

## Agreement on an affirmative action varies according to whom it is for... Affirmative actions for women are less known and agreed upon than those for disabled/low-income people. For young men, the perception of 'unequal to men' had a biggest impact on their agreement on the need for affirmative action. - Results of a public perception survey on affirmative action

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- As 'fairness' is being recognized as one of the key principles for maintaining a society, antipathy against affirmative action is spreading, mainly among the younger generation, based on the argument that various types of affirmative action undermine fairness and meritocracy and can lead to reverse discrimination.<sup>1)</sup>
- In particular, in the situation of 'gender conflict', affirmative action towards women is understood as synonymous with quotas for women, or as a system that discriminates against men by giving preferential treatment to women, so it faces criticism from the younger generation of men.
- If it is the case, it is necessary to identify where intervention is needed for the effective implementation of affirmative action, by examining whether stance on affirmative action differs by gender or age, and whether differences in stance come from differences in the perception of fairness between different genders or generations.
- Accordingly, the Center for Gender Equality Strategy of KWDI conducted a survey of 1,821 men and women aged 18 to 69 nationwide to understand the public's perception of affirmative action.
  - The survey categorized the fifteen types of affirmative action currently in place by policy area (education, recruitment, decision-making) and by target group (persons with disabilities, low-income group, local/provincial talent, men and women, and women) to identify the level of awareness of and the degree of agreement on the need for affirmative action by area and by target group.

1) Kyoung Hee Ma (2021) Status and Challenges of Affirmative Action, KWDI.

- In this article, we examine the differences in awareness and in perception of the need for affirmative action by area and target group and analyze how much the level of perception varies depending on the type of affirmative action through factor analysis. Furthermore, through regression analysis, we intend to identify the factors that cause differences in the perception of the need for affirmative action and determine intervention points necessary for building social consensus in the future.

## <Survey Overview>

Category	Details
Respondents	1,821 men and women aged 18 to 69 nationwide
Format	Internet-based online survey
Sample	Random sampling after sample allocation based on population proportionality by gender, age group, and region
Period	October 14 (Friday) to 24 (Monday), 2022
Purpose	To identify the level of awareness of and the degree of agreement on the need for different types of affirmative action, as well as perceptions of gender equality and fairness, etc.

