

International graduate students' satisfaction with academic advising and school engagement

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ABSTRACT

International students studying abroad often face significant challenges in their academic work and adapting to new environments. Without sufficient support, these challenges can lead to stress and depression, which may lead to a low level of school engagement (SE). Academic advising is important for positive intervention. This study examined the relationship between satisfaction with academic advising (SAA) and SE. A quantitative approach with correlational, regression, and survey methods was used. Data were gathered from 90 current students and alumni. The level of SAA was at a "satisfied", while SE was at a "high". Two analyses of variance (ANOVA) were conducted, revealing no significant difference in satisfaction with advising or SE from academic stages. A t-test was conducted to examine gender differences in satisfaction with advising and SE; results showed no significant difference between male and female respondents. These findings implied that satisfaction with advising and SE is stable across genders. The study contributes to understanding the role of academic advising in promoting student engagement and indicates current advising practices are successfully supporting a diverse range of student demographics. Future research may explore additional factors that influence advising satisfaction and engagement, like extracurricular involvement and frequency and depth of engagement.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Research shows international students face greater challenges than local peers, including securing part-time jobs, academic pressure, and managing cultural and social adjustments, such as language barriers and separation from family [1], [2]. Without adequate support, these issues can lead to severe stress or depression [3]. Scholars often use frameworks like adaptation, adjustment, acculturation, and intercultural competence to examine these challenges. These frameworks emphasize the needs of students to adapt to the practices and beliefs of the host culture.

As of April 2024, 208,900 international students were enrolled in South Korean universities, which has doubled in the last decade [4]. Aiming to reach 300,000 by 2027 [5], this growth poses potential challenges requiring coordinated solutions. To address this, the Korean Ministry of Education (MOE) has policies to oversee and assist international students, which include mandating universities to support a minimum of 60% with advising on living support and career guidance [6]. However, it has not specifically stated which programs would fulfill these requirements. Academic advising plays a crucial role in aligning higher education's mission with student experiences, supporting academic progress, integration, and career

preparation [7]. Advising takes a holistic approach by offering support in personal matters, academic progress, and career planning. Initially focused on program assistance, advising has expanded to include life and career guidance, course planning, and comprehensive support [8]. Aligning with Korean MOE Policy Notice 2024-357 [6], the International Graduate School (IGS) launched its Student Advising and Support (SAS) program in 2019 to guide international students in academics, living, careers, and compliance with Korean laws, fulfilling the MOE accreditation requirements.

Evaluating academic advising programs is essential to ensure they meet student and institutional goals while complying with MOE policies. Standard evaluation methods include American College Testing's framework [9], the student satisfaction inventory (SSI) [10], Cuseo's advisor effectiveness assessment, and the academic advising inventory (AAI) [11]. The AAI assesses whether advising is developmental or prescriptive and includes questions on student satisfaction. Davies *et al.* [12] emphasized that satisfaction surveys align program assessment with student needs. For this research, the student satisfaction questionnaire for academic advising (SSQFAA) from Imam Abdulrahman Bin Faisal University was adapted [13].

Students' school engagement (SE) reflects the quality of their academic environment and support [14]. Tomaszewski *et al.* [15] defined SE as the time and energy students invest in educational activities and the institutional practices that encourage participation. Winstone *et al.* [14] emphasized students' attitudes toward their school experience in shaping lifelong learning. In contrast, Yuan *et al.* [16] highlighted SE as the physical and psychological effort students dedicate to studies, activities, and interactions within the academic community. Astin's theory of student involvement/engagement stressed that student learning and development increase with greater involvement in academic and social activities [17], [18] identified three components of SE: behavioral (participation), affective (emotional connections), and cognitive (motivation and self-efficacy). Frequent student-faculty interactions and a supportive environment enhance these dimensions [19], [20] pinned that this teacher support serves not only as a teaching strategy, but also as a way to build interpersonal connections that make students feel appreciated, involved, and motivated. This support promotes psychological development, enhancing both motivation and engagement.

Owusu-Agyeman and Moroeroe [21] emphasized that SE and success require planned interventions to address individual needs and challenges. Advising plays a key role by providing academic, social, and cultural support while fostering a supportive environment. Tiroyabone and Strydom [22] noted that advising improves academic performance, engagement, and overall student success. Furthermore, Prananto *et al.* [23] and Sengsouliya *et al.* [24] found that advising strengthens students' connection to their school, which boosts both engagement and success.

