuition and living costs	Stress, need for more work hours
Academic Engagement	Less time for academic activities due to work	Lower academic performance
Social Integration	Financial constraints prevent participation in social events	Isolation, lack of peer support
Mental Health	Financial stress leading to anxiety and burnout	Decreased motivation, performance
Graduation Time	Delayed course completion due to financial barriers	Prolonged time to graduate

Table 4-4 Financial Impact on education

4.7 Finding job Analysis

As per the data gathered from the participants, the second-most vital hurdle confronted by international students, with 61.5% of the respondents pointing to it, is the complication in finding part-time work. For many international students, getting a job of part-time basis is a necessity to manage their finances while studying abroad. These students often need the income from working to attempt to meet their living expenses, tuition fees, along with other financial necessities. However, succumbing to the tedious, through the arduous, process of seeking appropriate vacancies in a foreign country often becomes a significant obstacle to overcome.

Language barriers are one of the significant problems particularly in countries where don't speak English, where many careers and organization need to language fluency of their native language. There is a limitation for international students to find a job without knowing their language and usually they find a manual work and low paid company to work. This problem, increase the finding job and raise the stress and financial problems for the international students.

Additionally, Restrictions on work permits for overseas students make finding a job even more difficult. Student visas sometimes limit the number of hours that students may work, often to part-time jobs in many different countries. Though these rules are intended to put an emphasis on academics, they also hinder students from making enough money to sustain themselves, particularly in places where living expenses are high.

The shortage of local networks and insufficient job market knowledge is also a factor that directly impacts the ability of the students to land a job. International students who don't have

Number	What challenges have you faced in finding a job?	Percentage
1	Language Barriers	73.1%
2	Work permit issues	53.8%
3	Limit job oppurtunities	50%
4	Balancing work and study	50%
5	Work Experience	26.9%
6	Prefer not answer	3.8%

Table 4-5 Biggest challenges for finding job

context or knowledge of the local economy struggle to find the same resources as local students. Lack of opportunities to supplement their income with part-time jobs only creates more financial pressure, which in turn impacts their academics and social life during their time abroad.

impact of language on finding job

While seeking employment in Italy one of the most burning issues the international students suffer from is the language barrier. Students from foreign countries are expected to find part-time jobs to pay for their living and studying expenses. Unfortunately, for many jobs, Italian language knowledge is a must, especially in the customer service field and the other industries different types of jobs of which are open to the local people who must communicate with them. This problem makes the issue of the work non-availability to the foreigner to be more critical and increases the pressure on them by taking away some money from them.

Many international students choose to enrol in English-taught programs, enabling them to continue their education even if they do not speak Italian well. While this encourages academic involvement, it restricts their career prospects because many part-time positions need at least a basic level of skill in Italian (Marginson & Sawir, 2011). Fluency in Italian is still required for most job ads, even in locations like Rome or Milan that have a greater number of international students. Students who don't have the language proficiency for this employment sometimes have to compete for the few jobs that don't need Italian, including those in multinational corporations or firms that cater only to expats (Cingolani, 2017).

Aspect	Description	Impact
Limited Job Opportunities	Most jobs require fluency in Italian, particularly customer-facing roles.	Fewer job options; students rely on low-paying jobs.
Extended Job Search Time	Language proficiency issues prolong job search duration.	Longer time to find employment; higher financial stress.
Financial Insecurity	Difficulty securing well-paying jobs due to language barriers.	Increases financial pressure; affects academic focus.
Reduced Academic Performance	Balancing language learning and job searching impacts time available for studies.	Academic performance suffers; delayed graduation.

Table 4-6 Impact of language on finding job

Research reveals that language proficiency is important in job market integration and those who cannot communicate effectively in the language of their host country are at big disadvantages when looking for work (Boeri & Brücker, 2011). For international students in Italy, their lack of fluency in Italian is the main reason which limits job prospects, and it also can be the reason of their feelings of isolation because they are not able to communicate with the local community. Besides that, the language barrier can lead to longer job searches, more financial insecurity, and eventually lower grades as students find it difficult to strike a balance in the financial aspect and their studies (Chiswick & Miller, 2007).

Impact of Work Permit Issue On finding job

International students in Italy who are interested in part-time employment often facing the hard task of securing a work permit. With non-EU students limited to a maximum of 20 hours of work per week in accordance with Italian law, but a ceiling of 1040 hours a year (Italian Ministry of Labour, 2021), students were posed with a double-edged sword of university priority and the lock down of their earning capacity to cover the many living costs, the latter of which is specifically about the high-cost cities like Rome or Milan. Besides the fact that these regulations seek to encourage students to focus on their studies, they are also a severe restriction that prevents the students from earning enough money to pay the expenses such as life, food and entertainment. The situation poses a severe financial burden for students who work part-time for their living during their studies.

Also, the given short-time job arrangement can take away some of the students' attractions to employers in the circumstances when local workers are not even restricted to the time limit. Therefore, many students who come from other countries will be given fewer hours or lower salaries at jobs like retail and internships, where the work schedule is uncertain, and job security is poor, those working in these sectors must have the most flexible, thus they may not be able to save some money (Cingolani, 2017). These positions, because they are indispensable to students as a source of income, unfortunately, do not offer them the necessary stability.

Keyvan who is a participant in our interview who is from Iran at CA' Foscari university shared his experience for the unaccepted job interview due to lack of Permit (Permesso di soggiorno): "Here in Italy, especially in Veneto Region, the process of getting the study permit is approximately one year and even after receiving the card, your card will be expired soon. I posted my Kit Permesso in the post office and after one month I received a message that provided me an appointment, and I realized that my appointment is in next 8 months. After the

meeting in police office, I received my permit after 60 days and I realized that just have 2 months expiry. So, during this time, I did some interview for part jobs but unfortunately the employers didn't accept me due to missing permit. On the other hand, I applied for delivery jobs online and they didn't accept me because of missing the documents".

In summary, complicated official systems, and hesitancy of employers to hire non-European Union students in Italy are the main barriers for employment of these students. As a result of this, many students, regardless of their efforts to find a legitimate, part-time job while they are still studying, still have difficulty affording their living expenses.

aspect	Description	Impact
Work Hour Limit	International students are limited to 20 hours per week.	Limits students' earning potential.
Annual Hour Cap	Maximum 1,040 hours per year.	Prevents students from working full-time during breaks.
Complex Bureaucratic Process	Difficulties in obtaining work permits due to administrative hurdles.	Discourages employers from hiring international students.
Employer Reluctance	Employers may avoid hiring due to compliance issues.	Reduces job opportunities for international students.
Sector Limitation	Students are often limited to informal or low-paying sectors.	Lower job security and income.

Table 4-7 Impact of Work Permit on finding job

4.8 Finding Accommodation Analysis

One of the major issues that the students coming from other countries to Italy face is obtaining a suitable housing. The students must struggle with this problem due to a number of reasons such as the expensive housing in the big cities, limited student dorm availability, and the fact they have to deal with the complicated renting system in a foreign country. In line with the warmth attitude of a native, the authors (Cattaneo et al 2017) bring the fact that among the international students to accomplish their housing is mostly a problem. Although there are many different things international students report to be troublesome, housing is the one that is mentioned most frequently as their primary concern on arrival, for several reasons as they usually do not possess enough local market knowledge and connections. So, the process of

finding affordable living spaces is challenging for them. This is discussed by a study done by (Cattaneo et al.2017). In this regard, the researchers found that many students reported the first-place housing among others as the most pressing matter while coming to the city, given that they often have little access to the local rental market and scarce connections to purchase cheaper solutions.

For instance, when it comes to rent, city biodiversity will be compromised. Cities like Rome, Milan, and Florence are quite popular among students, but the rent there is something that most of them cannot bear. Many of the students are only trying to get through with the daily difficulties-filled tuition fees and living expenses. As per the (European Commission Housing Survey, 2018), in Italy, the rental prices have been constantly growing; therefore, it is a struggle for students to find cheap housing close to the universities. This monetary situation usually leads to students occupying overcrowded or poorly provided stayovers, the effect of which directly affects their overall well-being and experiences.

Number	Challenges	Number of response	Percentage
1	Limited availability	41	78.8%
2	High cost	34	65.4%
3	Quality of housing	21	40.4%
4	Location	19	36.5%
5	Language barriers	17	32.7%
6	Easy to find	4	7.7%
7	Prefer Not Answer	2	3.8%

Table 4-8 Accommodation challenges

Correspondingly, the insufficient number of university-provided housing is a major contributor to the issue. The opposite happens if you are in an Italian university, where the number of berths is scarce, and you must sign up early to get one. Here most students who do not have on-campus housing can easily choose renting in the open market. They have nuts with locals or working students that indeed intensify the struggle. In addition, the inability to speak Italian and no knowledge of the rental laws complicate the process of international students being able to identify housing. According to the findings of (Ponzo and Scisci,2020), many students are

unprepared to handle the legal aspects of renting in Italy, such as signing leases or dealing with landlords, which eventually results in a rental property crisis.

In summary, the lack of affordable houses for rent, the restriction on campus housing, and the peculiarities of the private rental market collectively render the process of accommodation searching a real struggle for students coming from abroad. This, in its turn, leads to facing both financial and social struggles in daily life.