## The level of awareness of affirmative action

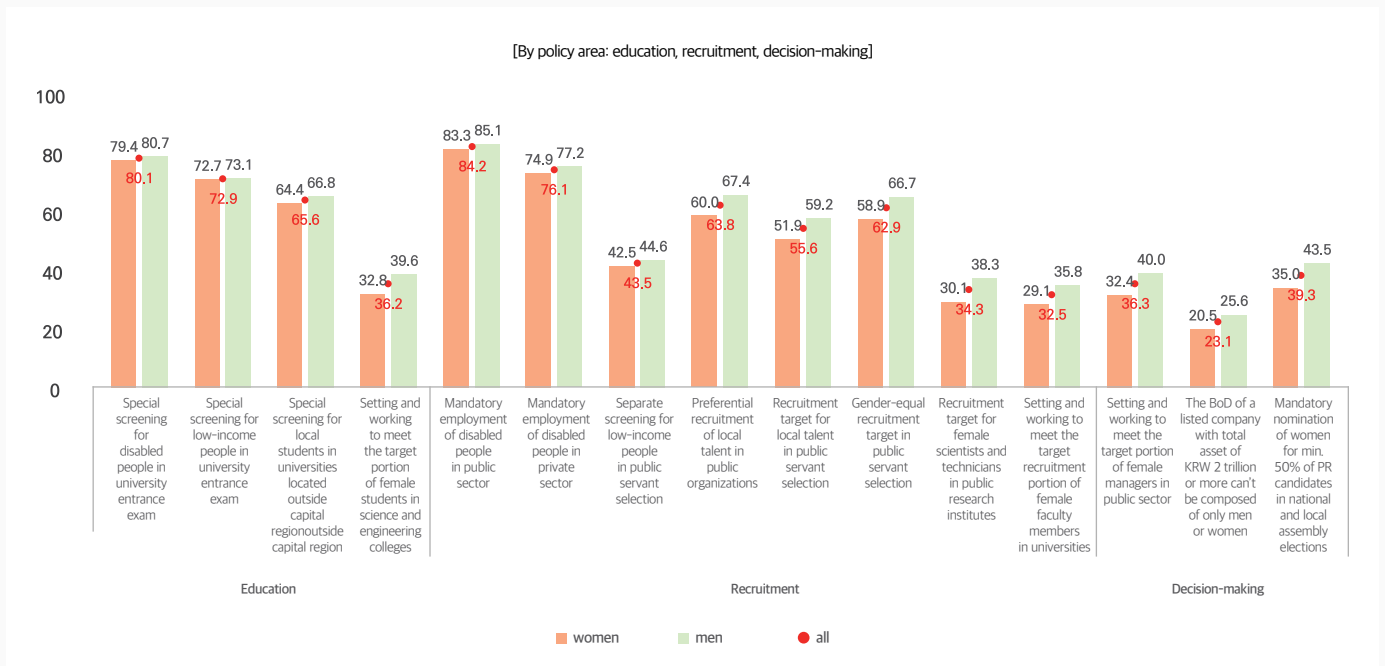
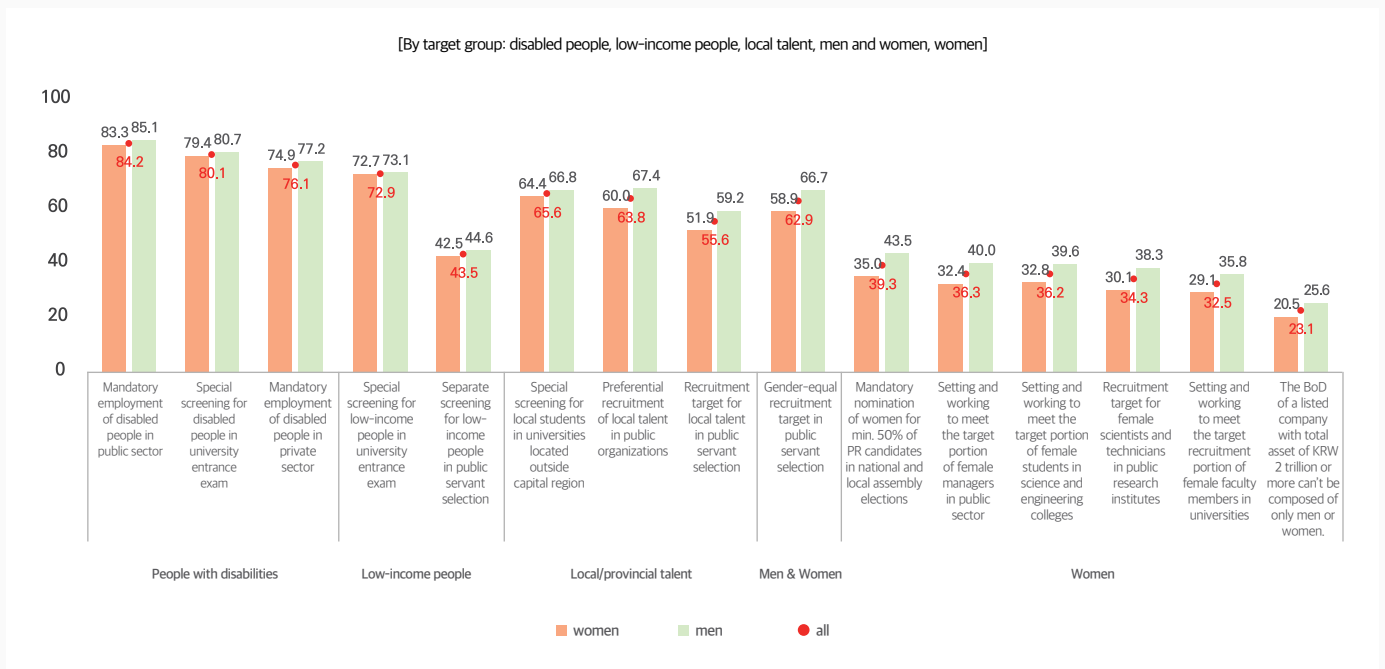
- Compared to affirmative actions for target groups such as the disabled and low-income people, the awareness of affirmative actions for women was lower. 6 out of 10 respondents even do not know the mandatory nomination of women for 50% of proportional representation seats.

- Currently, out of affirmative actions of all types, those for women are being debated most heatedly, but when it comes to the awareness of affirmative actions by target group, more respondents said 'I don't know' about affirmative actions for women than 'I know' compared to other target groups such as people with disabilities and low-income people.
  - More than 7 out of 10 respondents said they were aware of all the specific affirmative actions for people with disabilities, but less than 4 out of 10 people were aware of the most recognized affirmative action for women, 'mandatory nomination of women for minimum 50% of proportional representation candidates in national and local assembly elections'.

- As such, there was a clear difference in awareness of affirmative action depending on the target group, but there was no significant difference in awareness by policy area such as education, recruitment, and decision-making.
  - In general, awareness of affirmative action in the decision-making area was lower than in other policy areas, but in the education and recruitment areas, awareness differed by target group.
- In terms of the awareness of affirmative action by gender and by age, men in general showed a higher level of awareness than women, and the gender-based gap in the awareness of affirmative action for women is most pronounced in the younger generation.
  - Across all types of affirmative action, men showed a higher level of awareness than women. The gender-based awareness gap for affirmative actions for people with disabilities and low-income people was insignificant at around 2.0 percentage points, but those of affirmative actions for local/provincial talent and women were quite large at around 8.0 percentage points (See <Figure 1>).
  - In terms of the gender-based awareness gap by age group, the gap was larger in age groups of 20s and younger, 30s and 40s compared to those in 50s and 60s. For affirmative actions for women, women in older age groups showed a higher level of awareness, whereas the awareness among men was higher in younger age groups. After all, the gender-based awareness gap was widest in the younger generation (20s and younger and 30s) (See <Table 1>).

