

Career Planning, Employment, and Career Development among Young Female High School Graduates¹

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to analyze the status of career planning, employment and career development among young women with a high school diploma, and to recommend related youth employment policies. The research methods applied are: review of previous studies and policy documents; statistical analysis; questionnaire survey; and holding advisory group meetings. Immediately after graduating from vocational high school, women enjoy greater employment opportunities and higher quality of job than do men. However, after five years the gender gap in employment opportunities, job stability, and compensation begins to widen and women become bound into more unfavorable conditions. The majority of female workers with a high school diploma are less determined to sustain their present employment status and see a lower chance of developing their career to a higher level. Based on the results of analysis, this study recommends: improving the governance of youth employment policies and gender balance; prevention of career disruption among female workers with a high school diploma; improvement of conditions for combining work and learning; support for young female graduates from general high schools; introducing a lifelong career education for female high school students; and follow-up studies on employment and career development among young female workers with a high school diploma.

Key Words: Female high school graduates, Career Planning, Lifelong Career Development, Employment, Economic activity

¹ This article summarizes a KWDI research report (Seon-Mee Shin and Eunjin Oh, 2014).

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Introduction

The Korean government has implemented various policies to address problems due to overeducation, difficulties faced by young people seeking employment, and challenges in securing a skilled workforce. As part of these policies, the government has strengthened vocational education, expanded employment of high school graduates, and introduced dual work-learning systems. As a result, there has been an increase in the employment rate of vocational high school⁴ graduates.

According to previous studies women have more employment opportunities than do men shortly after graduating from high school (Nam Ki-Seong, Lee Sung-Jae & Oh Ha-Joon, 2013; Choi Dong-Son & Lee Jong-Bum, 2013; Park Sang-Hyun & Jo Dong-Jin, 2011). Women are mainly employed in the sectors of manufacturing, retail and wholesale, hospitality, and restaurants. By occupation, they are mainly concentrated in either electrical and electronic related jobs or management-accountancy-secretarial related jobs (Park Sang-Hyun & Jo Dong-Jin, 2011). The greatest difficulties faced by female high school graduates in the workplace come in relationships with seniors and colleagues (Choi Dong-Son et al., 2013).

If the government policies are successful, young female high school graduates should be able to continuously develop their vocational careers. Also, during this process they should be able to grow as professionals who can compete with other youth demographic groups, such as male high school graduates or female college graduates. The purpose of this study is to analyze the current status and issues of career planning, employment, and career development among young women with a high school diploma, and to recommend youth employment policies to help them become a more highly skilled workforce.

This study poses four major research questions as follows: First, how many young women with a high school diploma have joined the workforce after the recent educational reforms targeting vocational high schools and universities? What difference is there in their employment status from that of young male high school graduates or young female college graduates? Second, what difference is there in their job maintenance compared to college graduates? Also, what difference is there between the genders among young high school graduates and also by type of high school (general/vocational)? Third, what kinds of help do they need for their career development within the present workplace?

Lastly, as a response to these research questions, what would be suggestions for a policy agenda for supporting career planning, employment, and career development among young female high school graduates?

⁴ Vocational high schools include specialized high schools and Meister high schools.

Research Methods

As our primary research methods, we first reviewed previous studies and recent policy documents, including vocational education policies mainly designed for Specialized and Meister high schools, high school career education-employment support policies, plans related to vocational education, recent press releases from related ministries (Ministry of Education, Ministry of Strategy and Finance, etc.), annual reports to the President by the Ministry of Education, and vocational education plans of provincial and municipal offices of education.

Second, we analyzed national statistical data, including the Educational Statistical Surveys of Kindergartens, Primary, and Secondary Schools (2000-2013); Economically Active Population Surveys (2002-2013); Employment and Career Surveys of High School Graduates (2011, 2013); and data from the first (2007) through fifth year (2011) of Youth Panel Surveys (YP2007).

Third, we conducted questionnaire surveys of female employees aged 34 or under (966 persons) who went to work after graduating from high school or who entered employment first and then went on to college later. To develop the questionnaire for the survey, we performed focus group interviews. Participants in the interviews included 10 young female workers with high school diplomas, five human resource officers from business firms, and five specialized high school teachers in charge of career planning and employment.