Accommodation challenges	Description	Outcome	References
High Rental Costs	Rent in cities like Rome, Milan, and Florence is often too expensive.	Financial strain; forces students to choose low-quality housing.	(Cattaneo et al.2017)
Limited University Housing and high cost	Italian universities provide limited dormitory spaces for students.	Increased competition for housing; reliance on private market.	(Ponzo & Scisci 2020)
Navigating Rental Market	Language barriers and unfamiliarity with Italian rental laws complicate the search.	Difficulties in signing leases and dealing with landlords.	(Ponzo & Scisci 2020)
Overcrowded or Substandard Housing	Students often live in overcrowded or poor-quality accommodation due to high costs.	Negative impact on well-being and overall study experience.	(Cattaneo et al.2017)

Table 4-9 Housing challenges and impact

4.9 Language barriers Analysis

One of the biggest obstacles that foreign students encounter is language, especially in non-English speaking nations like Italy. These obstacles may have an impact on students’ academic achievement as well as their capacity to fit in with the community. Language ability becomes a crucial aspect when looking for part-time work, which might limit prospects and add to stress.

Speaking Italian is a need for many part-time occupations in Italy, especially those in customer-facing industries (Cattaneo, Malighetti, & Paleari, 2017). This is a significant challenge for international students who are not fluent in the language. Most jobs in bigger cities like Rome and Milan still demand some level of Italian ability, even in places where English is more widely spoken. Due to this language barrier, there is a reduced number of employment available, which makes it more difficult for foreign students to compete. These occupations are typically in physical labour, low-paying industries, or multinational corporations that serve expatriates.

Furthermore, language problems don't just affect job seekers. Due to their inadequate knowledge of legal and bureaucratic jargon, international students also find it difficult to manage administrative procedures like signing rental agreements or applying for jobs (Ponzo & Scisci, 2020). Students find it challenging to bargain with landlords or employers because they are unable to completely comprehend paperwork and processes, which leaves them open to abuse or misinterpretation. For example, if people are not completely informed of their rights, they could accept unpleasant working circumstances or overpay for inadequate housing.

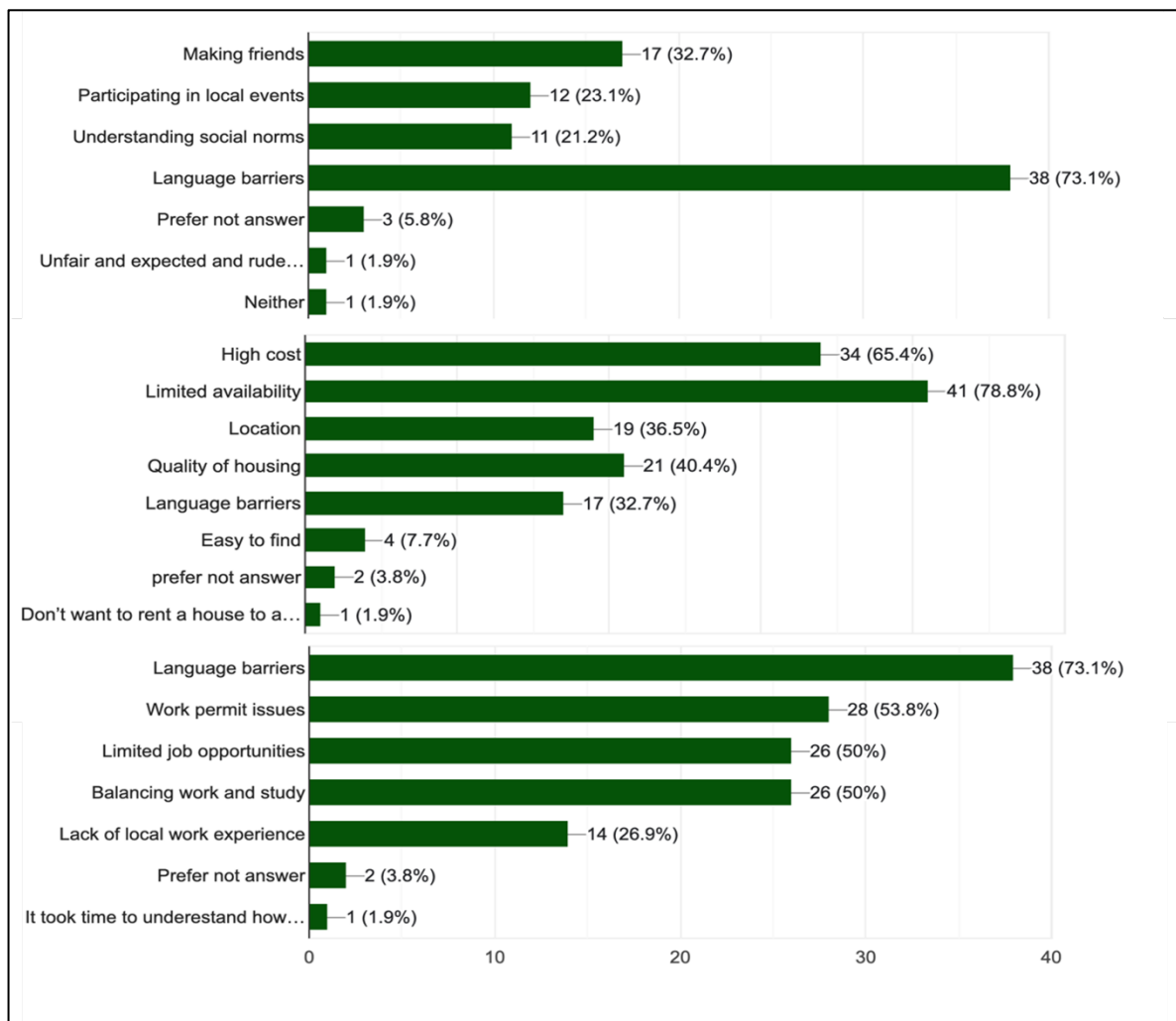


Figure 4-20 Comparison languages barriers

Language barriers hold back more than just work and administrative hurdles. According to investigations, the students that come from abroad and face problems with the local language are likely to feel lonely. They cannot participate in the cultural and social activities as well as chats that are happening in the community. (Sawir et al., 2008). These students are particularly exposed to the risk of mental health issues. They suffer more from loneliness and homesickness, which, consequently, leads to the decline of their academic and overall

experience. The researcher realized from the survey that Language barriers is a significant barrier that is face international students, for the social integration is 73.1% for the language barriers and the students has problem for finding accommodation due to language barriers that is 32.7 %, also in finding job, the first problem is language barriers with 73.1%.

Basically, the major impediments the international students have to face and need to overcome in order to be able to work, communicate with locals, as well as to manage their life, are the language barriers. Additional language support and resources provided will help the foreign students overcome such obstacles and improve their academic and social life.

4.10 Social Integration Analysis

A crucial part of the experience for the international students is social integration, and it is frequently a big part of their wellness and success outside of the country where they study. Social integration is the process by which an individual becomes part of the social and cultural life of the host country. But regarding international students, social, economic development is a key factor for their adaptation and education. And emotional support is mainly required for the academicians.

The chart below introduces some of the main issues international students encounter when trying to fit in socially with the local people in a foreign country. Based on the data, which represents the highest proportion of 73.1%, the most crucial issue reported is the language barrier. Possession of the language is the most important factor of social integration, because it enables the students to talk to the locals in their language, learn about cultural norms and participate in local community events. Most of the time, without a good knowledge of the local language, the foreign students will be left out of social activities which will make them feel lonely and hurt.

Another problem that the chart shows is that of making friends which has been expressed by 32.7% of the respondents. Creating relationships that are meaningful concerning international students is a demanding task, especially if the students do not know the social norms or if the language barrier hinders their communication skills. The absence of physical support in the form of face-to-face interaction can make international students feel disconnected, which then has a negative impact on their mental health and academic performance.

Participating in local events (23.1%) and the understanding of social norms (21.2%) are the other challenges worth mentioning. The distinctness in cultural traits could be a barrier to

international students' involvement in local customs, festivities, and sociable happenings, apart from the fact that it separates them from their local peers and the local community. Also, seen that they come from different cultures, international students could be in a state of confusion as to which bleeds should be worn, what proctoceles are required and what events are important in their school setting. Moreover, the interpretation of the unwritten social rules can be a source of confusion, hence, entering the wrong actions and being awkward in social settings.

These issues acting together have the potential of causing severe emotional and psychological malfunctions among overseas students. It has been found out that the students who have social integration difficulties are those who usually experience states of loneliness, anxiety, and homesickness (Sawir et al., 2008). These sociable troubles may cause academic performance declines because the students that are socially disconnected could have a difficult time concentrating on their studies or finding support when necessary.

4.11 Academic Difficulties Analysis

As far as international students are concerned, the varieties of the academic experience are an inevitable factor. Adapting to a completely new type of education system, adjusting to the unknown teaching styles, and meeting the high academic demand can be very hard to do, more so because of the language barrier, the cultural differences, and financial stresses. Problems international students often come across are those that closely relate to the academic field as their studies may get in hold, of course, a lot then learn to pass these through programmes.

The problem of language proficiency predominantly faces the students whose first language is a challenge to them. Most of the students are studying in countries where the language used for instruction is not their first language. Some of the students attend colleges in countries like Italy, where the mode of communication is entirely foreign to them and often must take up the new language by joining higher academic classes. Academic language used in classrooms, textbooks, and assignments may be more difficult than conversational language in general-which is not just the case for those who learn in a foreign language. This would explain misunderstandings, slower reading, and completion of written tasks. The study shows that poorer command of educational language would mean worse academic performance of international students and higher percentages of dropping out from college.

Other factors that make education challenging are the differences in teaching and learning styles between educational systems. For instance, some educational systems where teaching and learning are teacher cantered and focused in rote memorization, in country like Italy critical

thinking and student participation in discussion and group work like projects are the core of educational systems (Li & Campbell, 2009). This change can effect on misunderstanding and anxiety because the international students may not be aware of working in groups, or confident in effectively discussing classes or sitting for exams in a new academic setting.

