

Raising Awareness on Disability through Disability Sports

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1. Background of Study

Korea Foundation for Persons with Disabilities conducts an education to improve awareness on disabled persons supported by the Community Chest of Korea after 2016 when the foundation did the education firstly. Awareness Indicators on disability were self-developed to review how much the education has effective influence on the improvement of awareness. The indicators were composed of followings items such as four questions to know feeling of rejection against persons with disability; three questions to know misunderstanding and prejudice of behaviors of persons with disabilities; three questions regarding sensitivity on rights of persons with disabilities; and additional four questions to check ability to differentiate between difference and discrimination.

The study was to know the results of the education to improve awareness on disabled persons. The review process was done to review changes by pre-inspection before the education and by post-inspection after the education.

2. Type of Education

Education was done in various types such as lecture, discussion, experience, participation and talk concert types. For experience education, disability sports game (wheelchair ruby) was organized along with persons with and without disabilities together including persons with spinal cord injuries. Total 508 participants were responded to the questionnaire including lecture (299), talk concert (59),

experience (51), discussion (47) and participation (52).

Each question has five answers including 'strongly yes', 'somewhat yes', 'normal', 'somewhat no' and 'strongly no' with scores from one to five and respondents can select one of five answers. Threshold value was given to negative questions. When compared before and after education, each question showed 0.5-1 scores were increased in average.

(1) Do you avoid when you face persons with disabilities?

* Education type cross tabulation (pre-inspection)

Lecture type shows 0.75 increases, talk concert type 1 increase, discussion type 0.91

increases, experience type 0.82 increases and participation type 1.31 increases, which

means that participation type showed greatest effectiveness. As 0.86 scores were up in

average, generally one point of score increased more.

(2) Do you agree with living with persons with disabilities?

Scores increased in all education type. Average was up but there were big differences in talk concert and participation types due to big spectrum of standard deviation. In discussion type, enough explanation and consensus were confirmed. But in talk concert and participation types, there were some persons who spoke about problems and thought that they cannot live with disabled persons due to confusion and not well organized their mind. This interpretation was the result that event was fun but still internally their mind regarding human rights is not well organized. This means that later this type of education needs to be designed to show the interned direction considering this finding. Also design of education program and developing teaching material in cooperation with a trainer are required for participants not to have different opinions after the education.

(3) Live together among persons with disabilities is the best option.

There are significant differences of opinions in pre- and post-education questionnaires in all types of education. Before education, participants had different understandings. For lecture type of education, participants are student in schools. They didn't have understanding of deinstitutionalization and even had strong fixed idea that staying at institutions would be happier in thinking that the institution is a welfare institution. Also discussion type of education targeting students failed to change their way of thinking before and after educations. Those types of education are not enough to bring mind of living together than educations conducting in experience and participation together. Therefore concept of difference and living together based on rights should be highlighted in educations.

(4) Do you think that persons with disabilities are different from you?

In discussion type, not big changes were shown between pre- and post-educations compared with other education types. This is because of confusions whether this question asks difference among persons with disabilities or asks similarity with disabled persons caused by feeling of resistance. And after discussion, also participants felt more feeling of confusion. From these feedbacks, discussion type of education is not much effective way of education and could bring stereotype thinking that persons with disabilities are different. Also in this type of education, discussion was not fully conducted because of participants complains such as 'does one time education can improve awareness?' or 'do you know disadvantage of persons without disabilities in inclusion education?' etc. This is also to some extent because of poor discussion culture in Korea.

(6) Do you think that persons with disabilities could have negative impact on class mates?

There was very little difference of educational effectiveness by the type of education. Issues of educational effectiveness come from the same education contents than the ways of educations.

(7) Do you think that disability could happen to anybody?

Before education, there was significant difference by group of participants, but after education conducted in various ways, no difference has been checked. From this finding, we knew that diversification of education using interesting ways by group of participants is required but the result would not be different based on the type of education.

(8) Do you think that you could be a person with disability?

Before education, significant difference has been shown by the group of participants and even after education, the difference still existed. But each group showed little increase of their understanding. Unlike other questions which are able to reduce the difference through education, this question is not easy to be sensitized for participants because they thought their possible case to be a disabled person in this question which could not be easily agreed based on common sense, even though this question showed good effectiveness in the education.

(9) Do you think that help you need and help persons with disabilities need are different?

With education, level of awareness was improved but no significant differences were confirmed before and after educations by the type of education.

4. Awareness on difference and discrimination

This question was given with following four answers such as 'sitting in the front due to bad eyesight is difference not discrimination'; 'in cleaning time, giving work assignment like moving desks to male students and mopping floor to female students is discrimination'; 'excluding a student who got 100 scores from cleaning is discrimination'; and 'thinking that persons with severe disabilities must live in institutions without works is discrimination'.