Principal Results

Overall state of employment among young female high school graduates

High schools in South Korea are divided into general and professional schools. In 2013, 49 million people had graduated from a general high school and 14.1 million people from a vocational high school. The number of general high school graduates declined between 2003 and 2009, but increased again to 2000 levels by 2010. On the other hand, the number of professional high school graduates has continued to decrease since 2000.

Table 1. Number of high school graduates by sex and type of school (2000-2013)

(unit : person)

Year of graduation	General high school			Vocational high school		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
2000	473,665	248,695	224,970	291,047	145,941	145,106
2005	399,013	208,417	190,596	170,259	89,112	81,147
2010	477,470	248,379	229,091	156,069	83,886	72,183
2011	495,644	258,803	236,841	152,824	83,351	69,473
2012	490,202	258,425	231,777	146,522	80,684	65,838
2013	489,423	258,556	230,867	141,774	77,424	64,350

Source: Statistical Yearbook of Education, each year.

The employment rate among vocational high school graduates has increased since 2010. As of 2013, the employment rate of male graduates stood at 35.7%, and that of female graduates at 35.0%. The employment rate of women had been up to 10 percentage points higher than that of men in the early 2000s, but this was reversed in 2013.

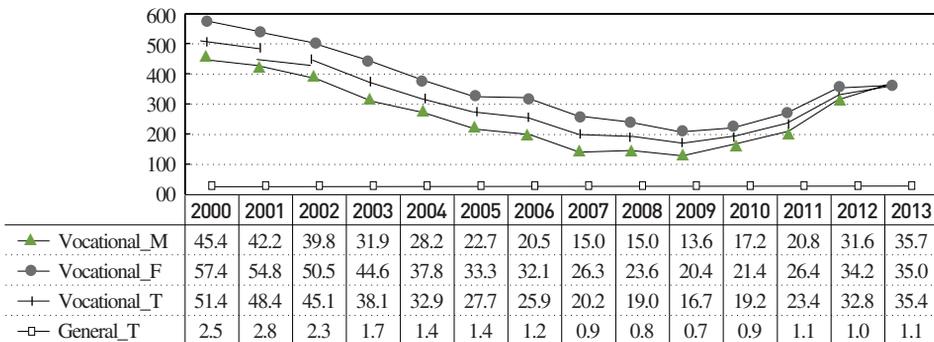


Figure 1. Employment rate of high school graduates by type of school

Source: Statistical Yearbook of Education, each year.

Note: Employment rate = number of the employed after graduation × 100 / number of graduates. The survey was conducted immediately after graduation on an annual basis (as of April 1).

Among young female workers with a high school diploma, 49.0% have regular jobs, a proportion higher than that of male workers (46.7%). However, compared to young female employees with a college degree or above, their proportion of regular jobs was lower by 25.0 percentage points, and the proportion of temporary or daily jobs was higher by 22.5 percentage points.

Table 2. Employment status of young employee
by gender-education level (2013)

(Unit: %)

	All education levels			High school graduates*			College graduates or above		
	total	male	female	total	male	female	total	male	female
Regular workers	56.1	52.5	59.3	47.7	46.7	49.0	73.2	72.1	74.0
Temporary/daily workers	37.1	39.5	35.1	43.7	43.3	44.2	21.7	21.5	21.7
Non-wage workers	6.8	8.0	5.6	8.7	10.0	6.7	5.1	6.5	4.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Statistics Korea, Economically Active Population Survey, microdata for 2013.

Note: High school graduates are limited to young people who do not attend school, except for current students at regular educational institutions including college, or students on leave of absence. Non-wage workers include employers, self-employed, and unpaid family business workers.

In general, as age rises, the proportion of those holding regular jobs increases. Therefore, when we calculated the proportion of regular jobs among young employees by dividing their ages into five-year units, the proportion of women's regular jobs was higher than that of men's across all age groups.

