

# Win-win Prosperity? A Case Study on the Donor Benefits of the KOICA Scholarship Program

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## ABSTRACT

**Purpose:** This paper aims to determine the perception on the effectiveness of the scholarship program of Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) from the perspective of serving the host university's interests.

**Originality:** Prior literature is focused on the benefits of recipients and fails to encompass both stakeholders of the scholarship program. Therefore, this paper's key contribution is the exploration of the scholarship program's impact on the implementing university.

**Methodology:** This study used a sequential mixed-method approach consisting of surveys and interviews. The surveys were conducted on the professors, administrative staffs, and students to examine their perception of the effect of the KOICA scholarship program on the implementing university. Then, among the respondents, individual interviews were used to analyze the reasons for the questionnaire results.

**Result:** The KOICA scholarship program is effective in furthering both the governance and educational interests of the implementing university. In terms of the governance, the KOICA scholarship program improves the administrative capacity, and the status of the implementing university as well as Korea's national image. In terms of education, the scholarship program has enhanced the quality of education and broadened the network of the implementing university.

**Conclusions and Implication:** This study provides some evidence that the KOICA scholarship program serves the diplomatic and economic interests of Korea. Such evidence will contribute to raising public awareness on ODA and enhancing the scale and the effectiveness of ODA.

**Keywords** Aid effectiveness, KOICA scholarship program, Mutual benefit, National interest, Official Development Assistance

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## I. Introduction

The effectiveness of official development assistance (ODA) is often measured in terms of its impact on

developing countries, but it is important not to overlook the donor countries' own purposes in providing ODA. Easterly (2003) argues that "not all aid can be assessed on its contribution to development, because a considerable

portion of it serves other purposes - humanitarian, diplomatic, cultural, even still commercial.” Therefore, Easterly (2003) recommends that when evaluating the development effectiveness of aid, one needs to isolate the aid intended for that purpose. Previous studies have confirmed that the donors’ economic, political, and sometimes military-strategic purposes play a significant and sometimes dominating role for practically all donors (Neumayer 2003).

Donors’ purposes for giving ODA can be largely divided by humanitarian/moral, political, economic/commercial, and environmental agendas. The humanitarian/moral agenda refers to donor countries’ use of ODA to combat world poverty and is mainly motivated by ethical concerns. The political agenda reflects the donors’ interest of using ODA to safeguard their political and national security interests. The economic/commercial agenda includes the expansion of a country’s exports and securing access to vital raw materials. Lastly, the environmental agenda is marked by a concern for ecological sustainability in conjunction with economic development.

Like other donor countries, South Korea’s purposes for providing ODA include the socio-economic development of recipient countries as well as its own self-interests. In fact, previous studies have shown that South Korea’s agenda when providing ODA is heavily weighted towards its own self-interest. Koo et al. (2011) have found that South Korea’s economic interests are far more influential than recipients’ needs in determining its ODA allocation. And interestingly Kim et al. (2012) have found that South Korea’s purpose for providing ODA differs according to the economic status of the recipient countries. This means that South Korea has a dual-track structure, showing a donor interest perspective toward the higher-income group and a recipient need perspective toward the second group (Kim et al. 2012). In addition, Korea’s agenda of using ODA to pursue its own national interest and create win-win prosperity is shown in many of its official policy statements. First, one of Korea’s six

diplomatic tasks announced by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is “strengthening trade diplomacy and development cooperation” (Ministry of Foreign Affairs n.d). Second, the New Southern Policy aims to strengthen economic cooperation for win-win prosperity between Korea and foreign countries, especially Asian countries (Policy Briefing of Republic of Korea n.d.). Third, the 3rd Framework Plan for International Development Cooperation established in January 2021 stipulated the “realization of global values and win-win national interests through cooperation and solidarity” as the vision of Korea’s international development cooperation over the next five years (The Committee for International Development Cooperation 2021). Moreover, the public interest in achieving these purposes is increasing. According to the results of the 2019 ODA national perception survey, the public’s interest in “what benefits ODA has brought to Korea” increased 17% from 13% in 2017 to 30% in 2019 (KIPA 2019).

Since Korea has its own agendas for providing ODA, it is necessary to properly examine the indicators related to Korea’s ODA goals to accurately measure the effectiveness of this ODA. However, simply evaluating Korea’s ODA from the perspective of national interest is insufficient. Due to the lack of empirical research on the effectiveness of serving national interests by providing ODA, ODA strategies (e.g., priority of selecting the recipient country, ODA size) have no choice but to be devised based on poor evidence, and this leads to decline in popular support for ODA flows. Currently, the Ministry of Economy and Finance decides ODA budgets for recipient countries in consideration of macroeconomic indicators (national income, exports, imports) and Korean companies’ status of overseas expansion. However, it is hard to avoid criticism that the criteria for priority selection for recipient countries are still ambiguous. If the ODA strategy is not established based on sufficient evidence, not only aid effectiveness but also the public support for the ODA provision may decrease.<sup>1)</sup> To create sustainable Korean ODA, the support of citizens, and

domestic organizations, as well as recipients is required.

