A Study on the Improvement of Learning Outcome of University Students: Focusing on majoring in Social Welfare

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Abstract

In order to seek for the measures for the improvement of learning outcome of university students majoring in social welfare of Korea, this study analyzed the relations of learning outcome, satisfaction (major education, interaction with professors, learning support service of university), perception of cooperative learning activity. For this, out of the data of ⌜National Assessment of Student Engagement in Learning (NASEL)⌟ in 2015, total 776 were selected, and then the multiple regression analysis was conducted. In the results of analysis, participated in the community volunteer activities as a part of lesson, judged their own learning outcome as high. And the students who performed the cooperative learning activities like actively sharing opinions with other people and seeking for solutions to problems during class hours and non-class hours, judged their learning outcome as high, compared to other students. Also, the students who frequently met and discussed with professors for the matter of career or not, and also used the mentoring service for the adaptation to university life, cognized their learning outcome as high, compared to other students. Based on such results of this study, the measures for the improvement of learning outcome of university students majoring in social welfare were suggested.

Keywords: Learning outcome, Satisfaction of major education, Majoring in social welfare

1. Introduction

In the past, social welfare education has continued to reflect on and improve the quality of education. Most of the discussions on improving the quality of education were focused on social welfare professions [1], discussions on overall improvement plans for professionalism [2], and reform of the curriculum [3]. However, except for the practical subjects, little learning outcomes were available to assess the quality of social welfare education.

It is important to make sure that such competences as educational outcomes are prepared through education because they are essential for realizing the talent image pursued in social welfare education. In addition, social welfare education should identify the factors that help students' core competencies to provide practical technical education that enriches the competencies of prospective social workers before graduation. The purpose of this study is to investigate the factors influencing the learning outcomes of social welfare students and to find ways to contribute to the improvement of learning effect of social welfare university students.

2. Background

Learning outcomes are the product of educational outcomes, and can serve as a benchmark for university students to see what they experience and how to grow in university. Many researchers are interested in the factors that improve college student performance. They are based on their personal background, pre-university education and experience, learning experiences at university, university characteristics [4]. The purpose of social welfare is to improve the quality of life by satisfying various needs of people and solving social problems. Therefore, social welfare education seeks to cultivate talented people with the ability to integrate and apply knowledge about complex needs and solutions for human beings [5]. The learning outcomes of university students majoring in social welfare should reflect the realization of talented people who want to cultivate social welfare education and the improvement of core competencies that should be basically provided as university students.

Social welfare studies have a strong characteristic of field-based practical studies because they have an educational curriculum for producing social workers. Properly equipped with theoretical-based academic capacity and the professionalism required in the field grows from general learner to social worker. Social workers are based on human dignity and social justice beliefs, along with individuals, families, groups, organizations, communities and the whole society, and stand on the side of the marginalized and suffering people to protect human rights and interests, It is a person who refuses and puts public interest ahead of individual interests. Regarding the capacities required as social workers, the American Council on Social Welfare Education cited cognitive and interaction or relationship skills. Many previous studies [6] also found that job-based skills such as problem-solving skills, communication skills, and relationship-building skills are necessary for social workers.

2. Research methods

2.1. Research subject

In order to explore the factors that affect the learning outcomes of social welfare majors, this study uses the 2015 National Assessment of Student Engagement in Learning (NASEL) data from the Korea Educational Development Institute. A total of 48,357 students from 70 universities nationwide participated in the 2015 survey. In this study were selected. a total of 776 people who correctly answered that they were majoring in social welfare and social welfare.

2.2. Variable and measuring tool

The data used in this study is a national level test tool to analyze the characteristics and current status of Korean university students' teaching-learning process. Reflecting the results of previous studies on social welfare and college student learning outcomes [4][7], Learning outcomes(dependent variable) consisted of eight items including major competence and expertise, higher-order thinking ability, communication, and cooperation ability. Independent variables consisted of five major factors: participation in clubs and volunteer activities (4 items), collaborative learning activities (4 items), interaction with professors (5 items), major education satisfaction (11 items), and academic support services (3 items).

2.3. Analytical method

In this study, frequency and multiple regression analyzes were conducted to examine the effects of independent variables (Learning outcomes, major educational satisfaction,

interaction with professors, university learning support services, participation in clubs and volunteer activities, collaborative learning activities, active learning activities) on dependent variables (Learning achievement). The analysis utilized the SPSS 21.0 program.