Table 3. The proportion of regular jobs among young employees
by gender-education level-age (2013)

(Unit: %)

Age group	All education levels			High school graduates*			College graduates or above		
	total	male	female	total	male	female	total	male	female
Aged 15-20	11.4	9.8	12.6	32.0	25.1	37.8	-	-	-
Aged 20-24	42.5	32.1	49.5	42.0	39.5	44.9	67.5	62.0	68.9
Aged 25-29	68.0	64.8	71.5	52.9	52.2	54.3	75.0	73.4	76.5

Source: Statistics Korea, Economically Active Population Survey, microdata for 2013.

Note: As there were almost no college graduates between the ages of 15-20, middle school graduates were excluded from the analysis. High school graduates were limited to young people who do not attend college or university.

In 2013, the population of career-interrupted women was estimated at about 1.95 million people. Out of this figure, young people under 29 years old accounted for 11.2%. People in their 30s took up the largest portion with 55.3%, followed by people in their 40s (accounting for 27.2%). Among young female high school graduates, career-interrupted women were about 80,000 in number.

Table 4. Number of career-interrupted young women with a high school diploma (2013)

Age group	Middle school graduation or below		High school graduation		College graduation or above		Total	
	persons	%	persons	%	persons	%	persons	%
Aged 15-29	11,555	0.6	80,139	4.1	127,222	6.5	218,916	11.2
Aged 30-39	10,505	0.5	389,969	19.9	680,739	34.8	1,081,213	55.3
Aged 40-49	17,450	0.9	248,742	12.7	265,975	13.6	532,167	27.2
Aged 50-59	21,437	1.1	66,821	3.4	34,692	1.8	122,950	6.3
Total	60,947	3.1	785,671	40.2	1,108,628	56.7	1,955,246	100.0

Source: Statistics Korea, Regional Employment Survey, microdata for 2013.

As a result of estimating the age of career-interrupted women (as of 2013) at the time their career was interrupted, we found that those who experienced career interruption prior to 29 years old accounted for 57.9%, and those prior to 34 years old took up 86.2%. The lower the education level, the more career interruption occurred in the age group of 29 years old or below. Precisely, middle school graduation accounted for 68.0%, high school graduation 63.0%, and college graduation or above 53.7%.

Table 5. Number and percentage of career-interrupted women by education level and age when career interruption occurred

Age group	Middle school graduation or below		High school graduation		College graduation or above		Total	
	persons	%	persons	%	persons	%	persons	%
Aged 24 or below	25,566	41.9	173,584	22.1	84,526	7.6	283,676	14.5
Aged 25-29	15,898	26.1	321,369	40.9	512,039	46.2	849,306	43.4
Aged 30-34	8,288	13.6	182,187	23.2	362,590	32.7	553,065	28.3
Aged 35 or above	11,195	18.4	108,529	13.8	149,472	13.5	269,196	13.8
Total	60,947	100.0	785,669	100.0	1,108,627	100.0	1,955,243	100.0

Source: Statistics Korea, Regional Employment Survey, microdata for the first half of 2013.

Note: There may be slight errors due to our calculating ages when career interruption occurred in the following manners: taking the full age at the time of the survey as the age of career interruption if it had been less than a year since the women resigned from work; and subtracting the difference between the year of the survey (2013) and the year of resignation from the full age if it had been a year or longer since they resigned from work.

Current state of employment immediately after graduating from vocational high school

When we examined the current state of employment two months (May 1) after vocational high school graduation, female graduates showed better performance in employment than did males in terms of employment rate, proportion of regular jobs, and proportion of employment at large companies. However, performance in terms of earned income is not always better for female graduates compared to their male counterparts. Gender disparity in earned income depends on year of graduation, major series, and type of employment.

For high school graduates in 2011 and 2013, the employment rate of female graduates (over 80%) was higher than that of male graduates. In particular, the employment rate of female commercial high school graduates was the highest, standing at over 83%.

