

Abstract

Vocational Competency Assessment of Interrupted Women and Support Measures for Their Career Building

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Research has shown that in Korea, interrupted women due to pregnancy, childbirth and childcare take at least 5 years on average to resume their career. The government has recognized that this is a social issue rather than a mere personal choice, and has legislated 'The Act on the Promotion of the Economic Activities of interrupted women, etc' in 2008 as a mean of comprehensively addressing this issue. 'The New Job Center for Women (Saeil Center)', a national project, has also been underway since February 2009 as according to its ground plan. The female labor force participation rate has increased dramatically with government support for interrupted women, but there are still not many jobs in the environments that they can participate in. As in the past, there is a strong trend of their re-employment in the non-professional sector and in sectors of food, accommodation and sales services. Such trend reflects on the difficult reality women over the age of 40 and with more than 5-10 years of career break experience, in finding better employment than these. In order to find them better employment and encourage developing a lasting career, there is a need to revise the initial re-employment counseling and vocational training services more specifically and professionally.

This research has been carried out to provide a management plan to address such issues. It aims to provide a objective tool so that interrupted women seeking re-employment may check how well they meet the requirements of their hopeful careers. It also hopes to provide policy support so that these interrupted women may establish a career development plan independently and build on their career continuously in the labor market.

This report first examines various literature studies to analyse why an objective vocational competency diagnosis is needed for interrupted women and why there is a need to support them after their employment success as to continue their career development in the labor market. Second, it aims to analyse the current status, problems and outlook on the employment support services by surveying career planners and advisors at the Saeil Centers that are carrying out the government's employment support program for interrupted women. It also analyses the connection between their vocational training program and the women's career development. Third, it nominates specific professions in office work and social welfare sector, the successful re-employment fields for interrupted women, and develops a tool to measure their vocational competency. This is to respond to lack of objective data other than the job description resources for interrupted women, which is often pointed out as a current existing problem for employment support services. In addition, a pilot project is carried out to analyze and streamline any problems found with the tool. Fourth, along with the development for a diagnosis tool, this research also develops a practical manual so that interrupted women may establish a career development plan in the future through an independent analysis of their current vocational competency compared to the requirements of the employer, and also the competencies of the women who have been successful in re-employment

in that field after a career break. Fifth, it suggests how the career planner and advisors at the Saeil Center can support career establishment centered around from the results of the vocational competency analysis. Furthermore, for a systemic improvement of their vocational competency, this report presents a revised vocational training plan to complement the women's career gaps step by step. Sixth, it proposes policies the government must pursue in the near future in providing general support in establishing careers for women. Based on the results of this report on the vocational competency diagnosis of women, we suggest the following for future directions of government support policies. The first is to push forward on expanding diagnosis tools that we introduced for two employment sectors, by analysing the popular professions that the interrupted women are pursuing in their re-employment. Second is to push forward the vocational competency development of career planners and advisors. Third is to re-direct the employment support services for interrupted women, and the final to strengthen the cooperation and negotiating power of career planners.