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A PRACTICAL APPROACH TO VISUAL DESIGN AND CONTENT MODIFICATION FOR A STUDENT EXCHANGE GUIDEBOOK

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Abstract

This study examines the challenges faced by the Office of University X in promoting student exchange programs due to its ineffective guidebook. Using a descriptive method, data were collected through an online questionnaire (N=20 students), informal interviews with staff and students, document analysis, and library research. The small sample size resulted from a short data collection period (two to three weeks) and the heavy academic workload of senior students. Findings revealed weaknesses in the previous guidebook, including a plain monochrome design, lack of visuals, text-heavy content, and limited distribution. Consequently, only 40% of respondents were aware of the program, although 85% expressed interest. Guided by Cognitive Load Theory and Mayer's Multimedia Learning Principles, the redesign applied evidence-based improvements: (1) mobile-first responsive layout, (2) high-contrast color and clear typography, (3) infographics and icons to aid comprehension, (4) concise, chunked content with bullet points, and (5) interactive elements such as clickable links and QR codes. Post-assessment results indicated strong positive responses: 80% of students found the new guidebook more engaging, 70% appreciated its visual appeal, and 100% agreed that infographics clarified complex information. Moreover, 80% reported increased motivation to join exchange programs after viewing the redesigned version. The study proposes three strategies for continued effectiveness: (1) active online distribution via portals and social media, (2) biannual updates with new data and testimonials, and (3) development of interactive tools such as chatbots or virtual info sessions. Strategic design improvements can thus enhance educational resources and reduce administrative burdens.

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Keywords: Guidebook Visual Design, Content, Student Exchange Programs, Engaging, Descriptive

Introduction

In today's global academic landscape, international cooperation has become a key strategic priority for higher education institutions. Research by Marinoni, van't, and Jensen

(2022) reveals that 89% of universities now prioritize international partnerships. Among these efforts, student exchange programs have emerged as vital strategies for promoting cross-cultural learning and global competence. However, the success of such programs depends greatly on how effectively students can access and understand relevant information.

At University X, the Office of International Affairs plays a central role in managing student exchange programs. One crucial element in supporting these activities is the student exchange guidebook, which serves as a primary information source about partner universities and program procedures. Unfortunately, the existing guidebook was found to be plain, unattractive, and poorly distributed, limiting student engagement. According to Zhang and Hyland (2023), 72% of students prefer centralized and visually appealing guides. When information design is weak, potential participants struggle to navigate program details, reducing the overall appeal of exchange opportunities.

During the internship at University X, several issues were identified. Students reported that the current guidebook lacked visual appeal and was difficult to access. Questionnaire results showed that only 8 out of 20 students had ever read the guidebook, confirming limited awareness and poor dissemination. As Huber (1990) emphasized, restricted information access hinders decision-making, which parallels the situation at University X. Nevertheless, most respondents expressed high interest in joining exchange programs, motivated by goals such as improving language skills, developing global networks, gaining academic experience abroad, exploring new cultures, and enhancing career opportunities.

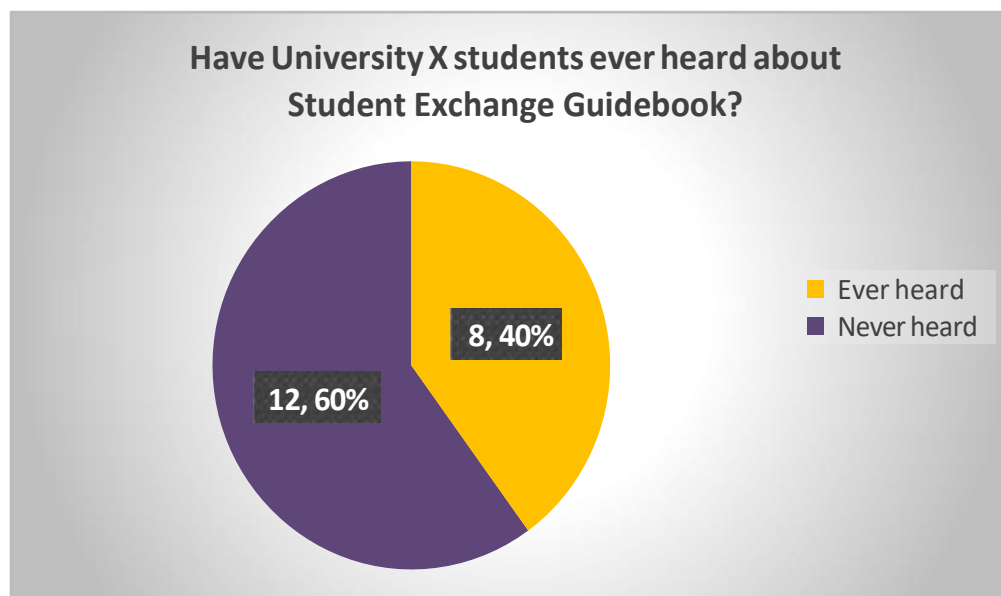


Chart 1. Have University X Students ever heard about Student Exchange Guidebook?

As summarized in Chart 1, only 40% of students had heard of the guidebook, while 60% were unaware of its existence.