This paper aims to determine the perception on the effectiveness of the scholarship program of Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) from the perspective of serving the host university's interests. The KOICA scholarship helps government officials from developing countries enhance their knowledge, develop specialist skills, and learn about Korea's development lessons and best practices by obtaining master's degrees in Korean universities. The KOICA scholarship program is a part of Capacity Improvement and Advancement for Tomorrow (CIAT)<sup>2)</sup>, which is a flagship project helping developing countries accelerate their development by providing training for government officials. The Graduate School of International Studies (GSIS) of Korea University has been implementing the scholarship program since 2007 and has produced 250 alumni as of 2021. The purpose of this paper is to determine the impact of the scholarship program on the institutional governance and educational quality of the implementing university. Previous studies often evaluate capacity building programs, such as scholarship programs, by measuring their impact on recipients (Campbell et al. 2021; Mawer 2017). Likewise, many previous studies evaluating the KOICA scholarship program have focused on how much the program has improved the situation of participants and their affiliated institutions (KOICA 2015; Kang et al. 2017; KOICA 2017; Hong et al. 2018; Kim et al. 2020). But none of this literature looks at the impact on the host university, a serious gap in determining how effective and sustainable the KOICA program will be in the long-term. Therefore, the research questions of this study are as follows:

- What are the effects of the scholarship program on the institutional governance of GSIS? And why?

- What are the effects of the scholarship program on the educational quality of GSIS? And why?

## II. Literature Review

### 1. Evaluation of International Scholarship Programs

International scholarship programs for higher education aimed at overseas students have served a crucial role in establishing favorable relations between donor and recipient countries. Nye (2004) argues that scholarships for tertiary education are valuable for building long-term relationships between states and developing them. Therefore, one of the benefits donor countries gain by operating international scholarship programs is building amiable friendships with the recipient countries.

Many international scholarship programs for tertiary education, including the KOICA scholarship program, are available for students from developing countries. Another main objective of these scholarship programs is for graduates to return to their home countries and catalyze socio-economic development (Campbell et al. 2021). One of the representative programs for these students is the Ford Foundation International Fellowships Program, open to any citizens of marginalized communities which lack access to higher education (Kallick et al. 2018). Commonwealth Scholarships are also open to students from developing countries of the Commonwealth (Mawer 2017). In addition, scholarship programs which send their national citizens abroad for tertiary education, such as Kazakhstan Bolashak scholarships, Brazil's Science Without Borders, and Saudi Arabia's King Abdullah Scholarships serve a similar function. The prevailing trend toward

1) In fact, the Koreans' support for ODA has decreased from 89% in 2011 to 81.3% in 2019.

2) As of 2016, one of the representative programs of CIAT is the Master's degree scholarship program which accounted for 41% of the 46.5 billion won (4.2 million US dollars) budget of CIAT. The program's budget is 4.6% of the total budget of KOICA and approximately 2% of the total ODA budget of Korea

the assessment of these scholarship programs has been based on recipients' gains, such as socio-economic development (Mawer 2017).

The objective of the KOICA scholarship program is to nurture young government officials to contribute to the socio-economic development of their home countries and build friendly relations. Focusing on the importance of recipients' benefits, Kang et al. (2017) evaluated the effectiveness of the training of government officials from developing countries at KU GSIS including reaction, learning, behavior and results such as job promotion, salary increases and participation in designing policies. The graduates of the KOICA scholarship programs demonstrated significant knowledge improvement in all fields of study. More importantly, the authors concluded that it would ultimately lead to the socio-economic development of developing countries. Kim et al. (2020) also emphasize the importance of knowledge acquisition at the KOICA scholarship program in Pukyung National University. For instance, one student noted the motivation to push the development of their home country after continuous collaboration with Korean students inspired him to learn soft skills such as responsibility and diligence.

Even though previous studies have endeavored to examine the effects of the KOICA scholarship program on overseas students, these studies focus solely on evaluation frameworks that measure the advantages of alumni and recipient countries. Therefore, prior literature is limited because it fails to encompass both stakeholders of the scholarship program (KOICA 2015; Kang et al. 2017; KOICA 2017; Hong et al. 2018; Kim et al. 2020).

In addition to the KOICA scholarship program, various international scholarship programs are operated around the world, and these programs contribute to the improvement of institutional capacity and internationalization of partner universities. For instance, the United States (US) International Fellowship Program (IFP) contributes to host universities strengthening the management system of international students which

eventually became an optimal example for other institutions (Clift et al. 2013; Velez-Ibanez et al. 2013). The Ford Foundation launched the IFP in 2000 to expand tertiary education opportunities to potential leaders from marginalized countries to strengthen international cooperation, and some host universities in the US bolstered their skills for managing international students by introducing new counseling services, on-campus orientation tutoring and emergency support (Clift et al. 2013; Mansukhani et al. 2013). Administrative workers of host universities also developed a variety of programs and policies which served as models for other universities (Velez-Ibanez et al. 2013).

The Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) launched a cross-border higher education program, Higher Education Loan Project (HELP). HELP is a scholarship program that allows Malaysian students to spend three years attending Japanese universities and two years studying at Malaysian universities to acquire an undergraduate degree. Yoshida et al. (2013) demonstrated that HELP has served as a mechanism to strengthen the governance of partnering universities in Malaysia as well as Japan in two ways. First, HELP acts as a catalyst in improving the hard skills of operating institutions by establishing a framework for credit transfer that facilitates the admittance of international students. Second, the lessons acquired from the HELP project have prompted more dynamic internationalization of participant universities by broadening the range of cross-border higher education. The project also enhances soft skills by increasing the awareness of administrative workers at donor universities when interacting with international students.

This paper is distinguished from earlier studies in that it examines the benefits to one of the implementing institutions of the KOICA scholarship program, KU GSIS. The new evaluation framework includes institutional governance, some of the dimensions of which are adopted from Gao (2018). As KU GSIS is an education institution, the improvement in the quality of education is measured as well.

## 2. Definition of Institutional Governance and Education

Institutional governance is evaluated based on the OECD standard (Santiago et al. 2008) which refers to “the formal and informal arrangements that allow higher education institutions to make decisions and take actions.” Education is defined as the “process of facilitating learning or the acquisition of knowledge, skills, values, beliefs and habits” (UNESCO n.d.). These terms are utilized as the basic foundations to evaluate the effect of the KOICA scholarship program on KU GSIS.

### 1) Governance

Governance is a key factor for universities to carry out their missions efficiently (Pruvot et al. 2018). Realizing the importance of visualizing administrative outcomes, Gao (2018) presents an evaluation framework of governance with components such as human resources, financial support, infrastructure and facilities, and international presence. Based on Gao’s model, this paper measures the input of the KOICA scholarship program in strengthening the governance of administrative workers in association with the characteristic that KOICA students are of diverse nationalities. As a result, the evaluation framework for determining the governance impact of the KOICA program focuses on the administrative capacity of the KU GSIS administration office, national status of GSIS and the international presence of Korea and GSIS.

Administration workers are the key actors at universities because they have the potential to enhance the institutions’ organizational sustainability (Graham 2010). Administrative capacity is measured as a set of factors possessed by productive organizations which contribute to effectively attaining their goals (Misener et al. 2009). The variables in this study’s evaluation framework include the degree of English skills, widening international perspectives, writing documents,

administrative capacity for the settlement of international students, foreign university certification of academic degrees, communication skills and understanding international students’ needs, and cooperation skills with other departments or external institutions. Governance also includes the national status of GSIS and the international presence of Korea and GSIS. These variables are converted to properly measure the output of the scholarship program and determine the mutual benefits from the perspective of the implementing institution and, by extension, the national interests of Korea.

Consequently, this paper differentiates itself from other studies because it seeks to measure how the scholarship program may benefit donors, specifically in terms of the elevation of the national status of GSIS, its positive impacts on winning other research or study projects, elevation of the international status of GSIS, and even improvements in the national image of Korea.

### 2) Education

Drawing upon a synthesis of various studies outlining the important factors of tertiary education (Mutrofin et al. 2017; Pulford et al. 2020), this paper creates a new evaluation framework to measure the effectiveness of the KOICA scholarship program in elevating the educational quality of KU GSIS. A survey examining the educational impact of the KOICA scholarship program is used to understand the crucial role of education in contributing to the socio-economic development of a country. The unique environment of the scholarship program, however, consists of government officials from developing countries are taken into consideration to design the framework encompassing the quality of education, research capacity, building network and evaluation of KOICA students. In determining the quality of education in the context of the scholarship program, the paper first links the quality of education with diversification of programs such as KOICA Buddy Program, field trip,

special lectures, and class discussion. Then, the enhancement of class discussion is measured as it is one of the teaching methods which can enhance learners' confidence and participation (Mutrofin et al. 2017).

The research capacity of KOICA students, who are government officials with detailed insights into their own countries, is the next major factor linked with the educational capacity of GSIS. The definition of research capacity is a process of individual development which contributes to a higher level of skills and outstanding ability to perform useful research (Pulford et al. 2020). To assess if the operation of the KOICA scholarship program is strengthening the research capability of GSIS, the impact of KOICA students in conducting research related to developing countries with other students and professors was investigated. Moreover, the expansion of networks at GSIS was examined as well. This determined if the educational interactions with KOICA students contributed to broadening the network of students and faculty members. The last part of the evaluation framework looked directly at KOICA students and assessed if their academic capacity distinguished them from non-KOICA students and if this can lead to the improvement of the overall academic capacity of GSIS.

