



Exchange report
Hanyang University Erica
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Introduction

When I first heard of the possibility of studying abroad, in my 6th semester, it sparked an interest. It sounded like a great way to experience a new country, culture, and people all while also gaining academic experience through studying. When I looked at the choices, we had I had one primary choice, which was South Korea, Hanyang University ERICA, and a second choice being Hogent, in Belgium. I had these two choices as they are both countries, I find interesting, and was countries that I had not been to yet. Going to South Korea was by far a more appealing choice, to me, because it seemed like a bigger experience, a bigger personal challenge, and the university also looked way more appealing. Furthermore, I had prior to going abroad never been outside of Europe, which really cemented South Korea, as being my priority.

The main reason I wanted to study abroad was to challenge myself, by going outside of my comfort zone by being in a completely new environment, which was otherwise something I was not the great at. I also saw this opportunity as a great way to learn more about different cultures and thereby becoming more suitable for an international working environment.

Prior to going, abroad I tried not to have too big expectations. The only expectations I really had was to learn something both academically both also personally.

Experiences at Hanyang university

Studying at Hanyang University is quite different compared to Denmark, both in how the classes are taught, how the exams are but also how the whole university life is. Well, the way classes are taught are somewhat similar. Most of the time it's taught in the classic lecture, one of the big differences compared to Denmark, is how things like group work, dialog with the teachers is not something that is done a lot and generally the whole atmosphere in the class is quite different. In Korea, there is a quite clear social hierarchy, which is something that can be felt in the classes, this results in classes being quieter, and people don't speak up if they have a different view or disagrees with the teacher. This overall resulted in a mostly one-way communication type of class. The group work that I experienced in the classes were different due to mainly being with the goal of a short presentation. In Korea, most of the exams has a big focus on memorization, which was something I was not used to. More so all of the exam we had was closed book, multiple-choice test, which I again was not used to and had a hard time adapting too. Lastly, the university life was different due to Hanyang being a big campus, and that somewhat creating a different atmosphere around the university, which was something I did not experience in Denmark.

I picked five courses being, Organizational behavior, Consumer behavior, Financial management, Advanced English communication, and Survival Korean. For me, it was a bit hard picking courses due to a lot of them overlapping, and other classes required you had taken a specific course prior to the class. One thing to note here is that at Hanyang courses are first come first served, so some of the more popular classes will be full in no time. Except for Survival Korean and Financial management, I found the classes to be quite easy, which was most likely a result of the teachers dumbing it a bit down due to the class being in English.

Organizational behavior

I choose this class due to it being quite relevant to my current study, some of the topics had already been somewhat covered earlier in my study, but I choose the class in the hope of learning about organizational behavior even further. This class had a focus on how you through the change of behavioral factors, in an organization, could improve the performance, and how all these factors linked together.

This class had by far the most competent teacher, he had earlier taught at an American university, so his English was at a very high level. His teaching style and how the exam was formed was pretty like what I'm used to in Denmark, with the midterm being a presentation and the exam being a report. The teacher also tried to engage a lot with the students and would go rounds asking sometimes more than 20 students questions, which I at times found being a bit too much.

Consumer behavior

It was also a course that was quite relevant to my study. Here the goal was to understand the consumer's behavior in their process of selection, buying and disposing of a product, with the goal of having more effective marketing.

In this class, the teacher was also quite good at English. She also tried to communicate with the class quite some, but the success varied. The exams, both midterm and final exam, was a mainly multiple-choice test, with some small essay questions.

Financial management

I found this class quite difficult due to several reasons, first the teacher was quite bad at English, she talked unclear and fast, which made it difficult to follow her, and the same time the PowerPoints she made was not the best either. At the same time, this was the last class I picked, and I only picked it due to not having any other options, as it was kind of irrelevant for my major. This resulted in me having quite a hard time understanding some of the topics we covered. Both the midterm and final exam was a multiple-choice test.

Advanced English communication

I choose this class due to a lack of better options. It was by far the easiest class. The class is probably beneficial for some Koreans or for someone who is not that comfortable with their English abilities. I am saying that because the English level being taught in the class was somewhat comparable to what I learned in the last years of elementary school, or the first year of high school. The teacher and her teaching style were not bad at all, but overall, I must say that it was a class where I did not learn much.