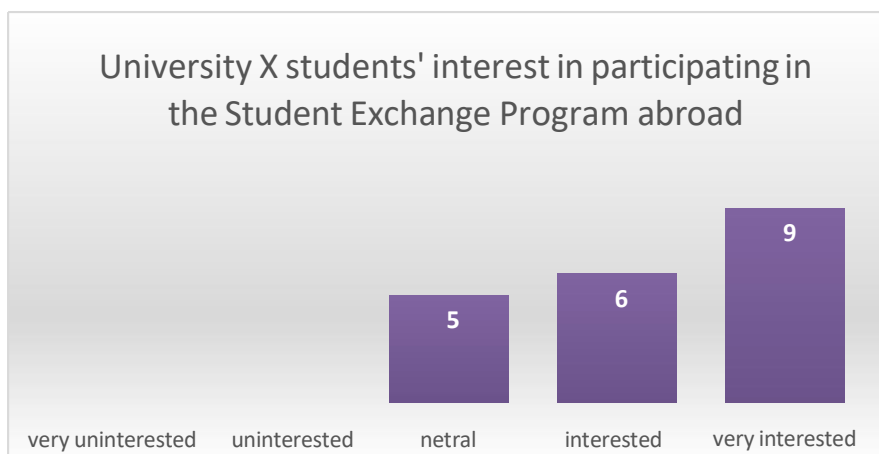


Chart 2. University X students' interest in participating in the Student Exchange Program abroad

The data presented in Chart 2, specifically concerning student interest in participating in the Student Exchange Program, was collected using the first structured online questionnaire. This quantitative approach employed closed questions (Likert scale). Additionally, it indicates that nearly half of the students showed moderate to high interest in participating in exchange programs.



Chart 3. Reasons why University X students were interested in participating in the Student Exchange program abroad

Chart 3 highlights their main motivations—career development, language improvement, and cultural exploration. These findings underscore a clear gap between student interest and the accessibility of program information.

The current guidebook’s design and distribution practices have proven ineffective. It was shared only upon request, preventing wide dissemination and lowering awareness. Consequently, many students remained uninformed about available opportunities. This lack of proactive communication undermines the university’s goal of fostering internationalization. To address these challenges, the guidebook must be redesigned to be

more engaging, accessible, and visually appealing. Fryer, L. K., Shum, A., & Nakao, K. (2023) demonstrated that students with easy guidebook access show 30% higher motivation to enroll in academic programs. Thus, a redesign emphasizing clarity, visual hierarchy, and accessibility could substantially improve participation.

Recent studies provide valuable insights for developing effective educational materials. Zhang (2023) found that 78% of students preferred guidebooks with infographics over text-heavy formats, while Lee (2023) showed that mobile-optimized layouts reduced bounce rates by 40%. The OECD (Paris) and European Students' Union (2023) guidelines recommend dark mode compatibility, color contrast ratios of at least 4.5:1, dyslexia-friendly fonts, and alternative text for images (Clarkson & Coleman, 2022; Smith, 2024). These practices align with inclusive design principles (Holmes, 2021) and ensure accessibility for diverse users.

Furthermore, research supports the importance of digital-first and culturally responsive visual communication. Case studies from the University of Amsterdam (2023) revealed that integrating micro-animations and concise “scrollytelling” formats increased engagement by 45%. Eye-tracking studies (Wedel & Pieters, 2021) also confirmed that readers focus eight times longer on visually segmented content. These results support Cognitive Load Theory (Sweller, 2020), which advocates chunking information for better comprehension. Similarly, Mayer's (2020) Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning demonstrated that bullet points and icons improved information retention by 30%.

Effective guidebooks balance comprehensive content with readability. The Erasmus+ (2023) handbook identified three essential content elements: procedural clarity, social proof through student testimonials, and personalization of program recommendations. Gartner (2024) found that AI-driven personalization increased engagement by 55%. Consistent institutional branding also builds trust and recognition (Erasmus+, 2023). Additionally, Self-Determination Theory (Ryan & Deci, 2020) emphasizes that materials fostering autonomy and competence—such as customizable filters and self-assessment tools—boost motivation. Surveys by the National Survey of Student Engagement (2023) revealed that 72% of students abandon guides lacking clear next steps, highlighting the importance of actionable language such as “Start Your Application”.

Modern guidebooks should integrate adaptive, inclusive, and sustainable design features. Studies on microlearning (Hug, 2020) and chatbot-mediated support (Winkler & Söllner, 2022) suggest that interactive, bite-sized content and real-time assistance enhance user experience. Inclusivity must also be prioritized: Holmes (2021) and Wu (2020) emphasize accessible layouts and strategic visual hierarchies to avoid information overload. Furthermore, recent educational frameworks advocate for cultural sensitivity (Stein, 2022; ISA, 2022), trauma-informed design (Imad, 2021), and climate-conscious mobility (Erasmus+, 2023). These innovations ensure that modern guidebooks align with ethical, social, and environmental priorities.

Beyond aesthetics, content quality must also address personalization, equity, and global relevance. Mittelmeier et al. (2024) proposed pre-departure surveys to assess student needs efficiently, while Alharahsheh and Pius (2023) highlighted culturally adapted FAQs as essential for inclusivity. Embedding student testimonials, as recommended by de Wit and Altbach (2021), further enhances authenticity and trust. UNESCO (2021) and NAFSA (2022) also stress the inclusion of student voices and anti-racist perspectives to promote fairness and diversity in academic communication.

In summary, the findings show that a successful student exchange guidebook should combine aesthetic appeal, accessibility, and interactive content grounded in inclusive and user-centered design. By implementing digital-first, culturally responsive, and sustainability-oriented principles, University X can create a more effective guidebook that engages students and supports institutional internationalization goals.

In response to the case above, this study aims to identify weaknesses in the existing student exchange guidebook and propose design and content improvements that make it more engaging, accessible, and aligned with the needs of modern learners.

Research Method

This study employed a descriptive research design to observe, analyze, and describe the challenges faced by the Office of University X in promoting its student exchange programs. The descriptive method was chosen because it enables accurate depiction of phenomena without manipulating variables (Creswell, 2014; Babbie, 2021). Guided by Kothari (2004) and Salkind (2017), the study combined qualitative and quantitative approaches, interpreting data through descriptive statistics and thematic analysis.

Data were collected through five complementary methods—document analysis, surveys, online questionnaires, informal interviews, and library research—ensuring triangulation and validity (Creswell, 2014). Document analysis involved reviewing the existing student exchange guidebook to identify weaknesses in design, accessibility, and content. Bowen (2009) noted that document analysis reveals institutional practices, while Prior (2003) emphasized contextual interpretation.