3. Research results

3.1. Main variables' characteristic

Among the survey subjects, 534(68.8%) female students and 242 (31.2%) male students, 462 (59.5%) Occasional admission, 280 (36.1%) Regular admission, 34 (4.4%) the other admissions. 661 (85.2%) non-metropolitan universities students, 115 (14.8%) metropolitan universities students. 417 (53.7%) small and medium-sized universities students and 359 (46.3%) large universities students. Major competencies and knowledge scored highest among the learning outcomes (dependent variable). Among the independent variables, the following items showed the highest scores by area. (Participation in voluntary community service activities, giving and receiving help with students in the same class, explaining the contents of the majors in relation to prior experiences, discussing the contents and tasks with the professors, and tutoring services for learning support). Reliability was high as shown in the table below.

Table 1. Mean of variables

Variables		Items	Mean	SD	Cronbach'α
Learning outcomes	Major competency expertise	Class or work related knowledge and skills	2.60	.789	.865
		Knowledge and skills related to the major field	2.73	.798	
	Higher-order Thinking ability	Critical, analytical thinking	2.39	.871	.868
		Problem-solving ability	2.38	.814	
		Creative, convergent thinking	2.14	.868	
	Communication and cooperation skills	Teamwork and collaboration	2.59	.837	.791
		Ability to understand multiculturalism	2.26	.947	
		Community consciousness	2.55	.894	
Club activities		Participation in club activities	2.31	1.173	.756
		Participation in student body organization and student body activities	1.74	1.040	
		Volunteering voluntarily, community service	2.62	1.035	
		Volunteering, Community Service Participation as part of the class	2.21	1.060	
Collaborative learning		Interaction with the same class students for assignments	3.01	.832	.722
		Interaction with students outside the same class for Assignments	2.34	.966	
		Talking to others about what you have learned	2.51	.842	
		Finding the solution to the problem and explaining it	2.20	.864	
Satisfac-Tion of Major	Instructional goals and learning content	Clear goals and expectations of the class	2.63	.793	.772
		Appropriating amount of learning	2.51	.856	
		Interesting and stimulates intellectual curios class	2.53	.872	
	Learning	Enough time to understand the learning content	2.43	.863	.871

experience	Class using materials, media	2.99	.802	
	Professors whose associate with their major experiences	3.06	.802	
	Appropriate cases presentation in relation to the major	2.86	.834	
	Additional explanation in case of difficulty in learning	2.85	.814	
Learning assessment and feedback	Evaluation management and grading fair.	2.81	.837	.793
	Appropriate test	3.01	.771	
	Faithful feedback from the professor	2.66	.881	
Interaction with Professor	Discussion with the professor about the enrollment	1.40	.718	.847
	Discussion with the professor about the contents and tasks of the class	1.93	.801	
	Discussion with the professor about the test and the grade	1.77	.800	
	Discussion with Professor about career path	1.83	.828	
	Interaction with professor on things other than classes and career paths	1.65	.821	
University student Support Services	Teaching and learning support	3.81	1.162	.820
	Tutoring service for learning support	4.24	1.147	
	Mentoring Service for Adaptation to University Life	4.08	1.174	

3.2. Factors affecting learning outcomes

As a result of checking multicollinearity to find out the factors that influence social learning and students' learning outcomes, all items were used because VIF value did not exceed 10, and the explanation amount (R) was 41.6%. In terms of individual factors, 'gender', 'admission' and 'current semester' were statistically significant, which means that male students perceive their learning outcomes to be higher than female students, occasional admission students than regular admission, and higher grade students than lower grade students. In the club and volunteer participation variables, the question of 'Participation in community service as part of the class' was statistically significant. This means that students who are majoring in social welfare at university actively participate in club activities and participate in community service activities as part of their class, and they judge their learning outcomes higher. The cooperative learning activity variables showed statistically significant questions such as "coordinating and receiving help with the same class students for class assignments" and "finding solutions to problems and explaining them to others". This means that students who participate in collaborative learning activities, such as actively communicating with others and finding solutions to problems in class and out of class, value their learning outcomes higher than those who do not.

The university factors were statistically significant in terms of 'discussing with professors about careers', 'discussing with professors outside of classes or careers', and 'mentoring services for adjusting to university life'. This means that students who meet and discuss professors in their careers and those who use mentoring services to adjust to college life will recognize that their learning outcomes are higher than those who do not.