<Figure 1> Awareness of Affirmative Actions (n=1,821)\*

(Unit: %)



\* the percentage of respondents who said 'I know' about each type of affirmative action

<Table 1> Awareness of Affirmative Action by Gender and by Age Group (n=1,821)\*

(Unit: %)

Category		People with disabilities			Low-income people		Local/provincial talent			Men & Women	Women					
Age	Gender	Mandatory employment of disabled people in public sector	Special screening for disabled people in university entrance exam	Mandatory employment of disabled people in private sector	Special screening for low-income people in university entrance exam	Separate screening for low-income people in public servant selection	Special screening for local students in universities located outside capital region	Preferential recruitment of local talent in public organizations	Recruitment target for local talent in public servant selection	Gender-equal recruitment target in public servant selection	Mandatory nomination of women for min. 50% of PR candidates in national and local assembly elections	Setting and working to meet the target portion of female managers in public sector	Setting and working to meet the target portion of female students in science and engineering colleges	Recruitment target for female scientists and technicians in public research institutes	Setting and working to meet the target recruitment portion of female faculty members in universities	The BoD of a listed company with total asset of KRW 2 trillion or more can't be composed of only men or women.
20s and younger	Women	75.6	86.9	63.7	84.5	50.6	77.4	67.3	60.7	64.9	34.5	34.5	33.9	27.4	29.2	26.8
	Men	74.9	79.7	66.3	76.5	54.5	71.7	69.5	65.2	68.4	50.3	49.2	39.0	39.6	40.1	31.6
30s	Women	77.1	75.8	68.6	72.5	41.8	54.9	51.6	41.8	43.1	27.5	28.8	23.5	25.5	22.2	19.0
	Men	82.5	78.9	68.7	77.1	53.6	71.1	65.7	54.8	64.5	43.4	42.8	42.2	41.0	34.3	31.3
40s	Women	82.1	75.8	71.1	70.5	40.0	56.3	61.1	50.0	56.8	27.9	29.5	29.5	27.9	24.7	15.8
	Men	83.0	80.4	74.7	69.1	38.7	59.3	70.6	55.7	65.5	41.8	32.5	35.1	34.5	35.1	19.1
50s	Women	87.1	79.7	81.2	69.3	40.6	65.8	62.4	54.0	58.9	43.6	34.7	32.2	29.2	31.7	20.3
	Men	89.5	81.3	86.1	71.8	38.8	63.6	61.7	56.0	67.0	42.1	35.4	41.6	36.8	32.5	21.1
60s	Women	92.8	79.0	87.8	68.0	40.3	67.4	56.4	51.9	69.1	39.8	34.3	43.6	39.8	36.5	21.0
	Men	95.9	83.0	89.5	71.9	38.6	69.6	70.2	64.9	67.8	39.8	41.5	40.4	40.4	37.4	26.3

\* the percentage of respondents who said 'I know' about each type of affirmative action

