

PROMOTING AND SUSTAINING NURSING AND HEALTH CARE RESEARCH

FOR GLOBAL IMPACT IN THE POSTDOCTORAL YEARS:

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ABSTRACT

Doctoral education is important for developing scholars and researchers, who educate and train students, generate new knowledge, and provide services to society. However, sustaining scholarship after doctoral education takes on even more importance for the progress of science and health care. Numerous approaches have been used in recent decades to promote and sustain the scholarship of faculty members following their doctoral degrees. This paper presents a case in which nursing faculty members from Korea participated in the Faculty Research Training Program at UIC in 2002, which proved to be a successful program for facilitating international collaborative research activities.

Introduction

In recent decades, higher education in Korea has accelerated, but the resources and support for education have not paralleled this growth. In other words, whereas higher education in Korea has rapidly expanded in terms of quantity, the quality of education and of faculty competence in scholarship has not grown commensurately. For instance, the number of four-year colleges in Korea increased to 158 in 1999, more than double the number of 71 in 1970; the number of students increased to 1,587,667 in 1999, 11 times that of 1970. Yet, the number of faculty members increased to 57,001 in 1999, merely a little more than 7 times that in 1970.

Lack of public investment in the educational system is thought to be the main cause of the worsening educational environment. For example, spending for public education per student in Korea is half of the average of the Organization for Economic Cooperation (OECD) countries (US\$10,444), and one third of that of the United States. Furthermore, the administration and operation of universities and colleges rely primarily on the tuition paid by students, and this is particularly true for private colleges. It is also true that college administration has been more inclined to external expansion, such as constructing buildings, rather than supporting education and research activities.

According to the International Institute for Management Development (IMD) in

Switzerland, the national competence of Korea ranked 28th among 47 countries that were surveyed in 1999. More specifically, Korea ranked 26th in the area of human resources and 43rd in the area of college competence. In terms of the number of research papers that were published in journals listed in the SCI, Korea ranked 16th in 1998. The number was only 3.9% that of the United States and 15.2% that of Japan. Impact Factor, as judged by the SCI, was far worse, ranking as low as 50th in the world

Even in such an adverse environment, however, many colleges place a major emphasis on the research activities of faculty as a way to gain an international reputation. Toward this goal, many leading colleges established a merit-based evaluation system, in which research achievement was a key element for salary increase. For instance, the annual evaluation system for faculty members focuses on the number of research papers and the amount of research funding they bring in from external funding agencies. Also, universities classify the results of research by each faculty member in terms of quality through a confidential evaluation system. Particularly in the area of natural sciences, they use SCI- or SSCI-listed journals as their major references for evaluating the quality of research. Furthermore, the Korean Association of College Education encourages competition among colleges through its own system of college evaluation, and it usually involves the number of publications in SCI-/SSCI-listed

journals or the external funding level. To our regret, however, none of the Korean nursing research journals have to date attained the status of SCI or SSCI listing. Hence, it is critical to find ways for publishing the research results of Korean nursing research in reputable journals that are listed in SCI or SSCI.

This paper describes the needs for increasing international collaborative research and publications, particularly for Korean faculty members and presents a case in which UIC provided an opportunity to meet such needs.

Needs for International Collaborative Research/Scholarship and the UIC Program

Scholarship at Yonsei University College of Nursing

Yonsei University is the top private university in Korea that aims to be a global leader in higher education. The university has placed major emphasis on faculty research productivity in recent decades, and the College of Nursing has responded with its own plan, which includes international collaboration. Yonsei University College of Nursing is the top private College of Nursing in Korea. However, their publication record in SSCI-listed journals is dismal. For instance, 24 faculty members published only three research articles each in SSCI-listed journals in the years 2000, four in 2001, and two in the year 2002, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Faculty Research Productivity

year	# of faculty	# published papers (SCI/SSCI)	# proceedings	# papers listed in international journals
2000	24	46	8	6(2)
2001	23	21	13	3(2)
2002	21	17	4	1(1)

On the other hand, the research funding records of Yonsei University College of Nursing indicate a promising future. It received US\$193,000 in 2001 and US\$248,000 in 2002, which is a sizeable increase.

