

# Developing a Job Search Platform for SMEs to Resolve Job Mismatch: A Case Study

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## ABSTRACT

The issue of mismatch with small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) for youth job seekers has been a serious social problem in Korea. Many youth job seekers tend to avoid working in SMEs, which is why sometimes there is no one to work. This study built a differentiated platform that provides excellent SME job information from the perspective of youth job seekers: (1) The characteristics of good jobs preferred by job seekers are identified by conjoint analysis in five attributes (annual salary level, performance-based compensation, working environment, corporate image, and organizational culture). (2) A self-evaluation application is developed with 13 items for SMEs to diagnose their own job characteristics, and (3) this process enabled job seekers to more easily and conveniently find good jobs. The job platform created in this study is expanded as a government support policy to resolve the job mismatch issue in Korea. This study will provide a solution to the problem of youth job mismatch and transform the policy from quantitative support to radical qualitative reform.

## KEYWORDS

Good Jobs, Job Platform, Self-Diagnosis Application, SMEs, Youth Job Seekers

## INTRODUCTION

Korea is facing unemployment due to COVID-19. The decline in youth employment, in particular, exceeded 300,000 overall, with 146,000 of those in their 20s and 165,000 in their 30s. The annual youth unemployment rate for those between 15 and 29 years was 9.0%, which is more than double the overall unemployment rate of 4.0%; moreover, one out of every four youths is reported to be jobless in Korea (KEIS, 2021).

However, despite these difficult situations, some firms face manpower shortages. According to a job search website survey<sup>1</sup>, 42% of Korean firms experienced a shortage of workers in 2020. By firm size, small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), which make up 43.8% of all enterprises, showed the highest rate of manpower shortage, followed by middle-standing enterprises (40.9%) and large enterprises (22.7%), indicating that SMEs faced twice the shortage of workers than large

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enterprises. This indicates that despite high youth unemployment, SMEs are still unable to recruit youth talent for their workforce.

Young job seekers, however, still perceive SMEs as companies that pay low wages, have excessive working hours, and offer little possibility for promotion (Long et al., 2014). The structural issue of job mismatch between the youth and SMEs is not resolved (Kohnová et al., 2020), so to tackle this social challenge we must improve the negative perception of SMEs, while matching good jobs with young job seekers (KBiz, 2020).

This study establishes a new platform to provide job information on SMEs. Applied here are innovative and differentiated features distinct from other existing job search platforms. First, SME job characteristics preferred by job seekers were identified from the seekers' perspective and reflected on the job matching process. Second, some features were suggested from the job providers' perspective to self-evaluate the job characteristics preferred by job seekers. Third, a system was established to enable SMEs to provide job information on the platform, thereby offering them an opportunity to positively influence potential employees' perception of SMEs.

The next section provides a literature review on good jobs in SMEs, factors affecting preferred jobs, and solutions to job mismatches. A description of the methodology and how it was applied in the research follows. Presented next are the results of the conjoint analysis and its application to the job platform. Finally, the significance of this study, along with its findings, which will contribute to future youth employment youth policies is provided.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Good Jobs in Small- and Medium-Sized Enterprises

While prior studies on job issues in SMEs focused on expanding the quantitative scale, in recent times there has been a growing interest on the qualitative aspects of employment such as adequate income, job security, improvement of work environment, and decrease in industrial accidents (Dodd et al., 2019).

Various related terms are used overseas, including “decent work” by the International Labour Organization (ILO), “*gute arbeit*” by the German Trade Union Confederation, and “good job” by the American Sociological Association (Jencks et al., 1988).

“Decent work” involves opportunities for “work that is productive, delivers a fair income with social protection, and offers prospects for personal development” (International Labour Organization, 1999). Discussions on “good jobs” consider wage as an important determinant; however, nonmonetary attributes such as job details and characteristics, autonomy in task performance, job security, and acquisition of skills have twice as much impact than wages. Moreover, good jobs have various indicators and items that are part of the comprehensive concept of socioeconomic equality; they include not only job opportunities, wage, and working hours but also women and social safety networks (Pickshaus, 2007). Therefore, a “good job” is a complicated and multidimensional concept in terms of job quality, which includes not only wages but also work conditions, environment, and social values (Hussain & Endut, 2018).

With emphasis on the qualitative aspect of jobs, Korea uses terms such as “decent work,” “good jobs,” and “healthy jobs.” “Decent work” requires a “wage higher than the median wage of paid workers nationwide, with more than 14 hours and less than 29 working hours per week” (Kim et al., 2014). “Good jobs” must not only consider monetary aspects such as wage but also job satisfaction, social status, and authority (Bang & Lee, 2006). Jobs in the labor market must generally meet socioeconomic, subjective, and psychological needs, such as job satisfaction.

This discussion has led to several studies. While some studies developed indicators that are suitable to the Korean context (Bang, 2007), others have analyzed the relationship between good jobs, organizational commitment, and job satisfaction (Song, 2016). Other studies have examined the

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