

Everyday Life Information Seeking of International Students in Taiwan

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ABSTRACT

The increasing number of international student enrolled all around the world that leads to the needs of information problem. Different background, social demography, and general information affect the needs of information of international students. The genre of information to be search on the internet and the use of internet in seeking everyday life information take attention of researcher. The research intended to find interrelation between Social demography and general information toward genre of information chosen. This research questions were answered by conducting survey using questionnaire. Online questionnaire is chosen as the method to collect information from international students who are studying in Taiwan. This study finding released that Internet had been used as a primary medium for seeking information and most of the International students are having tendency to search information related to entertainment compare to other genre of everyday life information. In fact, personal interest information which is having important value got a low interest.

Keywords: Everyday life information, Social demography, International Students.

Research Background and Motivation

The desire for higher education is rapidly increasing. The big number was recorded in 2011; nearly 4.3 million students were enrolled in tertiary education outside their country of citizenship as shown on the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development [OECD] (2013). In a decade, international student had grown 78% furthermore; Asian countries are the top sources of international students with 53% of total international students enrolled worldwide.

Students who are heading to study abroad, they want to improve their studies, also seek to gather better life experience. Dwyer & Peters (2004) believe that studying

abroad will change your life, this statement lead to the increasing number of international students enrolled. The changes in life have effect many aspects in human's life. International Students maintain the friendship better, great decision making process, modern way of thinking, have broad image about the world (Dwyer & Peters, 2004; Cynthia Perras, 1981). Moreover, foreign degree considered more prestigious than a local degree.

International Students sounds tempting for a group of people, but become international students are not easy as we imagine. During this term it comes out various kind of problem e.g. cultural shock which is definitely one of biggest challenges they have to face. Cultural shock can manifest itself with symptoms that a preoccupation with the water one drinks and the food one eats, irritability, a feeling of being criticized by the hosts, a strong desire to be with people of the same nationality, decreased flexibility, homesickness, a feeling of loneliness, difficulties making friends, a strong desire to be home, and difficulties communicating feelings to other (Oberg, 1960). It has come to mean distress those results from being in an unfamiliar culture, of which one does not have sufficient information (Brislin, 1981). Considering those international students who went abroad seeking for knowledge, but in the swing of things they get problems complicated to be solved, the researcher regards this can lead to bad grades driving a bad health condition, a mentally illness, among other negative effects.

If students have received information related to their new reality of living, then it can influence to reduce the consequences from facing problem as mentioned above. Therefore, the researcher attempts to find interrelation and simple descriptive statistic of Everyday Life Information Seeking (ELIS) the students seek according their general information background.

Consequently, that phenomenon ignites the researcher interest to explore the interrelation of social demographic, general information, and everyday life information seeking of international students. In this research, uses and gratification will be used as an underlying theory. This study methodology is based on a quantitative approach. A survey using questionnaire will be conducted to English program Taiwan, R.O.C.

International Students and the Consideration

The surge in internationally mobile students reflects the rapid expansion of enrolment in higher education globally, which has grown by 78% in a decade, UIS (2012). In that term, we called “internationally mobile students” such as students who have crossed a national border to study, or are enrolled in a distance to learning program in abroad. These students are not usual residents or citizens of the country where they study. Internationally mobile students are a sub-group of “foreign students,” a category that includes those who have permanent residency in the host country. For this reason, the number of foreign students, globally, tends to be higher, UIS (2012) (see Figure1).