### **III Research Design and Method**

This study used a sequential mixed-method approach consisting of a survey and interviews. In the first phase, quantitative data was collected through a questionnaire survey, and in the second phase qualitative data was collected through interviews (Creswell 2014). The questionnaire survey was conducted to determine the perception of professors, administrative staffs, and students of GSIS on the effectiveness of the KOICA scholarship program. In the second phase, open-ended interviews were conducted to analyze the reasons for the results from the questionnaire. The interviews can

explain why professors, administrative staffs, and students of GSIS have such perceptions of its effectiveness.

#### **1. Targets of the Questionnaire Survey and Interview**

The questionnaire was distributed to professors, administrative staff, and students. The selected 31 professors had taught a KOICA student registered lecture and/or supervised a KOICA student's thesis from 2017 to 2020. In addition, all five full-time employees of the GSIS administrative office and all 207 enrolled students of GSIS, excluding KOICA students, in the fall semester of 2020 were selected as the targets. On February 9, 15 and March 3, 2020, the questionnaires were distributed by e-mail, and reminders and follow-up notifications were sent to all the targeted people. We collected the responses from February 9 to March 24, 2020. Of 243 targeted people, this paper analyzes the responses received from 88 people, of which 14 were professors, 4 administrative staff members, and 70 students (45%, 83%, and 34% response rates respectively). Then, among the respondents, we interviewed two professors, one staff member, and three students to better understand the reasons for the perceptions identified in the questionnaire. The interviews were conducted on April 19, 21 and 22, 2020. We selected interviewees who had an in-depth understanding of the scholarship program, and the details of selection criteria are presented in <Table 1>.

#### **2. Contents of the Survey and Interview**

The questionnaire was designed to capture the perception of professors, administrative staff, and students on the effectiveness of the scholarship program in the following two dimensions: (i) governance of GSIS, and (ii) education of GSIS. While professors were asked to respond with their perception of its



&lt;Table 1&gt; The Target of the Questionnaire Survey and Interview

Object	Survey		Interviews	
	Selection criteria	Number of respondents/ Target people (%)	Selection criteria	Number of interviewees
Professors	Taught at least one lecture and/or supervised thesis for at least one KOICA student	14/31 (45%)	At least two years of experience of teaching KOICA students	2
Administrative Staffs	Currently working at GSIS administration office	4/5 (83%)	Five years of experience as a coordinator of KU-KOICA scholarship program	1
Students	Enrolled in GSIS in 2020 Fall semester	70/207 (34%)	Participated in KOICA Buddy Program for two semesters or worked as a teaching assistant of the KOICA scholarship program	3

effect on both governance and education, administrative staff were only asked to respond with their perception on governance, and students were only asked to respond with their perception on education. This was because it would be difficult for staff members to determine the scholarship's impact on education in the classroom and for students to observe its effect on the governance capability of the GSIS staff.

The theoretical model for this paper design is summarized in <Table 2>. The variables for the dimensions of governance are adopted from Gao (2018). More specifically, the evaluation framework emphasizes governance and organizational support dimensions consisting of four components: human resources, financial support, infrastructure and facilities, and international presence. Based on the purpose of this paper to measure the effects of the scholarship program on the institutional governance of the implementing university, the governance variables were created to examine the administrative capacity of GSIS staff as well as the national and the international presence of GSIS and Korea. For the education dimension, this paper created variables based on Mutrofin et al. (2017) and Pulford et al. (2020). With regard to Mutrofin et al. (2017), we added the variable of class discussion to determine the impact of KOICA students in improving the quality of

classroom knowledge production by sharing their experiences of the actual conditions of developing countries. Also, in accordance with the definition of research capacity introduced by Pulford et al. (2020), this paper created a variable to assess the effect of KOICA students on students and professors when conducting research related to developing countries.

In the questionnaire the respondents were asked to identify the level of agreement with each variable, using a 5-point Likert scale ("1: strongly disagree," "2: somewhat disagree," "3: neither agree nor disagree," "4: somewhat agree," and "5: strongly agree"). Because some professors might not be able to respond to the questions related to the capacity of the GSIS administration office because of their lack of engagement in administration, the option of "not sure" was included in their questionnaire. Also, the option of multiple answers was provided to professors to evaluate KOICA students by choosing from a list of distinguished capabilities such as "expertise in the field as a government official," "understanding the actual condition of developing countries," "critical thinking," "attitude toward learning," "communication skills with professors," and "sharing ideas with classmates."