## The degree of agreement on the need for affirmative action

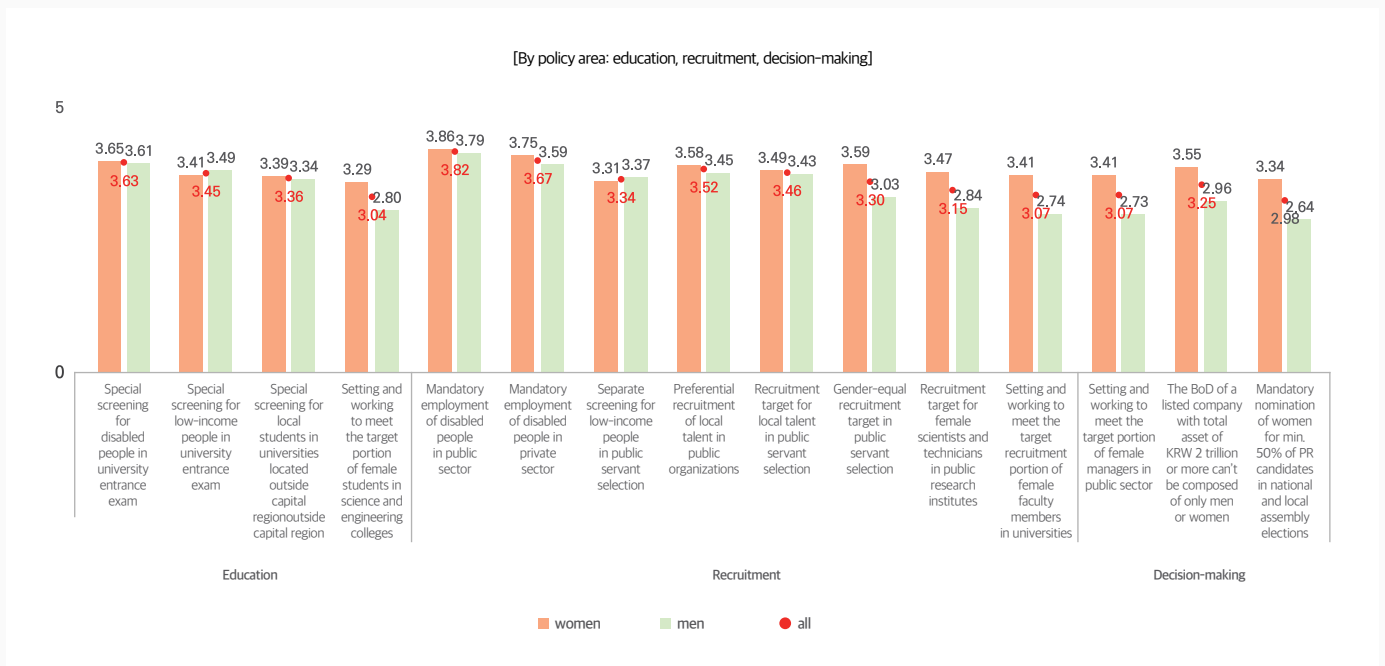
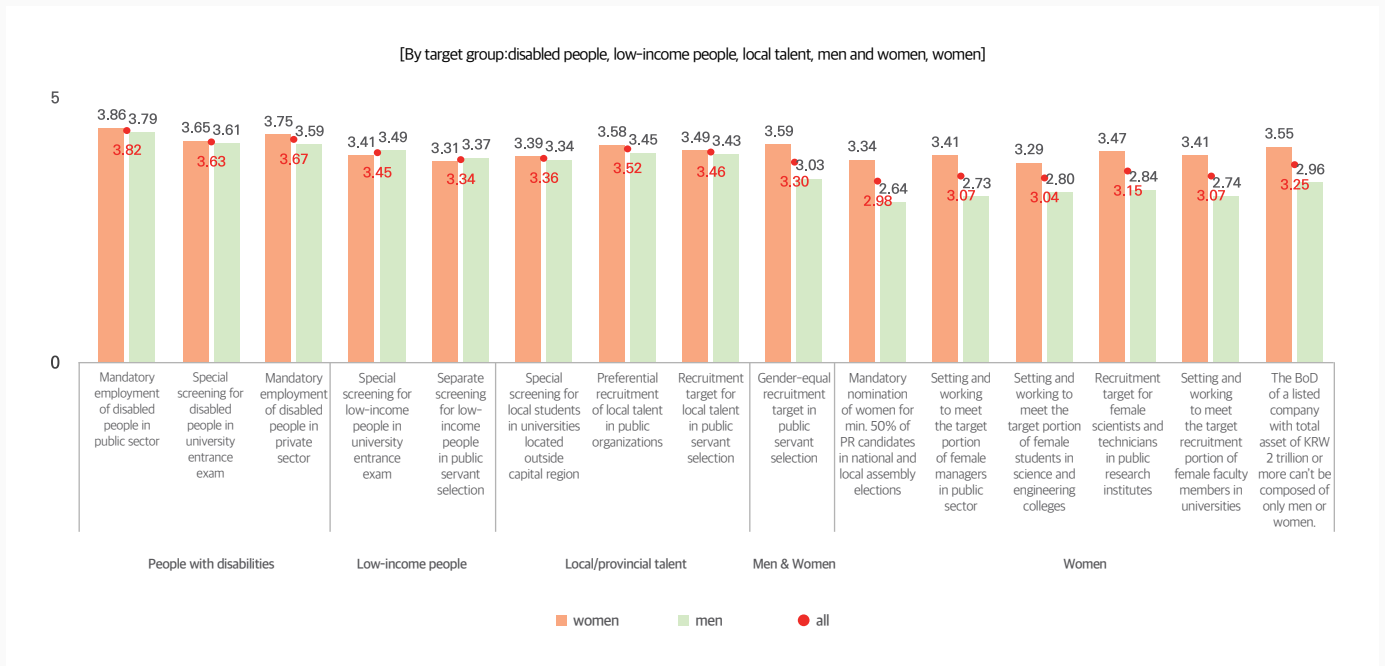
■ The degree of agreement on the need for affirmative action was in general 'moderate(3 points out of 5)' or higher, but the degree of agreement on affirmative action for women was relatively lower.

- The degree of agreement on the need for affirmative action was measured on a 5-point scale (1 for 'strongly disagree' to 5 for 'strongly agree'). The degree of agreement, in general, was '3 (moderate)' or higher, especially the degree of agreement was higher for people with disabilities, low-income people, and local/provincial talent. In comparison, the degree of agreement on affirmative action for women was low.

- The difference in the degree of agreement on the need for affirmative action is also more evident by target group than by policy area. The degree of agreement on the need for affirmative action for people with disabilities, low-income people, and local/provincial talent was all 3.30 or higher, whereas that of affirmative action for women was all 3.30 or lower.
- Analyzed by gender, men, in general, less agreed than women, but on the need for affirmative action for people with disabilities, low-income people, and local/provincial talent, there was almost no or very small difference between men and women in the degree of agreement with men showing 3.30 points or higher. However, men showed a degree of agreement lower than 3 points for all affirmative actions targeting women.
- Analyzed by gender and age group, men in older groups showed higher degrees of agreement, while women agreed less as they were older. For affirmative actions targeting women, the gender gap was very large among people in their 20s to 30s (See <Table 2>).
- The degree of agreement on the need for affirmative action for people with disabilities, low-income people, and local/provincial talent was higher among women in age groups of 20s and younger and 30s, but was higher among men in age groups of 50s to 60s. On the other hand, for affirmative action targeting women, men agreed less than women across all age groups, with the score gap between men and women being very large at 1 point or higher among those in 20s and younger and 30s.