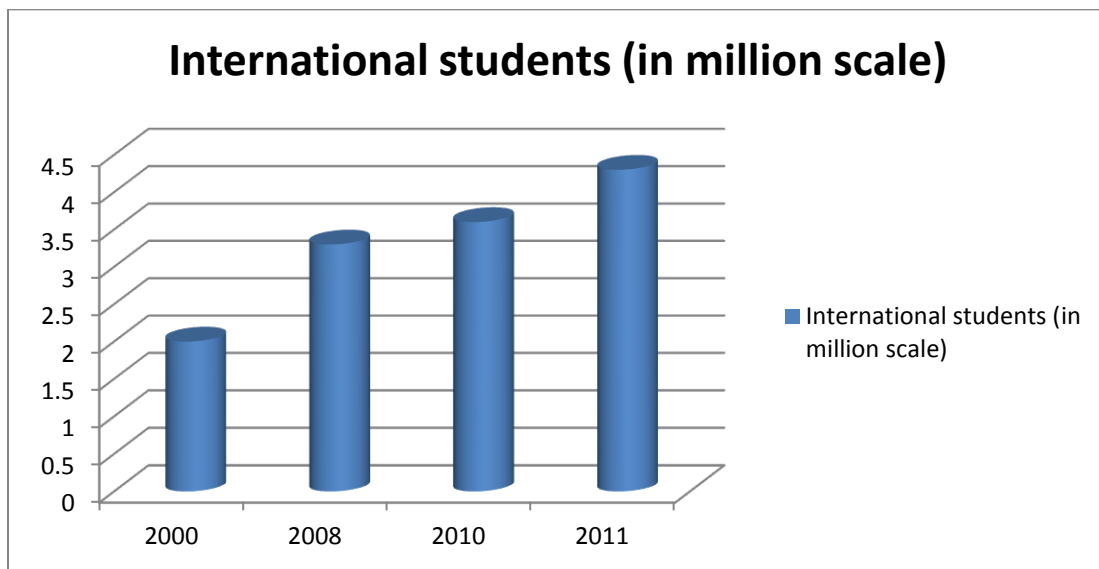


Figure 1. Diagram of international students' number all around the world (by researcher). Sources: OECD (2010); UIS (2012); OECD (2013).

The indication of popularity studying abroad is the increasing number of international students enrolled worldwide. Becoming international students have advantages and disadvantages, but people tended to choose study abroad because study abroad will change your life; you will come back a new person, Dwyer & Peters (2004). In the same research, as much as 97% of respondents agree study abroad

increased maturity; 96% of respondents agree study abroad increased self-confidence; while 89% of respondents agree it enabled them to tolerate ambiguity, and 95% of respondents stated that it had a lasting impact on their world. Other finding about studying abroad invented ability to maintain the friendship as a result, while 73% said the long-term effect for studying abroad is influencing the decision making process, Carolyn Valtos (1992) as cited in Dwyer & Peters (2004). Cynthia Perras (1981) adds the experience of living and studying in another country was so eye-opening ... [it] tested preconceptions and habits I wasn't even aware were so ingrained in me. Moreover, foreign degree considered more prestigious than a local degree.

The emergence of problem

In order to pursue and get all the advantages after graduated from studying abroad, international students also experienced bunch of problem. For instance, Culture shock definitely the biggest problem faced with abroad students. Culture shock can manifest itself with symptoms such as a preoccupation with the water one drinks and the food one eats, irritability, a feeling of being criticized by the hosts, a strong desire to be with people of the same nationality, decreased flexibility, homesickness, a feeling of loneliness, difficulties making friends, a strong desire to be home, and difficulties communicating feelings to other (Oberg, 1960; emphasizes added). It has come to mean distress those results from being in an unfamiliar culture, of which one does not have sufficient information (Brislin, 1981).

As information becomes an important factor for international students, many researcher conducted research about information needs (everyday life information needs) in relation with international students and all the research result legitimated the need of information in various ways such as Safahih (2006) conducted a research about information needs of international students at a Malaysian university founded as much as 22 respondents (40.7%) indicated the language was their main information barrier; Mohamed (2000) The main barriers of foreign woman in meeting their information needs were limitations in Bahasa Melayu and the English language, while Jackson

(2005) conducted a study to determine the library needs of incoming international students in the United States. A total of 121 respondents, representing 38 countries were surveyed at San Jose State University. The results showed there was a need for providing more information resources in other languages, especially daily newspapers from student’s home country, interest in local [San Jose] area information, and job related information. As Safahih (2006), Mohamed (2000) and Jackson (2005) discover in their research, make researcher absolutely sure that everyday life information should fulfilled in order to finish their studies.