Following the survey, we conducted face-to-face individual interviews. We used structured, open-ended interviews to determine the reasons for the variables

<Table 2> Overview of Questionnaire

Target	Dimension	Section	Variables	Options of the questionnaire
Professors, Administrative Staff	Governance of GSIS	Administrative capacity of GSIS administration office	English skills	Likert-scale-based rating “Not Sure” option is included only for professors
			Writing documents	
			Administrative capacity for the settlement of international students	
			Communication skills with international students	
			Understanding international students	
			Cooperation with other departments in KU/External institutions	
		National status of GSIS	Status of GSIS in Korea	Likert-scale-based rating
			Acquisition of research/study projects	
		International presence of Korea and GSIS	International status of GSIS	
			National image of Korea	
Professors, Students	Education of GSIS	Quality of education at GSIS	Overall quality of education	
			Diversification of programs	
			The participation of KOICA students in class discussion	
			Adding insights by sharing actual conditions of developing countries to classroom knowledge production	
		Research capacity of GSIS	Overall research capability at GSIS	
			Behavior of KOICA students to non-KOICA students in research related to developing countries	
			Behavior of KOICA students to professors in research related to developing countries	
		Building network at GSIS	The international network of students and faculty members	
			The international network of students	
			The international network of faculty members	
Professors		Evaluation of KOICA students	The distinguished academic performance of KOICA students from non-KOICA students	Multiple answers
			The skills of distinguished academic performances	

that were perceived as highly effective by the respondents. The interview questions were as follows:

- Based on the outcome of the questionnaire, why are the effective variables conducive to strengthening the institutional governance of GSIS?
- Based on the outcome of the questionnaire, why are the effective variables conducive to strengthening the education of GSIS?

We followed the basic phases of data analysis in qualitative research outlined by Creswell (2014). The interview results were coded and transcribed. And they were segmented into categories of internal and external effect.



## IV. Findings

This section examines how the KOICA scholarship program has a positive effect on KU GSIS, which is the project implementing institution, in both governance and education aspects. These two aspects - governance and education - have contributed both to the internal capacity and external reputation of the implementing institution. However, as is shown below, respondents' differ in their perceptions of the degree of the scholarship's positive influence on the institution.

### 1. Governance

The survey about the impact on governance was conducted with two different groups: professors and administrative workers in KU GSIS. Outcome variables are grouped into two sections, internal capacity of the GSIS administration office, and its external reputation. Internal capacity refers to administrative capacity, which includes document writing ability, understanding international students, and sharing international perspectives. External reputation means the institution's status in Korea and Korea's national image.

<Table 3> analyzes the perception of professors and administrative staff on whether the KOICA scholarship program has been conducive in strengthening the governance of GSIS. The results show that both administrative workers and professors agree that the scholarship program has played a positive role in

elevating the governance of GSIS.

Administrative workers gave the highest score for the KOICA scholarship program's positive impact on the institution's internal capacity. They assessed that the operation of the scholarship program is most conducive in improving the skills in writing documents (4.60) and understanding the characteristics of international students (4.60).

An interview with the former coordinator of the KOICA scholarship program at KU GSIS, who managed the program for five years, helped identify the specific reasons for the perceptions held by the administrative workers. The former coordinator testified that there are various kinds of documents that should be submitted to the headquarters of the KOICA scholarship program and Korea University. Also, revising these documents based on the feedback from earlier drafts contributed to the improvement of writing skills.

The frequency of submission and variety of documents requested by the headquarters of Korea University and KOICA positively affected the development of writing skills. Also, I felt that my ability to write documents was enhanced as I referred to excellent documentation samples and wrote revisions through the feedback on the draft that I wrote (an interviewee from the administrative staff group).

One of the positive aspects emphasized by the administrative staff was the widening of their

<Table 3> The Mean Value of Selective Variables in Governance Dimension

Variable	Professor		Administrative workers	
	Obs	Mean	Obs	Mean
Institution's internal capacity				
Writing documents	14	3.91	5	<b>4.60</b>
Understanding international students	14	4.08	5	<b>4.60</b>
External reputation				
National image of Korea	14	<b>4.57</b>	5	4.20
Status of GSIS in Korea	14	<b>4.50</b>	5	4.20

Note: 5: Strongly agree, 4: Somewhat agree, 3: Neither agree nor disagree, 2: Somewhat disagree, 1: Strongly disagree

international perspectives. The KOICA scholarship program also contributed to administrative workers' understanding of international students. The operation of the scholarship program was found to be effective in improving the staff's understandings of the cultural characteristics of foreign students through interaction with KOICA students from diverse countries.

Encountering students from varied backgrounds certainly fostered a deep understanding of the cultural characteristics of many countries. I used to think that Southeast Asia all had a similar culture. But through continental meetings, which are lunch gatherings for KOICA students from the same continent to share campus life right after the first semester starts, I learned that people from Southeast Asia have different cultures from country by country (an interviewee from the administrative staff group).

In terms of the responses from professors, outcomes show that the operation of the KOICA scholarship program is most effective in elevating the national image of Korea (4.57). Also, professors acknowledge that the status of the institution, KU GSIS, has been improved (4.50) in Korea. To determine the reasons why these factors were deemed to be most positively influenced, an individual interview was conducted with a professor who is knowledgeable about the scholarship program in Korea University due to previous experience of working as an associate dean of KU GSIS for seven years.