<Figure 2> Degree of Agreement on the Need for Affirmative Action (n=1,821)\*

(Unit: Points)



\* Average points measured on 5-point scale (1 for strongly disagree to 5 for strongly agree)

<Table 2> Degree of Agreement on the Need for Affirmative Action by Gender and by Age Group (n=1,821)\*

(Unit: Points)

Category		People with disabilities			Low-income people		Local/provincial talent			Men & Women	Women					
Age	Gender	Mandatory employment of disabled people in public sector	Special screening for disabled people in university entrance exam	Mandatory employment of disabled people in private sector	Special screening for low-income people in university entrance exam	Separate screening for low-income people in public servant selection	Special screening for local students in universities located outside capital region	Preferential recruitment of local talent in public organizations	Recruitment target for local talent in public servant selection	Gender-equal recruitment target in public servant selection	Mandatory nomination of women for min. 50% of PR candidates in national and local assembly elections	Setting and working to meet the target portion of female managers in public sector	Setting and working to meet the target portion of female students in science and engineering colleges	Recruitment target for female scientists and technicians in public research institutes	Setting and working to meet the target portion of female faculty members in universities	The BoD of a listed company with total asset of KRW 2 trillion or more can't be composed of only men or women.
20대 이하	여성	4.08	3.92	3.91	3.73	3.63	3.27	3.54	3.48	3.76	3.65	3.68	3.47	3.64	3.61	3.85
	남성	3.51	3.48	3.19	3.46	3.21	3.06	3.18	3.21	2.59	2.10	2.26	2.28	2.30	2.20	2.49
30대	여성	3.88	3.67	3.78	3.48	3.41	3.39	3.52	3.46	3.73	3.39	3.46	3.29	3.53	3.46	3.65
	남성	3.60	3.44	3.46	3.40	3.36	3.12	3.19	3.20	2.61	2.34	2.43	2.48	2.43	2.40	2.68
40대	여성	3.78	3.52	3.69	3.28	3.19	3.35	3.56	3.47	3.48	3.25	3.34	3.19	3.41	3.34	3.43
	남성	3.77	3.66	3.64	3.54	3.40	3.28	3.51	3.45	3.13	2.78	2.80	2.80	2.93	2.84	3.05
50대	여성	3.81	3.61	3.71	3.32	3.26	3.39	3.62	3.49	3.52	3.31	3.33	3.24	3.47	3.40	3.49
	남성	4.02	3.78	3.83	3.62	3.55	3.62	3.68	3.63	3.39	3.00	3.07	3.19	3.21	3.11	3.30
60대	여성	3.77	3.57	3.70	3.30	3.14	3.53	3.65	3.53	3.50	3.15	3.26	3.28	3.33	3.28	3.37
	남성	4.01	3.68	3.81	3.41	3.27	3.57	3.66	3.62	3.35	2.92	3.08	3.19	3.26	3.09	3.23

\* Average points measured on 5-point scale (1 for strongly disagree to 5 for strongly agree)

● A factor analysis was conducted based on the degree of agreement on the need for fifteen affirmative actions by policy area and target group, and found that affirmative actions are divided according to target groups such as women, disabled/low-income people, local/provincial talent, etc.

- The gender-equal recruitment target in public servant selection was classified as the same type of affirmative action aimed at women, even though it is not only targeted at women.<sup>2)</sup>

2) In the reliability analysis conducted together with the factor analysis, Cronach's  $\alpha$  value of the three constituent concepts such as women, socially disadvantaged people (people with disabilities and low-income people), and local/provincial talent was 0.8 or higher.



<Table 3> Classification of Fifteen Affirmative Actions by Area and Target Group

Category		Reliability Analysis	Validity Analysis (Exploratory Factor Analysis)		
			Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3
Women	Setting and working to meet the target portion of female managers in public sector	0.945	0.871	0.174	0.183
	Setting and working to meet the target recruitment portion of female faculty members in universities		0.867	0.190	0.248
	Recruitment target for female scientists and technicians in public research institutes		0.867	0.215	0.215
	Mandatory nomination of women for min. 50% of PR candidates in national and local assembly elections		0.852	0.151	0.149
	Setting and working to meet the target portion of female students in science and engineering colleges		0.778	0.219	0.188
	Gender-equal recruitment target in public servant selection		0.766	0.273	0.202
	The BoD of a listed company with total asset of KRW 2 trillion or more can't be composed of only men or women.		0.734	0.228	0.190
Disabled or Low-Income People	Mandatory employment of disabled people in public sector	0.871	0.188	0.831	0.152
	Special screening for disabled people in university entrance exam		0.188	0.795	0.163
	Mandatory employment of disabled people in private sector		0.287	0.786	0.145
	Special screening for low-income people in university entrance exam		0.176	0.670	0.373
	Separate screening for low-income people in public servant selection		0.255	0.621	0.411
Local/Provincial Talent	Recruitment target for local talent and recruitment of recommended provincial talent in public servant selection	0.863	0.246	0.259	0.848
	Preferential recruitment of local talent in public organizations		0.255	0.224	0.838
	Special screening for local students in universities located outside capital region		0.260	0.277	0.718
Eigenvalue			5.162	3.278	2.589
Variance Ratio			34.413	21.853	17.263
Cumulative Variance Ratio			34.413	56.266	73.529

- The results of the descriptive statistical analysis and the factor analysis on the degree of agreement on the need for affirmative action reveal that the current backlash and controversy over affirmative actions are not about the policy instrument itself or the policy area being intervened with affirmative action, but caused by the difference in views on affirmative actions for a certain target group, especially women.