Everyday Live Information Seeking

The information seeking, start from information needs, Robertson (1977) found the classical models (see Figure 2) of information revival which widely used in information science research for over 30 years. In the middle, match (3) is the role of search engine to match the needs (1) expressed as Queries (2) with documents represented (4) by entries in an index from the source (5). This model is really famous at that time because, to design effective search experiences, we need models that place the searcher rather than the system at the core of the process and in this classic model, the user set as an important element of information seeking.

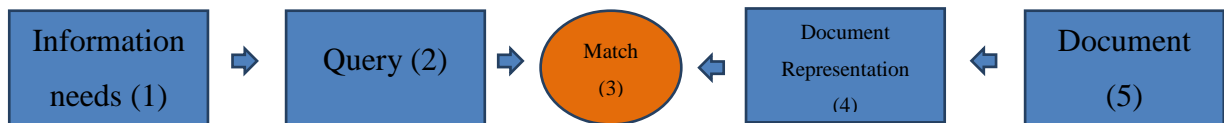


Figure 2 the classic model of information retrieval by researcher,

Sources: Robertson (1977)

The concept of everyday life information seeking emerges in the last two decades by Savolainen (1995) in research approaching information seeking in the context of “way of life”. Savolainen introduced two new concepts. *First*, way of life refers to “order of things,” which is based on the choices that individuals make in everyday life (p. 262). *Second*, because the “meaningful order of things” might not reproduce itself

automatically, “mastery of life” required to take active care of it (p. 264). Savolainen (1995) broadly defined it as “the acquisition of various informational (both cognitive and expressive) elements which people employ to orient themselves in daily life or to solve problems not directly associated with the performance of occupational tasks.” (pp. 266-267).

Another concept about everyday life information seeking arises because of P.Wilson's (1977) give understanding which explain that personal observations on monitoring their environment, discussions with friends, relatives and colleagues, and the use of the mass media as the way how people obtain information. And this idea influenced Williamson's (1995, 1997, 1998) to conduct a research, which examine the role of incidental information acquisition in informing people for their everyday lives. His research shows, the need of information not always perceived until the information is actually fulfilled. Besides that, there are also a lot of research conducted were concern on everyday life information-seeking and relation with International students (Jeong, 2004; Sin & Kim, 2013), young generation (Agosto & Hughes, 2005; Agosto & Hughes, 2006; Gray et al., 2005), social networking sites (Sin & Kim, 2013).

Methodology

This research was conducted in Taiwan, R.O.C. including Taipei, Taichung, and Tainan District. The subjects for this research are whole population of English program students at Taiwan, R.O.C.. English program was chosen for this research to elaborate the interrelation between Social demography and general information toward genre of information chosen. The researcher contacts the president of international student all around Taiwan and visits 3 universities at Taipei, Taichung, and Tainan District. Questionnaire distributed using online and sent to personal email of the president of the university and using snow ball sampling method. The genre of everyday life information seeking adopted from Sin & Kim(2013).