While the importance of academic advising in fostering student success and engagement is well established, it is essential to recognize that advising practices must be culturally responsive to effectively support international students. Drawing on Hofstede's cultural dimensions framework, students' perceptions of authority, communication preferences, and support are shaped by their cultural backgrounds. As such, advisors who exhibit cultural empathy and build rapport can significantly enhance students' sense of institutional belonging and satisfaction with the advising process [16].

This study highlights the importance of satisfaction with advising support services and their impact on international students' SE. Effective advising fosters a sense of belonging, motivation, and confidence, enhancing engagement and commitment to academic goals [14]–[16]. Positive advising experiences also strengthen academic identity, encouraging investment in learning [18]. The study analyzes how satisfaction with advising affects SE among international students at Namseoul University's IGS. It addresses four key questions: satisfaction with academic advising (SAA) and engagement levels, differences based on demographics, and the relationship between advising and engagement, offering insights for improving advising programs.

2. METHOD

2.1. Research design and research instruments

This quantitative study focused on international students at Namseoul University's IGS in South Korea. The questions in this study were selected from two established tools: the student engagement in schools questionnaire (SESQ) by Hart, Stewart, and Jimerson in Menaje and Israel [24], and the SSQFAA from the College of Design at Imam Abdulrahman Bin Faisal University [13], to fit the purpose of this research. The SESQ consists of nine items divided into three dimensions: affective, behavioral, and cognitive. Similarly, the SSQFAA has 15 items categorized into communication, support, and encouragement. All items, in addition to demographic questions, were rated on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

2.2. Data collection and survey method

The online survey was created using Google Forms and emailed to all IGS students and alumni, and they were asked for their consent to participate. The survey was conducted over four weeks, from the first week of April 2024 until April 30. Over four weeks, researchers actively followed up with professors to remind their students to participate in the study and maintained consistent follow-up with alumni. A total of 93 responses were received, but three were excluded as they were unable to provide proper consent to participate in this study. Specifically, they either failed to check the consent box on the form, had an incomplete consent statement, or withdrew consent after submission. As ethical research requires informed and voluntary participation, only responses from 90 respondents from diverse ethnic backgrounds were included.

2.3. Participants and demographic

Based on the demographic data gathered from the respondents, 39 (43%) were from Uzbekistan, followed by 16 (17%) from Pakistan, 14 (15.6%) from Nepal, nine (10%) from the Philippines, and four (4.4%) from South Korea. Additionally, there was one respondent each from Bangladesh, Canada, India, Mongolia, Kenya, Romania, Singapore, and the United States, accounting for one (1.1%) from each of these countries. In terms of gender, 52 respondents (57.8%) were male, while 38 (42.2%) were female. Among the 90 respondents, 22 were aged 20-25 years (24.4%), 38 were 26-30 years old (42.2%), 19 were 31-35 years old (21.1%), 9 were 36-40 years old (10.0%), and there was one respondent in each of the 41-45 years (1.1%) and 51-55 years (1.1%) age groups. Regarding their current semester, 30 respondents (33.3%) were in their 1st semester, 17 (18.9%) were in their 2nd semester, 13 (14.4%) were in their 3rd semester, 7 (7.8%) were in their 4th semester, and 23 (25.6%) were alumni.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Reliability

Analysis and correlation coefficient of subscales of academic advising and student engagement. Table 1 shows the reliability coefficients for all dimensions, with all alpha values exceeding 0.75. The Cronbach's alpha values are well above the minimum acceptable threshold of 0.70. Thus, it can be concluded that the internal reliability of the questionnaires was both acceptable and satisfactory.

Based on the results in Table 2, the mean for affect was 4.3741. This result indicates that most students liked the quality of their engagement with their school and academic advisor. Secondly, the mean for support was 4.3236. This result indicates that students value the support offered by academic advising more. The means for behavioral, communication, and encouragement were all 4.0 or higher, with cognitive having the lowest mean at 4.23. Table 2 presents the correlation coefficients between different dimensions of student engagement, including affective, behavioral, cognitive, communication, support, and encouragement.