# The analysis of different factors that influence the perception of the need for affirmative action

■ Gender has a greater impact on the perception of the need for affirmative action for women than a perception of fairness, according to the analysis of different factors that influence the perception of the need for affirmative action.

● Then, what affects the views on the need for affirmative action by target group? To examine whether differences in individual characteristics, awareness of affirmative action, and perception of fairness have a significant impact, regression analysis was performed using as dependent variables the degree of agreement on the need for affirmative action by each of the three types derived from the aforementioned factor analysis, while using, as independent variables, individual characteristics (gender, age, and socioeconomic status), perception of fairness, and awareness of affirmative action.

– The perception of fairness was measured by a question asking which is a fair society between the one that values meritocracy and egalitarianism and the one that values social equity (consideration and inclusion of the marginalized) in opportunity and reward. The higher the score, the stronger the perception that it is fair to value social equity over meritocracy and egalitarianism.

<Table 4> Independent Variables of Regression Model

Independent Variable	Measured Values						
Gender	Men				Women		
	50.9%				49.1%		
Age	20s and younger	30s	40s		50s		60s
	19.5%	17.5%	21.1%		22.6%		19.3%
Socioeconomic status	Lowest	Low	Lower-middle	Middle	Higher-middle	High	Highest
	3.1%	12.9%	32.3%	35.6%	13.5%	1.9%	0.7%
Perception of fairness	A society that gives equal opportunities to all is fair.		Neutral		A society that gives more opportunities to people in need such as low-income people is fair.		
	44.5%		28.2%		27.2%		
	A society that rewards individuals according to their abilities is fair.		Neutral		A society that provides more support for the socially disadvantaged is fair.		
	45.3%		26.5%		28.2%		
Awareness of affirmative action	Frequency of saying ‘I know’ about specific affirmative actions in <Figure 1>						

- The regression analysis showed that gender had the greatest relative impact on the degree of agreement on the need for affirmative action for women, while the perception of fairness influenced most the degree of agreement for affirmative action for disabled or low-income people or local/provincial talent (<Table 5>).
  - However, the  $\beta$  value, which refers to the relative influence of each independent variable, for the degree of agreement on the need for affirmative action for local/provincial talent was low in general, and the explanatory power of the regression model was low at 6.8%.
- For affirmative action for disabled or low-income people or local/provincial talent, the stronger the belief that a society that values social equity is fair, the higher the degree of agreement on the need for them. For affirmative action for women, the perception of fairness had a significant impact, but gender was a key factor that made difference in the degree of agreement.
  - The variables of gender and age did not have significant impacts on the degree of agreement on the need for affirmative action for disabled or low-income people while had significant impacts in the case of affirmative action for local/provincial talent, but the relative influence of gender was low.
- The awareness of affirmative action had a relatively different influence but had a significantly positive(+) effect on the degree of agreement on the need for three types of affirmative action, indicating that those who know about an affirmative action are more likely to agree on the affirmative action than those who do not know.

**<Table 5> Common Regression Model: Factors Affecting the Degree of Agreement on the Need for Each Type of Affirmative Action**

Independent Variables		Dependent Variables					
		Need for affirmative action for women		Need for affirmative action for disabled/ low-income people		Need for affirmative action for local/provincial talent	
		$\beta$	t	$\beta$	t	$\beta$	t
Individual characteristics	Gender(Base: Men)	0.325	15.138***	0.020	0.920	0.050	2.211*
	Age	0.137	6.382***	0.025	1.104	0.158	6.966***
	Socioeconomic status	-0.062	-2.853**	-0.107	-4.762***	-0.066	-2.852**
Perception of fairness		0.222	10.341***	0.296	13.287***	0.189	8.314***
Awareness of affirmative action		0.054	2.479*	0.122	5.443***	0.106	4.585***
Statistic		R <sup>2</sup> =0.174 adj R <sup>2</sup> =0.172 F=76.556***		R <sup>2</sup> =0.111 adj R <sup>2</sup> =0.108 F=45.293***		R <sup>2</sup> =0.071 adj R <sup>2</sup> =0.068 F=27.710***	

\* $p < 0.05$ , \*\* $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\* $p < 0.001$

■ For younger-generation men, the perception of ‘unequal to men’ had a biggest impact on their degree of agreement on the need for affirmative action than the perception of fairness - the significance of influencing factors varied between different generations of men.

● To analyze more specifically what causes differences in perceptions towards the need of affirmative action for women, the complementary regression model added the level of gender equality perception as an independent variable.