The faculty members of other colleges in Korea are in similar situations as those of Yonsei University. Many colleges make every effort to improve their competency, not only in terms of each individual, but also at the college level. For this presentation, a short survey was conducted among Yonsei faculty members to understand the faculty's perspective on research achievement. It was gratifying to find that some have doubled their research publications in SCI- or SSCI-listed journals in recent years. However, 70% of the faculty members failed to achieve that goal. Some of

the reasons are the following. The first is that many faculty members were not convinced of the significance of doing research. While this is surprising, this may be partly due to the differences of social context and nursing environment between Korea and other countries. Second, the scope of research might be too narrow to publish in international journals, because Korean research is usually confined to the Korean social context, possibly reflecting their lack of awareness of different cultures. Third, the tools and instruments used in Korean research may not be appropriate for international use. This may also be due to cultural differences. Fourth, the lack of English proficiency was considered as a constraint.

On the basis of such findings, the faculty members were asked to state factors that are important for improving research competency in order to publish in SCI- or SSCI-listed journals. They listed as most important the conducting of trans-cultural research. They thought this could be achieved through national and international networks, revitalization of international collaboration, and support by college administrations. They also listed as second most important the need for administrative support for English-language review classes.

International Collaborative Research Development Program at UIC

Dr. Mi Ja Kim from the University of Illinois at Chicago spent a year at Yonsei University College of Nursing, her alma mater, as a Senior Fulbright Scholar in 2001. Her observation of the situation of Korean nursing scholarship during this period led to the development of the Academy of International Leadership Development within the College of Nursing at UIC, where she was the dean for seven years. One main focus of this Academy is training faculty for advancement of nursing scholarship and research.

As the first event, eleven Korean faculty members from nine schools of nursing participated in six weeks of intensive training at UIC during the summer of 2002. They worked with eight UIC faculty members whose research expertise matched that of the Korean faculty members. The goal of this training program was for each faculty member to write a research manuscript and submit it to a journal that is SCI-or SSCI-listed or to draft a research proposal for submission to a funding agency in Korea. Both of these goals were accomplished in collaboration with UIC faculty members.

All Korean faculty members were provided with shared offices with computers, printers, telephones, and office supplies for the period. The program included a Writing for Publication workshop and research presentations by select UIC faculty members based on the interests of the group. The group visited diverse facilities, including UIC

Medical Center; Nurse Practitioner and Clinical Nurse Specialist-managed clinics of the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee; and the Chicago Department of Public Health.

Faculty teams (Korean and UIC faculty) met at least twice a week, for a total of about 4 hours for collaborative work, for which UIC faculty members were remunerated. As the Director of this Academy, Dr. Kim mentored each faculty member and met with the group almost daily in the beginning weeks, followed by at least twice weekly to assess how the collaborative work was progressing and making adjustments as deemed necessary.

UIC offered many opportunities for research collaboration. As the third-highest NIH-funded College of Nursing in the U.S., UIC offered faculty members who conduct numerous research projects that open up collaborative opportunities. Nine faculty members submitted manuscripts, and three research projects were developed collaboratively at the end of the 6 weeks of training. Two articles have been published or are to be published this year, and others are under revision. One research project, developed by Dr. Hee Soon Kim with 3 other Korean faculty and four UIC faculty, was funded by the Korean Research Foundation last year for 3 years. The study is on “Effects of Parenting Education Program on Early Infant Development: Targeting Primipara mothers in Korea” and is in progress now. UIC faculty will continue to work

with Korean faculty members on this project and others so that international collaborative work will be sustained beyond the training program.

Outcomes

Evaluation of the program by both Korean and UIC faculty revealed high satisfaction (i.e., good to excellent) with the program, particularly with the outcome of the program. They also rated highly the collaborative working relationship developed during the period, but not the student residence hall in which they stayed (i.e., fair).

Conclusion

Promoting and sustaining faculty scholarship after doctoral education is gaining increased attention by universities and colleges around the world. Increasing emphasis by the Korean government and universities for faculty to increase collaborative research with international colleagues provides a golden opportunity for development of international research projects.

The summer Faculty Research Training program at UIC College of Nursing was one way to promote collaborative international scholarship. The experience of Korean faculty at the UIC College of Nursing demonstrates that short-term intensive

research experiences with clear goals and mutual commitments can bring forth the desired outcomes (i.e., increased scholarship including publication in SSCI-listed journals). The concept embedded in the UIC training program and its approaches can be used for any postdoctoral nursing scholars who could benefit from a mentored research experience. The UIC training program may be a useful model for helping scholars to develop their own programs of research, particularly those from countries where English is not the primary language. However, the cost of about US\$4,000, including US\$2,000 training fee, airfare, lodging, and meals, etc., is a factor to be considered.

The authors are gratified to find that the participants in the UIC program expressed a high level of enthusiasm for international collaboration and the program's results, which we believe will promote and sustain future scholarship.