Table 1. Reliability

Dimensions	# of items	Cronbach's alpha
Affective	3	0.860
Behavioral	3	0.840
Cognitive	3	0.808
Communication	3	0.869
Support	7	0.932
Encouragement	4	0.899
Total	23	

Table 2. Correlation coefficient

Dimensions	n	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6
Affective	90	4.3741	0.80079	--					
Behavioral	90	4.2815	0.71877	0.667**	--				
Cognitive	90	4.2296	0.78157	0.737**	0.713**	--			
Communication	90	4.2926	0.83737	0.721**	0.617**	0.591**	--		
Support	90	4.3236	0.78966	0.701**	0.655**	0.622**	0.919**	--	
Encouragement	90	4.2861	0.86486	0.664**	0.640**	0.592**	0.884**	0.933**	--

Note: **Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

In Table 2, there are significant and positive relationships among dimensions of the two variables, student engagement and SAA. The results show that all dimensions are strongly correlated and statistically

significant with each other. Communication exhibits the highest positive correlation with SE, followed by support and encouragement.

3.2. Research question 1. What is the international graduate students' level of satisfaction with the academic advising?

Using the descriptive statistic, the satisfaction levels were measured into a 5-point Likert scale as 1 being strongly dissatisfied to 5 strongly satisfied. Among the respondents, three (3.3%) were strongly dissatisfied, nine (10.0%) were neutral, 40 (44.4%) were satisfied, and 38 (42.2%) were strongly satisfied. The mean satisfaction level with academic advising support was 4.222 out of five with standard deviation (SD) of 0.88404. This result shows that a majority of the students were "satisfied". Table 3 presents the satisfaction level for the variable SAA.

The results indicate a generally high level of satisfaction among students regarding academic advising, with a mean satisfaction score of 4.222 out of five, suggesting that most students feel positively about the advising they receive. Specifically, 42.2% of respondents reported being strongly satisfied, and 44.4% were satisfied, reflecting a majority (86.6%) expressing favorable views. The SD of 0.88404 indicates a relatively low variability in responses, reinforcing the overall consensus of satisfaction among the student body. The data highlight the importance of maintaining and enhancing academic advising programs to further support SE and success.

Ndlovu and Mkhize [25] noted that effective advising through SE and support was linked to higher GPAs. Additionally, they suggested that student SAA could help advisors identify areas for improvement to better support student success. Hawthorne *et al.* [26], building on earlier work by DeRosa [27], expanded the research focus to include extrinsic factors, such as teaching quality and support provisions, and found that these factors also had a significant impact on academic achievement.

Table 3. Satisfaction level

Variable	N	Median	SD
SAA	90	4.0000	0.88404

3.3. Regional differences in student satisfaction levels

This study investigated differences in satisfaction levels among international students from Central, Southeast, and South Asia using independent sample t-tests. Students from Kenya, Romania, Canada, and the US were excluded from this analysis since there was only one participant for each country. The statistical analysis included mean comparisons, t-values, p-values, and Cohen's d to assess the effect size of the differences.

As shown in Table 4, the independent samples t-test revealed an insignificant difference in test scores between Central Asia (M=4.1750, SD=0.67511) and Southeast Asia (M=4.1429, SD=1.09945), $t(52)=0.103$, $p=0.919$. The effect size, as measured by Cohen's d, was $d=0.035$, indicating a very small effect. Similarly, there is an insignificant difference in test scores between Central Asia (M=4.1750, SD=0.67511) and South Asia (M=4.2188, SD=1.03906), $t(70)=-0.206$, $p=0.838$. The effect size, as measured by Cohen's d, was $d=-0.049$, indicating a very small effect. Lastly, there is an insignificant difference in test scores between Southeast Asia (M=4.1429, SD=1.09945) and South Asia (M=4.2188, SD=1.03906), $t(44)=-0.219$, $p=0.829$. The effect size, as measured by Cohen's d, was $d=-0.070$, indicating a very small effect. All 3 effect sizes fall well below the conventional threshold for a small effect ($d=0.20$), suggesting the differences are not practically meaningful [28]. These findings indicate that regional origin does not meaningfully affect satisfaction level among the student groups studied. The uniformity in responses suggests a broadly consistent student experience regardless of regional background, which may reflect the institution's success in providing equitable support and services across international cohorts.