Table 6. Economic activity status two months after vocational high school graduation

(Unit: %, persons)

Year of graduation	Type of school	Employed		Unemployed		Economically inactive population		Number of cases	
		male	female	male	female	male	female	male	female
2011	technical	70.8	76.2	10.0	8.9	19.2	14.9	18,966	3,737
	commercial	74.2	83.8	10.3	7.2	15.6	9.0	6,120	20,573
	other	57.3	73.9	20.8	11.4	21.9	14.7	2,830	1,819
	total	70.2	82.0	11.1	7.7	18.7	10.2	27,916	26,128
2013	technical	75.8	76.2	4.9	9.1	19.3	14.7	21,729	3,832
	commercial	69.4	83.3	7.6	5.8	23.0	10.9	4,511	15,639
	other	73.5	77.8	9.7	5.7	16.9	16.5	4,928	5,385
	total	74.5	81.0	6.1	6.3	19.4	12.7	31,168	24,856

Source: Korea Employment Information Service, High School Graduates Employment Survey, microdata for 2011 and 2013.

Note: The survey is conducted approximately two months after graduation (May 1 annually).

The proportion of regular jobs for female vocational high school employees, which stood at 76.3% in 2011 and 85.2% in 2013, was considerably higher than that of male vocational high school graduates.

Table 7. The proportion of regular jobs among vocational high school graduates

(Unit: %)

Gender	Graduates in 2011				Graduates in 2013			
	technical	commercial	other	total	technical	commercial	other	total
Male	55.5	42.1	39.8	51.1	79.4	71.5	63.5	75.9
Female	73.2	77.5	67.4	76.3	85.2	86.6	80.9	85.2

Source: Korea Employment Information Service, High School Graduates Employment Survey, microdata for 2011 and 2013.

Note: The survey is conducted approximately two months after graduation (May 1 annually).

Relative to males, female employees with a high school diploma accounted for a higher proportion of employment at large enterprises with 1,000 employees or more. Compared to small & medium-sized enterprises, large companies in general have systems that are more helpful for the career development of women employees, such as a maternity protection system, work-family reconciliation system, education and training system, and other welfare provisions.

Table 8. The proportion of employees with a vocational high school diploma by size of enterprise

(Unit: %, persons)

Year of graduation	Gender	Number of employees									Number of cases
		1-4	5-9	10-29	30-49	50-99	100-299	300-499	500-999	1,000 or more	
2011	male	18.4	14.3	19.7	8.7	10.1	13.2	5.2	3.9	6.5	19,377
	female	13.8	9.1	12.1	5.6	5.4	9.4	7.0	5.1	32.4	21,352
2013	male	9.3	10.5	17.5	11.1	15.3	17.2	6.9	4.1	8.0	23,034
	female	11.5	12.2	22.1	7.0	11.8	12.8	5.0	5.3	12.3	19,904

Source: Korea Employment Information Service, High School Graduates Employment Survey, microdata for 2011 and 2013.

Note: The survey is conducted approximately two months after graduation (May 1 annually).

Gender disparities in earned income depends on year of graduation, major series, and type of employment. In the case of graduates from 2011, women reported higher monthly average earned income than did men in all the major series. In 2013, however, men showed higher income out of technical and other high schools, but women from commercial high schools.

Table 9. Monthly average earned income of employees
with a vocational high school diploma

(Unit: 10,000 KRW)

Year of graduation	major series	Total	Regular		Non-regular	
			male	female	male	female
2011	technical	127.3	143.7	152.1	108.1	108.4
	commercial	136.5	136.5	153.6	114.7	112.3
	other	122.8	132.1	149.1	108.6	102.7
	total	131.9	141.5	153.1	109.9	111.0
2013	technical	148.8	158.0	153.8	121.0	124.3
	commercial	149.4	157.5	157.7	118.3	122.7
	other	138.8	153.6	143.6	122.8	111.7
	total	147.2	157.4	154.3	120.9	120.3

Source: Korea Employment Information Service, High School Graduates Employment Survey, microdata for 2011 and 2013.

Note: The survey is conducted approximately two months after graduation (May 1 annually).

Current state of employment by time after graduating from the last school

We analyzed the following: the time span between high school graduation and first employment; the proportion of those working by passage of time after graduation; the proportion holding regular jobs; average monthly wage; and job satisfaction. In the results, female graduates showed higher performance in finding employment immediately after graduation (during the period of less than two years), but after five years, women's average employment opportunities and/or the quality of their jobs decreased compared to those of men.

