

***A Case Study of Educational Program Integrating Fashion and SDGs:
Collaborating with ASPIRE, the U.N. Affiliated College Student-Driven
Organization***

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The IAFOR International Conference on Education – Hawaii 2021
Official Conference Proceeding

Abstract

This paper describes the educational outcomes qualitatively about the educational program, “Cherish, Enjoy, and Develop oneself” in one of the Japanese university classes as a case study. This program aims that students acquire the sense of sustainability to achieve Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by the United Nations and improving self-efficacy to solve one of the problems of Japanese youngers, less self-confidence, through considering the issues around fashion business and clothes. United Nation’s affiliated student-driven organization, ASPIRE, collaborates with the instructor of this course to develop and manage the program as one of the unique characteristics of this study. This case study shows that participant students recognized the role of clothes as a part of the important factors for identifying themselves and background of familiar things such as clothing based on their written opinions and their group activities.

Keywords: College Education, Educational Development, Program Development, Sdgs, Fashion, Case Study

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Introduction

This research aims to identify educational outcomes on the educational program, “Cherish, Enjoy, and Develop oneself” to college students in Japan. This educational program intends to contribute to acquiring the mind of sustainability, knowledge, skills, and values of these students by considering fashion and clothes. It also focuses on developing a sense of sustainability by promoting SDGs in the international community. Higher education institutions are responsible for fostering their students to have a mind of sustainability in this globalized society. However, the concept of sustainability is difficult to understand for college students and makes them lose the passion for considering sustainability and SDGs sometimes for sustaining to understand sustainability and how reasonable is an essential factor to think about it.

The reasons of focusing on the fashion business and clothing in this educational program are these industries affect huge environmental burden with the violation of human rights to workers as the United Nations launched an initiative of UN Alliance for Sustainable Fashion to foster sustainable development. A lot of Japanese college students do not have enough chances to know this problem even everyone wears clothes every day. In the aspect of a personal matter, fashion can have self-confidence by putting on clothes because wearing is one of the important factors to make their identity and contribute to acquiring a feeling of self-esteem by creating their own style.

This educational program also intends to foster the younger Japanese generation's self-esteem because the low level of self-approval is one of Japan's most significant social problems. World Happiness Report (2019) examines that Japan ranked 58th in 156 countries and “Freedom to make life choices” is 64th while “Generosity” is 92nd. Between 2005-2008 and 2016-2018 rankings, Japan decreased percentages even though almost 60% of countries improved their situation. Moreover, the Cabinet Office, Government of Japan operates one survey, Awareness survey on youth in Japan and other countries. This survey aims to gather information about the Japanese youth to check and revise the national policies. Only 10% of Japanese youngsters response as “I agree” to the question “I am satisfied with myself” while other countries are at least 30% or more (Cabinet Office, 2018). The self-esteem of younger Japanese is also crucial in sustaining the country to find a solution for the extremely highly aging society.

This educational program focuses on considering the fashion as anchored on the influence of psychological processes on wearers (Adam and Galinsky, 2012). One of the research shows that positive psychological influences by fashion and clothes. Furthermore, to think about sustainability and related social issues through learning fashion and its businesses. By taking this educational program, students may acquire such things as developing personality/autonomy, improving happiness, self-efficacy, and generosity. Respecting others and themselves, and having a mind for taking care of a thing. Fostering imagination and creativity, Changing a purchasing behavior to sustainable and valuable, Endurance to media and SNS.

“Cherish, Enjoy, and Develop oneself” is developed by collaborative efforts with the Student’s organization, ASPIRE: Action by Students to Promote Innovation and Reform through Education. ASPIRE is a student branch of the United Nations Academic Impacts (UNAI), which is an initiative to fostering relationships between

higher education institutions all over the world by the Department of Global Communications by the United Nations. ASPIRE intends to contribute to achieving the United Nations' goals, such as Sustainable Development Goals, as in college students' perspective. ASPIRE personifies the saying, "Sharing a Culture of Intellectual Social Responsibility." It connects student organizations and individuals to global opportunities through the United Nations, educational and academic institutions, and civil society groups that focus on the UNAI initiative.

Yamazaki and Haseyama (2020) clarify that the educational impacts of self-directed/students-oriented extracurricular activities in the higher education institution such as the ASPIRE and identify the possibilities of acquiring opportunities to apply transformative competencies as suggested by "the Student Agency" in OECD (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development) Learning Compass 2030. The OECD Future of Education and Skills 2030 proposes the OECD Learning Compass 2030, a learning framework that aims to help students navigate future well-being. (OECD 2019). In the OECD Learning Compass 2030, Creating new value, Reconciling tensions & dilemmas, and Taking responsibility, 3 types of competencies are defined as the Transformative competencies. This research shows the validity of participating ASPIRE students for creating an educational program to understand the concept of sustainability and self-esteem of the Japanese younger generation through thinking of fashion and wearing clothes.