Table 2. Analysis of the impact of independent variables on learning outcomes

Valuables	Items	Non-standardized coefficient		Standardized coefficient	t	Multicollinearity	
		B	SE	β		Tolerance	VIF

						limit	
Personal Factors	Gender	.105	.042	.075	2.518*	.879	1.138
	Admission	-.073	.032	.065	2.256*	.937	1.068
	Semester	.047	.016	.088	2.928**	.865	1.157
	Location	.063	.057	.035	1.099	.788	1.269
	University size	.037	.041	.028	.884	.767	1.303
Club activities	Participation in club activities	.014	.017	.025	.801	.790	1.265
	Participation in student body organization and student body activities	.013	.020	.021	.640	.738	1.356
	Volunteering voluntarily, community service	.031	.023	.049	1.354	.591	1.691
	Volunteering, Community Service Participation as part ofthe class	.048	.022	.079	2.150*	.589	1.698
Collaborative learning	Interaction with the same class students for assignments	.087	.027	.112	3.224**	.652	1.534
	Interaction with students outside the same class forassignments	.014	.023	.021	.599	.645	1.549
	Talking to others about what you have learned	.052	.029	.068	1.820	.562	1.778
	Finding the solution to the problem and explaining it	.089	.030	.119	3.011**	.501	1.995
Instructional goals and learning content	Clear goals and expectations of the class	.037	.032	.045	1.168	.520	1.924
	Appropriating amount of learning	.025	.032	.034	.797	.441	2.270
	Interesting and stimulates intellectual curios class	.039	.032	.053	1.218	.409	2.443
Learning experience	Enough time to understand the learning content	.021	.033	.028	.649	.414	2.413
	Class using materials, media	.013	.035	.016	.366	.414	2.414
	Professors whose associate with their major experiences	.007	.038	.009	.183	.346	2.890
	Appropriate cases presentation in relation to the major	.011	.035	.015	.324	.389	2.570
	Additional explanation in case of difficulty in learning	.027	.036	.034	.735	.373	2.684
Learning assessment and feedback	Evaluation management and grading fair	-.016	.032	-.021	-.500	.457	2.189
	Appropriate test	.022	.036	.026	.603	.415	2.411
	Faithful feedback from the professor	.021	.032	.029	.657	.414	2.416
Interaction with Professor	Discussion with the professor about the enrollment	.035	.036	.039	.963	.486	2.059
	Discussion with the professor about the contents and tasks of the class	.063	.034	.079	1.866	.441	2.268
	Discussion with the professor about the test and the grade	.006	.035	.007	.159	.412	2.425
	Discussion with Professor about career path	.075	.031	.096	2.432*	.500	2.002
	Interaction with professor on things other than classes andcareer paths	.091	.030	.116	3.075**	.553	1.809
University	Teaching and learning support	-.011	.020	-.020	-.534	.576	1.737

student Support Services	Tutoring service for learning support	-.003	.026	-.006	-.121	.376	2.662
	Mentoring Service for Adaptation to University Life	.088	.023	.161	3.813***	.442	2.264
	Constant	.079	.154		.511		
R^2 =.416 adj.R^2 =.391 F=16.520***							

4. Conclusion and suggestions

The purpose of this study is to find out how to improve the learning outcomes of the social welfare department students. As a result of analysis, the students who majored in social welfare at university actively participated in club activities and participated in community service activities as part of the class. In addition, students who participated in collaborative learning activities, such as actively communicating with others and finding solutions to problems in class and out of class, rated their learning outcomes higher than those who did not. Also, the students who meet and discuss professors in their careers and those who use mentoring services to adjust to college life will recognize that their learning outcomes are higher than those who do not. In addition to cognitive achievements such as credits and certifications, non-cognitive achievements such as major competencies, communication skills, problem solving skills, and creativity are essential to enter society after graduation and to interact with many people.

Students who are actively engaged in club activities and community service activities have higher levels of learning outcomes, which is consistent with the results of previous studies [8] that volunteer work as part of class affects the learning outcomes of social welfare university students. In the case of social welfare majors, a rich and innovative service learning should be reflected in the curriculum, as it requires a curriculum that effectively combines theory and practice [9]. It is a good idea to consider clubs that can be opened within the department and encourage active activities. The more collaborative activities, such as actively communicating with others and finding solutions to problems, the higher the learning outcomes. Therefore, it is necessary to adjust the curriculum and methods so that students can collaborate.

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