Young female high school graduates found their first job about two years earlier than did their male counterparts, and between two and two and one-half years earlier than did female college graduates.

The time (mean value) passed before acquiring a first job after graduation from the last school was more than a year shorter among young female high school graduates than among male high school graduates. In the case of vocational high school graduates, the gender difference averaged 18.7 months, and in the case of general high school graduates, 20.4 months.

The age at which college graduates got their first job was more than two years older than that of high school graduates, but the time until getting a first job after graduating from the last school was much shorter.

Table 10. The age of first employment and the time passed since graduating from the last school

Category	Gender	Vocational high school graduates		General high school graduates		Total n=5,604*
		last school		last school		
		college n=706*	high school n=945*	college n=3,145*	high school n=808*	
Age of first employment ^a	male	24.3	21.4	26.1	22.8	24.9
	female	21.5	19.4	23.1	20.5	22.1
	total	22.5	19.9	24.2	21.6	23.1
Time passed since graduating from the last school ^b	male	4.3	36.5	7.2	51.7	18.5
	female	-2.1	17.8	6.9	31.3	10.0
	total	0.8	26.7	7.0	42.2	13.8

Source: Korea Employment Information Service, Youth Panel (YP2007), microdata from the 1st-5th years (2007-2011).

Note: *Number of persons

^aNumbers in this category represent ages when vocational and general high school graduates were hired at their first job and are median values.

^bNumbers in this category represent months and are mean values.

More female high school graduates than male graduates were employed up until two years after high school graduation. However, after five years, the proportion of female high school graduates in employment sharply dropped, and after 10 years, it fell even further. In the case of female college graduates, the proportion of employment decreased five years after graduating from the last school, but compared to high school graduates the proportion of those employed was higher.

Table 11. The proportion of employees by time since graduating from the last school

(Unit: %)

Gender	Time passed since graduating from the last school	Vocational high school graduates		General high school graduates		Total
		last school		last school		
		college	high school	college	high school	
Male	Less than 2 yrs	61.0	43.2	69.7	30.4	61.2
	From 2 yrs to less than 5 yrs	87.5	74.6	81.5	70.1	80.8
	From 5 yrs to less than 10 yrs	88.9	75.8	90.1	79.6	85.7
	From 10 yrs to 16 yrs	94.1	91.3	95.2	89.2	90.8
	Total	85.1	78.7	80.8	70.8	79.3
Female	Less than 2 yrs	83.5	75.8	69.5	37.0	69.2
	From 2 yrs to less than 5 yrs	81.6	74.7	76.9	72.2	76.8
	From 5 yrs to less than 10 yrs	59.7	56.6	65.6	57.8	62.5
	From 10 yrs to 16 yrs	46.5	49.0	52.0	40.8	47.5
	Total	75.8	66.8	74.1	61.5	71.3

Source: Korea Employment Information Service, Youth Panel (YP2007), microdata from the 1st-5th years (2007-2011).

When we examined the proportion of regular workers with a high school diploma in terms of time since graduating from the last school, women have more regular jobs than do men in the case of vocational high school graduates with no experience of higher education. However, after 10 years since their graduation, the proportion of male regular workers was higher. In the case general high school graduates, there was almost no gender gap overall in the proportions of regular workers. However, in the case of employees with less than two years since their graduation, the proportion of female regular workers was much higher, and in the case of employees with two to five years since graduation, the proportion of male regular workers was higher.

Table 12, The proportion of regular workers by time since graduating from the last school

(Unit: %)

Gender	Time passed since graduating from the last school	Vocational high school graduates		General high school graduates		Total
		last school		last school		
		college	high school	college	high school	
Male	Less than 2 yrs	88.0	56.3	83.5	25.0	78.1
	From 2 yrs to less than 5 yrs	81.7	62.0	86.1	58.2	81.3
	From 5 yrs to less than 10 yrs	81.1	68.1	82.0	67.9	77.6
	From 10 yrs to 16 yrs	81.3	69.6	85.0	65.3	69.5
	Total	81.5	66.6	84.2	61.2	77.4
Female	Less than 2 yrs	74.2	80.0	76.1	58.8	75.2
	From 2 yrs to less than 5 yrs	75.9	80.6	82.5	50.9	78.8
	From 5 yrs to less than 10 yrs	84.9	82.7	78.1	70.5	78.9
	From 10 yrs to 16 yrs	75.0	54.8	71.2	58.6	61.1
	Total	79.1	70.4	78.8	61.1	75.7

Source: Korea Employment Information Service, Youth Panel (YP2007), microdata from the 1st-5th years (2007-2011).

