The Effectiveness of an International Development Cooperation Educational Program for Nursing Students

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Abstract

Objectives: To evaluate the efficiency of the education program for IDC, targeting nursing students for ODA specialists in the medical health field in the future.

Methods/Statistical Analysis: The study used descriptive research methods to identify changes in nursing students’ IDC relations regarding perception, attitude before and after learning IDC educational program. 34 nursing students participated in the study. The questionnaires were a research tool for IDC’s perception that was produced by the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA). It was supplemented and revised to fit the purpose of the study after receiving approval of its use.

Findings: The awareness of ODA of the subjects at the 'know very well' level largely increased from 5.9% before the education to 35.3% after the education. The awareness of MDG of the subjects was low at the level of 'know very well,' with a rate of 8.8% before the education, but increased to 58.8% after the education. The number of the subjects who reserved a strong level of approval to support ODA increased from 38.2% before the education to 47.1% after the education. The number of the subjects who agreed to expand the size of the existing ODA increased from 11.8% before the education to 32.4% after the education.

Improvements/Applications: In order to systematically manage human resources to participate in the IDC business, it is suggested that college level programs to train and administer health care professionals be developed further.

Keywords: Educational Program, IDC, Nursing Student

1. Introduction

The latter half of the 20th century saw the rise of an industrialized South Korea as it established a solid foundation of economic social development, with some assistance from foreign aid. This pushed Korea into the realm of the Newly Industrializing Countries (NICs) in the mid-1970s. In a short period of time, Korea transformed itself from being a recipient country to becoming an emerging donor nation. Korea’s foreign aid project for developing countries was built on the basis of a systemic framework by creating the Economic Development Cooperation Fund (EDCF) in 1987 and founding the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) in 1991. Korea continued to press forward as a leader in the cooperative development field, contributing through a global partnership for development efficiency as a member country to the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) in the OECD in 2011 and hosting the Youth in Action for High Level Forum-4 (HLF-4) in Busan in 2011.

As a result, the size of Korea’s Official Development Assistance (ODA) has rapidly expanded at a steady annual average of 20% since 2006. This year, for the first time Korea exceeded two trillion won, and saw an increase in both its range of ODA and number of ODA businesses; the number of participating institutions have been increasing.\(^*\)
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This study aims to evaluate its efficiency while managing the education program for international development and cooperation, targeting nursing students in some universities running the education program for ODA specialists in the medical health field in the future.

One of the effects of Korea’s ever-growing presence as a successful player in the world socioeconomic environment is the rise in international demands and expectations for Korea to fill its current roles and become even more involved in external affairs. Though domestic expectations have also been piqued, it would benefit Korea greatly to educate its domestic population about its international development and cooperation. Considering that the expansion and the qualitative improvement of public development aid cannot be guaranteed without the peoples’ interest, understanding and support, enhancing public perception towards the field of international development and cooperation are of utmost importance.

According to the results of a public opinion survey by KIEP (Korea Institute for International Economic Policy) in 2011, 82.8% of the Korean public reported they were aware of the government’s provision of foreign aid marked, which implies that the general public’s basic recognition for the ODA, compared to the past, has improved. The areas in which Korea has proven it can provide aid most effectively are the health and medical fields, with a rate of 62.8%. However, this level of awareness and education for the International Development Cooperation (IDC) can be improved.

Additionally, young respondents (19-29 years old) have comparatively low awareness of South Korea’s implementation of foreign aid and Millennium Development Goals (MDG), with 59.7% responding, ‘no information regarding foreign aid’. This result suggests that education programs should be implemented to better inform this demographic.

In spite of positive, active awareness of foreign aid contributions, the activities conducted to support developing countries are often passive. Hence, greater effort is required to not only increase the public’s awareness but also encourage more positive awareness towards foreign aid and promote assertive action.

A university is considered the cradle of knowledge and the source of higher education for human capital. Both are key national resources. A nation’s growth depends on the knowledge created in the academic industry and on the qualitative level of human resources produced. It can be observed that competitiveness within university environments and training functions of human resources largely influence a nation’s nature of competition in the future. In this sense, a university is one of the most important factors for leading national development and carrying out ODA for supporting social economic developments of developing countries. A university is the repository for essential knowledge in the development of developing countries, which plays a vital role as an institution in training future professionals to carry out ODA effectively.

2. Research Method

The study adopted the descriptive method to change IDC-related awareness and attitudes of those nursing students who took a course promoting the understanding of international development and cooperation before and after the course.

The study subjects were 34 nursing students who took a curriculum subject that focused on the understanding of international development and cooperation in a university for a semester. They were told the object of the study and agreed in writing to participate in it. Data was collected through questionnaires in the first and last week of the semester.

The questionnaires were a research tool for IDC’s perception that was produced by the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA). It was supplemented and revised to fit the purpose of the study after receiving approval of its use.

3. Research Results

The awareness of ODA of the subjects at the ‘know very well’ level largely increased from 5.9% before the education to 35.3% after the education as follows (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Change in awareness of ODA.
The awareness of MDG of the subjects was low at the level of ‘know very well’, with a rate of 8.8% before the education, but increased to 58.8% after the education as follows (Figure 2).

![Figure 2. Change in awareness of MDG.](image)

The number of the subjects who reserved a strong level of approval to support ODA increased from 38.2% before the education to 47.1% after the education as follows (Figure 3).

![Figure 3. Change in attitude for ODA.](image)

The number of the subjects who agreed to expand the size of the existing ODA increased from 11.8% before the education to 32.4% after the education as follows (Figure 4).

![Figure 4. Change in support for ODA expansion.](image)

4. Conclusion

Although Korea’s foreign aid improved in quantity, the consideration for quality of international development and cooperation itself is insignificant. The fact that a small number of the public are aware and support international development and cooperation projects in Korea indicates that greater education of IDC is urgently needed.

To this point, the public sector – including government agencies and special corporations - have been the major supplier of specialists to assist in IDC. However, as the needs of recipient countries become more diversified and specialized, the necessity of skilled professionals from the private sector has been gradually increasing. Currently, KOICA’s support for the program of promoting development and cooperation specialists in local universities is considered crucial for the promotion of Korea’s future development specialists, the aid accompanied by public participation, and the securement of the experts for the implementation of KOICA projects. By partnering with universities, the universities can set the curriculum reflecting the directional nature and strategies for financial support and grant aid. This will expectedly bring KOICA an opportunity to reduce administrative transactional costs for specialists promoting education and advertise KOICA’s efforts to promote the production of local ODA skilled professionals.

Foreign aid projects in Korea have been systematically developed through the establishment of the Foreign Economic Cooperation Fund and Korea International Cooperation Agency, which has led to the steady growth in size. However, compared to the level of other advanced countries or the size of South Korea's economy, the size of foreign aid is insignificant, and the level of awareness as well as public support and understanding for foreign aid projects is also very low. In this regard, for Korea to play a responsible role as an industrialized country and member of the international society, active participation is required. This must be backed by public understanding and by the support for foreign aid projects for developing countries. To achieve this, the spread of public understanding for supporting developing countries is required, and introducing a program to enhance the awareness and understanding of international development and cooperation through university curriculums is considered one of the most effective ways.

The arrangement for a continuous public relations strategy is needed to enhance the awareness and
understanding of university students and the general public for IDC. Thus, the study proposes the enhancement of awareness through development and operation of an IDC-related liberal arts curriculum in university. Additionally, to systematically manage human resources for IDC projects, the study also proposes the development of a training and management program for health professionals from the college level.

5. References

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