Table 4. Multiple independent t-test

	Region	N	Mean	SD	t-value	p-value	Cohen's d	Effect size
Satisfaction level	Central Asia	40	4.1750	0.67511	0.103	0.919	0.035	0.017
	Southeast Asia	14	4.1429	1.09945				
	Central Asia	40	4.1750	0.67511	-0.206	.838	-0.049	-0.025
	South Asia	32	4.2188	1.03906				
	Southeast Asia	14	4.1429	1.09945	-0.219	.829	-0.070	-0.035
	South Asia	32	4.2188	1.03906				

3.4. Research question 2. What is the international graduate students' level of SE?

Research question 2 was tested using descriptive statistics. In this study, the level of SE was measured using a 5-point Likert scale, where 1 represents “very low” and 5 represents “very high”. Among the respondents, three (3.3%) indicated a very low level of engagement, five (5.6%) were neutral, and 45 (50%) displayed a high level of engagement, and 37 (41.1%) exhibited a very high level of engagement. The average engagement score was 4.2556 out of five, with an SD of 0.84216. These findings indicate that students' level of SE is categorized as “high”. The distribution of responses shows that a significant majority (91.1%) of respondents reported either high (50%) or very high (41.1%) levels of engagement, suggesting that most students are actively engaged in the school activities. The low SD of 0.84216 suggests that students' perceptions of engagement are consistent across the group. This result could reflect effective school policies and practices that promote engagement, like supportive faculty interactions, engaging curriculum, and extracurricular activities. The studies by Wong *et al.* [29] and Jirout *et al.* [30] indicated that high levels of SE are necessary for a students' academic achievement.

3.5. Research question 3. Is there a difference in the international students' satisfaction and SE regarding academic stages and gender?

Table 5 indicates that the mean satisfaction score in the 4th semester ($M=4.460$, $SD=0.522$) was the highest, while the mean satisfaction score for alumni ($M=4.101$, $SD=1.103$) was the lowest. Additionally, the mean score for SE in the 4th semester ($M=4.571$, $SD=0.535$) was the highest, compared to the mean satisfaction score in the 2nd semester ($M=4.118$, $SD=0.993$), which was the lowest. Table 5 shows the mean scores for SAA and SE across different academic stages (1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th semesters and alumni).

Table 5. Mean score of SAA and SE according to students' academic stages

Semester	SAA				SE			
	N	Mean	SD	SE	N	Mean	SD	SE
1st semester	30	4.396	0.494	0.090	30	4.300	0.466	0.085
2nd semester	17	4.245	0.970	0.235	17	4.118	0.993	0.241
3rd semester	13	4.248	0.656	0.182	13	4.231	0.725	0.201
4th semester	7	4.460	0.522	0.197	7	4.571	0.535	0.202
Alumni	23	4.101	1.103	0.230	23	4.217	1.204	0.251

Gu and Lu [31] and Madden *et al.* [32] suggested that alumni and current students may have different satisfaction levels due to varying experiences and expectations. Current students often benefit from engaging in academic environments, such as interactions with teachers, resources, and support networks, leading to higher satisfaction. In contrast, alumni may view their experiences more critically, influenced by factors like job market conditions or unmet post-graduation expectations, resulting in lower satisfaction scores.

Kim *et al.* [33] noted that as students progress in their studies, they develop deeper relationships with peers and teachers, boosting their sense of belonging and engagement. Additionally, senior students often take more specialized coursework, increasing motivation and commitment. In contrast, junior students are still adjusting to coursework demands, leading to lower engagement.

To address research question 3, two one-way analyses of variance (ANOVAs) were employed to assess differences in student SAA and SE across various student enrollment statuses. The ANOVA for SAA revealed no statistically significant differences among the groups, $F(4, 85)=0.534$, $p=0.711$, $\eta^2=0.024$. The means and SDs for the five groups were as follows: 1st semester ($M=4.396$, $SD=0.494$), 2nd semester ($M=4.245$, $SD=0.970$), 3rd semester ($M=4.248$, $SD=0.656$), 4th semester ($M=4.460$, $SD=0.522$), and alumni ($M=4.101$, $SD=1.103$).

Similarly, the ANOVA for SE showed no statistically significant differences between groups, represented by $F(4, 85)=0.385$, $p=0.819$, $\eta^2=0.018$. The means and SDs for the five groups were: 1st semester ($M=4.300$, $SD=0.466$), 2nd semester ($M=4.118$, $SD=0.993$), 3rd semester ($M=4.231$, $SD=0.725$), 4th semester ($M=4.571$, $SD=0.535$), and alumni ($M=4.217$, $SD=1.204$). The effect sizes, calculated as eta squared (η^2), were 0.024 for SAA and 0.018 for SE, indicating very small effects. These results suggest no evidence of differences in SE with academic advising and SE based on student enrollment status among the groups tested under the current conditions. However, further research may be necessary to explore potential effects in different contexts or with a larger sample size.