When we examined the average monthly wage of female high school employees by passage of time since graduating from the last school, the average monthly wage of general high school graduates was higher overall than that of vocational high school graduates. In the case of vocational high school graduates, average monthly wage of employees less than two years after graduation amounted to 1.2 million won; those from two years to less than five years, 1.35 million won; those from five years to less than 10 years, 1.51 million won; and those from 10 to 16 years, 1.70 million won. We calculated the wage difference between male and female high school graduates by passage of time and found that female graduates received lower wages overall than did male graduates. As time passed the wage gap widened.

Table 13. Average Monthly wage of employees by time since graduating from the last school

(Unit: 10,000 KRW)

Gender	Time passed since graduating from the last school	Vocational high school graduates		General high school graduates		Total
		last school		last school		
		college	high school	college	high school	
Male	Less than 2 yrs	168	141	219	119	206
	From 2 yrs to less than 5 yrs	193	142	234	143	214
	From 5 yrs to less than 10 yrs	234	166	247	186	223
	From 10 yrs to 16 yrs	254	227	275	233	234
	Total	212	192	235	195	219
Female	Less than 2 yrs	127	120	164	124	154
	From 2 yrs to less than 5 yrs	155	135	182	126	170
	From 5 yrs to less than 10 yrs	165	151	200	162	184
	From 10 yrs to 16 yrs	172	170	194	176	178
	Total	154	152	183	154	172

Source: Korea Employment Information Service, Youth Panel (YP2007), microdata from the 1st-5th years (2007-2011).

Results of career development needs surveys of young female employees with a high school diploma

An overview of the survey results is as follows: First, the survey subjects included female employees with a high-school diploma aged 34 or under, excluding those engaged in farming, forestry, fishing, and mining. Second, the sampling method was proportionate quota sampling. That is, we divided types of industry into service and non-service industries, then classified service industries into four types: distribution services, producer services, social services, and personal services, based on research by Kang Soonhie et al. (2011;18). Finally, a proportionate quota was applied to the five industries. Third, a needs survey for supporting career development was conducted based on current job. As such, we excluded 34 persons who had gained employment after graduating from high school but later went to college and thus were college graduates at the time of their current job. We then analyzed the remaining total of 966 persons.

Among the female employees with a high school diploma, 90.1% expected that it would be possible for them to continue working at their current workplace if they so desired. Most of the non-regular workers (82.1%) also expected to be able to continue at their work. However, the response that they planned to change jobs within three years accounted for 26.8% in general, with 39.4% of non-regular workers reporting a plan to change job.

Table 14. Possibility of remaining at current job and plans to change jobs within three years

(Unit: persons, %)

Category		Number of cases	Possible to continue to work	Plan to change jobs within 3 years
Total		966	90.1	26.8
Employment type	regular	631	94.3	20.1
	non-regular	335	82.1	39.4
Size of business	less than 100 employees	460	92.4	35.0
	100 to less than 300 employees	418	89.0	19.6
	300 to less than 500 employees	25	96.0	12.0
	500 employees or more	63	77.8	20.6
Occupation type	managers / professionals	9	100.0	44.4
	clerks	434	92.6	15.9
	sales / service workers	424	89.2	38.4
	manufacturing workers / mechanics / other	99	81.8	23.2
Age	19-24 yrs	265	83.4	35.8
	25-29 yrs	291	92.1	24.7
	30-34 yrs	410	92.9	22.4

To the question of equal treatment in terms of job allocation, compensation, promotion, personnel evaluation, education and training between two comparative groups (high school graduates with 4-5 years of job experience and newly-employed college graduates), 24-45% of female high school graduates gave a positive response (usually or often). In particular, a relatively large proportion gave positive responses regarding job allocation and compensation. However only 24% did so regarding promotion and personnel evaluation.