Based on the participant's respond, the researcher realized that most students have cited that the issue, about 55.8%, is adaptation with different teaching styles. That is, students from abroad often enter new educational institutions with learning methods completely alien to them. For instance, in some countries, teaching can be more one-sided, and students may be kept more at arm's length, while in Italy (and many other Western countries), there is a lot of emphasis on thinking critically, discussing, and cooperation (Li & Campbell, 2009). One of the significant difficulties that learners need to cope with is the fact that this educational approach is new for them, and they are not used to giving feedback.

Furthermore, 40.4% of the students admitted to having issues with understanding course materials. This, in turn, is ascribed to language barriers, uncommon technical terms, and differences in academic systems. For numerous foreign students, the academic language being used by the lecturers and the textbook is more difficult than the language used in everyday communication. This renders it more problematic for students to fully comprehend abstract topics, which can ultimately lead to academic underperformance. This, too, is due to the use of different techniques in preliminary education (for example, the educational system may emphasize memorization instead of critical thinking), which might also be the case.

As already mentioned, 26.9% of the students reported that language restriction is on top of the academic problems that they are facing. Not even international students, for example, who are good at English and Italian still are find linguistic barriers such as academic jargon and field-specific language usage a thorny issue. Besides, even good students who are not proficient in the local language may find it difficult to express themselves and to understand what is being said. Thus, this difficulty usually becomes a part of the other challenges, such as not being able to follow the course materials, or the professors make connections.

Some other problems, 25% of the students, reported are prevailing in academic resources. This issue can include not only getting books from libraries, but also finding online sources like published papers among others. It is even possible that some international students may not have heard of academic resources being organized the same way in the host country or may have had difficulties using online providers for the same. Blocking the students' access to the

libraries and thus to such resources, due to this dropout of supplies, is the main problem. These students cannot think, develop, discover, and write effectively without enough reading resources, research tools, and instructional support. The ultimate result will be a poor academic record that reflects their lack of effectiveness.

Even though a smaller fraction of 9.6 percent noted that communicating with professors is a major problem, yet it is something that must be given prior importance in the academic world. The differences in the student-teacher bonding in the cultural zone can at times lead to misunderstandings among individuals. Students from a particular culture may be too introverted to talk to teachers or to ask questions, which may ultimately lead to the loss of their academic support. On the contrary, certain teachers might expect higher interaction and contribution from students, and thus, the latter might still be unable to meet these expectations, leading to a mismatch.

According to that graph, the main academic problems of the international students are the differences in teaching styles and the ways of understanding the course material—which appeared as the most important difficulties. Language deficiencies and limited entry to the resources create more opportunities for students to explore their academic experiences. Overcoming these troubles is the duty of the universities that will have to provide more academic support services and increasing the availability of academic resources.

4.12 Culture Adoption and Homesick Analysis

Cultural adaptation is the process that involves the adjustment to a new cultural environment, which is understanding local customs, social norms, and communication style. A lot of international students can find it difficult and long to adapt to a new culture. The difficulties faced while adapting to a new culture are often worsened by cultural shock, which is the phenomena individuals hit when they become uncomfortable with the differences that exist between their home culture and the host culture (Ward & Masgoret, 2004).

Studying in Italy could be a big problem for international students because they had to cope with another social custom in every society, not being only adaptation toward the new era. Let's present the development through changing the example. A visitor coming from a society that is wicked in hierarchically might find it hard to weave into the Italian context, considering the non-academic looks of the student-teacher relationships. Differently, international students might find the process of fostering friendships and developing social networks scary because of the various cultural differences, leading them to feel lonely and becoming aliens in the new

community (Sawir et al., 2008). The inability of these culturally diverse students to totally blend in with the new campus lifestyle often brings feelings of anger and unease, which has a direct consequence, both to the personal and academic domain.

Nevertheless, homesickness is a very common issue among international students. As a result, they are often far from home and far off their loved ones and familiar areas. Homesickness is a prevailing feeling of longing for home, enjoyment of one's culture, and emotional distress caused by the absence of standard support systems (Thurber & Walton, 2012). Homesickness for many foreign students may be described as sadness, loneliness, a lack of motivation, thus all of these can have a negative effect on their mental health and academic performance.

Homesickness can also cause other challenges, such as not keeping pace with the local culture. Homesick scholars may choose to stay away from interacting with people and just stay in their rooms without developing the culture of the target area further restricting their adjustment chances. A research study has demonstrated that homesick students are more likely to have poor academic results as they are less willing to be engaged in their studies and more likely to be unable to concentrate (Sawir et al., 2008). The mix of homesickness and the challenges of adapting to the local culture can create a hazardous circle in the condition where students seem both more lonely and less bonded with their academic and social contexts at the same time.

To sum up, international students have these two important to master the ability of embracing a respective culture and dealing with homesickness to say only for a few. Their mental and emotional health as well as academic and social integration in the long run are the issues they must deal with. Universities which must set up adequate help services such as counselling, peer mentoring programs, and cultural workshops should be the ones helping students deal with these problems and thus give them a better experience.

4.13 Support systems analysis

According to the survey and interviews conducted as part of your research, support systems are very important for foreign students to navigate and to cope with their academic and social problems successfully. Especially, international students in Italy utilize many support methods, both formal (e.g., university services) and informal (e.g., peers and online communities). Here's the analysis of the support systems according to the study you have done:

Support systems awareness

According to the survey's findings, 62.7% of the participants did not know about the available support services at their university, while the rest of them, 37.3%, were fully informed about these services. This is indicative of a major problem of communication between the universities and their inter students. Often, without proper promotion, and the provision of support services to all members of a student family, students do not access resources that can help them academically, socially or even financially. This has raised the issue of more efficient orientation programs for universities, which will ensure that all students, notably the newcomers, are well-informed about the support services that help them.

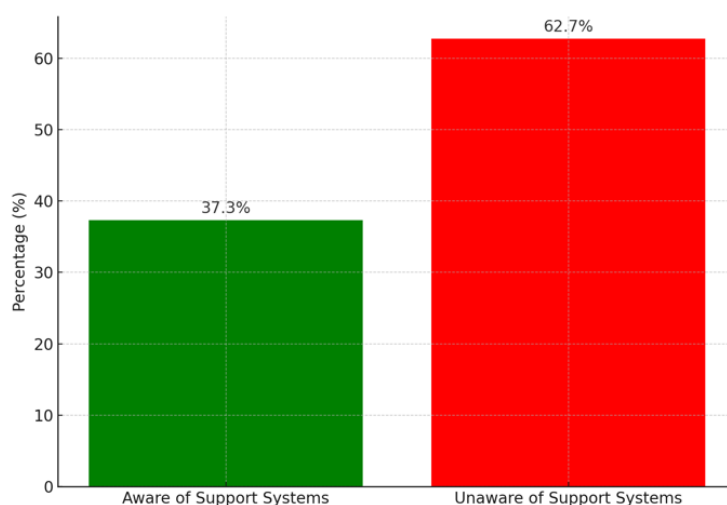


Figure 4-21 Support systems awareness

A lack of awareness can arise from various causes:

Insufficient Orientation Programmes: The universities might be not providing international students with an orientation program that is exclusively designed for them. Orientation sessions are the most critical chance for the universities to explain to the incoming students how they can get their academic advisors, financial help, language support services, and personal counselling in addition to many others.

Language Barriers: Many International students have difficulties with local language and academic English, and this sometimes can be a hindrance for them in grasping the supplied resources efficiently. Thus, a student who is unfamiliar with the language of the host country may not learn on the spot about the support services, the library, your host family, what courses you are taking, etc (Andrade, 2006).

Cultural Differences: In some cultures, students may shy away from accepting help from institutional services, seeing autonomy as a symbol of their independence. This cultural

mismatch can make students not reach out for support that they may need, although they are calling for help (Sawir et al., 2008).

This missing information indeed makes it hard for students to make use of the following support opportunities, which could be the ones that they need the most: financial, academic, or social counselling. As a result, higher education institutions should consider allocating more time to perfect the communication channels that might not be initially reachable to attract students that international students require. Highlight the services provided to international students, as well as the required steps to use them. By doing this, we will be able to bring our students to the level that is expected of them.

Level of Awareness	Number of student	Percentage	Impact	References
Aware of Support Systems	19	37.3%	Able to access academic advising, language support, financial aid, etc., but fewer students benefited.	Andrade (2006)
Unaware of Support Systems	33	62.7%	Missed out on essential support, leading to higher stress and difficulties in managing academic and social life.	Sawir et al. (2008)

Table 4-10 support system awareness

Kind Of Support Systems

Peers, Friends and Old students: was the most common form of support peer networks, with some 73.1% of the surveyed students getting help from classmates, friends, or last year's students. In formal education, it has been documented that the provision of practical advice, emotional support, and help with academic and personal problems is symbolized. Students are more likely to ask for assistance from the individuals who share their experiences, a process that promotes confidence and similarity. This is evidenced by the increasing use of peer support, which, as a relatively cheap and solution-focused means, is of great value to international students themselves. It is apparent that students create informal peer networks. In that respect, these informal assisted groups keep the information within the network and trust is developed (Glass & Westmont, 2014). The way international students are forced to turn to other peers to feel settled is indicative of the deficiency in fulfilling the role of host institutions in managing the international students' adjustment.

Online communication and resources: About 34.6% of the students answered that they always consulted the online community and resources. This would include forums, social media

groups, and specialized websites which have been created for international students to share their advice, tips, and information. Online resources available anytime and anyplace can provide students with more flexibility and convenience. Through such platforms, students not only get exposure to additional studies but also obtain part of the learning solutions usually not availed by the formal university systems. According to (Andrade,2006), such platforms are more likely to provide answers that are not convenient to find in formal university systems. Online forums have started trending as forms of support, showing that digital solutions can handle social and academic issues alike.