Survival Korean

When I signed up for this class, I at first thought it would be a class where we learned about Korean culture and some basics about the Korean language, such as numbers, the alphabet, and common phrases. Well, it turned out to be a class where we would mostly repeat words and letters the teacher said, without having much focus on learning something. It was quite late into the course that we started learning every-day sentences and such. Making it even more difficult was the fact that the teacher could not speak English at all. With all that being said I still ended up somewhat enjoying the class and challenge it gave me.

Social and cultural experiences

Before coming to Korea, I had no idea what to expect culturally and socially, so I tried having an open mind when I arrived. Culturally I did not find it very hard to adapt to. Korea, being a very developed country, shared a lot of things culturally with Denmark, I would say so. The major differences being a more structured social hierarchy, which showed at times, and people, in Korea, are generally more conservative. Socially I also found it somewhat like Denmark, both for better and for worse, with social groups being quite structured, and it is hard to really make Korean friends, which also resulted in me mostly socializing with other exchange students. With the exception being when there was alcohol involved, which made people a lot more talkative, but you had to be a bit more careful with your humor, the humor, I am generally used to in Denmark, did not fit in that well there at times.

The University has a mentor program, called Hanmille, which is a program where you get assigned a Korean mentor, which will show you around and give you tips. I would say how much you can benefit varies from what mentor you get, but generally, I would recommend signing up for it. Besides giving you a mentor, they also host several social events and trips, which is also a great way to get to know people. Overall, I would say Hanmille is a great initiative, but there is room for improvement.

The school also has several clubs that you can join. I tried joining the E-sport club, but I only ended up going to the introduction event they held. That was due to them not communicating in English at all, and not really trying to get me involved at all, which just made me give up on that club. But from others, I hear that you through the clubs can have a great time and make friends, if you are lucky, with the group, or are actively seeking out, and get them to speak some English.

Near the campus there is not much to do or see, they have some decent restaurants and there are also a couple of places where you can chill and drink some alcohol, but besides that, there isn't really anything. In the same city, Ansan, there is an area called Jungang, where there is a bit more. There is a decent shopping selection, both with clothes and with beauty products and so on. There are also a few clubs, karaoke places, and bars, but they are quite a hit or miss. Most of them are empty most of the time, and the only one who seems to be somewhat full consistently does not allow foreigners.

As for Seoul, there is always something to do or something to see. It is filled with tourist attractions, clothing stores, clubs, restaurants, and so on. Compared to what I'm used to, in Copenhagen, the city, though being quite homogeneous, feels alive and always seems somewhat full. At times too full, which can be felt at the clubs. They are filled to the brim all weekend, which for me was at times too much. But I would say that there is something for everyone to see and experience in Seoul.

Practical experience

I arrived in Korea a couple of days before the semester started, which meant that I stayed at a hotel, in Seoul, a couple of days. I did this because I wanted to get somewhat settled before the semester started, and so I could see some of Seoul because I was unsure about how much time I would get to see the city later, but I ended up having plenty. At the airport train station, I bought a T-money card, which is a card that is used for all public transportation in Korea. To get to the University I travel by train to Hanyang University station and took a taxi from the station to the university. At the university, I stayed at the dorm, which cost me 1,117,000 KRW, which is about 6500 KR, for the whole semester. If you had contacts or know how to rent an apartment, in Korea, you could probably get your own apartment for a similar price.

When I ate I normally did it in the restaurant in the cafeteria, and not in the canteen. The price for a meal in the canteen was 3500 won or about 20 kr, but the quality of the dishes they served varied quite a lot. In the restaurant, that was in the cafeteria, the meals cost normally around 5000 won or 29 kr. But here you had the option of choosing what dish you wanted yourself, and overall the quality was better, and the portion was bigger, so I would say it was worth it. When eating at restaurants outside of campus, and in Seoul, the price varies quite a lot from 6000 won to 20000 won, all depending on if you want Korean food, or something else, where things like European generally being more expensive.

When it comes to the overall cost of the trip, I am not the best to ask, as I used quite a lot of money on clothing and going out, but if you do not buy too much extra stuff, you should be able to survive on SU.

Conclusion

Overall, I am super happy did I decided to go on exchange. I learned a lot about different cultures, and I evolved as a person. I got to meet a lot of awesome and weird people and see places I would not have ever imagined seeing before. Looking at it from a professional angle, I would say it could have been better due to the style their whole education system has might not be the best fit to me, but then again I learned a lot about how it is to communicate and work with people from all over the globe, which is something I think is beneficial for everyone, especially in today's multicultural environment.