Table 15. Equal treatment between high school graduates with 4-5 years of job experience and newly-employed college graduates

(Unit: persons, %)

Category	Number of cases	Mean value	Never / seldom	Sometimes	Usually / often
Job allocation	966	3.26	18.9	35.5	45.5
Compensation	966	3.27	20.2	36.3	43.5
Promotion	966	2.91	31.4	44.7	23.9
Personnel evaluation	966	2.92	29.1	47.0	23.9
Education and training opportunities and contents	966	3.09	21.0	48.0	31.0

We conducted a survey of the current state of operation of systems or facilities helpful for career development at the present company at which the young female employees with a high school diploma work. As a result of the survey, positive responses (yes) were reported only at rate of 10-20% over all questions.

Table 16. Current state of operation of systems or facilities at the present job

(Unit: persons, %)

Systems or facilities	Number of cases	Yes	No	Don' t know
Personnel management suitable for employees with a high school diploma	966	22.9	69.7	7.5
Transfers between job categories	966	11.3	77.1	11.6
Equal job rotation opportunities for male and female workers	966	17.9	73.2	8.9
Support for combining work and learning	966	10.2	78.9	10.9
Education and training needs survey by position/job	966	16.5	73.8	9.7
Regular questionnaire survey of workers to identify worker opinions/attitudes	966	11.6	78.6	9.8
Flexible time arrangements	966	12.7	77.5	9.7
Program to prevent disadvantages due to the use of parental leave	966	15.1	73.4	11.5
Committee on gender equality	966	15.3	75.4	9.3
Official meeting for female employees	966	19.8	71.6	8.6

A considerable number of young female employees with a high school diploma were skeptical about gaining better jobs or becoming professionals or core employees through career development. To the question asking if they believed they could gain better job

opportunities through career development, about 43.1% answered “Very strongly” or “Strongly,” while 15.4% answered “Not at all” or “Slightly.” To the question of if they believed they would develop into professionals or core employees, only about 34.2% said “Very strongly” or “Strongly,” while 27.4% answered “Not at all” or “Slightly.”

Table 17. Belief in improved job opportunities through career development

(Unit: persons, %, point)

Category		Number of cases	Not at all / slightly	Moderately	Strongly / very strongly	Mean value (5-point scale)	Chi-square
Better job opportunities available through career development	Regular	631	13.9	40.1	46.0	3.38	6.997*
	Non-regular	335	18.2	44.2	37.6	3.20	
	Total	966	15.4	41.5	43.1	3.32	
Possibility of becoming professionals / core employees through career development	Regular	631	21.7	38.4	39.9	3.24	16.341***
	Non-regular	335	38.2	38.5	23.3	2.83	
	Total	966	27.4	38.4	34.2	3.10	

***P<.001, *P<.05

We presented six examples of activities in which respondents can participate for lifelong career development and asked them whether they felt it necessary to participate in each activity. As a result, “obtaining certificates necessary for my occupation type” was described as the greatest need, followed by “vocational education and training whose cost is supported by the state or the company,” “acquiring a college degree,” and “individualized counseling for career development.”

The need to obtain certificates was high among the group classified as clerks, but very low in the group of managers or professionals. Also, the need was higher among the age group of 30-34 compared to the age group of 20s or below.

The need for acquiring a college degree was described as higher among women who had entered college than among those who had not.

The need for individualized counseling for career development was high among the group of managers or professionals, but low among manufacturing workers or mechanics.

The need for vocational education and training with the cost born by individuals (trainees) was high among employees at public agencies or institutions.