KOICA students usually possess vague images of Korea that it is more developed than their home countries with regard to socio-economic development. However, 18 months of stay in the country highly affects them to vividly understand the promising images of Korea. Academically, KOICA students learn about Korea's role in the field of international commerce, international development, and cooperation and peace and security by acquiring knowledge at

GSIS. Also, as it is inevitable to compare the situations of their home country to the one they are currently studying at, KOICA students can physically feel the positive aspects of living in Korea (an interviewee from the professor group).

Other faculty members in GSIS also agreed that the KOICA scholarship program promotes the national image of Korea. KOICA students' experiences in Korea leads them to fully realize that its academic and life aspects are more advanced than their home countries, therefore causing them to develop a favorable image of Korea. Because KOICA students who learn at GSIS are government officials in their home countries, the promotional effects of GSIS are naturally enhanced when they relate their experiences to colleagues or families.

In addition, most faculty members agreed that the management of the KOICA scholarship program helps enhance the national status of KU GSIS. Out of thirteen GSIS schools in Korea, there are only four which manage a KOICA scholarship program (Higher Education in Korea n.d.). As KU GSIS is one of the few institutions to hold this program, many professors agree that it positively elevates the national status of their institution.

There are only four GSIS schools in Korea which manage the scholarship program. In order to implement the program, numerous universities bid for the program and KOICA headquarters selects the operating institutions based on their proposals and presentations. In light of the limited number of operating institutions prudently chosen by KOICA and the fact that KU GSIS is one of them certainly elevates the national status of KU GSIS (an interviewee from the professor group).

## 2. Education

The survey about the quality of education at KU GSIS was conducted with two separate groups:

graduate students who do not belong to the KOICA scholarship program and professors at GSIS. Outcome variables regarding the quality of education are also classified into two parts: internal effects (quality of education) and external effects (building networks), note that each category consists of several variables. Internal effects refer to the qualitative aspects of education including the diversification of the program, the degree of class participation, and the improvement of research capacity, while external effects include factors such as the establishment of an international network of students or faculty members.

<Table 4> displays the perception of professors and non-KOICA students that the KOICA scholarship program has been instrumental in strengthening the education of KU GSIS. The responses from professors and students at KU GSIS demonstrate how the educational quality of the institution has been positively affected by the operation of the scholarship program for more than a decade.

First, students at KU GSIS indicated that the most effective contribution of the scholarship is the addition of international insights by government officials who share the actual status of their developing countries in class discussions (4.17). Also, many students agree that the scholarship program is effective in broadening students' international networks (4.10). Individual interviews were conducted with three non-KOICA students at GSIS and it revealed a consensus about

the importance of the above factors.

KOICA students actively share their opinions on issues in the classroom by reflecting on their hands-on experiences. Especially, when KOICA students apply the knowledge they learned from the institution in Korea to their home affiliations, it facilitates further class discussions by supplementing global insights in lectures.

There is a high tendency for non-KOICA students to be only aware of the theories about developing countries. However, KOICA students possess hands-on experience of the actual condition of developing countries and share it in presentations, discussions, and assignments. It eventually enables non-KOICA students to enhance their understanding of the current situation in developing countries (an interviewee from the student group).

In lectures, KOICA students illustrate the actual situations that their home countries are facing. And they devise optimal methods of how they will utilize the knowledge acquired in GSIS as government officials. For example, some students from Nigeria and Rwanda presented the application of knowledge based on corruption that the two governments were undergoing. Consequently, this prompts non-KOICA students to not only learn the actual situations but also to apply proper knowledge in the pertinent environment in developing countries (an interviewee from the student group).

<Table 4> The Mean Value of Selective Variables in Education Dimension

Variable	Professor		Student	
	Obs	Mean	Obs	Mean
Internal effect (Quality of education)				
Adding insights by sharing actual conditions of developing countries to classroom knowledge production	14	<b>4.50</b>	70	<b>4.17</b>
Diversification of the program	14	<b>4.29</b>	70	3.84
The participation of KOICA students in class discussion	14	<b>4.29</b>	70	3.87
External effect (building network)				
The international network of students	14	3.90	70	<b>4.10</b>

Note: 5: Strongly agree, 4: Somewhat agree, 3: Neither agree nor disagree, 2: Somewhat disagree, 1: Strongly disagree

On top of that, the exclusive learning environment that separates GSIS from other institutions and the diversification of programs factored into the students' agreement that the second advantage of the KOICA scholarship program is the expansion of the international network of students at GSIS. Also, the interviewees often explained that they expect to maintain their relationship with the government officials even after they returned to their home countries.

The special learning environment at GSIS of taking classes together with KOICA students and the provision of the KOICA Buddy Program made me acquainted with KOICA students (an interviewee from the student group).