Table 6 shows the results of an ANOVA test examining the relationship between satisfaction and academic stages. Table 7 illustrates the results of an ANOVA test that examines the relationship between SE and academic stages. As illustrated in Figure 1, Figure 1(a) and Figure 1(b) students from first through fourth semesters, together with alumni, maintain high satisfaction ratings about academic advising and engagement

at level 4 from the maximum of 5. The consistent high ratings from various student stages demonstrate that the institution delivers effective and continuous advising services. The graph shows students obtain meaningful guidance during their entire academic path, which starts at enrollment and ends with graduation. Alumni SAA remains high because this advising continues to positively affect their academic success and professional growth. Along with the ANOVA analysis, the findings demonstrate a well-organized, student-focused advising approach which effectively adapts to student needs throughout time while building strong institutional support and student engagement. Thus, it contributes to strong institutional loyalty and positive word-of-mouth, enhancing the university's reputation and student retention efforts.

Table 6. ANOVA result for SAA and the academic stages

Source	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	p	η^2
Between groups	1.399	4	0.350	0.534	0.711	0.024
Within groups	55.733	85	0.656			
Total	57.132	89				

Table 7. ANOVA result for SE and the academic stages

Source	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	p	η^2
Between groups	1.122	4	0.281	0.385	0.819	0.018
Within groups	62.000	85	0.729			
Total	63.122	89				

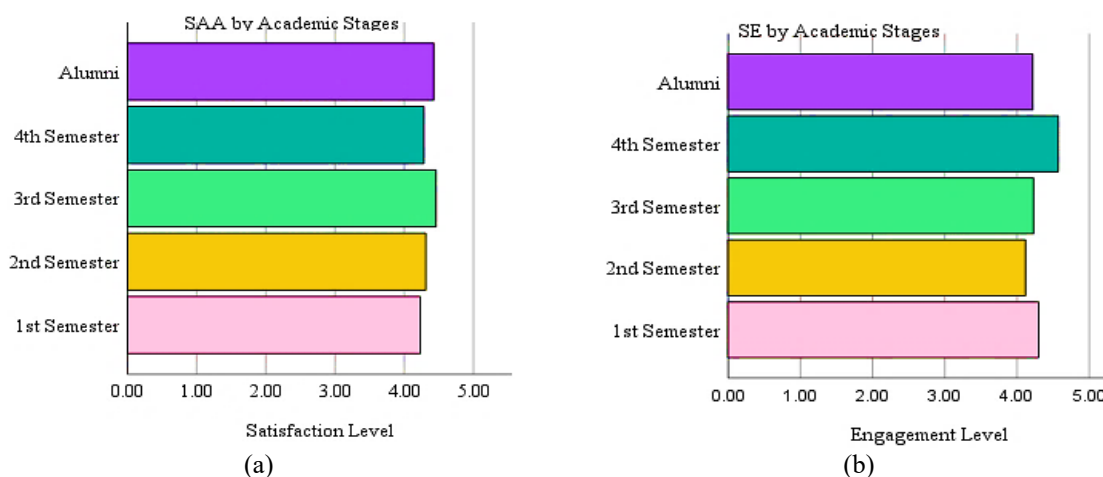


Figure 1. ANOVA results of (a) students' satisfaction level and (b) engagement level, based on their academic stages

Goemans and Kapinos [34] indicated that equal access to institutional resources such as academic advising, career services, and others to both current students and alumni may mitigate the differences in satisfaction levels and SE. The IGS is engaged in formal and informal ways of connecting to its alumni, such as inviting them to school activities, social media campaigns, and casual meetups. In addition, two independent sample t-tests were conducted to compare student SAA and SE between male and female students. The analysis showed that there was no significant difference in student satisfaction between males ($M=4.375$, $SD=0.584$) and females ($M=4.140$, $SD=1.021$), $t(88)=1.379$, $p=0.171$. Similarly, for SE, there were no significant differences between males ($M=4.340$, $SD=0.471$) and females ($M=4.234$, $SD=0.909$), $t(88)=0.719$, $p=0.474$.

These findings indicate that there are no significant gender differences in either student SAA or SE. Both male and female students appear to have similar experiences with advising and school involvement, suggesting that the academic advising system and engagement strategies are implemented uniformly across genders. Further research could investigate other factors, such as academic performance or specific program types, that might influence these outcomes.