University support system: The number of students, who were 26.9% of the whole, who used the University support. The comparatively low proportion of students utilizing university services raises the possibility that overseas students are not being adequately reached or engaged by these systems. As mentioned in previous research, there could be obstacles to using these services, such ignorance, communication difficulties, or cultural disparities (Sawir et al., 2008). To make sure that students are aware of and at ease using these services, universities must improve their accessibility and communication.

Third party organization: only a small proportion (9.6%) of the newcomers were enrolled in third-party institutions, for example, agencies and faculties outside the university, despite their substantial number. These associations can supply certain services like guidance on immigration issues, litigation advice or external therapy. On the other hand, the small number of parts used the predictability that not so many international students either were unknow about these organizations or they were physically closer to the services of Open Mind or university. Peer help could also make it to.

Type of services

The researcher realizes that there are more support services which most of students have problem and challenges base on the finding from the survey. Further, it gives an idea about what services are most and least used. The most utilized service is academic advising, where it is reported that 42.3% of the students have accessed this resource. Academic advising is also a important part in helping of course pursuit, choosing the right classes and follow up on the learning of the student. The extreme level of the usage of academic advising shows the importance such a service carries in the life of international students who usually are in need

of further guidance due to the inconsistencies between an educational system and academic expectations (Andrade, 2006).

Number	Biggest challenges	responded	Percentage
1	Peers, Friends and Old students	38	73.1%
2	Online communication and resources	18	34.6%
3	University support system	14	26.9%
4	Third party organization	5	9.6%

Table 4-11 Type of support systems

Usage of career services is the second most common support system, with 26.9% of students overseeing them. This proves that, on the one hand, foreign students actively look for work opportunities, thus, they are eager to get financial aid during their studies in another country. Career services represent a major part of the strategy of the university to practice getting part-time jobs, internships, and postgraduation jobs. Because of this, negatively, the financial stability requisite can be met, and students will be able to get the necessary work experience they need in the labour market (Boeri & Brücker, 2011).

Financial aid and housing assistance were used by 21.2% and 15.4% of students, respectively. The necessity of these services in aiding students who are finding the high cost of living and the study in Italy a challenge, which is particularly true for the foreigner students, is the prime reason for which they are indispensable. Nevertheless, the relatively low level of use of these services in the comparison with financial and academic advising may indicate that many students do not know about the existence of these two supporting services or else they find it difficult to access them (Cattaneo et al., 2017). In addition, the same procedure allowed 19.2% of the participants to the language support services, which justifies the necessity people experience trying to overcome language obstacles, affecting both aspects of their lives, academia and social integration (Sawir et al., 2008).

Other services with modest utilization include health services (9.6%), cultural exchange programs (9.6%), and counselling services (15.4%). International students' mental health and

well-being depend on these services, but their lesser use may be a sign that they are not fully aware of the resources at their disposal or that they are stigmatized culturally for seeking out counselling and other medical care (Smith & Khawaja, 2011).

Like 25% of the answers mentioned not used any offered services for support. This may indicate either a lack of awareness of such programs or the programs inaccessibility, which would certainly call for more communication and outreach by the universities to make certain that all students know these resources exist and be access to use them.

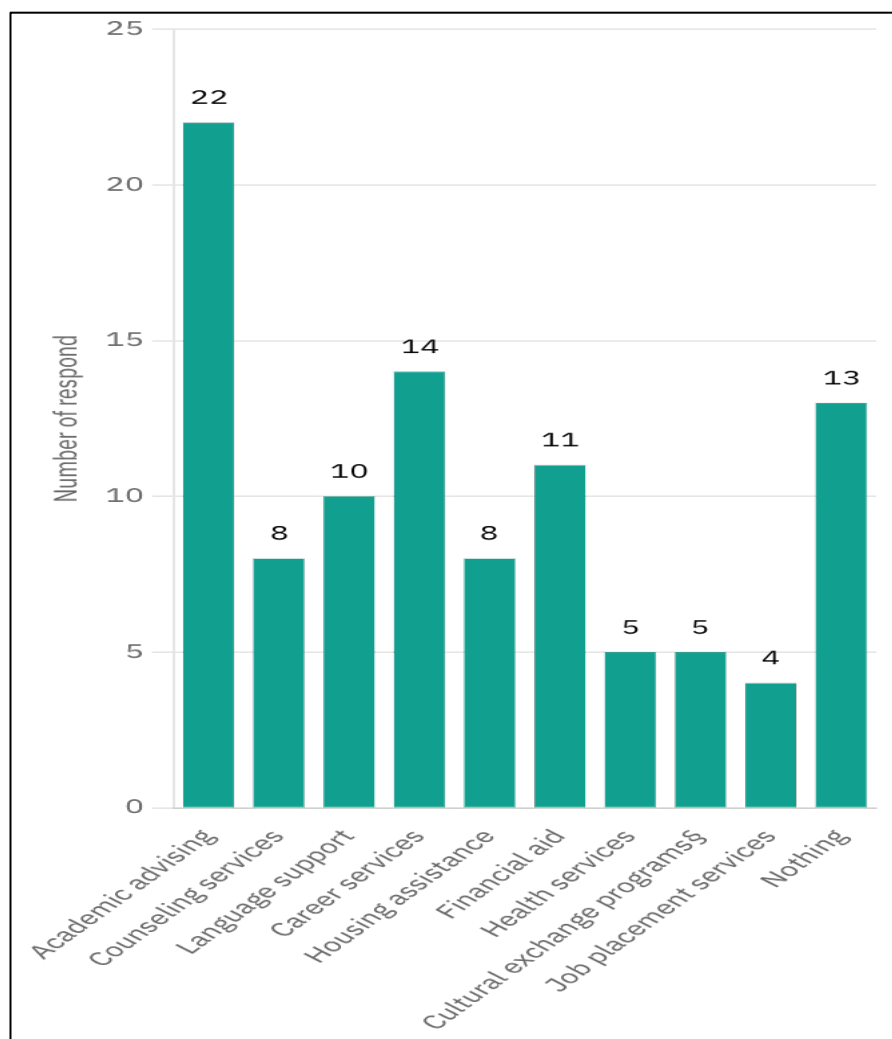


Figure 4-22 Type of services

In conclusion, academic advising and career services are broadly utilized, however, other support services, such as financial aid, housing assistance, and counselling, are about to be underused. Universities should emphasize making the support services that are under-utilised accessible and visible to assist the diverse international student populations in their schools. This is a sort of student services where low-frequency services such as financial aid and housing assistance are in demand and even the university counsellors are having a lighter

schedule. So, these should be the impactful measures of the administration of student services and the mental health of international students.

Support systems Satisfaction

The pie chart illustrates data on the satisfaction of the international students with the support services at the university they are attending on a sample of 52 participants. The survey of students and the frequency of certain answers show several problems that are indispensable for dealing with their cases, and the students are inaccessible for some of it. The largest proportion of respondents, 44.2%, believed they were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with the services, suggesting that while understandably students might not be overtly dissatisfied, the services might not truly have a considerable impact on their overall experience additionally. Such a rating could suggest that students perceive the services as mere survival skills that only marginally contribute to their lives without offering any innovative or proactive support. Neutral statements like these often reveal cases in which learners are not interested in or are unsure about the usefulness of the services they have been provided (Glass & Westmont, 2014).

As a result, 32.7% of the students said the support services were not helpful, which is a cause of concern. The reason for dissatisfaction could be the lack of good oral access to services, the knowledge of the available services, or inefficiency of the provided services. As per Andrade (2006), the international students who bring their own unique difficulties such as language communication, cultural changes, and financial instability are the last to mention among the support systems. This unhappiness may also reflect the difficulties experienced by foreign students, who may encounter delays in response times, inadequate assistance, or culturally insensitive services.

Only 11.5% of participants expressed satisfaction with the support services, while an equally small 11.5% voiced extreme dissatisfaction. It appears that Support systems are not meeting the unique demands of their international students, as indicated by the comparatively low satisfaction rating. Unsatisfied or extremely unsatisfied students may have faced obstacles like poor communication, a lack of individualized support, or rigidity in the services offered (Sawir et al., 2008). Interestingly, not a single responder expressed high satisfaction with the services. Even the contented students may have space for growth, based on the lack of extremely positive responses. This emphasizes how important it is for colleges to evaluate their support programs and incorporate input from overseas students to make the programs more efficient, accessible, and culturally aware (Smith & Khawaja, 2011).

To sum up, many students are indifferent toward the services, still, quite a few are upset, positing that universities should hurry up and investigate the issue as well as to adopt the existing help systems. Communication about the possibilities richly provided by the service, creating programs that are based on the specific needs of the given culture, and support staff being very conscious of the needs of international students will help minimize the differences.