Characteristics of Respondents

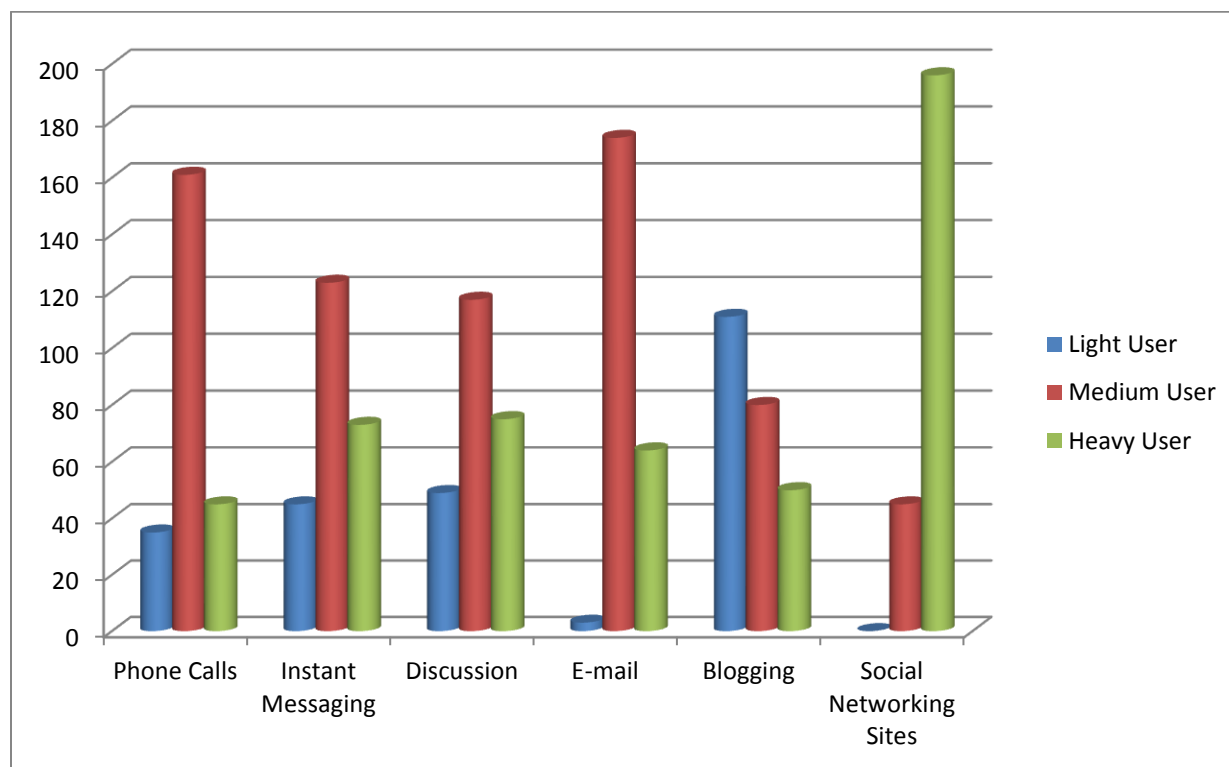
The respondent on this research will be reflected on Table 1 as shown below. Most of the respondents were single and aged between 21 to 30 years old, this is be in accordance with the education degree being taken by the respondents. In term of internet user segmentation (see Figure 3), researcher divided the user into 3 segments: light user, medium user, and heavy user; only social networking sites purpose got heavy internet users.

Table 1. Characteristic of Respondents

	Frequency	Percentage (%)
	Gender	
Male	114	47.3%
Female	127	52.7%
	Marital Status	
Single	210	87.1%
Married	31	12.9%
	Age	
17 to 21 years old	21	8.7%
21 to 30 years old	198	82.2%
More than 31 years old	22	9.1%
	Level of Education	
Bachelor degree	40	16.6%
Master degree	189	78.4%
Doctoral degree	12	5%
	Nationality	
Vietnam	70	29%
Thailand	28	11.6%
Indonesia	64	26.6%

Philippine	14	5.8%
Mongolia	21	8.7%
Western Countries	8	3.3%
European Countries	10	4.1%
African Countries	5	2.1%
Latin American Countries	7	2.9%
Other Asian Countries	14	5.8%

Figure 3. User Segmentation in Particular Function of Internet Usage



Mean Comparison

Respondent in group 17 to 21 years old tend to consume entertainment, News related to Taiwan, and Particular Group/identity; while respondent aged between 22 to 30 years old seek finance, food and drink, health, housing, legal, transportation information, and respondent aged more than 30 years old tend to search interpersonal relationship, news related to home country, and Taiwanese Culture.

