Comparative study on Volunteerism of the Youth in Japan, Korea and Canada

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At first, I must explain why we choose these 3 countries; Canada, Korea and Japan. A report of comparative study on the voluntary sector shows us that Canada has one of the largest and most vibrant nonprofit and voluntary sector in the world. Comparing with Canada, both Japan and Korea are “developing countries”, focusing on the voluntary sector.

From the public data of Japan(1996): Korea(1999): Canada(1997), we can understand that these three countries are very different types, when we check the participation rates in volunteer activities based on different age groups in each country.

When we check the change of volunteer participation rates during this decade in each country, namely in Japan from 1996 to 2006, in Korea 1999 to 2006, and in Canada from 1997 to 2007, it is surprising to see an increase of the volunteer participation rate of the youth generation, especially the rapid increase of Korea’s rate. This decade, there was an educational reformation in each country. The mandatory volunteer educational programs were beginning to be introduced into the High School education this decade in Korea, Canada and Japan.

Having this chance, my research is focusing on the change of mind in students in these countries in order to challenge the comparative sociological study on Volunteer Culture in these countries. I have carried out a survey on their volunteer sense 5 times at the universities and high schools from 2000 to 2010 in three countries.

We, firstly, focus on both students’ and teachers’ impressions toward volunteer activities, and secondly, focus on educational effects of volunteer activities. I will explain about the difference in volunteer culture between Japan and Canada & Korea, using the data.

In short, the brief comments of my survey are as follows;

1) In Canada & Korea, the community service programs (in Ontario, it is named as “the community involvement activities”) are usually criticized because of their lack of both pre and post program. However, “the community involvement activities” in Ontario is working well from the aspect of increase of student activities and educational effects, comparing with Korea & Japan.

2) In Canada, the reasons may be that teachers’ Social Capital (their high level experience of volunteering) effects students as “hidden curriculum”, and that educational influence outside of school, namely the NGOs’ educational strength is stronger than other countries.

3) The Impressions of volunteering in Canada and Korea became more negative after the mandatory program was introduced. But for many students in Canada, this does not diminish the volunteer activity level.

4) However 15% of students in Canada don’t agree with this mandatory system. This will be the problem we as well as Canadian people must face.

5) In Japan, the impression of volunteering is negative, and it affects negatively the volunteer activities of students. The mandatory programs will not go well because of such volunteer culture of the youth.

6) In Japan, the adults (ages 35+) usually volunteer in the field of community work via the neighborhood association. However the youth are eradicated from their local community. They do not experience any volunteer activities in their community these days. This is the most acute problem that we are facing in modern Japan.
Sources


# My survey toward university students in Japan (Kyoto & Tokyo), Korea (Seoul) and Canada (Toronto) in 2000.

# My survey toward high school students in Japan (Kyoto), Korea (Seoul) and Canada (Toronto) in 2001, 2004 and 2007.

# In 2004, the survey with teachers was also carried out by my project.


“How to collaborate between Univ. and NGO to empower the Youth : A Challenge depending on the Data of Comparative Study on Volunteering Culture between Japan, Korea and Canada”, Paper presented at The 6th ISTR Asian Pacific Regional Conference, November 2009 in Taipei.