Support systems analysis

in terms of Helpfulness: Friends, Peers, and Old Students: A total of 22 respondents and 16 respondents who rated it as "Helpful" and "Very Helpful" gave this informal support system high ratings. Peer networks are beneficial because of their relatability and common experiences, which make students feel more at ease asking those who have gone through similar struggles for guidance. Peer support offers timely and helpful guidance on matters related to academic and cultural adjustment (Glass&Westmont,2014). Online Communities and Resources: Likewise, 22 respondents thought these resources were "Helpful," while 9 respondents said they were "Very Helpful." The convenience and accessibility of online communities, which offer quick, flexible assistance with social and academic issues, is reflected in the emergence of digital platforms as important information and support sources (Sawir et al., 2008). University Support Systems: On the other hand, the helpfulness of university support systems was ranked lower. Many students (22%) rated them as neutral, while just 10 respondents rated them as "Helpful," and 1 rated them as "Very Helpful." This suggests that although these services are offered, they might not be customized to meet the unique requirements of overseas students, either because of a lack of individualized support or cultural insensitivity. Third-Party Organizations: These services were marked the lowest, with 24 people being neutral and 15 finding them "Not Helpful." Overwhelmingly, students seemed to cite more negative than positive feedback which shows that these organizations are seen as the least reliable sources of help. It looks like this may be because of their lack of consideration for international students' academic and personal needs. Due to this, they were ranked the lowest among those services besides the fact that one of them had the lowest "Not Helpful" response where students gave only 15 reaction scale.

In terms of accessibility: Peers, Friends, and Old Students: Overall, 9 of the responses rated informal networks as "Very Accessible," while 28 rated them as "Accessible." For most of the sample population, the networks were very accessible. This would tend to indicate that peer networks are accessible and provide quick, reliable advice without much of the barriers that

seem to be associated with more formal institutional services. Online Communities and Resources: 8 Of the participants identified online communities as "Very Accessible," while 24 thought of them as "Accessible." This gives credence to the fact that online communities operate at all hours of the day, providing information and support crucial to international students, who may have their schedules conflict with in-person services or office hours. University Support Systems: The majority of students said the support services within the university were accessible, as 3 had rated them as "Very Accessible" and 18 as "Accessible." However, an almost equal number of responses came back with a neutral ranking - 15 in all, indicating that even though such services exist, accessing them may be cumbersome or not easily located by the students. As a matter of fact, the third-party organizations were rated to be least accessible by 29 respondents who marked them as neutral, 6 of whom rated them as "Not Accessible" and another 6 as "Not Very Accessible." This indeed means that third-party firms are not easy to be contacted due to obstacles such as distance, ignorance, or even trouble in the usage of their services.

In terms of Easy to use: Peers, Friends, and Old Students: This informal network was rated as very easy to use, with 13 respondents marking it as "Very Easy" and 25 as "Easy." The directness of peer support, where Students can easily contact their friend or peer for help, is a significant advantage of this user-friendly approach Online Communities and Resources: 12 respondents have rated the online resources as "Very Easy" to use, and 21 mentioned them as "Easy." The adaptability and user-friendliness of these platforms, where students are given the chance to seek information, ask questions and interact with others from their homes, are some of the reasons why they have shown a great affinity for them. University Support Systems: The University services received generally positive and some mixed feedback from students regarding the ease of use. While 3 survey takers rated it as "Very Easy" and 10 came at the "Easy" level, a large part of the respondents remained neutral 18. It seems that the university services could be operating but they hardly cater to the needs of such students since they are not user-friendly among other international students. Third-Party Organizations: These organizations were rated the least user-friendly, with 23 respondents marking them neutral, and 16 finding them "Not Easy" and 5 find "Not Very Easy." The bureaucratic processes and lack of personalized support likely contribute to these low scores.

The data clearly demonstrates that peer networks, such as friends, peer, and older students, and online communities are seen by international students as the most practical, approachable, and user-friendly support resources. University Support Systems, on the other hand, are regarded as reasonably accessible yet neutral in terms of usefulness and easy to use. In every category, Third-Party Organizations have the lowest effectiveness ratings. These results show that to provide better help for international students, Universities must improve their offerings. They should concentrate on improving the usability, accessibility, and customization of their support systems.

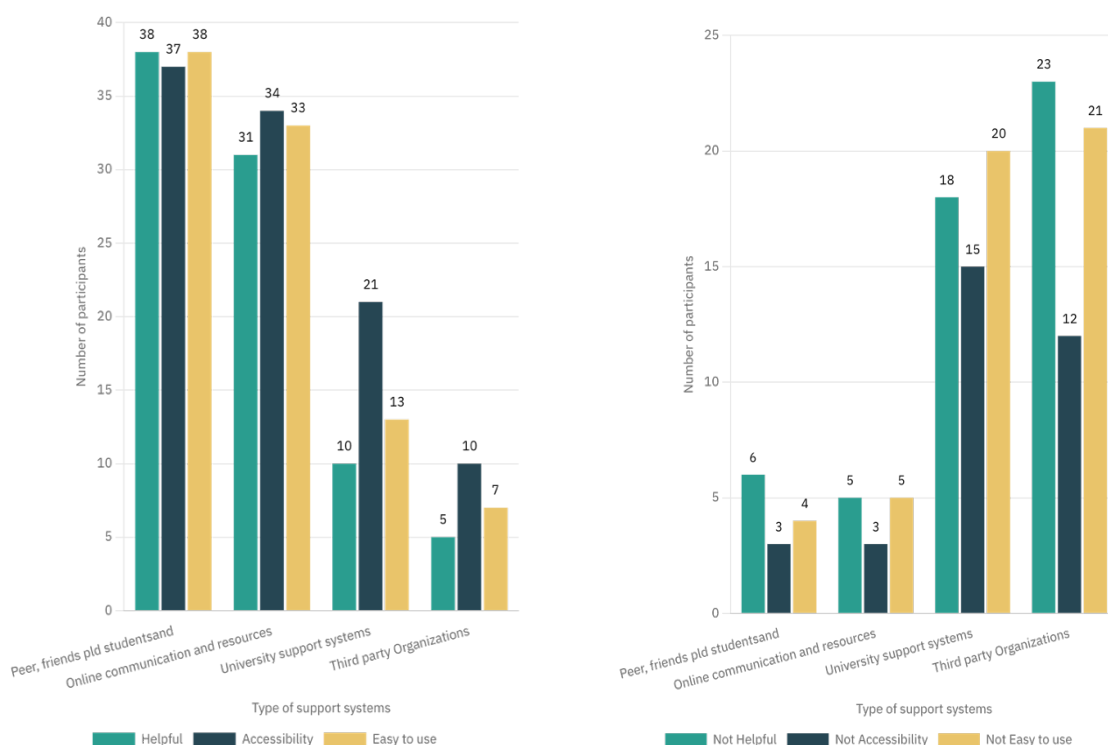


Figure 4-23 Support systems comparison

Peer support platform

The two pie charts' findings bring up crucial pieces of information on the students' intent to support each other. The data supports the fact that the network is a must for the students' community and that a strong base for the platform to give facilities to the participants.

An interest in getting in touch with old students going through similar experiences: 88.5% of those surveyed said they would like to Connect with Old classmates who had gone through comparable struggles. foreign students place a high value on peer support and the chance to gain knowledge from individuals who have successfully negotiated the academic, cultural, and social hurdles of studying abroad, as seen by the enormous response they received.

According to the input text, students are really in need of practical and understandable ideas

that they will get from other students who have overcome such difficulties themselves. Thus, these informal networks are very important since they would provide a platform that helps students who are changing their environment to interact with their peers easily.

Interest to share experience with new students: 90.4 % of respondents indicated that they would be willing to share their expertise with new students if they got assistance from more experienced peers. The data further supports the fact that not only do foreign students assist their peers through advice but also, they endeavour to through aiding future learners. The commencement of a two-way higher education communication through peer help among the student community is a potentially sustainable student support system

5 INNOVATIVE PLATFORM AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction

As the international education landscape continues to change, international students experience many obstacles in the way of studying successfully abroad. The financial aspects, language, academic achievements and social integration problems are major issues that the students face. In this chapter, the researcher presents the innovative support platform with design and functionality to eliminate or minimize the international students' challenges. Based on the finding in the survey, this platform created to help the international students to study abroad without any barriers in terms of financial, language barriers, academic difficulties and social integration.

The aim of this chapter is to bring into focus an overview of the main goals of the platform, functional aspects, and design elements. It analyzes how unique interactive capabilities from the platform support the students in receipt of updated, relevant information with personalized, accessible counsel. This new platform differs from other conventional support systems, often perceived to be either too insufficient or cumbersome to access, by making use of actual life experiences through counselors who are existing international students themselves. The counselors will be advising and providing information to prospective or new students in preparing for their abroad studies.

To provide a smooth support experience, the chapter also describes how the platform incorporates essential features including peer-matching, direct communication, and advice sessions. It fills the void that exists between official institutional services and the unique, practical realities that face overseas students. In the end, this platform aims to empower both parties: advisers can use it to offer their expertise and generate money, and applicants can use it to get useful advice that will help them make well-informed decisions about their studies and overseas living.

To assist international students, succeed academically and socially in a foreign setting, the platform focuses on user-driven interactions and shared experiences, providing a dynamic solution to the problems that frequently overwhelm them. In conclusion, the researcher provides the benefits and expected impact for the users and advisors to better studying abroad and experienced remote job and be a professional student during the time abroad.

5.2 Platform overview

The platform is a Innovative consultant platform created to tackle the major issues encountered by International students. It functions according to a double concept, catering to both new or prospective international students who are getting ready to study abroad and existing international students. The platform's main objective is to establish an environment where new students can communicate directly and provide insightful experiences, advice, and support.

The platform offers ways through which the current students, who often have to face challenges such as limited job opportunities, a language barrier, and financial constraints, may share experiences by providing advice to new students. These students will have the chance to add their profiles to this platform, highlighting their area of expertise, specific university, degree, program, and nationality to enable the applicant-new student or whoever has a problem-to find it easy to reach for the specific students based on their needs. This gives them a great opportunity to make money from providing advice or information to people who need them.