- The level of gender equality perception was measured in three aspects: gender role stereotypes, patriarchal perceptions, and perceptions of the level of gender equality in our society. For gender role stereotypes and patriarchal perceptions, the combined scores of the sub-items measured on a 5-point scale were used, while for the perceptions of the level of gender equality in our society, a dummy variable divided into three groups: unequal to women, gender equal, and unequal to men was used (See <Table 6>).
- In the previous descriptive statistical analysis(See <Table 2>), there was a contrast difference in the perception between age groups of different gender on the need for affirmative action. Therefore, a complementary regression model was constructed with an additional interaction term to identify the moderating effect of gender on the influence of age on the perception of the need for affirmative action, and a step-wise regression analysis was conducted.<sup>3)</sup>

<Table 6> Independent Variables of Complementary Regression Model

Independent Variable	Measured Values			
Gender role stereotypes*	The livelihood of the family is mainly the responsibility of men.	Jobs of caring for others are not suitable for men.	Even if having a job, women are primarily responsible for raising children.	Jobs requiring physical skills and a strict command structure are unsuitable for women.
	2.69 points	2.07 points	2.16 points	2.38 points
Patriarchal perceptions*	If the wife's income is greater than the husband's, it hurts the husband's ego.	It is uncomfortable for men to work under women.	Hard and dangerous work is better done by men than by women.	Men should protect women.
	2.58 points	2.14 points	3.02 points	3.14 points
Perceptions of the level of gender equality in our society	Our society as a whole is unequal to women.		Our society as a whole is gender equal.	Our society as a whole is unequal to men.
	53.6%		31.6%	14.8%

\* Measured on a 5-point scale (1 for strongly disagree to 5 for strongly agree)

3) For better readability of the step-wise regression analysis results, only the results of the three-step model were included.

- The analysis showed that as for the gender equality perception newly added to the complementary regression model, the lower the gender role stereotype and the higher the patriarchal perception, the higher degree of agreement on the need for affirmative action for women, while those who believed that our society is unequal to men or equal to both men and women agreed less to the need for affirmative action for women compared to those who believed that our society is unequal to women.
  - Those who are more opposed to gender role segregation in work/family agreed more on the need for affirmative action for women. Interestingly, the stronger the patriarchal perception, the stronger degree of agreement on the need for affirmative action for women. This can be interpreted that those who have stronger patriarchal perceptions see women as objects of consideration and protection from a paternalistic perspective.
  - The significant impact of the differences in perceptions on the level of gender equality in our society suggests that the perception that women are no longer socially disadvantaged has a major impact on the disagreement against affirmative action for women.
- Nevertheless, the relative influence of gender was still greater than the perception of gender equality, and although the older the respondents, the more they agreed on the need for affirmative action for women, the moderating effect of gender was significant - age had a bigger positive(+) impact on men than women in their perception of the need for affirmative action for women.
  - In the analysis to examine the moderating effect of gender in the age-specific changes in the perception of the need for affirmative action, the explanatory power of the one-step model(awareness of affirmative action, perception of fairness, perception of gender equality, age) was 23.4%, that of the two-step model(added with gender) was 27.1%, and that of the three-step model added with age\*gender interaction term was 29.4%. The amount of change in R2 at each step increased significantly, which confirms that gender had a moderating effect.

**<Table 7> Complementary Regression Model: Factors Influencing the Perception of the Need for Affirmative Action for Women**

Independent Variable			Dependent Variable: Need of Affirmative Action for Women	
			$\beta$	t
Individual characteristics	Gender(Base: Men)		0.576	11.269***
	Age		0.216	7.073***
	Gender*age interaction term		-0.418	-7.841***
	Socioeconomic status		-0.058	-2.853**
Awareness of affirmative action			0.092	4.515***
Perception of fairness			0.206	10.357***
Gender-equality Perception	Gender role stereotypes		-0.212	-8.219***
	Patriarchal perceptions		0.181	6.782***
	Gender equality level (Base: Unequal to women)	Unequal to men	-0.215	-9.504***
		Gender equal	-0.150	-6.809***
Statistic			R <sup>2</sup> =0.298 adj R <sup>2</sup> =0.294 F=76.938***	

\* $p<0.05$ , \*\* $p<0.01$ , \*\*\* $p<0.001$

- Next, to understand the factors that lead to generational differences in perceptions within the male group who showed a low degree of agreement on the need for affirmative action for women, additional analysis was conducted by dividing the male respondents into young adults(18 to 34 years old), middle-aged(35 to 50 years old), and senior(51 years old or older) (<Table 8>).
- The additional analysis into men by generation showed that the importance of the influencing factors on the degree of agreement on the need for affirmative action for women differed by generation, with the strongest relative influence coming from the perception that our society is unequal to men for young adults ( $\beta=-0.451$ ,  $p<0.01$ ); gender role stereotypes for middle-aged men ( $\beta=-0.298$ ,  $p<0.001$ ); and the perception of fairness for seniors ( $\beta=0.241$ ,  $p<0.001$ ).<sup>4)</sup>
- Young-adult men who associate fairness with meritocracy or egalitarianism than with social equity showed a lower degree of agreement on the need for affirmative action for women, but this was not unique to young men. Rather, the perception that our society is unequal to men had a greater impact on their degree of agreement on the need for affirmative action for women compared to other generations.
  - It can be said that the perception that in our society, women are no longer socially disadvantaged, but rather the society is unequal to men, so affirmative action for women is unnecessary is evident in the younger generation of men.

4) Among female respondents, gender role stereotypes were identified as the key influencing factor for all generations of young adult, middle-aged, and seniors.