In Korea, there is no place where students from developing countries are gathered as much as KU GSIS. KOICA students are different from other exchange students from developed countries because they start their academic journey in KU GSIS through the ODA donor-funded scholarship program. With the diverse nationalities of KOICA students, it is beneficial for non-KOICA students to expand their international network not limited to advanced nations (an interviewee from the student group).

Second, when professors at KU GSIS were asked how the KOICA students influenced the educational quality at GSIS, respondents emphasized their contribution to knowledge production in the classroom by sharing their experience of the actual status of developing countries (4.50). Also, professors recognized that there has been a marked improvement in the diversification of educational activities at KU GSIS (4.29) as well as improvements in class discussions due to the enthusiastic participation of KOICA students (4.29).

Professors perceive that the greatest improvement in education at KU GSIS is the way that KOICA students improve the quality and depth of class discussions, presentations and assignments. Most KOICA

students are currently working as government officials in their home countries, so they can contribute to classes by sharing their own experiences and information on the up-to-date situation in their countries.

KOICA students are government officials who need to design policies that can contribute to socio-economic development of their home countries with the help of the acquisition of knowledge at KU GSIS. So, the active discussion in class which involves sharing numerous cases of developing countries amplifies the synergy as KOICA students actively present the current status their governments are undergoing and provide the solutions based on their own countries' experiences. This eventually leads to in-depth class discussion and broadens our understanding of developing countries (an interviewee from the professor group).

Professors also agree that the operation of the KOICA scholarship program positively leads to the diversification of educational activities. The provision of various activities, such as the Buddy Program and field trips to KOICA students, contribute to professors' perception that diversification is one of the most improved factors associated with the scholarship.

KU GSIS offers extracurricular activities to create an environment for non-KOICA students to be acquainted with government officials from developing countries such as the KOICA Buddy Program and the field trip to Duozone in November, 2019. These attempts prove that educational activities at KU GSIS are diversified due to the scholarship program (an interviewee from the professor group).

Professors also acknowledge the role of KOICA students in improving the quality of classroom discussions. Their enthusiastic participation serves as a catalyst for inducing other students to share their opinions. Especially, the diverse backgrounds of KOICA students are also effective in improving the

quality of debates in class.

There is a relatively low tendency of Korean students to participate in class. In this context, KOICA students' enthusiastic participation acts as a peer pressure for non-KOICA students since their behavior encourages non-KOICA students to actively engage in class. Also, the various backgrounds of KOICA students play a positive role as they actively share the ongoing issues of their home countries, leading to the improvement of the quality of class discussions (an interviewee from the professor group).

However, it should be noted that each respondent in this study - administrative workers, non-KOICA students and professors in KU GSIS - also noted ways that the KOICA scholarship program failed to make a significant contribution to the institution. First, administrative workers think the scholarship program is less fruitful in fostering cooperative relationship with other departments or institutions (3.80 out of 5). Since the requests by KOICA headquarters often cause unnecessary interactions with other departments in Korea University, it does not effectively contribute to the cooperative relationship with other departments for administrative workers. Second, students do not fully agree that the scholarship contributes to the overall quality of education in KU GSIS (3.50 out of 5). The different intellectual level between KOICA students and non-KOICA students, and learning deviation within KOICA students, leads to only a minority of students responding that the scholarship program is effective in improving the overall quality of education. Lastly, professors agree that the scholarship program is less effective in improving the overall research capacity of KU GSIS (3.57 out of 5). Professors assume that developing countries have a low accessibility of data and this often discourages them from working with KOICA students.

Although there are some responses with relatively lower scores, the questionnaires and targeted interviews

demonstrate that the KOICA scholarship program has an overall positive effect on the capacity building of KU GSIS in both governance and educational quality. In addition, individual interviews with the representatives of each target group provide substantial evidence for these findings.

## **V. Conclusion and Implications for Practice**

This paper contributes to the literature on donorship by demonstrating how the provision of ODA, especially in the context of university scholarship programs, is mutually beneficial to both donors and recipients, not just a unilateral donor-beneficiary relationship. While extant studies have focused on the benefits for recipients of scholarship programs, this paper argues that the institutions that operate scholarship programs can also benefit from the capacity development. These benefits are divided into two parts: one is institutional governance and the other is educational quality.

This paper also has some limitations. As the research sample is limited to the members of Korea University, it is necessary to be careful when generalizing the results. Nonetheless, KU GSIS is one of only four GSIS departments with a KOICA scholarship program, has operated it since 2007, and it is therefore a representative institution with abundant experience and expertise. Also, since this paper uses a cognitive-based questionnaire, it is possible there is a gap between the responses of the questionnaire and the actual contributions of the program. However, starting with this paper, future research will seek to develop an indicator to measure the degree to which a scholarship program contributes to the institution, thereby confirming a direct causal relationship.