On the other hand, prospective or new students utilize the platform to get direct guidance from people who have already gone through these experiences because they are frequently lost about how to deal with academic programs, visa procedures, housing and cultural differences and so on. They can choose advisors by selecting the university, program degree and nationality to make sure they get in touch with someone who is aware of their unique circumstances. During one-on-one counselling sessions, candidates get tailored, useful guidance that assists them in making decisions on their future study abroad experiences.

The platform offers better connections between the parties involved, and as such, it is good for both. It not only strengthens students to further their financial matters and provides them with essential guidance and mentorship to be a good mentor to other students, but also it gives new students the support they need to fit in the new learning environment.

5.3 Platform structure

The platform is created as a user-friendly interface that mainly focuses on ease of access, intuitive navigation, and smooth interaction between advisors (current students) and applicants (new or aspiring international students). As such, it was intended to be a platform that facilitated effective information sharing and tailored interaction. The main structural and design elements of the platform are broken down as follows:

User interface: The platform's user interface is constructed to be simple and facile and thus it is so convenient for users to switch from one part of the platform to other and access the materials they need.

Dashboards: Applicants and advisors have own dashboards. Advisors have access to track their sessions, modify their profiles, and see incoming requests for guidance. Furthermore, advisors can set the time for availability of consultant. they can set the available days and time to work, and in their profile, they can set how many languages speaks, by providing the ability to communicate with several language, they can more opportunity to ger more applicant from different nationality. Also, they can upload a short video about themselves to provide a friendly sense to the applicant. By editing this feature in their profile, they can create a strong profile to have a more opportunity to get more applicant to earn more money and have a more comments and reviews.

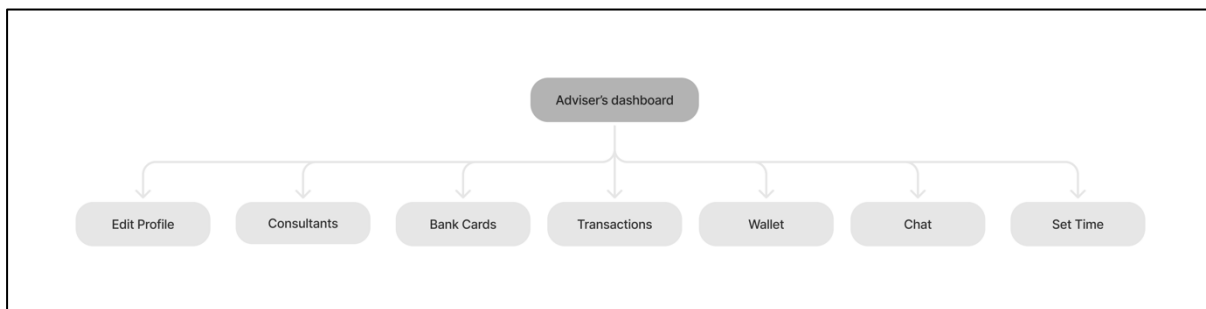


Figure 5-1 Advisor dashboard options

On the other hand, Candidates can receive tailored recommendations, schedule sessions, and peruse adviser biographies. And they can manage their meeting, find out the previous communications, save the chats and access to documents and files that the advisors sent to them. Both dashboards created as simple as possible to don't be confusing and easy to use for both sides.

Profile systems: Advisors should create detailed profile with highlight their university where they are studying now, Nationality, Degree and program. This help to the applicants can find the specific advisors who align with their specifics needs. And there is a review and comment systems in the profile where applicant can rate and see their experiences for the trust and fostering transparency.

Filter functionality: One of the main additions to the platform is the filter and sort functionality, which results in a better user experience by default, as applicants can easily find the most suitable advisors based on specific criteria. It is possible to get all the information one needs and then make an informed choice when it comes to an advisor using this add-on. This

functionality can be particularly in the university section, where allows to applicant can filter the advisor by Nationality, Degree, Program and languages.

Nationality filter allows to applicant find the advisor who is from same culture and country to help to overcome language barriers and providing the best advice in a same culture and language. On the other hand, Degree filters allow the applicant to find the advisor who are studying in type of degree such as: Bachelor, Master, PHD to communicate with relevant academic experience, Furthermore, Programs lets to users that find the international students who are currently studying in the specific program or field of study, ensure the advice that received be in area of interest. Finally, languages are the most filtering that allows to applicant find the advisors who are speaking with same language to better understand and effective guidance.

And there is Sort that allows to applicant sort the advisers by high consultant and high score. The high consultant option allows to the applicant to find the advisors who had more consultant and experience due to trusty and high knowledge. Also, the High score options allow to applicant find the highest positive ranked advisors that can get helpful and reliable advice.

The platform guarantees that candidates may effortlessly identify the best adviser based on their own requirements, desires, and the standard of the advising services offered by adding these filter and sort features. By connecting applicants with advisers who are best able for addressing their difficulties, this not only saves time but enhances the entire experience.

Brand design and URL:

The researcher set the word of the “**Unimmigrate**” as a name of this platform, The design of the Unimmigrate combines university with immigration, being the main components of international education. It is neat and modern, with a world-oriented approach to becoming a goal and journey which students go through in higher education pursuits in abroad. A lot of emphasis has been laid on creating an environment friendly and approachable for the user, reflected by the logo and graphic elements with openness, growth, and support. The font and color scheme of the brand need to be catchy and appealing for students while invoking professionalism and some sort of trust. The researcher created this platform <https://unimmigrate.com/> around one year ago and now is available just for the advisors to register on it and after registering the business in order to legalization, the platform start to working.

consultant plan Type:

The consultants will be of three kinds in the platform for every need and preference a user has: to communicate the way he or she wants. Each plan is meant for development so both advisors and applicants can find suitable options of communication in their respective situations.

The first type of consultant is chat where the advisors and applicant can communicate in through real time text messaging. This would be ideal for the people who don't want to speak and prefer to type the message rather than speak. This is the cheapest option to connect with advisors. Applicants After selecting this plan, the applicant can ask their questions where the chat box appears and then should wait for the response of advisors, on the other hand, advisors must answer maximum in ten hours.

The second type of consultant plan is calling that is allow to applicants to connect with advisors in call type. This is the quickest way and direct communication to get the consultant, and this is the best option for applicants who wants to ask more questions and discussions or who prefer the real time communication without showing their face. After selecting this type of consultant, applicant should ask their question in small box to advisor can realize and understand what your questions is and prepare, and advisors have the 3 hours' time limit to call the applicant.

Another type of consultant that could be provided is Video call-consultants that would offer more efficient and interactive consultation opportunities for applicants. The applicants, through video calls, may have face-to-face conversations with the advisors; thus, they get involved in this process more, deeper, and more personally. Such a scenario would ask for the type of consultant who would fit best for complex topics that require some explanations, or for applicants at the first step who have no experience. It is a premium option, and after choosing the Video call option applicants have to select an available date-once advisors will have set it in their profile-and one of the specific times after which they will be able to pose their questions in a small message box while waiting for the appointment in order to communicate.

With the flexibility of the platform's price options, applicants may select the best type of consultation for their needs and budget. The freedom to determine their own fees and provide a variety of contact options to accommodate varying preferences is another advantage for advisors. The platform guarantees that both sides may interact in the most practical and efficient way possible, regardless of the candidates' preferred method of communication—a brief chat, a more in-depth phone talk, or an in-person video conference.

5.4 Benefits of Innovative Support Systems

The researcher divided the benefits in two parts, first for advisors and second for the new students or new commers.

Benefit for advisor: Based on the results of a survey given to international students, the Innovative support platform has been created to specifically address the main issues that these students encounter. These disadvantages include financial hardships, linguistic obstacles, Academic difficulty, and problems with social integration. This platform offers a range of advantages to advisors (current students) and applicants (new or prospective students), greatly improving their study-abroad experience, by enabling a connection between current international students and those getting ready to study abroad.

Financial benefits for the advisors (current international students): according to the finding of the survey, the biggest challenges were the financial one. Most of the students has a problem to find a job or part time job because of lack of languages, study permit issue, and so on. This platform helps the advisor to earn money by providing advice and guide to the new student who has desired to study abroad with their mother tonged languages.

Additionally, the platform enables to the international students work with their knowledge and there is no limitation for requirements, the advisors can work through this platform without any work experiences and knowing the specific languages. But if someone knows more languages, there is chance to make more applicants with different nationalities and countries. Indeed, this platform helps international students to decrees the financial barriers and aim to decrees the stress and the revenue helps the students that concentrate on their study and social life and enhance the academic success.

Such jobs are flexible compared to other part-time jobs, as they are usually demanding in the presence of long or exhaustive physical hours that involve work. Advisors can get a chance to plan and select the hours that suit them for work while incorporating some time that may be needed by their scholars. They are allowed to state their preference for consultations on the platform during the day, over the weekend, or between classes. Due to such flexibility, advisors are never overworked; they manage to pay more attention to their education while earning their living.

Furthermore, such work should be distinguished from muscle effort or any intensive causative activities. In contrast, it uses the advisor's knowledge, experience, and communication skills—elements that students have already imbibed as part of their academic journey. This, in any

case, will make this lead position more popular with people who can't, won't or do not like hard work while they still need money from some source. Also, the platform allows international students work from home that would be low stress, saving time and easy to work.

The platform empowers the students to handle their financial matters and not spend their precious studying hours and health. This also enables them to take advantage of their own experiences abroad, becoming the primary source of information and the possibility to be financially independent without the presence of a labour.