Staff surveys provided structured feedback on both the old and redesigned guidebooks. Following Fowler (2014) and Christian, Dillman, & Smyth (2014), the writers applied the Tailored Design Method to enhance response quality. Questions assessed satisfaction, usability, and visual appeal. Online questionnaires were distributed to University X students via Google Forms for efficiency and scalability (Ritter & Sue, 2012). Two questionnaires were administered, both using primarily closed-ended questions: the first examined students' awareness, interests, and perceived barriers; the second compared the old and new guidebooks using a 5-point Likert scale for clarity, visual appeal, and engagement (Krosnick & Berent, 1993). Demographic data were collected to ensure validity and representativeness (Fowler, 2014).

Informal interviews with staff and students provided qualitative insights during the writers' internship. As Kvale and Brinkmann (2015) and Rubin and Rubin (2012) emphasize, informal interviews encourage authentic reflection and reveal underlying perspectives. Qualitative insights were gathered through informal interviews with staff and students during the writers' internship. Unlike the structured questionnaires, these open-ended discussions encouraged authentic reflection and revealed underlying perspectives, thereby complementing the quantitative data gathered through the two questionnaires. Library research established the theoretical foundation for the redesign. The writers reviewed books, journals, and digital sources on design, information accessibility, and international education (Kumar, 2019; Creswell, 2014). This informed the integration of Cognitive Load Theory and Mayer's Multimedia Learning Principles into the guidebook's revision.

Respondents included University X students (minimum semester 2) and Office staff. Students were chosen as primary users of the guidebook, while staff contributed administrative perspectives. Data were collected over two to three weeks, yielding 20 student responses. Limited participation reflected scheduling constraints and barriers such as finances, parental approval, and language skills.

Conducted at the Office of University X from December 2024 to June 2025, the study followed eight stages: problem identification, data collection, analysis, theory review, redesign, testing, feedback, and reporting. These stages integrated the data collection methods as follows: The first online questionnaire, informal interviews, and document analysis were utilized during the ‘data collection’ and ‘analysis’ stages to identify weaknesses. The second online questionnaire was then implemented during the ‘testing’ and ‘feedback’ stages to assess the redesigned guidebook.

This methodological framework enabled a comprehensive evaluation of the guidebook’s weaknesses and redesign impact. The integration of multiple data sources ensured triangulation, improving validity and reliability. By combining systematic observation with stakeholder input, the writers identified effective strategies to enhance engagement and information accessibility in University X’s student exchange guidebook.

Result and Discussion

The two problems with the Student Exchange Guidebook owned by the Office of University X were as follows: (1). What were the weaknesses of the previous guidebook? (2). How could this guidebook be made more engaging? For the two questions above, the writers distributed two questionnaires to University X students from semester two to eight. Due to time constraints, the questionnaires distributed by the writers within a period of two to three weeks. Within two to three weeks, only 20 University X students returned the questionnaires to the writers because most of them had entered their senior semesters and were busy with academic activities and student activities. In addition, they were not yet interested in the Student Exchange program abroad due to limited funds, parental permission, and foreign language skills.

Guidebooks in student exchange programs served as essential tools to help participants understand the culture, academic rules, and daily life in the host country (Kosman, B., Winchester- Seeto, T., & Shields, R., 2023). Without clear guidance, students may experience culture shock or struggle to adapt, which can diminish the benefits of the exchange program. In the pie Chart 1 above, it was concluded that only 40% of students who responded to the author's questionnaire had seen and read the Student Exchange Guidebook. While 60% of students had never seen or read the Student Exchange Guidebook which could cause several things such as lack of preparation that must be prepared.

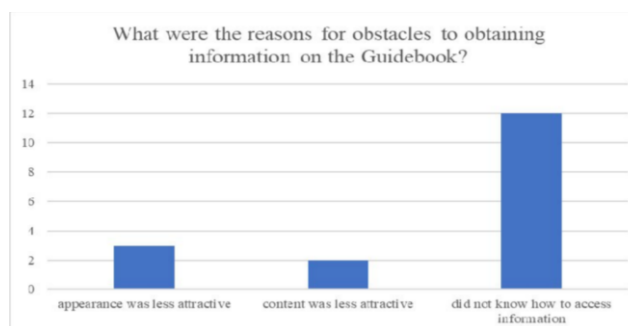
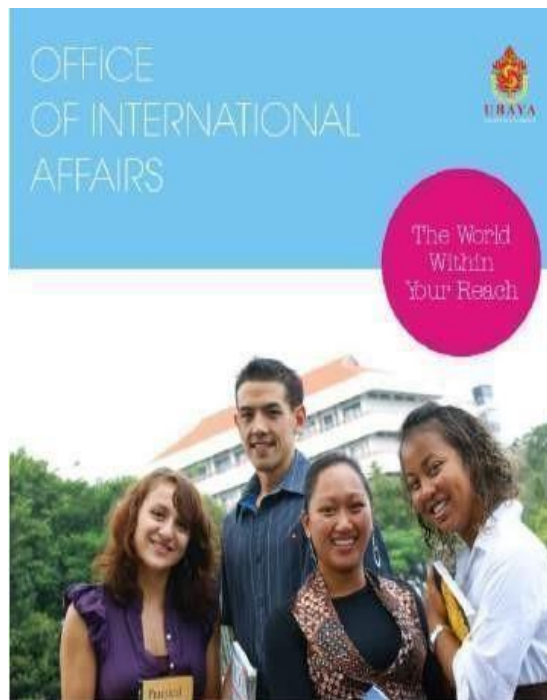


Chart 4. Reasons for obstacles to obtaining information on the Guidebook

Based on the pie chart above, 12 out of 20 students who responded were not aware of the previous student exchange program guidebook, but 17 students were very interested in participating in the student exchange program. The previous guidebook also suffered from several critical weaknesses that reduced its effectiveness in promoting student exchange programs. Visually, the guidebook used a plain, monochrome design with minimal infographics, making it appear outdated and unappealing to students. According to (Lester, 2020) visual communication theory, effective design requires contrast, alignment, and visual hierarchy—elements that were largely missing.