Many previous studies refer to national interest - variously conceptualized as diplomatic or economic interests - as one of the strong motivations for

implementing ODA. However, recognition of national interest differs depending on the government ministry: the national interest that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs considers is international reputation and diplomatic relations, but the national interest from the perspective of the Ministry of Strategy and Finance is the national economic benefit. Therefore, there have been numerous attempts to define the concept of national interest (Krasner 1978; Keohane 1984; Wendt 1999; Nye 2004). Despite the different understandings of the national interest, the scholarship program studied here is part of the promotion of the national interest. When the implementing institution increases its external reputation through the scholarship program, it is also beneficial for Korea's international reputation and diplomatic relations with other countries. In the long term, this program allows administrative workers to strengthen their administrative capacity and improves the education quality of the institution, thereby establishing a friendly relationship between students from developing countries and the members - administrative workers, students, and professors - of the university. This program is an obvious example of successful public diplomacy, which promotes amity between countries through private cooperation (Cull 2008; Nye 2008; Roselle et al. 2014). Furthermore, in the long term, economic benefits are also expected when KOICA students, having developed a friendly attitude towards Korea during their stay, return to their government jobs in their home countries.

As this paper has shown, the KOICA scholarship program has a positive impact on the donor's national reputation as well as helping aid recipients. It also enhances the public understanding of the national interest obtained through the program. This helps citizens have a positive perception of ODA, and this perception contributes to an increase in ODA scale and effectiveness. Based on this result, it is necessary to aggregate data from various fields and confirm that the provision of ODA is in line with South Korea's ODA strategic goal of win-win prosperity. This is

because the assessment of the benefits for South Korea from ODA - not only implementing a scholarship program but also operating overall ODA programs - is a critical issue which can contribute to the common goal of the international community to establish a global partnership through ODA. When measuring the benefits of Korea for implementing the ODA projects, donor agencies tend to focus on a short-term and tangible benefits, such as cases of exporting products and services of Korean corporations to the developing countries. Such a fragmented evaluation based on gathering these cases may not comprehensively assess the benefits of the donor countries. Thus, rather than gathering the successful cases (or so called "best practices"), it is necessary to develop the macroscale framework to measure the long-term benefits of the donor countries. Prior to developing such framework, this study suggests to first examine the direct impact of ODA projects on the implementing agency's capacity, function, and reputation. Based on the analysis of its impact on the implementing agency, it is necessary to develop the macroscale indicators to measure its impact in improving diplomatic relations and generating economic benefits.

Until now, the provision of ODA, including educational programs, has been interpreted as a one-sided benefit. However, sustainable development is now a global standard in international society and this requires building partnerships. This means that the provision of scholarship programs for higher education should also be established as a partnership rather than an act of charity, and through this viewpoint it is possible to establish the policies that are favorable for both Korea and the recipients. It is expected that implementing institutions will obtain a strong motivation to operate the scholarship program to capture these positive effects. In the future, it is necessary to better determine which factors affect the degree of achievement of the institute and scholarship students. These studies can provide basic data for policy-making processes, such as selecting recipient countries or establishing



the criteria to select scholarship students.

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## 상생 번영을 위한 원조? KOICA 석사학위 연수사업 수행대학의 혜택에 관한 사례 연구

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### 국문초록

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**연구목적:** 본 연구의 목적은 KOICA 석사학위 연수사업 수행대학의 입장에서 사업의 효과성에 대한 인식을 알아보는 것이다.

**연구의 중요성:** KOICA 석사학위 연수사업에 대한 선행연구는 수혜자의 이익에 초점을 맞추고 있는 반면 사업을 수행하는 대학이 얻는 이익에 대한 연구는 미비한 바, 본 연구는 해당 프로그램이 수행 대학에 미치는 영향에 대해 평가했다는 점에서 중요성을 갖는다.

**연구방법론:** 본 연구는 설문조사와 인터뷰로 구성된 순차적 혼합 방법을 활용했다. 연수사업이 수행대학에 미치는 영향에 대한 인식을 이해하기 위해, 대학의 교수, 행정직원, 학생을 대상으로 설문조사 및 개별면접을 실시하였다.

**연구결과:** KOICA 석사학위 연수사업은 수행대학의 거버넌스와 교육의 효과성 증진에 긍정적인 효과를 미친 것으로 나타났다. 거버넌스 차원에서 해당 사업은 국가 및 대학의 위상을 제고하였고, 교내 행정 직원의 행정역량을 강화하였다. 교육 차원에서는 해당 사업을 통해 대학의 교육의 질이 향상되었고, 인적 네트워크가 확대되었다.

**결론 및 시사점:** 본 연구에서는 KOICA 석사학위 연수사업이 우리나라에 미치는 긍정적인 영향에 대해 알아본다. 이러한 실증 연구 결과는 국민의 ODA에 대한 인식 제고 및 ODA 규모와 효율성 증진에 기여할 것으로 기대된다.

**주제어** 원조효과성, KOICA 석사학위 연수사업, 상호 이익, 국익, 공적개발원조

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