

Abstract

**2019 Korean Education Longitudinal Study:
An Analysis of the Lives and Achievements of Early Adulthood after
Graduation from High School (IV)**

Park, Kyoung-ho(KEDI)
Kwon, Heekyung(KEDI)
Kim, Jeong-a(KEDI)
Baek, Seungju(KEDI)
Choi, In-Hee(KEDI)
Song, Seungwon(KEDI)
Rhee, Byung Shik(Yonsei University)
Choi, Youree(KEDI)
Lee, Suhyun(KEDI)
Jeong, Minjoo(KEDI)
Choi, Euna(KEDI)

Early adulthood is a time period when an individual is required to become independent from one's parents, choose a career and job, marry and have children. In addition to these social tasks, young adults need to gather knowledge from learning as well as using and applying it to practical use and establish their own self-conception of personality, capability and gender role identity. In comparison to other countries, however, in Korea, an individual's ability to achieve tasks such as getting a job, marriage and pregnancy during early adulthood has been delayed due to pursuing higher education and increases in housing and child rearing expenses. This

research has been conducted and expanded continuously under the title of “An Analysis of the Lives and Achievements of Early Adulthood after Graduation from High School (I), (II), (III)” in 2013, 2015 and 2016 to understand and improve the reality in Korea.

As a follow-up research of the aforementioned three studies, this research, under the theme of “An Analysis of the Lives and Achievements of Early Adulthood after Graduation from High School (IV)”, primarily conducted a basic analysis about how an individual's awareness-thinking and expectation on him/herself, using of time, learning, family and him/herself, society and him/herself- after graduating high school has changed during early adulthood by using the data from the first to the eleventh of the Korean Education Longitudinal Study Cohort 2005 (KELS2005). It was taken into consideration that high school and two-year vocational college graduates as well as 4-year college graduates who enter the labor market or graduate school are more likely to participate in the study, so our team has focused on analyzing getting a desired job and entering graduate school to broaden our understanding of the current situation and to suggest effective policy recommendations regarding early adulthood tasks such as choosing a career and getting a job.

In Part II, the study conducted a basic analysis about how an individual's awareness-thinking and expectation on him/herself, using of time, learning, family and him/herself, society and him/herself- after graduating high school has changed during early adulthood. There was a noticeable result among the basic analysis, especially with respect to gender difference. Male respondents are more likely to assess themselves positively than female respondents in terms of most areas of self-conception. Also, the average of the male respondents' recognition on their cognitive domains such as information utilization and learning capability as well as non-academic/cognitive domains such as personal relationships and conversation capability

was higher than females. Additionally, male respondents' recognition about satisfaction on their health and life was higher than female respondents. Additionally, female respondents tend to be more stressed and contemplate suicide more than males.

With respect to an individual's time spending, female respondents spend their time more with their families or manage their appearances and house works, while male respondents tend to spend their time for self-improvement. In terms of time spending for building personal relationships, male respondents spend their time for groups and volunteering activities and hanging out with their friends, while female respondents spend their time more for SNS and dating. Also, male respondents usually enjoy their hobbies such as playing games or doing exercise, while female respondents like to watch television during leisure time. With regard to family, male respondents spent more time to improve their future by seeking and preparing for jobs, doing part time work than female respondents. According to the 2018 study result, 6.8% and 2.0% of female respondents and 2.3% and 2.0% of male respondents experienced marriage or cohabitation, respectively. About 3.1% of female respondents answered that they have children, comparing to about 1.2% of male respondents. There was an intriguing finding that women are more actively participating in political activities than men. Many women answered that they have been participating in political activities such as elections and demonstrations or rallies, posting their opinions on online debates and signing petitions or complaints about social issues more than men.

In Part III, the research understood whether those employed achieved their original goal or not and how much their level of education, career maturity and participation in job seeking programs influenced their level of education to achieve employment goals. First, depending on one's level of education, those employed who graduated from high school or lower education have

been shown to maintain a lower level of achievement for desired jobs than those who have a higher education than vocational college or university. Additionally, when considering annual development of the desired job achievement concurrently, those employed who have higher education than vocational college or university tend to show a higher level of achievement for desired jobs when they graduate than those who have lower education backgrounds.