Before education, significant difference already existed by the group of participants. Lecture type education was getting reduce the difference but discussion type showed moving backward condition. This could be happened because after discussion, a moderator failed to intervene in finalizing the discussion with good reflection of discussion. From this finding, we knew that significant difference was getting disappeared by the type of education.

5. Analysis based on Feedbacks

1) Positive response

Expression that anybody can be a person with disability is in the questionnaire and also it could be mentioned by a trainer during the class. Many participants agreed with this expression. Related with this, there is another concept that disability could come from accidents. As 90% of disability is acquired one and usually main reason of disability is accidents, anyone can be a disabled person. However on the contrary, some participants were tended to remember only wrong information that all disability is happened by accidents. And participants were tended to withhold their consent that anyone can be a disabled person and I also can be a disabled person, this situation could be checked by the information that the number of respondents regarding this question was dramatically low. And other participant said disability is made by social restriction, not by physical one.

Second largest comment is disabled persons are just little difficult to live. But some interpreted 'living with difficult' as 'a disabled person is a person who has light disease'. This comment considering a disabled person as a patient comes from trainer's teaching method when he took an example that disabled persons need treatment and assistance, just like taking a medicine when people catch a cold and has bad health condition. Therefore taking example of a patient to give understanding of disability could be dangerous to give misunderstanding.

Third largest comments are disability is not shame, which means that disability is not abnormal. Before education, some said that disability was thought as abnormal but now is more close to me and disability does not need to be shamed or hided. Some participants said disability is not miserable and the start of new life. When a disabled trainer talked about his or her new life after disability, this education could bring an understanding to participants that people can challenge again when they become disabled persons. One participant said I don't have any concerns even I could be a blind person because I can use a service dog.

There was a disabled trainer who sang a song of 'Persons with disabilities were bone to be loved'. Positive comment regarding this trainer was that singing a song is really good but other negative one was that the song is really sad because a disabled person sang or it was uncomfortable song for listeners and for a singer both. Other comment also said that a trainer sang a song by letting a disabled student in a class play a piano and later the trainer said a disabled person who has ability like this student to help us to sing a song together. Talented shows like sing a song and playing musical instruments in beginning of or during the class will be good opportunity to draw attention, to show talents of disabled persons and to change awareness on disability. From the small event, participants started to think that persons with disabilities have ability and are so cool. And providing small presents like a wet paper towel is a good way to catch participant's eyes. And some said the education to improve awareness on disabled persons itself is just fun without any special comment. In particular, participants responded with lots of interest in puppet shows or video clips.

Other comments are we must encourage disabled persons to find their hidden ability or disabled persons are just little slow than others.

2) Negative response

No cooperation in class: Only few negative comments. But there were some cases that a participant just observed a disabled trainer throughout the whole class without focusing on the contents of class. Some mentioned only a trainer is a blind person or is a person who has injured legs. And other said that a trainer is miserable. There was no comment saying that education is stressful or is too much burden to understand. Only one participant said that the education is boring and difficult.

Disability is disease: Surprisingly some said disability is suffering from disease. And some mentioned disability is just disease and can't blame to anybody, or need to wait more because robot will cure all disability down the road. As to persons who think disability as disease and disabled persons are sick ones, disability could happen to anybody in any time like disease, but also under this way of thinking, disability could be considered as an epidemic which should be avoided. Also they could think that disabled persons should be at home because they are patients who need treatment. One peculiar comment is that when he or she met a disabled person, it was so happy and appreciated because there is no disabled person in family and I am also in good health condition. It is surprised that participants could feel of appreciation and vicarious satisfaction when met disabled persons.

Disability is miserable and unhappy condition: One responded that disability is sad, hard to live and miserable. It is surprised to see comment of one participant, saying that 'thanks a trainer for your education to let me know how disability is miserable.'

Disability can be overcome: One mentioned that disability can be overcome or can be cured. There was no content in the education mentioning disability which was fixed health condition for a long time

can be cured. Therefore the comment could be the result of fabricated understanding in explaining assistive devices that disability can be solved thanks to a new technology. After did sports game together with persons with disabilities, one participant thought that disabled persons live a happy life by overcoming disability, so persons with disability must overcome disability. This comment was made from a condition that participants thought disability could be overcome when they meet active disabled persons, even though still they have stereotype of disability is poor and miserable.

6. Conclusion

Among educations to improve awareness on disabled persons, participation education using sports can give opportunity to make close relations with persons with disabilities easily. Participation education is good to make positive effect that persons with disabilities are not different from me but it shows not much difference from other types of education to expect awareness on difference and discrimination using sports.

In case of participation type education, it is concerned that it could create the image of rehabilitation with impression that disabled persons can do anything if they can enjoy sports or disability can be overcome to do anything by individual efforts. Therefore the education using sports requires for additional education highlighting rights of persons with disabilities and difference & discrimination, rather than being enjoying the game.