

Using Active Aging and Co-Creation Service Projects to Change the Attitude towards Elders and Enhance the Competence Development of University Students from China, Japan and Korea

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1. ABSTRACT AND KEYWORDS

This study aimed to examine the competence development and attitude toward elders after conducting a co-creation project in rural area in Sichuan among university students from China, Japan, and Korea. A total of 59 students from The Polytechnic University, Peking University, Ewha Woman's University, Yonsei University, Sichuan Agricultural University, Sichuan University, and Kyoto University participated in the study. The findings showed that there was a significant improvement in youth development competencies and attitude toward elders in rural area of Sichuan, China. In addition, students also had significant changes in their attitude toward their own aging process. The results of this study provided information for university educator about the importance of educating young generations in particular university students developed positive attitude toward elders. Further, competencies development could be built such a way that they cooperated with elders to contribute to the community

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2. Introduction

Globalization brings together people from different walks of the world. People can learn from each other and become more creative. Unlike most projects that aimed at learning by serving others, the China-Japan-Korea SERVE Initiative provided an opportunity for university students to learn from older people and co-create sustainable things in the communities where they lived. The Project not only enriched students' understanding about the traditional art but also helped them know more about the older people.

The China-Japan-Korea SERVE Initiative 2018 was a non-credit bearing leadership training programme organised by Global Youth Leadership and Service-Learning Institute (GYLSLI). It was jointly run by the Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Peking University, Ewha Womans University, Yonsei University, Sichuan Agricultural University, Sichuan University, and Kyoto University. The CJK SERVE Initiative was held from August 4 to 18, 2018 with the theme of building a better place to live through an inter-generational participation. Hence, it adopted the approaches of co-creation and place-making by the joint effort of the elders and university students. Hence, it adopted the approaches of co-creation and place-making by the joint effort of the elders and university students. The goal was to enrich students with basic knowledge on practice of active ageing and place-making with elders in three rural communities (i.e., Miaoxiacun, Hungcaocun, and Hekancun) in Sichuan, China. This study aimed to examine the competence development and attitude toward elders after using active aging and co-creation concepts to do projects in rural area in Sichuan among university students from China, Japan, and Korea.

3. Theoretical framework/literature review

Apart from traditional service delivery type of Service-Learning, the program is designed to use active aging and co-creation design concept to do inter-generational service practice. Students need to have new knowledge of global aging trend especially in China and advocacy of active aging. Under the concept of active aging, old people were encouraged to remain in their homes—aging in place. Since home not only meant the residential setting, but also about the surrounding neighborhoods and the broader community (Park, Han, Kim, & Dunkle, 2017), the involvement of people in the community could provide a platform to develop a sense of place. Consequently, it helped foster a sense of authentic human attachment and sense of belongings among older people and participants (Sime, 1986). The growing rate in ageing population has a sharp increase along with the provision of quality health care service. According to World Health Organization (2017), the number of people aged 60 years or older will rise from 900 million to 2 billion between 2015 and 2050, an increase from 12% to 22% of the world's population. In China, it was estimated that the elderly aged 60 years and above was 221 million in 2015 and the rate continued to increase at an average of 0.54% each year (Chinese elderly health guideline, 2015). The proportion of Chinese was projected to increase from 10 percent in 2000 to 27 percent in 2050 (Riley, 2004). Instead of taking a negative perspective

to view elders as a financial burden to the country, the World Health Organization (WHO) first published the active ageing concept in 2002. Active ageing is defined as “the process of optimizing opportunities for health, participation and security in order to enhance quality of life as people age”. This conceptualization provides guideline to the government to develop ageing policies in their countries.

Furthermore, several studies have been conducted to evaluate the youngsters' perception and attitudes towards older people have conflicting results. The results of some studies are generally positive (Cha & Seo, 2009; Liu, Pu, Wang, & Hu, 2014) while some are negative in their perceptions on elders (Lee, Kim, & Han, 2006; Williams, Anderson, & Day, 2007). It is important to have education design to nurture students with positive perception and attitude toward older people in the community. Studies have suggested that students' attitudes toward elderly care can be changed in a more positive manner through education (Jansen, & Morse, 2004). Therefore, we would like to study the attitude of the students towards elderly through this program.

4. Methods/analysis

A total of 59 students participated in the programme, including 12 students from The Polytechnic University students, 9 from the Peking University, 10 from Ewha Womans University, 5 from Yonsei University, 8 from Sichuan Agricultural University, 5 from Sichuan University, and 10 from Kyoto University. Students were assigned to serve older people at three communities in Chengdu. All participants had given their consent to participate in the studies and then the pre-test was administered to them before the programme began. The post-test was conducted after the programme had completed. Of these 59 students, 37.3% (n = 22) were males and 62.7% (n = 37) were females, aged between 19 and 28 (Mean=21.08, SD=2.03). Both paired-samples t-test and mixed factorial ANOVA were performed to compare the mean scores for all the measurement instruments of participants in the pre and post-programme surveys and mean scores differences among the groups. Different Instruments are used for the measurements: Positive Youth Development Competence Scale, Life Satisfaction Scale, Intercultural Effectiveness Scale, Person Social Awareness Scale, Revised Fraboni Scale of Ageism, The Attitude-Older Adult and Aging-Visual Analogue Scale.

5. Results and Discussion

The findings showed that there were significant difference in the mean scores of all instruments except Intercultural Effectiveness Scale and Personal Social Awareness Scale. The result suggested that the participants demonstrated an improvement of positive youth competencies, life satisfaction, positive knowledge and attitude toward older people, and positive attitude toward participants' own ageing process.

The results of the study showed that there was improvement in students' level of competence, life satisfaction, and change in their attitude toward older people and their own aging process after completing the programme. This might be related to

the task assigned to the students who possessed no knowledge in these tasks like tea plucking and brewing, paving, bamboo waving etc. before they joined the programme. However, they learned the skills in these tasks and developed a high level of competence and life satisfaction after the programme. The tasks accomplished in the programme might give the students a sense of competence and therefore enhance their life satisfaction.

Furthermore, the findings showed that students' attitude toward older people as well as their own ageing process changed positively after joining the programme. This implied that the students had learned from the elders through their contribution of service to the elders. The design of the program used co-creation and active aging perspective helped the students' attitude towards older people. This is a new perspective and design from traditional service delivery type of practice. There is no significant difference of the positive change in students' attitude towards older people among China, Japan and Korea.

6. Conclusions and contributions to theory and practice

The results of this study provided information for university educator about the importance of educating young generations in particular university students developed positive attitude toward elders. Further, competencies development could be built such a way that they cooperated with elders to contribute to the community. The active aging perspective and co-creation design of the program helped to improve their positive attitudes towards elderly and towards their own ageing process. Educators can use this design in their service-learning program planning.

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