Table 2. Mean Comparison ELIS and Age

Age	Everyday Life Information Seeking											
	Entertainment	Finance	Food and Drink	Health	Housing	Interpersonal Relationship	Legal	News: Home Country	News: Taiwan	My Particular Group	Transportation	Taiwanese Culture
17 to 21 Years Old	4.29	3.24	3.52	3.86	3.57	3.43	3.43	3.71	3.95	4.00	3.90	3.24
22 to 30 Years Old	4.18	3.82	3.80	4.04	3.79	3.66	3.54	4.05	3.60	3.94	4.03	3.46
More Than 30 Years Old	4.05	3.64	3.73	3.73	3.41	3.77	3.41	4.36	3.91	3.73	3.59	3.73

Table 3. Mean Comparison ELIS and Gender

Gender	Everyday Life Information Seeking											
	Entertainment	Finance	Food and Drink	Health	Housing	Interpersonal Relationship	Legal	News: Home Country	News: Taiwan	My Particular Group	Transportation	Taiwanese Culture
Female	4.20	3.69	3.87	3.94	3.67	3.65	3.44	3.98	3.59	3.83	3.91	3.46
Male	4.15	3.82	3.66	4.04	3.82	3.65	3.61	4.11	3.75	4.04	4.04	3.47

In terms of gender, the most information searched on internet is Entertainment. Female acquired a higher mean with 4.29 and followed by male with 4.18 from 5-point scale. Female respondents tend to search Entertainment, Food and Drink, and Interpersonal Relationship Information, while male respondents search the rest (see Table 3). In terms of level of education, Bachelor Degree and Master Degree Students are likely to search information related to Entertainment; with the result of Master Degree students as the highest and followed by Bachelor Degree Students. The most searched information is related to News: Home Country by Doctoral Degree students (see Table 4).

Table 4. Mean Comparison ELIS and Level of Study

Level of Study	Everyday Life Information Seeking											
	Entertainment	Finance	Food and Drink	Health	Housing	Interpersonal Relationship	Legal	News: Home Country	News: Taiwan	My Particular Group	Transportation	Taiwanese Culture
Bachelor Degree	4.08	3.43	3.70	4.08	3.70	3.50	3.43	3.90	3.70	3.98	3.75	3.33
Master Degree	4.19	3.81	3.79	3.95	3.76	3.66	3.53	4.04	3.63	3.93	4.02	3.51
Doctoral Degree	4.25	3.75	3.58	4.33	3.58	4.00	3.67	4.67	4.00	3.83	3.92	3.33

Table 5. Mean Comparison ELIS and Marital Status

Marital Status	Everyday Life Information Seeking											
	Entertainment	Finance	Food and Drink	Health	Housing	Interpersonal Relationship	Legal	News: Home Country	News: Taiwan	My Particular Group	Transportation	Taiwanese Culture
Single	4.21	3.74	3.77	3.93	3.68	3.60	3.48	4.05	3.63	3.90	3.94	3.43
Married	4.00	3.81	3.81	4.42	4.10	4.00	3.77	4.06	3.94	4.13	4.16	3.74

Marital Status in Table 5 shows that Single respondent have a high consumption of entertainment information, while Married respondent assume almost all kind of information is important. And the most important information for Married respondent is Health.