While statistical analysis revealed no significant differences in satisfaction or engagement across academic stages, these findings merit further reflection. The one possible explanation is that the model used in the IGS offers consistent, structured support across all stages of a student's academic journey. The SAS program's holistic approach, emphasizing both academic and personal guidance, may contribute to uniform

satisfaction regardless of whether students are in their first semester or preparing for graduation. Moreover, qualitative dimensions such as students' evolving expectations, coping strategies, adaptation, and sense of autonomy could play a role (e.g., even if junior students are still adjusting, they may still feel supported due to clear communication, accessible resources, and guidance provided). Similarly, alumni may have gained greater appreciation for advising services after transitioning out of university life, resulting in retrospective balance and satisfaction levels. Further qualitative studies, such as focus groups or in-depth interviews, would provide more insights into these dynamics.

Table 8 presents the results of two independent sample t-tests that compare student SAA and SE between genders (male and female). The illustration in Figure 2 both Figure 2(a) and Figure 2(b), show that male and female students express similar satisfaction ratings at 4 on the scale regarding SAA and SE. The absence of gender-based differences indicates that the institution provides advising services and engagement initiatives which students view as fair and inclusive. The steady satisfaction ratings demonstrate that male and female students receive equal advantages from academic support and campus participation programs. Likewise, with ANOVA analysis, the findings demonstrate that the institution successfully creates an academic setting which supports all students equally regardless of gender. The research finds that gender-neutral support systems play an essential role in developing both student belonging and academic motivation throughout the entire student population.

Table 8. The two independent sample t-test of SAA and SE between genders

Gender	N	SAA					Student engagement				
		Mean	SD	<i>t</i>	df	<i>p</i> -value	Mean	SD	<i>t</i>	df	<i>p</i> -value
Male	52	4.375	0.584	1.379	88	0.171	4.340	0.471	0.719	88	0.474
Female	38	4.140	1.021				4.234	0.909			

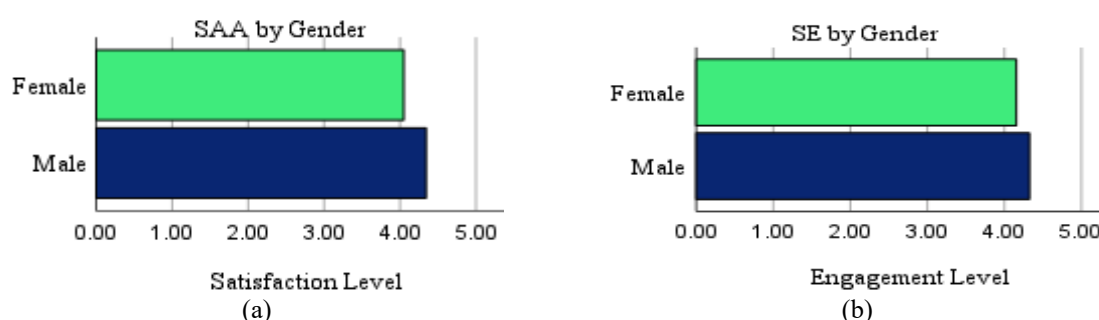


Figure 2. Two independent sample t-test of (a) student's satisfaction level and (b) engagement level, based on their gender

3.6. Research Question 4. Is there a relationship between the academic advising and their SE?

To address research question 4, a regression analysis was conducted to determine whether student SAA significantly impacts SE. SE were treated as the dependent variable and SAA as the predictor variable. Results indicated that SAA significantly predicted SE, $F(1, 88)=112.989$, $p<0.001$, demonstrating that SAA plays a crucial role in influencing SE ($\beta=0.750$, $p<0.001$).

These findings suggest a positive relationship, whereby increases in SAA correspond to higher levels of SE. Additionally, the R^2 value of 0.562 indicates that the model accounts for 56.2% of the variance in SE. The results of a regression analysis examining the relationship between IGS SAA (satisfaction with academic support) and student SE was conducted wherein Hawthorne *et al.* [26] and DeRosa [27] observed that students who receive advising often feel more connected to their school community. This sense of connection not only enhances their satisfaction but is also linked to increased engagement and improved academic outcomes. Gu and Lu [31] found that increased advising contact may be linked to greater SE, particularly in terms of retention.