Picture 1. Cover of the previous guidebook

The picture above was the cover of the student exchange guidebook owned by the office of University X. Several students who responded to the author's questionnaire said that there was no sentence that indicated that the book was a student exchange guidebook. In addition, students also said that the font of the letters in the pink circle was less legible because it was not clearly visible.



Picture 2. Cover of the new guidebook

After knowing the results of the questionnaire, the writers decided to redesign the latest student exchange guidebook with the photo above being the cover of the latest guidebook. The writers added words stating that the cover is the cover of the student exchange guidebook. The author also chose a font that is clearly visible and understandable by students.

China	
Monthly Living Expenditures	
Meal, Inexpensive Restaurant	25.00 ¥
One-way Ticket (Local Transport)	3.00 ¥
Monthly Pass (Regular Price)	200.00 ¥
Basic (Electricity, Heating, Cooling, Water, Garbage) for 85m2 Apartment	383.33 ¥
Apartment (1 bedroom) in City Centre	3,892.87 ¥
Apartment (1 bedroom) Outside of Centre	2,376.08 ¥

1 ¥ (Chinese Yuan) = Rp2091,57 as of June 15, 2023

Note:

- Student visa requirements

The student visa process in China

- Accept a place at your university: You might need to pay a deposit to secure your place before receiving a formal admissions letter.
- Receive your JW201 or JW202 form: After your acceptance, your university will send you a JW201 or JW202 form, also known as the foreign student visa application form. The JW201 is for students who've gained a scholarship, whereas the JW202 for self-funded students.
- Complete the JW201 or JW202 form: Ensure you've filled in every section on the form and have signed it.
- Gather documentation: You'll need to submit a range of supporting documents (see list below).
- Submit your application: apply through your nearest Chinese embassy or consulate.
- Receive the result: The turnaround for applications is usually less than a week, so you won't have long to wait.
- Register with the exit and entry administration bureau: Within 30 days of arriving, you must apply for a temporary residence permit. This effectively replaces your student visa and allows you to remain in the country for the duration of your studies.
- Have a medical examination: To convert your visa into a temporary residence permit, you must have a physical examination costing roughly RMB 622 or \$88. Citizens of some countries must have this physical examination before they arrive in China.

Required documents
Submitting all of the documents requested by the Chinese authorities is the most important part of the entire visa application process. Double-check that the documents are complete, accurate, and legitimate.

Here's a list of the compulsory documentation you'll need:

- A valid passport with an expiry date at least six months away from the date of application
- A formal acceptance letter on headed paper with a university seal
- A completed JW201 or JW202 form
- A passport-style color photograph that captures the whole of your face
- Receipt of payment for your visa application
- Details of your flight numbers, dates and times, including your return ticket
- Details of your accommodation arrangements
- Evidence of your physical examination test (if required)

China student visa processing time
Chinese embassies are usually quite quick at processing visa applications, and it can take as little as four days to get a response. Typically you should allow at least a week to get your visa after submitting your documents.

It's worth getting your application in early in case of any unexpected delays. It's recommended to apply at least a month before your arrival in China, but not more than three months in advance.

What to do if your visa is rejected
China has notoriously strict visa policies and relatively low acceptance rates, so don't be disheartened if your first application isn't successful.

Although visa rejection is frustrating, it's possible to appeal the decision or reapply. If you do choose to reapply, don't just submit the same application again. Without making some changes, further refusal is almost guaranteed.

Picture 3. Several content of the previous guidebook

From a purely visual design perspective, the picture above exhibited a conventional, text-heavy layout that prioritizes information delivery over user engagement. The Cognitive Load Theory (Sweller, 2020) reveals that the dense, unbroken text and lack of visual hierarchy (color or typographic contrast) strain users' working memory.



Picture 4. Several content of new guidebook

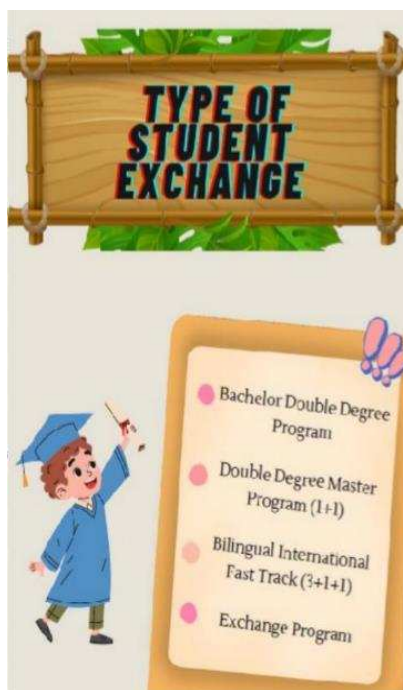
After the writers read and analyzed the questionnaire about the assessment of the old student exchange guidebook and read theories from existing books or journals, the writers decided to redesign the visuals and content of the old guidebook to the latest one. Compared to the old guidebook which had too much writing, the writers added several supporting icons in the guidebook. (Zhang L., 2023) found that 78% of students preferred guidebooks with infographics over text-heavy formats, while (Lee, 2023) demonstrated that mobile-optimized layouts reduced bounce rates by 40%. Therefore, the writers decided to reduce the use of excessive sentences and add some infographics so that students could illustrate or imagine what they are reading. In addition, the purpose of adding some infographics, such as image icons, was to make the guidebook's appearance more attractive. Recent research emphasized the role of dynamic, accessible, and culturally responsive visuals in student exchange guidebooks. Algorithmic iconography (Manovich, 2020) explored how AI-generated imagery can personalize guidebooks for different audiences.

Strategic visual design significantly enhanced the appeal of student exchange guidebooks. Research demonstrated that high-contrast color palettes improved readability by up to 40% (Zhang & Hyland, designing effective international program guides: A user-centered approach, 2023), while consistent institutional branding-built trust and recognition (Erasmus+, 2023).