Method

"Cherish, Enjoy, and Develop oneself" organized as a part of the course of "Human Understanding (Education and society)" in one of the Christian based universities in Japan. This course was provided to college students due to collaborative efforts with the United Nations' Department of Global Communications. 44 students took this course, and most students from freshmen (30 students) in the 2020 fall semester. 5 times (100mins * 5) classes consisted of 2 times watching movies with homework about the contents and discussion twice and with a wrap-up session. All classes provided a virtual classroom by Zoom due to the affection of COVID-19. This university applied a virtual classroom system by Zoom from April 2020. Almost all students are used to the online class setting.

This educational program separates 3 parts, watching movies, discussing/considering these movies, and wrapping up these activities to understand the whole program. One of the movies is "Dior and I" (Tcheng, 2015) is the movie that the story of Christian Dior, one of the biggest privileged fashion companies, and focuses on its designer, Raf Simon. It shows highly professional works around fashion business processes as a part of the art. This program regards this movie as a bright side of the fashion industry and a possibility of how people can have passion and feeling of cherishing even just clothing materials. Japan has a unique culture in fashion, such as Kawaii (cute in English) and Cool. These words are quite popular while talking about clothes, especially for the younger generation. That tendency points out that Japanese fashion culture strongly focuses on external elements rather than self-expression and art. "Dior and I" provide some perspectives that clothing materials influence not only looks but also personality, and clothes can be a target as having strong passion.

Class (100mins in each)	Procedures	Contents
1st	Watching “Dior and I”	Watching a movie, “Dior and I” and answering on a small test to check to understand the content and preparation for the next task.
2nd	Discussion / individual work (1)	Students can choose group-discussion / individual work. Questions are the same for both. 1. " Dior and I" depicts the world of advanced professions, including Couturier. What do you think about this way of working and the economy? 2. Do you find the clothing called "ready-to-wear" attractive? 3. Is there any differences in the image of fashion between your daily life and in the movie? 4. Can beauty be bought with money? 5. Can fashion improve one's life? 6. What is the role of fashion and clothing in " Cherish, Enjoy, and Develop oneself "?
3rd	Watching “The True Cost”	Watching a movie, “The True Cost” and answering on a small test to check to understand the content and preparation for the next task.
4th	Discussion / individual work (2)	Students can choose group-discussion / individual work. Questions are the same for both. 1. How to increase an attachment to clothes by fast-fashion industries? 2. Even extremely low wage works contribute to sustaining the life of people in poverty. How to transform the working circumstance without a losing job for them? 3. In the movie, the way of advertising in the recent fast-fashion business is questioned. Think about what you would make if you want to create an advertisement that would convey the appeal of fast fashion and prevent excessive consumption. 4. When the maximum revenue value is 10 (distributing 9 for the owner and 1 for the worker in the movie), suppose how much allocation do you think is appropriate if you are the owner of this company?
5th	Wrap-up session	All students participate in group-discussion. 1. Is there any differences between self-awareness by ①oneself and/or ②by inspiring others to recognize on their own. 2. Sharing your educational/cultural experiences and opinions to discovering the moment of developing yourself.

Table1: Procedures of “Cherish, Enjoy, and Develop oneself”

On the other hand, “The True Cost” (Morgan, 2015) tackles issues and problems, especially in the fast-fashion business. ZARA and H&M are famous examples of this situation. Almost all college students know them and even have experiences to buy

something from. This documentary movie exposes the dark side of the fashion business, such as violations of human rights and workers' environment, and negatively affected the natural environment. Students may have an opportunity to know how different the meaning of fashion and clothes in contrasted 2 movies, "Dior and I" and "The True Cost" even though these movies focus on the same things, fashion business and industries. The idea of sustainability is an essential part of sustaining a better future in our society and higher education institutions have a responsibility to foster their students to contribute sustainable development. Besides that, even in the educational program, "Cherish, Enjoy, and Develop oneself," must focus on negative aspects of fashion and clothing materials, pointing out "The True Cost" to understand workers' situation in poor circumstances. These problems suggesting by the movie are not one of a few examples in the world. The negative impacts of the fashion industry on our society become more significant factors in achieving SDGs or not. Human rights issues such as extremely low-income with too long hours work, gender discrimination, low forcing workers harmful conditions, and damage to natural environment and recourses are recently revealed. As one of the evidence of this trend, the United Nations launched a UN Alliance for Sustainable Fashion in 2019.

