

**Analysis and Policy Tasks of Vocational Capability  
Development System for Women to Enhance a  
Competency-Based Society(Ⅱ)**

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I. Research Objectives and Methods

○This paper is designed to analyze women's vocational competency development systems and to review related policy issues in connection with a competency-based society. In the process, it aims to study female youth's achievements in career development, focusing on universities and junior colleges' policies for cultivating talents in a competency-based society. The main purposes hereof are to identify changes in women's achievements in labor markets coming from the introduction of the National Competency Standards (NCS) into curricula for universities and junior colleges and fluctuations in employment systems and culture, as well as the effects of related changes in universities and businesses on female youth's achievements in career

development. In connection therewith, new policy issues are also identified and reviewed.

○A variety of research methods such as the analysis of administrative DB, the survey of students, and the Delphi survey of professors, Focus Group Interviews (FGI) with students, professors, and business staff, and on-site visits to universities and junior colleges were used to look into the achievements of NCS-based curricula for junior colleges and of work-learning balance systems for four-year universities in labor markets and thereby to identify their policy implications.

## II. In-Depth Analysis of Competency-Based Curriculum Operation

### 1. Competency-Based Curriculum Operation and Female Employment: Universities

○Universities are found to have participated in work-learning balance systems to promote their students' employment. However, some universities in Seoul took part in the systems to narrow the gap between the academic world and the business community by developing business-centered curricula for departments, rather than to boost employment rates.

○Many female students participated in work-learning balance systems due to professors' recommendations, universities' promotion activities, and so forth. They are deemed to have joined the programs because of the fact that their employment is ensured after graduation, rather than due to the superiority thereof.

○Work-learning balance systems are also of help to businesses. Companies are shown to have taken part in the systems due to their cooperative relationships with universities, the government's subsidies, and labor supply. However, the degree to which NCS-based curricula are relevant to real jobs is found to have been very low. Students are shown to have failed to effectively recognize the

relevance of real business courses to NCS-based curricula.

○Interviews do not show whether businesses participating in work-learning balance systems have discriminated against female students in terms of employment. However, university employees who play a role in matching students to employers state that female students have had more difficulties in landing jobs than their male counterparts, showing that companies still have a prejudice against women in employment.

## 2. Competency-Based Curriculum Operation and Female Employment: Junior Colleges

○Most junior college students were very satisfied with curricula due to their high degree of relevance to real jobs. Their degree of satisfaction tended to increase because learning activities were based on practice to help students acquire certificates.

○Junior college students with various educational and vocational experiences gave their opinion that NCS-based jobs are what the business community requires and therefore should be mastered while those who had entered junior colleges immediately after graduating from academic high school showed their limitation in understanding the characteristics or level of jobs required by the NCS.

○In connection with employment, students highlighted the importance of close relations with professors, replying that they were significantly helped by employment support centers. Professors also stated that they and their colleges made diverse efforts to help their students effectively get employed.

## III. Youth's Attitudes Toward and Their Recognition of Competency-Based Curricula

○According to junior college and four-year university students, the strength of

NCS-based curricula lies in their field-based practical training. However, some students pointed out that learning objectives, contents, and assessment are inconsistent with one another, leading to incomplete curricula. Junior college students stated that the percentage of theories drops in the process of reorganizing curricula into practical training-based systems, often making learning objectives, contents, and assessment inconsistent.

○Their degree of satisfaction with professors who introduce and operate NCS-based curricula is found to have been generally high. University students were less satisfied than junior college students.

○Regardless of gender, university and junior college students showed high interest in NCS-based employment. More specifically put, female students had higher interest therein than their male counterparts.

○NCS-based curricula causing changes in higher education curricula are implemented via work-learning balance systems and long-term field placement programs in a four-year university environment. In connection therewith, female students showed very positive responses. In particular, joining high-quality SMEs to improve their understanding of SME-related jobs and land better jobs is deemed to give more benefits to women who have weaker networks in labor markets.

#### IV. Delphi Survey of Professors

##### 1. Work-Learning Balance System Operation and Demand for Policy Improvement: Universities

First, female students' participation in work-learning balance systems depended on the characteristics of departments or majors. Companies' stronger preference for male students led female students' participation into the schemes to be relatively poorer. Such a situation shows that companies are gender-biased in choosing employees.

Second, despite diverse weaknesses, almost every expert (90%) participating in this survey agreed that work-learning balance systems are of service to female students in employment.

Third, systematic follow-up management plans need to be devised. Participating universities voluntarily implement follow-up management activities but the use, contents, and types of the follow-up management system rely on the willingness of universities. The follow-up management system should apply to both students who drop out of the course and those who are successfully employed after graduation, which should be reflected into the program again. Related manuals also need to be developed.

## 2. NCS-Based Curriculum Operation and Demand for Policy Improvement: Junior Colleges

First, unlike work-learning balance systems, the introduction of the NCS into the junior college environment failed to significantly affect the employment of female students. According to the Delphi survey of junior college professors, 75% replied that the NCS does not have significant effects on the employment of female students.

Second, NCS-based curricula should be continuously updated. This is very important to the NCS, which relies on field-based education.

## V. Policy Issues in the Operation and Achievements of Gender-Sensitive and Competency-Based Curricula

○The program is currently divided into ‘Off JT’ and ‘OJT’ for effective development. In the process, female students tend to be excluded, because most of them major in humanities and social sciences where it is hard to discover jobs that the business community requires. To resolve such an issue, a kind of quota system for female students needs to be implemented.

○In reality, it is not easy to find businesses in the sectors where students hope

to be employed and there are many difficulties in leading companies to participate in the program. Therefore, in a procedural context, changes in students' preference should be identified, requiring universities and junior colleges to regularly conduct a survey on business demand.

○Amid female students' low participation in the system, the percentage of those who drop out of the program is high and they often quit their job voluntarily. To improve such a situation, female students should be given opportunities to benefit from in-depth counseling and career guidance services from when students are recruited.

○The main pillars of current work-learning balance systems are student recruitment, business discovery, and the effective connection therebetween via the development of curricula. However, to make the process more effective, it is necessary to assess whether services are properly offered to students.

○It is desirable for students to complete the Off JT course and to be employed as learning workers. However, in reality, the program is set to last too long, often causing students to lose their opportunities. Therefore, a fast track program needs to be newly established, where credits can't be earned in connection with theoretical education but students are allowed to work after quickly completing the program. Or, another type of fast track can also be operated, where only parts of credits are acceptable. Such a dual program is proposed herein.

○Businesses have developed OJT courses by introducing the NCS but have argued that it is very difficult to effectively implement such programs in reality. To improve such circumstances, appropriate SME support plans should be crafted, which include 'business monitoring simplification,' 'development of a joint training model for similar job competencies,' 'systematic education and training for work-learning balancing,' and 'specific planning for strengthening workplace teachers' competencies.'

○As in the case of work-learning balance systems, junior colleges need to

develop two or more courses in connection with practical training and seek ways to link them to field placement. Four-year university administrators should contact businesses, promise them financial aid and check diverse circumstances facing companies. In this regard, universities and colleges should search for promising companies, relying on their competitive departments while businesses need to identify jobs that can link to academic curricula. Likewise, it is necessary to come up with plans to connect jobs and curricula.