Table 6. Mean Comparison ELIS and Nationality

Nationality	Everyday Life Information Seeking											
	Entertainment	Finance	Food and Drink	Health	Housing	Interpersonal Relationship	Legal	News: Home Country	News: Taiwan	My Particular Group	Transportation	Taiwanese Culture
Vietnam	4.29	3.91	3.67	4.00	3.64	3.46	3.64	4.01	3.43	4.07	4.04	3.11
Thailand	4.29	3.75	3.79	4.00	3.54	3.89	3.68	4.04	4.00	4.04	4.21	3.64
Indonesia	4.19	3.70	3.88	3.97	3.81	3.66	3.42	3.94	3.61	3.70	3.86	3.56
Philippine	4.00	3.21	3.86	4.14	3.50	3.57	3.86	4.43	3.93	4.07	3.64	3.64
Mongolia	3.71	4.00	4.05	4.05	4.29	3.81	3.48	3.76	3.57	4.14	4.33	3.90
Western Country	3.75	3.88	4.00	3.75	3.50	3.38	3.38	3.63	4.00	3.50	3.63	3.50
European Country	4.40	3.00	3.10	3.70	3.40	3.50	2.30	4.70	4.10	4.00	3.50	3.40
African Country	3.60	4.00	4.40	4.40	4.20	4.20	3.40	4.00	3.60	4.00	4.20	3.80
Latin American Country	4.29	3.57	2.86	3.43	3.57	3.71	3.43	4.71	3.14	3.43	3.43	3.14
Other Asian Country	4.43	3.71	3.79	4.29	4.00	3.93	3.79	4.21	4.07	4.00	4.14	3.71

Table 6 shows information needed according to their country of origin. International student which come from Vietnam, Thailand, Indonesia, and Other Asian Country tend to search entertainment information. While Philippines, European, and Latin American students care about News on their home country and Mongolia focusing on transportation information. Western Country Students Search 'Food and Drink' and News related to Taiwan. From other point of view, the most searched information is News related to their home Country by Latin American Students.

Table 7. Mean Comparison ELIS and User Segmentation Blogs

User Segmentation Blogs	Everyday Life Information Seeking											
	Entertainment	Finance	Food and Drink	Health	Housing	Interpersonal Relationship	Legal	News: Home Country	News: Taiwan	My Particular Group	Transportation	Taiwanese Culture
Light User	4.14	3.59	3.56	3.90	3.64	3.37	3.32	4.01	3.42	3.50	3.72	3.30
Medium User	4.30	3.76	3.90	3.95	3.55	3.75	3.55	4.25	3.80	4.16	4.01	3.40
Heavy User	4.06	4.08	4.02	4.26	4.26	4.10	3.90	3.80	3.98	4.50	4.46	3.96

Table 8. Mean Comparison ELIS and User Segmentation Chat Room

User Segmentation Chat Room	Everyday Life Information Seeking											
	Entertainment	Finance	Food and Drink	Health	Housing	Interpersonal Relationship	Legal	News: Home Country	News: Taiwan	My Particular Group	Transportation	Taiwanese Culture
Light User	4.47	3.86	3.82	3.82	3.86	3.33	3.67	4.27	3.69	3.61	4.02	3.12
Medium User	4.14	3.84	3.69	4.04	3.68	3.79	3.56	4.00	3.66	4.04	4.02	3.52
Heavy User	4.04	3.53	3.85	4.03	3.76	3.64	3.35	3.97	3.65	3.96	3.87	3.61

Table 9. Mean Comparison ELIS and User Segmentation E-Mail

User Segmentation E-Mail	Everyday Life Information Seeking											
	Entertainment	Finance	Food and Drink	Health	Housing	Interpersonal Relationship	Legal	News: Home Country	News: Taiwan	My Particular Group	Transportation	Taiwanese Culture
Medium User	4.21	3.73	3.75	3.89	3.65	3.45	3.46	4.12	3.65	3.82	3.87	3.35
Heavy User	4.06	3.75	3.77	4.23	3.98	4.19	3.61	3.80	3.70	4.17	4.19	3.75

Table 10. Mean Comparison ELIS and User Segmentation Instant Messaging

User Segmentation Instant Messaging	Everyday Life Information Seeking											
	Entertainment	Finance	Food and Drink	Health	Housing	Interpersonal Relationship	Legal	News: Home Country	News: Taiwan	My Particular Group	Transportation	Taiwanese Culture
Light User	4.47	3.84	3.53	3.93	3.93	3.04	3.60	3.98	3.93	3.71	4.29	3.13
Medium User	4.12	3.86	3.85	4.08	3.70	3.76	3.52	4.03	3.53	4.04	3.97	3.45
Heavy User	4.08	3.49	3.78	3.88	3.68	3.84	3.47	4.11	3.73	3.88	3.78	3.71

