



ABSTRACT


An analysis of education condition and performance of Regional universities in Korea

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This study is a third year research of 'Data-based education policy analysis', where it uses diverse set of data from various sources. The purpose of the research is to provide grounds for rational decision making for Korean education policy settings. The theme of this year's research is to investigate on the 'Condition and performance of regional universities in Korea' and the analysis is categorized in total five domains as following: 1) Analysis of Higher education policy in Korea, 2) Categorization of regional universities, 3) Change in trend of regional universities based on policy and environmental change, 4) Characteristics of students attending regional universities, 5) Performance analysis of regional universities.

○ Analysis of change in higher education policy in Korea

Since the 5.31 educational reform in 1995, Korean higher education policy emphasized on increasing university's global competitiveness and to increase



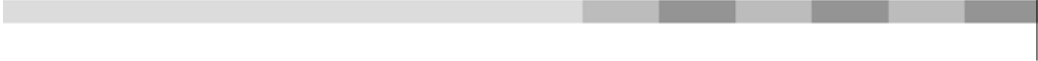
institutional autonomy by providing special-purpose funding subsidy. During the 2000's, various policy tools have been implemented in order to promote following areas such as university's research and education performance, university-industry linkage, student support and to design and implement university structural reform. As for policy implementation for regional universities, the government mainly concentrated on enhancing university-industry linkage and to promote quality of education provided by regional institutions. However, these policies lacked in long-term goal due to government's inconsistent policy directions. Also, evaluation criteria for funding subsidy were based on limited quantitative figures, where it did not fully consider characteristics and unique nature of each institutions. Therefore, future policy direction for regional universities should pay more attention on designing clearer long-term objectives by thoroughly considering conditions and environments that the regional institutions are facing.

○ Categorization of regional universities

In order to analyze regional universities' education condition, this study attempted to categorize regional universities by using 15 variables based on 5 domains which are 1) systematic characteristics, 2) education, 3) research, 4) regionalization/lifelong learning, 5) university-industry linkage. According to the HLM analysis result, regional universities were categorized into four cluster of groups which are research-oriented university, national university, private university, and other university group. Such result implies that the categorization of Korean regional universities are determined by their systematic characteristics such as institutional type, size (number of students) and proportion of graduate students, rather than being defined by their unique function or role.

○ Change in trend of regional universities

This study analyzed the change of universities since the mid 1990's by using



time-series analysis, particularly on the perspective of 'process', especially on academic affairs, education condition as well as performance.


As for environmental aspect, Korean regional universities' have suffered by the drastic fall in enrollment resource due to the constant expansion of higher education and decline in school age population. Such condition is expected to become worse in near future.

As for educational condition aspect, a series of higher education funding subsidy projects since mid 1990's have influenced regional universities to improve on number of criteria such as proportion of full-time faculty members and number of student per faculty. Also, these projects influenced on reducing performance gap between universities located in Seoul metropolitan area and those located in regional areas. Furthermore, it was found that the performance gap was narrowed between universities within the regional university groups.

As for education process aspect, following changes took place since late 1990's such as increase in departmental restructuring, diversification of curriculum, increase in intra-institution exchange, emphasis on university-industry linkage, globalization of higher education, expansion of graduate education and lifelong learning. For regional universities, there has been significant change in index of university-industry linkage. Also, national universities and large-sized private universities in regional area saw frequent change in departmental restructuring, and there has been increase in exchange between domestic universities. Moreover, number of foreign faculty member and international student have increased significantly in large-sized regional private universities. Despite such change, regional universities are yet not meeting the demand of diversified lifelong education from local areas.