Table 1. Conclusion of the weakness of the previous guidebook

Problem	Solution
Unattractive cover design with unclear title	Redesigning cover with clear branding and engaging visuals
Plain, monochrome design with minimal visual elements	Implementing high-contrast color scheme and add infographics

In conclusion, the previous guidebook had an unattractive cover design with an unclear title, which was addressed through a complete redesign featuring clear branding and engaging visuals. These modifications significantly enhanced the guidebook's visual appeal and effectiveness in communicating essential information to students. The redesigned version proved more successful in capturing student interest and improving overall engagement with the exchange program materials. To enhance engagement, the new guidebook should incorporate evidence-based design and content strategies. By implementing these strategies, the new guidebook can become more engaging, user-friendly, and effective in increasing student participation in exchange programs while reducing the administrative burden on staff. Modern guidebooks required adaptive, inclusive, and digitally integrated content. Effective guidebooks balanced comprehensiveness and scan ability. (Mayer, Multimedia learning (3rd ed.), 2020) Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning showed that "chunked" content (bullet points + icons) improved retention by 30% compared to paragraphs.



Picture 5. First page of new guidebook

The inclusion of various types of student exchange programs on the first page of a guidebook was crucial for immediate clarity and engagement, as emphasized (Knight, Internationalization of higher education: new directions, new challenges, 2012), presenting program options upfront helped students quickly identify opportunities that align with their academic and personal goals, thereby increasing their motivation to participate. This approach aligns with (Kolb, 1984) experiential learning theory, which suggested that understanding diverse learning environments beforehand enhances students' ability to select experiences that maximize their growth. By prioritizing this information, guidebooks fulfilled a practical and psychological need, ensuring students feel empowered and well-informed from the outset (Deardorff, 2009).

In Picture 5 above was the first page of the latest student exchange guidebook created by the writers. The writers explained several types of student exchanges that exist, explanations of each type, departments and university partners, along with the terms and conditions for taking the program.



Picture 6. first content of the old guidebook



Picture 7. First content of the new guidebook

Effective guidebooks balanced comprehensiveness and scan ability. (Mayer, Multimedia learning (3rd ed.), 2020) Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning showed that "chunked" content (bullet points + icons) improved retention by 30% compared to paragraphs.

In Picture 6, it can be seen that some pages of the guidebook do not have bullet points. Therefore, in the new student exchange guidebook as in Picture 7, the writers added several things to improve recall such as appropriate bullet points and icons.

Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman

Students may refer the undergraduate programmes in UTAR here: <https://bit.ly/utar-edu.my/campus/utara>

Here is the list of documents that we need for the application, we just need to receive the documents via email (softcopy documents).

a) A completed [abroad application form](#) with a passport size photo
 b) A letter of recommendation from Hoop of Department / Dean from Home Institution
 c) A copy of Official Academic Transcripts (a certified English translation if the original language is not English)
 d) A copy of passport (only pages with passport number, photo, issuance and expiry date)
 e) A copy of passport size photo with size 4.5 cm x 3.5 cm (white background) – JPEG format
 f) A letter of confirmation from Home Institution to prove that applicant is enrolled as a full-time student at Home Institution and as an **exchange student** to UTAR
 g) A copy of passport for all pages including blank pages (The passport must be valid for at least 18 months from the expected date of entry)
 h) Health Declaration form

For your information, UTAR has 3 trimester in one academic year

2023 Academic Calendar
 January Trimester: 18 January 2023 – 31 May 2023
 May/June Trimester: 19 June 2023 – 17 October 2023
 October Trimester: 30 October 2023 – 7 January 2024
 (*Dates shown above are inclusive of final examination period, but not inclusive of term breaks duration)

Submission Deadlines
 - Admission for January Trimester: 30th September (previous year)
 - Admission for May Trimester: 29th February (current year)
 - Admission for October Trimester: 30th June (current year)

Hanyang University (ERICA)

1. General Information

Website	http://www.hanyang.ac.kr (main) http://global.hanyang.ac.kr (Office of Int'l Affairs, ERICA Campus) http://ericainfo.hanyang.ac.kr (exchange & visiting program)
Mailing Address	Office of International Affairs, 55 Hanyangdeshik-ro, Sangnok Ansan, Gyeonggi-do 15538, Korea Email: ericainfo@hanyang.ac.kr Fax: +82 31 409 5090

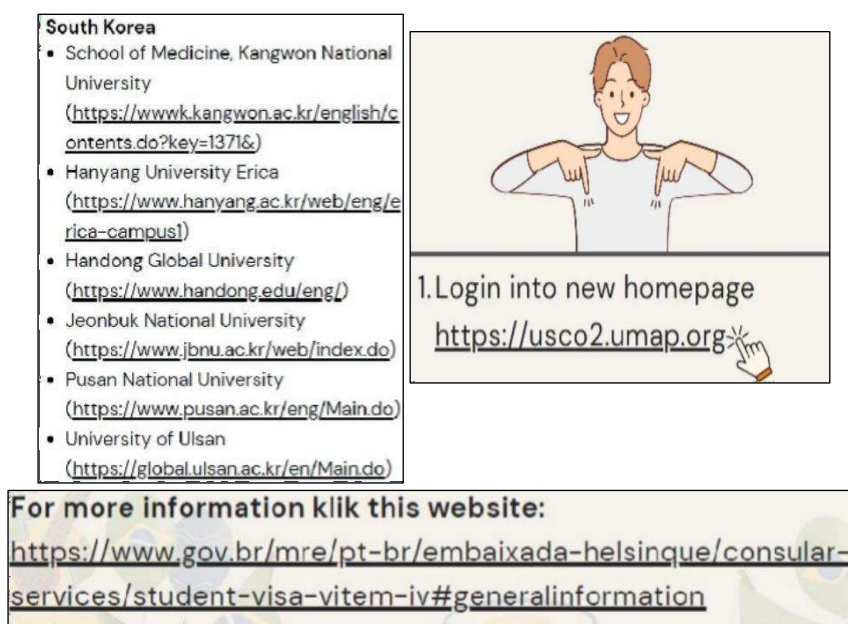
Important Date	2023 Fall	2024 Spring (Tentative)
Online Nomination Begins (By Home University Coordinator)	April 1, 2023	October 1, 2023
Online Nomination Deadline (By Home University Coordinator)	April 15, 2023	October 15, 2023
Online Application Deadline (By Students)	April 30, 2023	October 31, 2023
Semester Dates	September 1 – December 21, 2023	March 2 – June 21, 2024
On-campus Dormitory	Check-in: 2-3 days before the Semester Starts Check-out: Depends on the number of months student is choice to live	
Orientation	1-2 working days before the Semester Starts	
Exam Period	Midterm exam: Monthly 7th - 8th week of semester	

