
Strategies to eliminate the gender gap in the labor market(I): Focusing on Recruitment

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This paper deals with ‘recruitment’ as the first issue for medium to long-term research for narrowing the gender gap in labor markets. Its aim is to identify the degree of the gender gap in recruitment, as well as factors that affect such a gap. A fact- finding survey of 1,000 businesses and 2,000 job seekers was conducted for such purposes. Data from the existing Workplace Panel Survey (WPS) were also analyzed, holding FGIs (Focus Group Interviews) with HR managers.

The results from workplace data analyses are as follows: First, the share of new employees in the current workforce gradually jumped from 16.4% in 2015 to 17.8% in 2016 and 20.3% in 2017 while businesses employing 500 persons or more were relatively less active in employing new workers in 2017. The percentage of women in new employees is as high as 48.7% while their share

in career positions is as low as 36.4%, exhibiting that a rise in the number of career positions has negative effects on the recruitment of women. The share of women in temporary jobs including direct or indirect employment-based non-regular positions is higher than that of their male counterparts, signifying that more women than men are employed as non-regular workers. In terms of recruitment phase, a specific gender is not found to be clearly discriminated against or favored but in the context of business type gender differences are found to be big. Specifically put, male-dominated workplaces are particularly unfavorable to women, showing that Korea's labor markets are still seriously gender-segregated. Second, in many cases, gender discrimination against women in recruitment is not associated with productivity or is based on corporate culture unfavorable to a specific gender. For instance, 'whether to work for a long period of time without resignation,' 'if it is possible to be on field duty or work down in provinces,' and 'whether it is possible to work overtime or for longer hours on a need-to-do basis' are important matters that are considered when recruiting women. Moreover, corporate culture and job-segregation by gender have significant effects on the recruitment of women. Of the businesses surveyed, 57.7% operate teams where the share of a specific gender is 70% or higher. In these teams, the issue of gender is seriously taken into account when recruiting employees. Third, controlling the other elements, factors that affect the size of recruitment were also analyzed. The results show that 'industry type,' 'business size,' 'the existence of labor unions,' 'the nature of business (public or private),' 'when businesses were founded,' and so forth have statistically significant effects on the size of recruitment. Female-dominated industries are clearly distinguished from male-dominated ones in terms of the size of recruitment. Small-sized companies employing many women are more negatively affected in the context of recruitment. The recruitment environment in labor markets can be favorable to some groups but unfavorable to other groups, rather than causing all job seekers to be exposed to similar

circumstances. Therefore, what is important is to specify labor markets and help target groups more effectively understand real situations. The analysis of changes in recruitment systems shows that industries with a bigger number of high-quality jobs, big businesses, and the public sector have experienced greater changes. Given that such jobs are highly preferred by job seekers, a rise in the degree of difficulty is deemed to affect job-hunters reacting to such changes. Lastly, elements affecting the gender gap in recruitment were analyzed. According to the results, businesses where jobs are seriously segregated by gender have a lower percentage of recruited women while companies with better work-life balance systems have a higher percentage of recruited women. Businesses with a female final interviewer or a higher percentage of female interviewers have a higher percentage of recruited women. Corporate structures and culture (, etc.) affect the recruitment of women and a high level of job segregation by gender has negative effects on recruiting women.

The analysis of job-seekers reveals the following results: First, job-seeking is a very time-consuming and expensive process. The biggest difficulty that they experience in the process of seeking employment is lack of information on recruitment criteria and jobs. Second, they have submitted job application forms an average of twenty times and have had an average of 6.7 interviews. Ten percent or less of them answered that female staff has taken part in manager, executive, and camp interviews. Third, 81.8% responded that when failing to land a job, they have never gotten their documents back. 80% or more replied that they have never been informed of reasons for failing to pass the examination. Fourth, a high percentage of job seekers think that the share of career positions, non-regular jobs, and indirect employment has climbed in job markets. Fifth, about 30% said that they have experienced gender discrimination. In connection therewith, more specific information is as follows: 1) Prospective employees are classified by gender; 2) A specific gender is

preferred; 3) Pregnancy or childbirth-related questions are asked; and 4) Marital status-related limitations are set. Most of them answered that they have never reacted to such discriminatory attitudes.

Lessons learned via this study are as follows:

- 1)The size of recruitment closely relates to business expansion and so forth;
- 2)Businesses have negative attitudes toward giving high-quality jobs to women;
- 3)Big changes in high-quality jobs increase the degree of difficulty that job-seekers experience;
- 4)A rise in the number of career positions and non-regular jobs has negative effects on recruiting women;
- 5)Gender equality at the interview phase is important in promoting the recruitment of women, as well as the objectivity of recruitment methods and procedures;
- 6)The root cause of discrimination against women is the current HR management system and corporate culture.

Based thereon, policy implications are presented and discussed.