Table 18. Need for lifetime career development activities
after high school graduation by type

(Unit: persons, points, %)

Category	Number of cases	Mean (5-point scale)	Not at all/ slightly needed	Moderately needed	Strongly/ very strongly needed
Obtaining certificates necessary for my occupation type	966	3.82	4.8	26.6	68.6
Vocational education and training conducted by the government or public institutions	966	3.73	6.5	30.3	63.1
Participating in education and training conducted by the company	966	3.67	8.3	29.8	61.9
Acquiring a college degree	966	3.64	7.6	33.2	59.2
Individualized counseling / support for self-directed career development	966	3.63	6.5	31.7	61.8
Participating in vocational education and training with the cost borne by individuals (trainees)	966	3.46	11.1	40.4	48.6

Policy Suggestions

Strengthen the Special Committee on the Promotion of Youth Employment and improve gender balance in policies

Related government ministries have participated in preparing measures for youth employment, and they announce such measures annually. However, they have not yet established a governance system to coordinate projects and budgets between these ministries based on a survey and/or analysis of their projects, budgets, groups of beneficiaries, and project performances.

According to the Special Act on the Promotion of Youth Employment, the Special Committee on the Promotion of Youth Employment bears the function of deliberating and evaluating measures for promoting youth employment as submitted by respective ministries and local governments to the Minister of Employment and Labor. However, the committee has no coordinating function for the projects and budgets between the ministries. Therefore, not only deliberation and evaluation, but also a coordination function should be assigned to the Special Committee on the Promotion of Youth Employment. In addition, the function of reviewing policies on narrowing gender gaps should also be granted to the committee.

To improve the functions of the Special Committee on the Promotion of Youth Employment, relevant ministries should monitor the current state of participation in each youth employment project using the Ilmoa database, an integrated job information service by Work-Net and apply principles of gender disaggregated statistics to the results of monitoring. Officials in charge of female youth policies or related experts should participate in the Special Committee on the Promotion of Youth Employment.

Operate a career development system for female employees with a high school diploma

The targets for this system would include female employees aged 25 to 34 with a high school diploma and over five years of career experience. To enhance the impact of career development activities, it is necessary to conduct individualized career consulting prior to establishing “Individual Career Development Plans.” In other words, career development plans should be established by considering education and training experience (including educational levels), vocational experience, vocational psychological testing, and job competency testing.

In order to introduce this system, it is necessary to perform a detailed prior survey of the career development needs of female workers with a high school diploma. It is also necessary to foster professional counselors able to conduct career consulting with them. In order to nurture such professional counselors, rather than developing new ones it would be more desirable to conduct programs in the form of continuing education for employment planners at women’s re-employment centers, employment support officers at colleges or specialized high schools, and vocational counselors at various job centers.

Monitor application of maternity protection and work-family reconciliation system

Small-sized enterprises that lack knowhow on work-family reconciliation systems should be provided with opportunities to share the expertise, including best practices, of large companies. The application of a maternity protection system, which is legally required, should be more strictly monitored and the results should be published.

Improve conditions for voluntarily combining work with learning

Conditions for combining work with learning should be improved through the use of Cyber Universities, Korea Open University, enterprise colleges⁵, the Academic Credit Bank System, and a Course-type Certificate System, as well as the Work-Learning Dual System. The targets of application of flexible time arrangements, shift-type time selection systems, and home-based work systems should be expanded not simply for the purpose of work-family reconciliation, but also for combining work and learning.

Reduce the population size of young female graduates from general high schools

At present, students at general high schools who wish to acquire a job are sent to Korea Polytechnic University, vocational training institutions, vocational colleges, or specialized high schools for commissioned training. However, information on specialized or Meister high schools needs to be improved among middle school girls and their parents. In addition, information on employment services should be provided for general high school graduates who do not attend college.

⁵ This refers to colleges established by enterprises (large companies/firms) for their employees.

Introduce a lifetime perspective to career education for female secondary school students

Career education programs should be developed from a lifetime perspective according to the characteristics of female students, including students at middle schools and at specialized, Meister, and general high schools. The programs should be operated on a pilot basis and then expanded. When conducting career search activities or mentoring programs for high school girls, it is suggested that program guides taking a lifetime perspective be provided for colleges that operate career development centers for female college students.

Conduct follow-up studies on employment and career development among young female employees

It is suggested that follow-up studies be conducted on measures for supporting the career development of young female employees with a high school diploma from the perspective of enterprises. Also, studies should be performed regarding the situations and effects of changing jobs among young female employees with a high school diploma.

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