Picture 8. second content of the old guidebook

 UNIVERSITI TUNKU ABDUL RAHMAN	 HANYANG UNIVERSITY ERICA												
<p>SEP Application Period</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Trimester</th> <th>Start Date</th> <th>Due Date</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>January Trimester</td> <td>Early of Aug (previous year)</td> <td>End of Sept (previous year)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>June Trimester</td> <td>Early of Jan (current year)</td> <td>End of Feb (current year)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>October Trimester</td> <td>Early of May (current year)</td> <td>End of June (current year)</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Documents</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Application Form Recommendation Letter Copy of Official Academic Transcripts copy of passport A copy of passport size photo with size 4.5 cm x 3.5 cm (white background) A letter of confirmation Health Declaration Form <p>Undergraduate Programme: https://study.utar.edu.my/undergraduate.php</p> <p>Accommodation Information Danish House: https://www.danishhouse.com.my/ Westlake Villas Home: https://www.danishhouse.com.my/</p> <p>UNIVERSITY WEBSITE https://www.utar.edu.my/</p> 	Trimester	Start Date	Due Date	January Trimester	Early of Aug (previous year)	End of Sept (previous year)	June Trimester	Early of Jan (current year)	End of Feb (current year)	October Trimester	Early of May (current year)	End of June (current year)	<p>Timeline: Nomination (by Home University) → 2025 Spring : Early of October → 2025 Fall : Early of April Nomination Deadline → 2025 Spring : Early of October → 2025 Fall : Middle of April Online Application Deadline → 2025 Spring : End of Oct → 2025 Fall : End of April Issue of Certificate of Admission → 2025 Spring : Early December → 2025 Fall : Early June Academic Calendar → 2025 Spring : March – June → 2025 Fall : September – December</p> <p>Documents:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Color ID Photo Passport (Valid for at least 6 months beyond the end date of the program) Academic Transcript Language Proficiency Form https://un.kr/utn4rc Health Insurance Certificate https://bit.ly/4e3DABC Financial Affidavit Certificate of Enrollment  <p>UNIVERSITY WEBSITE https://www.hanyang.ac.kr/web/eng/ERICA-campus/</p>
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June Trimester	Early of Jan (current year)	End of Feb (current year)											
October Trimester	Early of May (current year)	End of June (current year)											

Picture 9. second content of the new guidebook

Academic and marketing theories affirmed that university photographs in exchange guidebooks critically influence students' perceptions and choices. The Stimulus-Organism- Response (SOR) Model (Mehrabian, 1971) suggested that visuals, such as campus imagery, trigger affective and mental responses that guide actions, indicating compelling photos of student life can enhance appeal and applications (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974). By placing these images early, guidebooks harness these effects to forge instant connections and credibility, driving participation (Altbach & Knight, 2007). In Picture 8 was the content of the second part of the student exchange guidebook at University X. Therefore, the writers' solution as in Picture 9, the writers reduced the use of words and added some icons and images such as the university logo, university images.



Picture 10. Interactive link

Incorporating interactive links into a student exchange guidebook enhances engagement and usability by leveraging principles from digital learning theory and user experience (UX) design. According to (Mayer, The Cambridge handbook of multimedia learning, 2014), interactive elements facilitate active processing by allowing users to explore content dynamically, leading to deeper understanding and retention. (Norman, 2013) concept of affordances in The Design of Everyday Things further supports this, suggesting that clickable links provide intuitive navigation, reducing cognitive load and making information more accessible.

The new guidebook as in Picture 10 the writers used interactive links such as university links so that students were more extensive to obtain information. The writers marked the interactive with an underline so that students knew that the link can be clicked as stated by (Nielsen, 1999), which emphasized the need for clear visual cues to enhance user interaction. Additionally, Ryan & Deci's (2000) Self-Determination Theory posits that interactivity fosters autonomy and intrinsic motivation, as students feel more in control of their learning journey (Ryan & Deci, Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivations, 2000).

In conclusion, the original guidebook lacked clear classifications of student exchange types, which the writers addressed by adding dedicated program descriptions on the first page. To help students visualize their potential experience, the writers added university photos and official logos throughout the document. Collectively, these strategic

enhancements transformed the guidebook from a static document into an engaging resource that effectively supported students throughout their exchange journey.

After the writers completed the guidebook, the writers distributed a second questionnaire containing assessments and responses about the latest student exchange guidebook. The writers distributed the second questionnaire also through google form and using a Likert scale. When assessing the effectiveness of a guidebook, researchers commonly employed either 5-point or 7-point Likert scales, as these ranges provided an optimal balance between response sensitivity and participant ease. The 5-point scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree) was widely used for its simplicity, mobile-friendliness, and reduced cognitive load, making it ideal for quick evaluations of aspects like visual design or usability (Krosnick & Berent, 1993).