**<Table 8> Complementary Regression Model: Influencing Factors on the Perception of the Need for Affirmative Action for Women by Male Generation**

Independent Variable			Dependent Variable: Need for Affirmative Action for Women					
			Young adults		Middle-aged		Senior	
			$\beta$	t	$\beta$	t	$\beta$	t
Socioeconomic status			0.030	0.502	-0.055	-1.066	-0.187	-3.673***
Awareness of affirmative action			0.016	0.273**	0.080	1.545***	0.127	2.474
Perception of fairness			0.235	4.157***	0.155	3.036**	0.241	4.831***
Gender-equality perception	Gender role stereotypes		-0.189	-2.636***	-0.298	-4.865***	-0.105	-1.807
	Patriarchal perceptions		0.292	4.026***	0.237	3.941***	-0.020	-0.346**
	Gender equality level (Base: Unequal to women)	Unequal to men	-0.451	-5.418**	-0.248	-4.296*	-0.164	-3.132**
		Gender equal	-0.251	-3.025	0.147	-2.576	-0.149	-2.817*
Statistic			R <sup>2</sup> =0.249 adj R <sup>2</sup> =0.227 F=11.589***		R <sup>2</sup> =0.175 adj R <sup>2</sup> =0.157 F=9.700***		R <sup>2</sup> =0.171 adj R <sup>2</sup> =0.154 F=9.989***	

\* $p < 0.05$ , \*\* $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\* $p < 0.001$

## Closing and Policy Implications

- Recently, affirmative action for women has often been subject to controversy amid the ‘gender conflict’ situation, but not many citizens were aware of affirmative action for women.
  - At least 5 out of 10 respondents said that they knew about affirmative action for people with disabilities, low-income people, and local/provincial talent, but less than 4 out of 10 replied they knew about affirmative action for women.
  - For ‘mandatory nomination of women for min. 50% of proportional representation candidates in the national and local assembly elections’, which was most recognized among affirmative actions for women, only 39.3% of respondents said they were aware of the measure.
- There has been a lot of discussion about the growing backlash against affirmative action as a whole as a result of the widespread perception of fairness from a meritocratic perspective, but the degree of agreement on affirmative action varied depending on “whom” it is targeted than the measure itself or the policy area where it is being implemented.

- The degree of agreement on the need for affirmative action for disabled people, low-income people, and local/provincial talent was all 3.30 points or higher(the share of respondents agreeing on the need was 45.5% to 71.4%), whereas that of affirmative action for women was all 3.30 points or less(the share of respondents agreeing on the need was 33.4% to 44.7%).
- As a result of analyzing the factors affecting the degree of agreement on the need for fifteen affirmative actions across different policy areas and target groups, the affirmative actions were classified into three types depending on the target group, that is, women, disabled/low-income people, and local/provincial talent. This revealed that the degree of agreement on the need for affirmative action varied depending on the target group.
- It can be said that there is a certain national consensus on affirmative action for disabled or low-income people regardless of gender or generation, but there is a great difference of opinion between men and women, especially between men and women in the young generation, regarding the need for affirmative action for women.
  - Men showed a lower degree of agreement on the need for affirmative action as a whole than women, but showed a high degree of agreement on affirmative action for disabled/low-income people, for which the effects of gender and age were not significant in regression analysis.
  - On the other hand, regarding affirmative action for women, men in their 20s and 30s were much more likely to score 2 points or less, or disagreed on the need, while their female counterparts were more likely to score 3.30 points or higher, or agreed on the need.
  - Regression analysis showed that gender-equality perceptions or perception of fairness had a significant effect on the perception of the need for affirmative action for women, but gender turned out to be a major factor contributing to the difference in perceptions of the need.
- Regression analysis of men by generation showed that the perception that our society is unequal to men in the young generation, gender role stereotypes in the middle-aged generation, and perception of fairness in the senior generation were key factors influencing their perception of the need for affirmative action for women.
  - Difference in perceptions of fairness influenced the degree of agreement on the need for affirmative action across all generations and was not unique to the younger generation. Rather, the perception that affirmative action for women is unnecessary because women are no longer socially disadvantaged in our society and our society is rather unequal to men is more evident in young men.



- The policy implications that can be derived from above analysis results are as follows:
- First, it is necessary to increase awareness and understanding of the various affirmative actions in place. Sharing accurate information about the system will be more important in building consensus on affirmative action, especially for women.
  - Even if there are slight differences depending on the target group, awareness of the system also increases the degree of agreement on the necessity.
  - Although more respondents said 'not necessary' for affirmative action for women than those for other target groups, the fact that the number of responses that they did not know the system was highest for affirmative action for women indicates that not a few respondents had a vague animosity just because they are for women, without sufficient understanding of the system.
  - Therefore, in order to build a consensus on affirmative action for women, it is necessary to widely share basic information on various affirmative actions implemented at the government level.
- Since the conflicting perceptions of the level of gender equality in our society have been identified as a major factor leading to opposition to affirmative action for women among young men, it is necessary to reach an agreement on the level of gender equality in each policy area and to deliberate to identify in which specific policy areas affirmative actions are needed.
  - In order to create a social consensus on affirmative action for women, there should be shared perception that there is serious gender imbalances in the area in which the system is to be implemented. Only after showing objective indicators revealing the level of gender equality in each area and fully discussing the social problems caused by gender imbalance can the current perception gap be narrowed.
  - Moving beyond repeating the abstract debate of 'who, between men and women, is more discriminated against in our society', a discussion of in which specific area gender inequality is rarely improved so affirmative actions are required should be held in public arena.