○ Characteristics of students attending regional universities

Despite its importance, previous studies have not fully considered analyzing characteristics of students attending regional universities. Therefore, this research attempted to analyze various scope of student characteristics such as

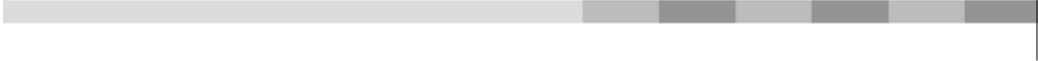


family background, educational experience and career after graduation and compared the result with students attending universities in Seoul metropolitan area. Firstly, as for background characteristic, students attending regional universities had lower status on family background, and had lower expectation and support from their parents compared to those students attending universities in Seoul metropolitan area. They also had less parental involvement in education and also received less private education, but had higher tendency to rely on school classroom lessons and EBS programs as their learning resource. Also, their admission grade was lower than their counterpart in Seoul metropolitan universities, and had lower proportion of students who indicated that their current institution or course was first choice. Moreover, students who chose to study in regional universities tended to relate more on job opportunity after graduation when choosing for institution and course.

As for educational experience aspect, students attending regional universities had higher drop out rates but had relatively shorter time to degree. This may result from the fact that regional university students have lower completion rate on double major (or joint major), and there are less students taking leave from university before graduation.

Students attending regional universities were found to have relatively lower classroom participation but had higher interaction with their advisor or have higher corporation among their peers. There was no significant difference for students' overall college life satisfaction between these two groups, but regional university students scored lower on satisfaction of institution that they are attending and course they are majoring in, and also had lower sense of belonging. Moreover, their time invested on self-improvement and enhancing social network were lower, and their level of awareness on self-competency and degree of lifetime goal were all found to be lower than their counterpart.

As for their career preparation, more students from regional universities participated in career support programs offered by institutions, and had higher




proportion of students with qualification certificate. Also, their qualification certificate showed higher relevancy from the course they are majoring in. On the other hand, career related experience obtained by local industry or from students' family background were lower, and it was found that regional university students have more disadvantageous circumstance for job searching activity.

Lastly, overall employment rate was found to be similar among these two groups, but students who attended regional universities had lower monthly income and lower job satisfaction and more regional university students worked in less preferred environment.

○ Performance analysis of regional universities

Performance analysis of regional universities were conducted based on two categories; performance of university–industry cooperation and education competency promotion performance. Firstly, as for university–industry cooperation performance, performance of LINC(Leaders in Industry–University Cooperation) projects were analyzed. For the analysis, employment rate and two indicators for measuring characterization competency (human resource and research competency, curriculum and competency for start–up business support) were analyzed by using DID (Difference–in–Difference) model. As a result, there was no difference found in terms of graduates' employment rate among universities benefited by LINC projects and those that are not. Moreover, no significant difference was found according to institution's establishment type, size, location and institution's past participation in university–industry cooperation project. This is due to the fact that most universities, regardless their characteristics have been managing their graduate employment performance effectively since it has been used as one of the most important indicator for government funding subsidy for over the 10 years. As for 'human resource and research competency', no difference was found between universities that benefited from LINC project and those that are not, but institution type (national



and public university), institution size (large size), and location (Seoul metropolitan area) were found to be significant variable. As for 'curriculum and competency for start-up business support', universities benefited from LINC projects saw significant increase, and moreover, it was also found that such competency were found from universities that have participated in former university-industry linkage project, and those located in regional area and large in institution size.

In terms of analyzing education performance, proactive·cooperative learning activity and university education satisfaction were used as dependent variable, and whether the institution participated in ACE (Advancement of College Education) project and Education Competency Promotion project were used as one of the independent variables. As a result, regional universities' proactive·cooperative learning activity were found to be higher compared to Seoul metropolitan universities. Also, there was no difference based on whether the institution participated in ACE project, but was found to be significantly higher if the institution participated in Education Competency Promotion project. In overall, there was no direct effect of regional university on proactive·cooperative learning activity and university education satisfaction. However, since various variables related to teaching and learning competency were significantly influencing on students' proactive and cooperative learning activity and their satisfaction, it can be concluded that regional universities need to further promote on their competency for teaching and learning.

□ **Keyword:** Regional university, Higher Education Policy, Government funding subsidy, University-Industry linkage, Education competency.