The writers asked several issues such as the assessment of the visuals and content of the new guidebook. The following were some questions and responses from University X students:

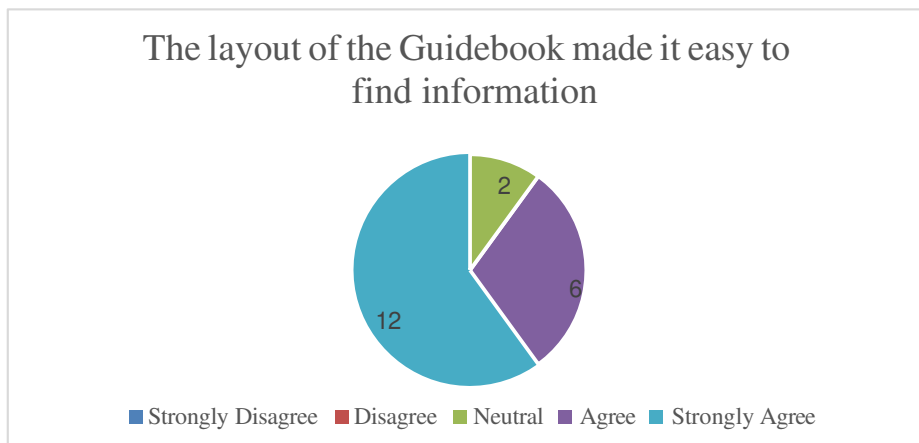


Chart 5. Second questionnaire first question

University X students generally approved of the Guidebook's layout according to survey data. Twelve students agreed that the guidebook helped them find information efficiently, complemented by six who agreed which indicating clear approval. The complete absence of disagree or strongly disagree responses confirmed that the layout was universally acceptable without notable criticism.

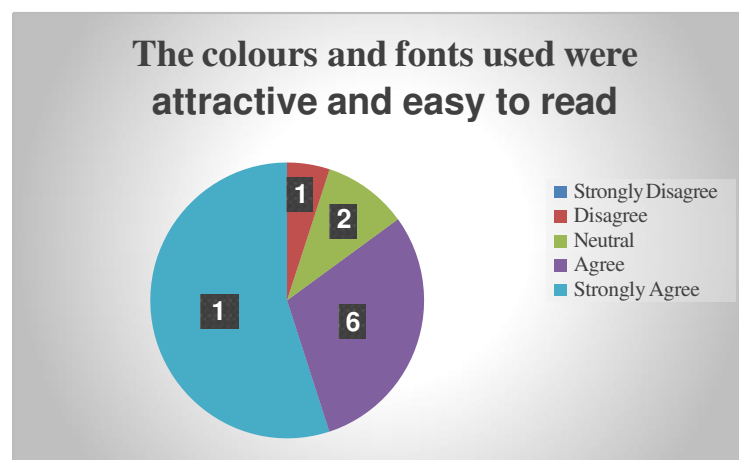


Chart 6. Second questionnaire second question

The survey results regarding the statement "The colors and fonts used were attractive and easy to read" show predominantly positive feedback from the 20 respondents. A majority of University X Students (11 out of 20) selected "Agree," indicating strong approval of the visual design. Overall, these results demonstrated that the Guidebook's visual elements were well-received, with 70% of respondents expressing some level of satisfaction.

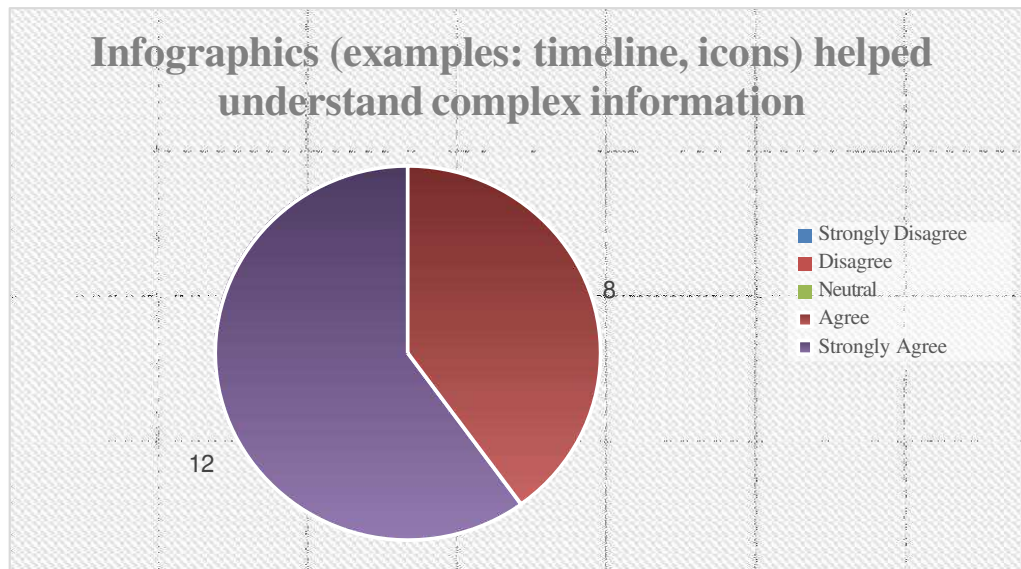


Chart 7. Second questionnaire three question

Survey responses regarding the statement about infographics' effectiveness revealed unanimous approval among all 20 participants. This exceptional consensus demonstrates that visual elements like timelines and icons were remarkably successful in clarifying complex information, indicating the Guidebook's infographics were particularly well-executed and valuable.