Overcoming Language Barriers for advisors the platform brings advisors easy communication channel and the ability to break the language wall. One of the difficult issues that arises when students want to find a part time job outside of their home countries is the fact that most of them do not have enough language skill in the host country which makes them miss out on many job opportunities that require knowledge of the native language or/and fluency in the local language. It offers a broad, flexible stage where advisers can make money through offering advice to new students in their mother tongue or in any other language they feel competent. For instance, a Chinese adviser who studied in Italy can advise incoming Chinese students who are preparing to study in Italy without having to hold meetings in Italy. This means that the advisors can easily share their knowledge and experience and do not need to learn a second language since the language barrier is gone.

Advisors get a chance to serve a more diverse group of participants by providing consultations in different languages. Their bilingual or multilingual nature allows them to offer help to young people coming from diverse linguistic backgrounds, thereby the advisors succeed in increasing the number of consultations provided. This is a strong competitive advantage they have, which in turn makes it possible to support a wide range of students who have different ethnicities. For example, an adviser who is bilingual in French and English can communicate with candidates from both French-speaking and English-speaking regions. Because they can now help more students who are looking for help in various languages, their earning potential grows. Advisors may reach a wider range of students by bridging language hurdles, which expands their potential to make money while doing good deeds.

In summary, the platform serves to help advisors who are commonly held back by language barriers when it comes to employment opportunities in abroad. This, on the one hand, gives them a possibility to make the best match out of their mother language or the languages they know, be in touch with wider kinds of students, and a source without having to master the

language of the host country. Nonetheless, it creates a place for them to improve their language skills and confidence, which will take them further in the end both professionally and academically.

Furthermore, this platform tries to eliminate the significant challenges that encounter to international students. The advisors (who are the students are currently studying in abroad) can minimize and eliminate the first significant challenges (with 69.2% vote in survey), and Also for the second challenges Finding job (with 615%) and language barriers (with 57.7%).

Benefits for applicants: Applicants are the new students or prospective students or the international students who need some information's or advice. Here, the innovative platform offers more benefits for the applicants. The new international students often face some challenges when they come to study in abroad in a new country. as a new international students come to abroad, they face the challenges based on the survey finding such as: financial, language problem, social integration, jobs, academic difficulties, culture shock and so on. Access to Personalized, First-Hand Advice, one of the main advantages of the device is a chance that the students will receive help from other students who have previously undergone a similar process. This website is different from the university online resources which are unable to support you, and the university support services since this platform connects applicants to the current students who can give them real-time, practical ideas based on their own experiences.

For instance, by contacting an advisor who is currently studying engineering in Italy, an applicant will be able to gather all relevant information related to the university and the course. The advisor can specify the ways to deal with the academic system, requirements for visa, accommodation, as well as share the hints for connecting to local people. The involvement of the customer is so deep here. The advice becomes more realistic when an applicant is consulted.

Additionally, the platform helps the new students to find the answers to the questions which they don't know. For example, some students don't know about the academic structures, how to make study plans, how to register the exams how is teaching methods and so on. With connecting to the old students, they can find easy to receive some positive information without any concern. With this early knowledge, the new commers prepare themselves to better study in abroad and reduce the anxiety and nervousness starting education in a new country. so there is a chance to be advisor in the next semester and earn money to help again to other new students to come abroad. So, there is a circle of new students become advisors. Advisors can

help new students to come study abroad, and after coming abroad they can be advisors and help the new students again.

Furthermore, another point of this platform is, there is a possibility for the new students be advisor after arriving in host country, and after spending a few weeks in abroad, and managing the challenges by their own, they can start registering on the platform and be an advisor.

In short, the service has numerous benefits to new or prospective students. It provides them with personalized, relevant, and useful support, which makes the challenge of studying abroad easy. From direct counseling to language support and material about financial resources, support from both the academic and social sectors-the platform ascertains that candidates have no stress as they prepare for their adventure and no uncertainty. The vision of the students as future advisors creates a support circle that is long-lasting, and one that can generate money for students the next time around.

5.5 Marketing Strategy and Awareness

The success of the platform is not only associated with this working capability but also its capacity to attract both advisors and applicants (customers). To create awareness (familiarity), build trust and increase participation of the target audience such as international students (advisors) and new or prospective international students (applicants) a well-thought-out marketing strategy is essential. The content below is a detailed overview of the marketing plan and awareness campaign to the platform grow in preferences and to maintain its competitiveness in the international education market.

For the identifying target audiences The platform can be viewed or assessed by two sets of students mainly reported include: Advisors, Students who had the opportunity to work and are now current international students and who give suggestions and advice to the prospective students on the field of study based on their experiences, as well as the study abroad experience. Applicants: The new or prospective international students who need to guide and help for navigating to come to study in abroad.

For the platform to be successful, the marketing strategy needs to be personal and specific targeting the requirements of the group, designs that are exciting and motivating are to be included. The below tips will serve as go-to for reaching out to them and pushing them to the platform.

Digital Marketing Strategy

International students mainly make use of the internet for finding the required help, collecting the necessary facts, and interacting with others. It is highly important to have digital presence to communicate with these students online. Digital marketing plan must go along with such tools that can be used for bringing the public to know the existence of services, allow them to get involved and using a platform.

Search Engine Optimization (SEO): The platform must devise an SEO strategy, which guarantees that it is at the top in the search engine results pages (SERP) for key terms such as "international student advice," "study abroad help," and "apply university" This will attract potential customers who are searching for the services they need. The main goal is to produce high quality blog content which is based on the common problems that international students encounter.

Social Media Marketing: Use Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, LinkedIn, and Twitter as marketing instruments to get people to pay attention to the brand. Develop attractive, instructive, and links of scholarly reputation containing the most potential to the creation of a digital brand that resonates with the interests of international students. Posts with such materials could include reviews for active users, and brief presentations of the platform providing tips, the success stories of advisors, and considerations of study abroad. Use ads that are specific and will reach out to international students and key platform benefits.

Influencer and Ambassador Partnerships: Work together with influencers and student ambassadors who are currently engaged in study abroad programs. These influencers can share their personal experiences with the platform too, and thus, they can improve the credibility factor, the prospects of bringing more participants to the program also get a boost automatically. Those influencers may be the current international students, student bloggers, or YouTubers who are dedicated to the theme of study abroad. The ambassadors should be urged to spread the message in their schools and social circles.

Content Marketing: Create a content-led blog or video channel that talks about the typical issues that international students deal with such as getting a visa, finding accommodation, language barriers, and how to succeed academically. In the process, this nature of thinking will create the platform as a major source of international student support and enhance the user potential at the platform. By including calls to action (CTAs) encouraging users to register or attempt a free consultation, you can use this material to nurture leads as well.

Using influencer partnership, social media, SEO and content marketing, the platform's digital marketing plan efficiently reaches both existing and potential international students. Through focused efforts the platform may boost exposure, improve traffic, and foster credibility. Long-term engagement and development may be fostered by emphasizing referral schemes and individualized content. By taking a thorough approach, the site is made to stand out as an invaluable resource for foreign students, encouraging advisor sign-ups as well as application engagement.

Referral program

A user referral program is a smart way to tap into the existing user base to promote platform growth. Both customers and job applicants can get some rewards for bringing new people to the platform, which in turn, makes the platform more visible, and the number of Adopters also increases. Hence, a viral loop can be said to be created that ultimately increases notice and usage.

Advisor Referral: Current advisors can benefit by having the opportunity to obtain a gift for all international students they bring in as advisors. A referral bonus or cash reward or putting the advisor's profile on the first page of the platform to have opportunity to make more consultant, can be given for every new advisor who signs up and completes a specific number of consultations.

Applicant Referral: Applicants who recommend our platform to their friends and classmates may get discounts on future consultations, for instance, have some sessions for free of charge. This kind of approach generally encourages new applicants to participate in and talk about the platform within their university environments.

Campus and university Partnership

Developing strong campus and university partnerships relate to the means of creating awareness and trust among international students who are the platform users. Partnering with the international student offices of the universities is a direct way to the students. This way the platform can target the main group of its audience both present and future students. These relationships can be nurtured by offering universities with marketing materials, such as brochures, posters, and digital content that can be handed out in notable times like international student orientations or pre-departure seminars. Universities can even offer it as an added resource to students by presenting to them a tool for mutual help that students can use to help each other through their problems, rather than outdated traditional services. Moreover,

partnerships with student clubs, societies, and international student organizations increase the reach of the platform. This means that the groups can support the platform within their local communities by organizing various events, posting on social media channels, and circulating newsletters.

Besides the information processing, universities also can be involved in special affiliation programs, where their students are preferred for premium features or discounted services at the platform. We also see the sponsored international student fairs, study abroad events, or conferences as other ways to show the platform's value to the students who are starting the planning process of their academic journey.

In conclusion, For the platform to be successful, it is not enough for it just to work properly but it also needs to be able to attract and involve both advisors and applicants. Awareness, trust, and long-term engagement are the results of a good marketing strategy. All this the platform will be able to do with the right marketing strategy that includes SEO, partnerships with influencers, content marketing, and social media marketing in order to gain the attention of its target group, both current and potential international students. Similarly, referral programs are also win-win, where both the advisors and applicants go in interested in promoting the platform; hence, organic growth of the program. Furthermore, engaging in-campus and university partnerships is a direct way to gain trust and be perceived as a reliable resource for international students. In the framework of this marketing program, the Platform is seen as having the opportunity to show its brand awareness, user engagement formation and keeping the competitive advantage in internal educational market abroad as a whole, sowing the seeds for international students to conquer their academic journey and improve.

5.6 Limitations of the study

Legalization and adherence to regulatory compliances: Legality of the platform in most regions is one of the major limitations. Every country has its laws on online platforms, data privacy, tax, and employment laws. Compliance with local law and regulations, therefore, forms the basis for proper functioning of the platform in different countries. For example, the platform has to navigate such issues as the advisors being able to receive this income legally in a given country, while because of work permits or regulation of visas in some countries, that might not be possible. This particular element was not looked into in its entirety by the study and could thus be what eventually causes legal impediments to the growth and adoption of the platform.