3.7. Other significant findings on students' perspectives about academic advising

Other than the adapted questionnaires, the following questions were added to get the students' perspectives towards the IGS' SAS and its implementation.

3.7.1. Perspective 1. I feel that my overall academic performance has significantly improved as a result of attending advising sessions

Research results show 4.4% of participants strongly disagreed with this statement, while 3.3% disagreed. Meanwhile, 14.4% remained neutral, 44.4% agreed, and 33.3% strongly agreed, indicating a positive trend in the perceived effectiveness of the advising sessions on academic improvement.

3.7.2. Perspective 2. I believe my overall SE has significantly improved due to the advising sessions

Research findings indicate 4.4% of respondents strongly disagreed with this sentiment, while only 1.1% disagreed. Among the participants, 17.8% adopted a neutral position. In contrast, a significant majority of students 42.2% agreed and 34.4% strongly agreed—indicating the positive impact that advising sessions have had on their SE.

3.7.3. Perspective 3. I believe that student advising is incredibly helpful and should remain a key component of the IGS services

Data shows that 5.6% of respondents strongly disagreed with the statement, while only 1.1% disagreed. Additionally, 5.6% remained neutral. In contrast, a substantial 27.8% agreed, and an impressive 60.0% strongly agreed, highlighting the strong support for the continuation of student advising within the IGS framework.

3.7.4. Perspective 4. What was the most helpful advice you received from your advice?

When questioned about the usefulness of the advice they received, 37 respondents (41.1%) gained valuable academic guidance, 29 (32.2%) found visa-related advice helpful, and 19 (21.1%) obtained important information about living in Korea. A few respondents reported receiving assistance on financial matters (1.1%), job advice (1.1%), banking (1.1%), or indicated they do not need help (1.1%). The one respondent (1.1%) mentioned help in maturity.

The results show significant improvements in both academic performance and SE due to advising sessions: 44.4% of students agreed and 33.3% strongly agreed that advising sessions positively improved their academic performance. Regarding SE, 42.2% agreed and 34.4% strongly agreed that advising helped them become more engaged. Additionally, 60% of students strongly agreed that advising should remain a key part of IGS services, indicating strong support for its continuation. The most helpful advice students received included academic guidance (41.1%) and visa-related advice (32.2%).

4. CONCLUSION

This study's findings demonstrate a high level of SAA and a strong degree of SE among international graduate students at Namseoul University. Statistical analysis showed a positive correlation between satisfaction with advising and SE, affirming that supportive advising fosters a sense of belonging and motivation, which aligns with prior studies that associate supportive advising with increased academic involvement and community connection. The study found no substantial differences in advising satisfaction or engagement across gender, academic stages, and students across Asian regions, supporting the idea that the advising framework is effective across demographic groups. The current study affirmed that supportive academic environments enhance students' sense of belonging, ultimately promoting academic and social integration. By confirming these theories within the context of international graduate students, this study advances the existing knowledge base, emphasizing the role of consistent inclusive advising practices in fostering engagement for diverse student populations. To broaden the implications of these findings, it would be helpful to compare the IGS' advising model with those at similar institutions. Studies conducted at universities in Canada, the United States, and Asia have found that advising frameworks that integrate career planning, psychosocial support, and early academic interventions tend to foster higher student engagement and persistence. The IGS SAS program shares many of these characteristics, which may explain its effectiveness. However, institutions that lack tailored support for international students or rely on purely transactional advising models often report lower satisfaction and engagement levels. Incorporating global comparisons not only affirms the value of the IGS' approach but also offers pathways for refinement, such as implementing more proactive advising or peer mentorship programs to increase depth of engagement. Future research could build on this foundation by exploring additional factors influencing advising satisfaction and motivators of SE, potentially leading to more refined support programs for international students worldwide. However, the study's limitation of relying on a single-institution's scope and self-reported data, may not fully capture broader trends or objective measures of engagement. Broader, multi-institutional studies would provide greater generalizability and deeper insight into the advising experiences of international students across diverse academic contexts.

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C : Conceptualization

M : Methodology

So : Software

Va : Validation

Fo : Formal analysis

I : Investigation

R : Resources

D : Data Curation

O : Writing - Original Draft

E : Writing - Review & Editing

Vi : Visualization

Su : Supervision

P : Project administration

Fu : Funding acquisition

CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

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INFORMED CONSENT

We have obtained informed consent from all individuals included in this study.

DATA AVAILABILITY

The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author, [RB], upon reasonable request.

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