Table 11. Mean Comparison ELIS and User Segmentation Phone Call

User Segmentation Phone Call	Everyday Life Information Seeking											
	Entertainment	Finance	Food and Drink	Health	Housing	Interpersonal Relationship	Legal	News: Home Country	News: Taiwan	My Particular Group	Transportation	Taiwanese Culture
Light User	4.43	3.91	3.86	4.11	3.91	3.63	3.34	4.17	3.91	3.77	4.17	3.34
Medium User	4.12	3.74	3.68	3.91	3.60	3.60	3.52	4.00	3.58	3.98	3.91	3.35
Heavy User	4.18	3.64	4.02	4.18	4.09	3.84	3.64	4.11	3.76	3.89	4.02	3.98

Table 12. Mean Comparison ELIS and User Segmentation Social Networking Sites

User Segmentation SNS	Everyday Life Information Seeking											
	Entertainment	Finance	Food and Drink	Health	Housing	Interpersonal Relationship	Legal	News: Home Country	News: Taiwan	My Particular Group	Transportation	Taiwanese Culture
Medium User	3.93	3.36	3.64	4.18	3.44	3.51	3.11	4.22	3.53	3.64	3.60	3.64
Heavy User	4.23	3.84	3.80	3.95	3.81	3.68	3.61	4.01	3.69	3.99	4.06	3.43

Table 7 to Table 12 shows the mean comparison of User Segmentation in particular function of internet on everyday life information seeking. Most of the results show that they have high mean on Entertainment, but there are several User Segmentation that have different results, such as: (1) Heavy Users of Instant Messaging searched information related to News:Home Country, (2) Heavy Users of E-Mail care about Health information more, compare to others information, (3) Heavy Users of Blogs tend to choose My Particular Groups / Identity, (4) Medium Users of Social Networking Sites tend to choose News:Home Country.

Discussion

The Internet had been used as a medium to search information among international student around Taiwan, since they live in different country with different culture and language; it is hard to be in touch with the local students or local citizen. Even for simple things, for instance subscription on operator card, opening bank account, buying food, and almost every aspect on daily needs, we barely hard to do it

		(T)	(P)	(M)	€	(A)	(O)			
Everyday Life Information seeking	Survival Information	3.71	3.16	3.58	3.45	4.70	3.55	2.91*	0.00	A>T>M>O>E>P

Table 14 shows that there are significant interactions between Nationalities on survival Information ($F = 2.91$, $p = 0.00$). African Students have the highest mean compare to the other and significant with Thailand, Mongolia, European, and Other Asian Countries Students. This Statistical result makes a hit because, from several universities which is Chinese Culture University, Taipei and Ming Chuan University at Taoyuan, 9 out of 11 African Students are leaving outside the dormitory school and try so hard to find a place to work. So, the searching of information of Housing, Transportation, legal, and Finance is considered urgent for them. According to their grumble, it is really hard to find housing and working place here in Taiwan. Therefore they need to search more information by themselves. And the only way to achieve their need is to use the Internet, because they feel discriminated by the others

Conclusion

To conclude this research, become international students are irritable, but surprisingly Taiwan had been chosen as a leisure country by the internationally mobile students. This statement are legitimated by the data shown that most of international students choose common information the most, while in common information contain Entertainment, News: Home Country, Food and Drink) which believed to be the type of information sought when people do the travelling. Strengthen by the user segmentation, most of medium user use Phone Call, Instant Messaging, Discussion, and Email; while it shown heavy user on social networking sites which believed to be the type of entertainment activity platform.

For academic recommendation, researcher hope that this research can be expanded and involving all internationally mobile students or can be duplicated in

other country. New variable also expected to be added in order to get broader image of needs of international students and the fulfillment of information, also the satisfaction of internet and information gathered by international students.

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