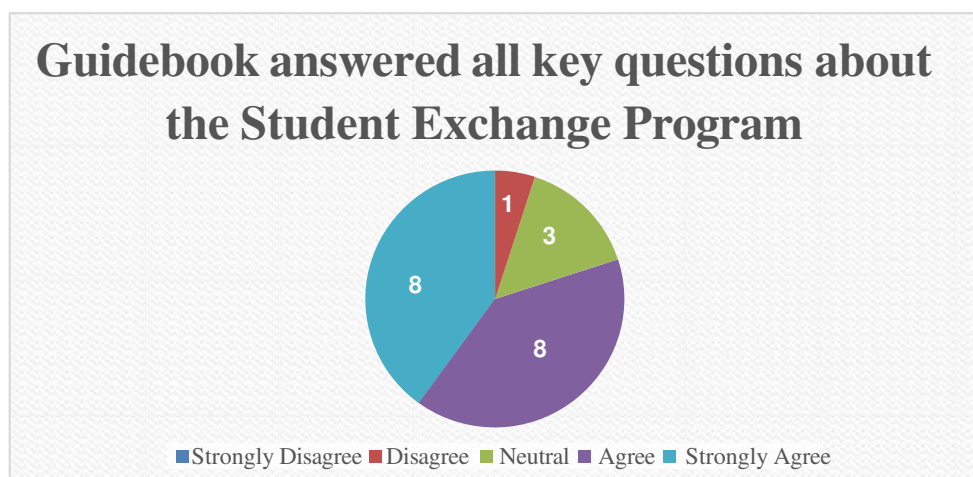


Chart 8. Second questionnaire fourth question

Survey data revealed that most University X student considered the Guidebook highly effective for answering Student Exchange Program queries. The predominantly positive reception validated the Guidebook's utility, with the limited critical feedback providing valuable direction for future improvements.

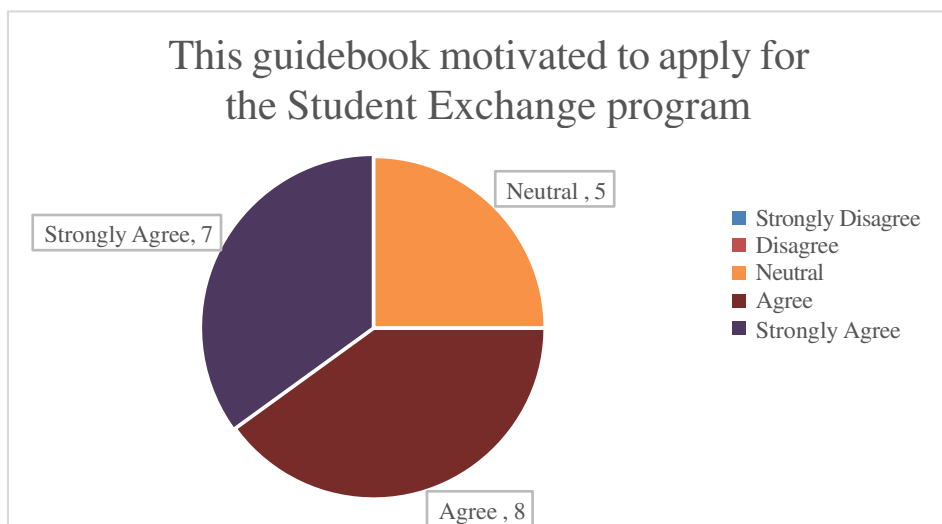


Chart 9. Second questionnaire fifth question

The survey data clearly indicated the guidebook's motivational efficacy, with an overwhelming 80% of University X student (16 out of 20) reported it encouraged them to apply for the Student Exchange Program. While 20% (4 participants) selected "Neutral," the complete lack of negative responses confirms the guidebook successfully avoided deterring potential applicants. These results not only validate the guidebook's inspirational value but also suggest potential to further enhance its motivational impact.

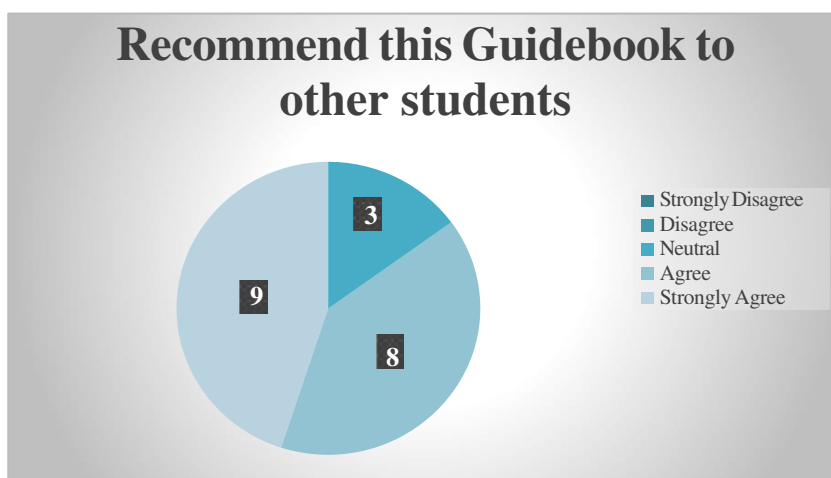


Chart 10. Second questionnaire six question

The results of the recommendation survey showed broad approval of the Guidebook among the University X student. The visual weight of the graph strongly favors the “Agree” and “Strongly Agree” categories indicating that most students would easily suggest it to their peers. This strong support implies that this resource effectively meets students' needs and provides content worth sharing.

Conclusion and Recommendation

This study examined the weaknesses of University X’s student exchange guidebook and proposed an improved design to enhance engagement and accessibility. Findings showed that the previous guidebook’s plain layout, limited visuals, and passive distribution reduced awareness—only 40% of students knew it existed despite strong

interest in exchange programs. Through surveys, interviews, and document analysis, the redesigned version adopted high-contrast visuals, infographics, and mobile-friendly formatting guided by Cognitive Load and Self-Determination theories. After implementation, 80% of respondents rated the new guidebook as more appealing and easier to understand, and all agreed that infographics clarified complex information.

The redesigned guidebook proved effective in supporting University X's internationalization goals by improving information clarity and student motivation. It demonstrates the value of evidence-based visual design in educational communication. Further studies should involve larger and more diverse samples to examine long-term impacts of digital guidebooks on student participation rates. Future projects could also explore integrating AI-powered personalization, chatbot support, or interactive multilingual features to enhance inclusivity and accessibility across global audiences.

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