
**Analysis and Policy Suggestions to Promote Gender-
Equal Career Education**

Yunjeong Choi
Hae-sook Chung
Hee-Young Jang
Hyunjoo Lee

The study is aimed at examining the current conditions of career education and developing alternatives required for students of both genders to choose careers without sex prejudice. Career education has rapidly developed in a relatively short period with the enactment and implementation of the Career Education Act in 2015, introduction of the free semester system, and expansion of regional career experience support centers, but is devoid of the gender equality perspective.

Despite the present reality in which academic abilities of female students are growing each day and their performances at school are surpassing those of male students, gender segregation in career choice and gender division in the labor market are not improving; this problem is directly linked to women's performance in the labor market, leading Korea to have the largest gender wage gap among OECD member countries.

Based on such critical awareness, a survey was conducted with career

teachers/instructors in 623 middle schools and 106 regional career experience support centers nationwide on gender-equality career education and career experience activities. Focus group interviews were also held with career teachers, staff at career experience support centers, instructors, and male and female middle school students(24 interviewees in total), to listen to and analyze the opinions of those directly involved in career education on the current conditions of gender-equality career education. In addition, domestic and foreign good cases of gender-equality career education were collected and analyzed to gain insights on viable policy measures.

The results of the study can be summarized as follows. First, it is seen that the present career education provides educational activities without resolving gender bias and gender discrimination, and thus is serving as a mechanism for strengthening conventional gender role stereotypes among male and female students. Second, although some schools and career experience support centers are attempting at gender-equality career education, they fail to implement it or merely provide less than high-quality education due to lack of competence or awareness of teachers, limited educational conditions, such as the absence of guideline and available programs, lack of education to produce qualified instructors, lack of support based on relevant policies, etc.

In this regard, advanced foreign cases, in which companies, students and schools are systematically connected under gender-equality career education provided on the national level or gender equality perspective is essentially incorporated in key education guidelines or career education guidelines in countries with much higher level of gender equality and freer career choices among students of both genders, have significant implications for us. We would like to explore and propose policy measures that will help facilitate gender-equality career education in the adverse educational conditions in Korea at present. First, standards for gender-equality career education should be developed. For this, the Career Education Act should be amended to specify the

perspective of gender-equality career education. We also suggest the development of the 「Guidelines for the Operation of Gender-Equality Career Education (tentative title)」 on the standards and details necessary for the operation of gender-equality career education. Provision of active measures and effective reference materials is needed by making manuals, workbooks, teaching materials, etc. available on the Ggoomgil webpage while developing and reflecting guidelines against gender discrimination, sexual harassment and sexual violence.

Second, it is necessary to develop and implement representative gender-equality career education programs. It is strongly proposed to designate a special day for gender-equality career experience for both male and female students in Korea, just like Girls' Day and Boys' Day in Germany. We would like to suggest the establishment of a 「Young Female Talent Academy (tentative title)」 as a program for development of various career opportunities and vocational competence of female students. Through collaboration with the Woman Leader Academy, the program will provide advanced female students with one-stop support from career choice to connection to the occupational world, women's awareness as workers, leadership education and establishment of networks.

Third, promotion of awareness and competence for gender-equality career education on various related staffs is needed. For this, first of all, prior education for mentors and parent career coaches should become mandatory. Then, as the gender equality awareness and competence for gender equality career education of career teachers are vital for sufficient reflection of gender perspective in the scenes of career education, gender-equality career education should be obligated in the education of career teachers and administrators. Also, it is necessary to train and provide qualified instructors by having the Korean Institute for Gender Equality Promotion and Education; train instructors specialized for gender-equality career education and building a relevant database, or establishing a database of specialized instructors for career

education on the Ggoomgil webpage.

Fourth, gender-equality career education for parents, who have huge influence on the career choice of students, should be provided. Possible measures may include regular mailing of information leaflets as well as production of videos, etc. to enhance parents' gender-equality career awareness and promotion through parent support centers and webpages.

Finally, it is necessary to reinforce the feedback system for gender-equality career education. To maintain the policy intention for gender-equality career education, it is considered ideal, in terms of policy implementation and feedback, for the Ministry of Education and provincial education offices to voluntarily choose gender-equality career education as a theme for the gender impact assessment. Also, content related to gender equality perspective should be added to the evaluation measures of the career education certification system so that career experience providers can constantly check themselves. In addition, it is necessary to include items on gender-equality career education in the 「Survey of Career Education for Elementary and Middle School Students」 carried out each year by the Ministry of Education.