Another limitation is related to the team members involved in the platform's development and maintenance. The platform requires a diverse and specialized team, including experts in software development, data security, legal compliance, and international student services. Nevertheless, the scarcity of necessary resources may lead the development team to not have the developed expertise to tackle the wide range of technical and legal challenges. Additionally, the management of such platform would require regular updates and maintenance, as well as the supporting staff who would handle customer service, complaints, and troubleshooting. The current teams' arrangement might be insufficient for implementing large scale or solving ongoing operational problems of the platform.

Data Security and Privacy: Due to the sensitive nature of the information shared between counselors and students, the confidentiality and privacy of data were among the most significant aspects. Still, the research was not done on the thorough examination of the platform's security in protecting the user's data and the issues of user's privacy that they may have that will determine participation.

Financial support is the main barrier to such initiatives becoming fully established and expanding; it may be one of the major obstacles that keeps it from doing so. A peer network requires strong investment in things like marketing, user support, technical infrastructure, and regulatory compliance to cater to all needs for international students. It is dependent on the same three issues, however: the marketing of the platform to a wider audience, technological complexity, and the specialized talent acquisition. The lack of funding does more than simply slowing down the growth of the platform and making it less competitive compared to other, further developed platforms.

And also, No Investor Backing: Yet another huge limitation is that no one invests. This money of investors would be well utilized in the progress of the platform and would speed up things in the feature development. The fact that the project needs to rely on itself, because it does not receive any external funding or financial investments from investors due to being a new platform, denotes that the operational cycle consists of scarce resources. It will affect the development of the platform because it is not able to create all the appropriate links and use all the latest technological developments in full, which would contribute to enlarging user activity. Without backer investors, it also doesn't allow the platform to run aggressive marketing campaigns, to play the technology card for its non-competitiveness in the global market.

5.7 Recommendation for future research

Scaling the Platform: Therefore, the platform extension can hold a much larger number of students and their data. In this view, there lies a future enhancement in the architecture of the platform and its data management system so that these would be able to handle increased traffic of users while sustaining the regulations around privacy and data security. The platform should effectively take up the oncoming rush of international students with increased scalability, besides providing customized services matched to differing countries and their respective educational systems. Advanced algorithms should be implemented for data processing, AI-based matching for the students, and analytics while scaling up such that whatever requests are received for servicing by the students should come out successfully.

Introducing Best advisors to Major Employers: Building partnerships with large corporations interested in employing bright overseas students after graduation is a substantial additional opportunity for platform improvement.

An advisor's knowledge, leadership, and communication abilities could be highlighted through a system that the platform develops. After finishing their education, these advisors—who have already demonstrated their ability by coaching others—may be contacted by large companies on possible employment prospects. Due to the possibility that their effectiveness as advisors could result in career prospects, this could not only help advisors find employment after graduation but also encourage students to participate more actively on the platform.

Broader and More Diverse Sampling: A broader and more culturally varied pool of participants should be used in future research in order to determine if the platform's advantages are universal or if they are specific to country, educational system, or culture. Executing comparative research across various countries could offer us priceless understandings on what the platform is used for, and help in the tailoring of the platform to the specific needs of all the groups.

Studies on Long-Term Effects: Upcoming investigations ought to focus on the long-term effects of platform use on students' social integration, financial status, and academic achievement. Thus, a platform such as this one would be able to project long-term advantages and potential obstacles that students would encounter along their academic journey.

The more the advanced technology becomes, the more we research to adopt AI features like real-time translation, intelligent peer matching, and virtual assistants can change the user experience a great deal. It will be an important thing to do in the platform's growth to examine

whether these advancements can be measures for providing a better environment for non-native language learners or students in isolated areas.

5.8 Summary

An innovative peer **online platform** was offered as a potential solution to the challenges experienced by overseas students, which included financial difficulties, language barriers, academic troubles, and social integration issues. By addressing these important issues, the platform enables current international students (advisors) to provide new or prospective students (applicants) with individualized advice and support.

The study showed that the website was truly assisting students to solve their financial crises first by inviting advisors to earn their wages, and second by offering specific academic and cultural advice and third by launching a language exchange system for the purpose. Although successful the project had some shortcomings like legal, financial, and technical obstacles that need to be addressed and the fact that a larger sample size and a long-term evaluation was required.

The recommendations that would allow the system to handle the large number of users more effectively in the future is the focus going further. Also, the measures that the platform may consider introducing the top executives of big companies for after-degree employment, the platform becoming not only a counselling tool for students but also a possible job enhancement resource are the new directions for the system. In summary, this platform has the potential to significantly impact the experience of international students by enabling future opportunities for professional growth along with helpful, easily accessible, and culturally appropriate support.

APPENDIX A

The interview questions divided in four categories:

Introduction questions

1. Hello, could you please introduce yourself and tell us where are you from?
2. What motivated you to study abroad? or what was your decision to study in Italy?

Challenges questions:

3. Did you face any challenges before and after coming to Italy?
5. What challenges did you face when you arrive in Italy?
6. Could you please share your challenges during your time abroad such as: accommodation, academic challenges, culture shock, financial and language barriers?

Overcoming the challenges

7. How did you overcome the challenges during the time abroad?
8. Have you ever used the support systems? If yes share your experiences.

Advice and plan for future

9. Do you have any advice to the new students who have decision to study abroad?
10. What is your plan after graduation?

APPENDIX B

International students experiences

We'd love to hear about your experiences as an international student abroad so we can minimize or eliminate your problems abroad!

* Indicates required question

1. Full name *

2. Email *

3. Nationality *

4. Gender *

Mark only one oval.

Male

Female

Prefer not to say

Other: _____

5. Age *

Mark only one oval.

Under 18

18-24

25-34

35-44

45 and above

6. country of residence *

7. City of residence *

8. Name of University *

9. Degree *

Mark only one oval.

Undergraduate

Master's

Doctorate

Other: _____

10. Program *

11. How long have you been studying in abroad? *

Mark only one oval.

Less than 6 months

6 months to 1 year

1-2 years

More than 2 years

International students challenges

12. What are the biggest challenges you have faced during your study abroad? *

Check all that apply.

Cultural adaptation

Language barriers

Financial issues

Academic difficulties

Social integration

Homesickness

Finding accommodation

Finding job

Other: _____

13. How difficult has it been for you to adapt to the.. *

Mark only one oval per row.

	Very difficult	Difficult	Neutral	Easy	Very easy
Cultural adaptation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Language barriers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Financial issues	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Academic difficulties	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Social integration	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Homesickness	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Finding accomodation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Finding job	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

14. How have you managed your finances while studying abroad? *

Check all that apply.

- Personal savings
- Scholarships
- Family support
- Student loans
- Part-time job
- Prefer not answer
- Other: _____

15. What specific academic challenges have you encountered? *

Check all that apply.

- Understanding course material
- Different teaching styles
- Language barriers
- Interacting with professors
- Access to academic resources
- Prefer not answer
- Other: _____

16. What aspects of social integration have been most challenging for you? *

Check all that apply.

- Making friends
- Participating in local events
- Understanding social norms
- Language barriers
- Prefer not answer
- Other: _____

17. What challenges have you faced in finding accommodation? *

Check all that apply.

- High cost
- Limited availability
- Location
- Quality of housing
- Language barriers
- Easy to find
- prefer not answer
- Other: _____

18. What challenges have you faced in finding a job? *

Check all that apply.

- Language barriers
- Work permit issues
- Limited job opportunities
- Balancing work and study
- Lack of local work experience
- Prefer not answer
- Other: _____

Support systems

19. Are you aware of the support services available to international students at your university? *

Mark only one oval.

- yes
- No

20. What kind of support systems did you use? *

Check all that apply.

- University Support Systems
- Third-Party Organizations (Agency, institutions ...)
- Peers, Friends, Old Student
- Online Communities and Resources
- Other: _____

21. Which of the following support services have you used? *

Check all that apply.

- Academic advising
- Counseling services
- Language support
- Career services
- Housing assistance
- Financial aid
- Health services
- Cultural exchange programs
- Job placement services
- Nothing
- Other: _____

22. How satisfied are you with the support services? *

Mark only one oval.

- Very dissatisfied
- Dissatisfied
- Neutral
- Satisfied
- Very Satisfied

23. How would you rate the advising services in terms of helpful: *

Mark only one oval per row.

	Very Helpful	Helpful	Neutral	Not Helpful	Not Very Helpful
University Support Systems	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Third-Party Organizations (Agency, institutions ...)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Peers, Friends, old Students	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Online Communities and Resources (Social media)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

24. How would you rate the advising services in terms of Accessibility: *

Mark only one oval per row.

	Very Accessible	Accessible	Neutral	Not Accessible	Not Very Accessible
University Support Systems	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Third-Party Organizations (Agency, institutions ...)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Peers, Friends, old Students	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Online Communities and Resources (Social media)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

25. How would you rate the advising services in terms of Easy to Use: *

Mark only one oval per row.

	Very Easy	Easy	Neutral	Not Easy	Not Very Easy
University Support Systems	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Third-Party Organizations (Agency, institutions ...)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Peers, Friends, old Students	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Online Communities and Resources (Social media)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

26. are you interested to connect with the previous students dealing with the same experience as you. *

Mark only one oval.

Yes

No

27. If you get help from the Old students, are you interested to share with new students? *

Mark only one oval.

Yes

No

28. Please share any additional comments or suggestions to help us enhance the experience of international students.

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