

Young People's Job Hunting Activities in Korea

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All over the world it is becoming more and more difficult to find a job, including in Korea. One of the major social problems in this country is the high unemployment rate for young people. What do young Korean people do to obtain employment? As preparation for employment, Koreans usually receive language training, such as private English lessons, and obtain various qualifications. Of particular note is the trend to take language training in a foreign country. Actually, the child of my colleague took a leave of absence from the university to go to an English-speaking country and to study English there. Many Korean people go abroad to join a language program for six months to one year, hoping that their language proficiency will improve somewhat.

Research indicates that women and university graduates born in the countryside start their job hunting activities later than other job seekers. Moreover, they tend to have more qualifications than the others. The same research reported that, people from high-income families are more likely to have experienced language training, such as private English lessons, than the others.

According to a survey conducted by a job-seeking portal website, the companies that are most popular among university students today are major ones. They include SAMSUNG Electronics followed by Kookmin Bank, Korean Air, NHN, CJ Chiel Jedang, POSCO, SAMSUNG Mobile Display, and other companies.

Now, I would like to mention Korean women's awareness of employment. According to a research paper, 98.6% of female university students wish to have careers in their future. This is because it is regarded as natural in Korea for female students to have careers after graduation. Also, the research paper reveals that while more than half of female students wish to ensure full-time jobs, 42.0% prefer a more flexible form of employment, such as being a freelancer or part-time worker. Moreover, 27.4% of female students who prefer employment as a part-time worker state that they want to secure time for their family as the reason. Meanwhile, the typical occupations that female students wish to take up are those related to education such as teachers and tutors (17.9%), researchers including professors (8.2%), public servants (7.6%) and general administrative staff (7.5%). These occupations have been traditionally regarded as suitable for most women. It seems that female students think that these occupations are stable and they can take them up with relatively less investment of time. In my personal opinion, women today are far more active in job hunting activities than in the past. I believe that almost all women wish to have careers.

In conclusion, job hunting by young people in Korea has become increasingly difficult. In order to be more competitive, many are strengthening their English language skills overseas through six months to one year programs. Young people aim for large companies with good benefits and more than half of female students want to work full time. These trends in turn have an important impact on the South Korean labor force.