Second, the study shows that career maturity gives a meaningful and positive impact on the desired job achievement, statistically. In particular, the career maturity's influence on desired job achievement differentiated according to one's academic background and it has the biggest influence on the employed who had a higher level of education than 4-year college. Lastly, in terms of direct/indirect intermediate pathway between participation in a job-seeking program and career maturity, it was found that there is a pathway- "participation in a job-seeking program → career maturity → getting a desired job"- for those employed who had a higher level of education than vocational college or university.

In Part IV, the research studied about the influences on college graduates' entering graduate school and their characteristics and experiences. First, a student's self-conception, their mother's academic background (based on 10% of significance level) and the parents' expectations on their children's education among individual background variables, have a static relationship with the student's chance of entering graduate school. Meanwhile, the research shows that the more parents provide academic support for a student during his/her high school, the lower the possibility of entering graduate school. Students who had a higher educational desire and better school grades, majored in natural sciences and engineering in college and had higher their college GPA or higher satisfaction with their school were more likely to enter graduate school.

With regard to the characteristics and experiences of graduate school students according to the type of high school and college where the graduate school students graduated from, 83.81% and 5.65% of the respondents graduated from general high school and vocational high school, respectively. 3.24% of graduate school students graduated from general high school and vocational college. Only 0.81%, the lowest rate, of the graduate school students, graduated from vocational high school and vocational college. Among many reasons, students usually enter graduate school for “getting professional knowledge for their major” followed by other reasons such as “to obtain higher educational background (getting master’s or doctorate degree)” and “for employment (higher educational background is advantageous to get a job).” Regarding graduate school students’ difficulties, education experiences and their research efficacy, students who are majoring in natural sciences and engineering mostly have “difficulties in conducting study/research assignments”, while the students at non-natural sciences and engineering were mostly concerned about financial problems. Students who are majoring in natural sciences and engineering have shown higher satisfaction for their academic environment than others, in terms of their educational experiences in graduate school. Especially, students’ satisfaction on “the space, facility and equipment in graduate school” and “financial support (scholarship) for students’ graduate school education” were significantly higher than other factors. Students who are majoring in natural sciences and engineering have shown higher research efficacy in most sub-areas than other students.

In Part V, the study recommends some policies based on the findings in our research and assumptions that our society has been built based on a structure which can be organized or change according to a viewpoint on how we look at human beings and the world. Furthermore, these viewpoints and structures can become an important foundation for education reform

and it will be ultimately connected to one's life and achievement in early adulthood. Also, there is an important premise that these viewpoints of looking at human beings and the world can directly have influences on one's education, life and achievement in early adulthood without being affected from a society. In other words, a change in our society can have a direct impact on one's life and achievement without being affected from an education.

With respect to the government policies, a society should understand and share a causal viewpoint first to interpret a relationship between human beings and the world or lives and achievements in early adulthood. Firstly, regarding getting a job, which is one of the major achievements in early adulthood, a policy should be prepared to reduce an income gap by education through income redistribution. Secondly, a tax policy, in particular a gift or an inheritance, should be strictly strengthened or restricted, as it usually plays a discriminative role in forming an individual's economic power which is a major factor that determines marriage or residence during early adulthood. Thirdly, to improve the situation related to residence cost, which can be a severe barrier to independence, marriage and childbirth, the government should expand public rental houses by purchasing privately-owned houses and the annual rent and sale of privately-owned homes need to have an upper limit set for appreciation. To search for an appropriate career and to establish one's identity, one should go through more diverse experiences. Therefore, for the fourth proposal, a society should change its viewpoint and reach social consensus for young people that they should be financially supported by a society, not by their own or families.

For education policy, firstly, as the study proposed, if the income gap can be reduced by education, education should be designed for students to

understand their inborn capabilities and to find their individual pathways to grow. Secondly, education should be provided for young people to make an optimal decision based on given information as well as knowledge, as they are living in a world filled with future uncertainties. Thirdly, in the viewpoint of causal theory, although no one is attributable to a learning loss in childhood, a society including school must raise its social responsibility for education considering the cumulative effect of education until adulthood. Fourthly, education should recognize and respect diversity to realize gender equality in our society. Fifthly, regardless of one's educational background, whether he/she graduated from high school, 2-year college or university, well-customized job supporting programs should be prepared and strengthened with its quantity and quality. Sixthly, support should be provided not only for graduate school students at natural sciences and engineering but also for students at humanities and social sciences should be expanded and strengthened.