Students in the class can choose to participate in group-work activity or work individually based on their own favorite way to understand the issues. Zoom, a virtual classroom setting, makes it easier to create such a circumstance. Whether students learn the things group-based or individual based, everyone allows to read the outcomes and make comments on Moodle online.

In the final section of this educational program, students focus on "develop oneself" based on learning experiences from class number 1 to 4. This section aims to recognize the role of fashion as a part of self-awareness. All of the participants have an opportunity to take a group discussion as concluding this educational program.

The student body called ASPIRE, an affiliate under the United Nations Department of Global Communications, contribute to create and manage this educational program, Cherish, Enjoy, and Develop oneself". 3 ASPIRE students support organizing this educational program in this class by making a time for questions and answers and giving some suggestions to students who attend the lecture while 10 of ASPIRE members work for developing this program.

Result

This educational program asks what kinds of things participant students learned after the end of this educational program. The Japanese younger generation is very familiar with mass consumption. Especially in fashion items, almost all of them did not have a mind to have clothes sustainably—one of the reasons supposed to be public relations from fashion industries through SNS. SNS gives thousands of useful information while spreading fake information tremendously. However, almost all students in this class realized the importance of wearing a long time with cherish and joy for everyone, not only for students themselves but also for designers, workers, and every person related to the fashion business, to create a sustainable society. Furthermore, they also find what people wear is an expression of who people are. Some of them explain that this program gives a first time to consider clothes as a part of functional items to make the personality of themselves.

Japan is one of the countries where huge dealing with pressure to conform to the social norm. Many Japanese college students struggle to choose what kind of clothes they are wearing in their university because almost all of them have a uniform before entering college. Not being noticeable while following fashion trends is an important issue to live their college life successfully. In this Japanese circumstance, this educational program allows them to think about the fashion items more freedom to express themselves through clothes while considering sustainability to our world. This educational program is also supposed to have a possibility to contribute to improving the retention of college students In this context.

Some students point out that changing consumers' practice is a crucial factor to foster changing the fashion business's attitude. The consumer can have the power when they make choices to get clothes from clothing companies eager to contribute to sustainable development. That practice is still not an ordinary thing in Japan even though the movement is beginning the last couple of years as Japanese society takes on the mind to SDGs. Moreover, others also mention that respecting others is one of the essential factors to developing oneself in this program because that must be the beginning of developing one own characteristic and personality.

Discussion

It seemed to attain this educational program's goal at least the course in this term even though there must be more cases. It organized research for identifying the outcomes from this educational program, including from a quantitative perspective. It is to be one way to consider improving self-efficacy and a mind of sustainability for college students by applying the issues around wearing clothes that is a very usual thing for everyone. Making a familiar approach such as clothing and fashion to achieve sustainable development with fostering self-confidence is one of the crucial factors consisting this educational program. Online classroom situations may also affect outcomes in both ways, positively/negatively. Online education is a relatively new phenomenon in Japanese higher education institutions. There is not apparent consideration about the educational impacts of online education. Hence, "Cherish, Enjoy, and Develop oneself" requires more research to identify the educational outcomes.

Conclusions

Our world is struggling to achieve the SDGs by COVID-19, and the pandemic influences every aspect of our life. To get clothes from fashion business industries, each student's economic gap and financial strain may affect their clothes choices even they have interested in. On the other hand, some people realize the importance of sustainable development and question too highly economical society with limiting various activities by the pandemic of coronavirus. Improving their own self-efficacy while considering sustainable development, such as aiming this educational program, is very important in higher education institutions.

Moreover, this research has a space to analyze learning outcomes focusing on students who participate as a program developer such as a student of ASPIRE. They contributed to creating this educational program with research activities such as gathering information and articles about fashion and sustainable development. That might be a

learning curve for them in a different perspective of general students in this class because developing an educational program is challenging work with a fruitful learning opportunity.

Acknowledgement

This educational program was created by collaborative efforts with a student-body, ASPIRE. The author would like to thank K. Amemiya gave full supports to create this program, and the leader of ASPIRE, Y. Tobisawa, who helped the instructor by managing classroom activities and evaluating educational outcomes from students in the class. One of the students as a non-ASPIRE member, A. Takekawa, also facilitated classroom activities to improve the student's discussion quality.

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