



# A Study on the First Step of Youth in Society and Policy Measures I : Employment<sup>1)</sup>

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## Summary

### Study Objective

- ▶ To analyze the current status of transition from school to work among youths under circumstances where there is instability and impediments that delay them taking the first step towards society and to propose the future policy direction and plans which would help youths to achieve a smooth transition from adolescence to adulthood.

### Subjects

- ▶ This study was conducted as a supplementary survey for the "Survey on Socio-Economic Status of Youths." As for the "Survey on Socio-Economic Status of Youths (Statistics Korea-Approved Statistics No. 402004)," it was previously conducted among subjects aged 15 years to 39 years from 2016 to 2019, but due to the enactment of the 'Framework Act on Youth,' the age range of its subjects has been altered to "≥ 18 years to ≤ 34 years" since 2020. The reason why "18 years" has been determined as the minimum age for subjects in this study even though youth is defined as people aged between 19 and 34 in the above act is because the voting age in Korea has been changed to 18 years according to the amended Public Official Election Act.

### Methodology

- ▶ The survey method was a tablet-aided personal interview (TAPI) where investigators visited each household in person and performed a face-to-face survey with a respondent by means of a tablet. If the target subject is absent, a written questionnaire was used instead of a personal interview.

### Study Period

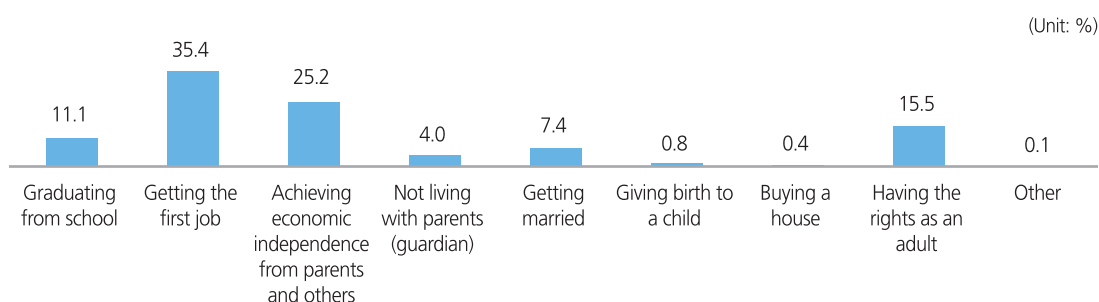
- ▶ The survey period was from May to October, 2021. In May and June, sampling design, statistics approval from the Statistics Korea, and review from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) were carried out. Starting on July 19, the main survey lasted about three months until its termination on October 29. This duration was more than two-fold longer than the usually expected duration, about a month and a half. This was the result of survey suspension due to prevailing conditions resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic.

1) This Blue Note is the extract and summary from 'A Study on the First Step of Youth in Society and Policy Measures I : Employment' as the 2021 research report by the National Youth Policy Institute.

## 1. Meaning of 'First Step Towards Society'

### ■ The 'first step towards society' to becoming adults from the perspective of youths

- Of the participating youths, 35.4% recognized 'Getting the first job' as the 'first step towards society' for adults.
  - 'Getting the first job' accounted for the majority, among the total responses, at 35.4%, followed by 'Achieving economic independence from parents and others' at 25.2%.
  - The proportions of other responses were 15.5% for 'Having the rights as an adult' and 11.1% for 'Graduating from school.'



\*Source: Kim Ki-Hun, Bae Jeong-Hee, Kim Chang-Hwan, Seong Jae-Min (2021: 46). 2021 Results of Survey on Socio-Economic Status of Youths

Figure 1 Meaning of the 'first step towards society' from the perspective of youths

### ■ Difference in the perception of 'first step towards society' between male and female respondents

- The proportion of 'Getting married' was higher in males than in females (male 8.2, female 6.5), whereas the proportion of 'Having the rights as an adult' was higher in females than in males (male 14.1, female 17.1).

### ■ Difference in the perception of 'first step towards society' depending on age

- The proportion of 'Achieving economic independence from parents and others' was higher in respondents aged 18 to 19 years than in other age groups. In addition, 'Having the rights as an adult' in their early 20s, 'Getting the first job' in their late 20s, and 'Getting married' in their early 30s, respectively, showed a higher proportion in the relevant age group than in other age groups.

### ■ Difference in the perception of 'first step towards society' depending on education level

- The responses with a higher proportion than in other groups were 'Having the rights as an adult' in high school graduates or lower, 'Graduating from school' in college/graduate students, and 'Getting the first job' and 'Getting married' in college graduates or higher.
  - In high school graduates or lower, the proportion of 'Having the rights as an adult' and 'Not living with parents (guardian)' was higher than in other groups.
  - In college/graduate students, the proportion of 'Graduating from school' and 'Achieving economic independence from parents' was higher than in other groups.
  - In college graduates or higher, the proportion of 'Getting the first job' and 'Getting married' was higher than in other groups.

**Table 1** Results of the responses for the meaning of 'first step towards society' from the perspective of youths per variable

(Unit: N, %)

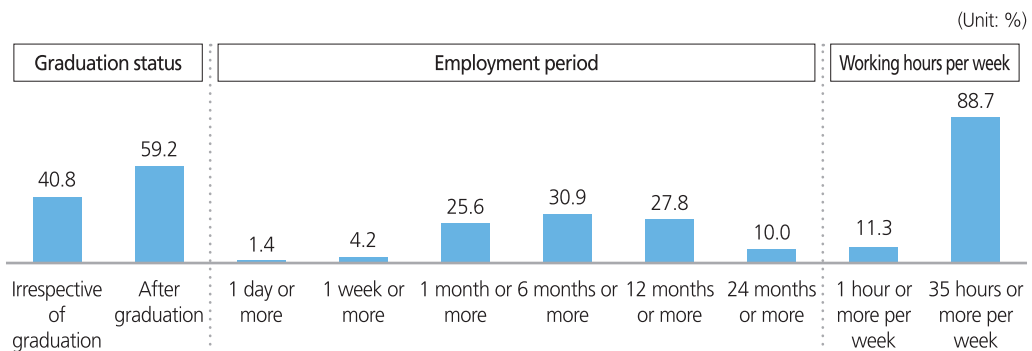
Category		No. of cases	Graduating from School	Getting the first job	Achieving economic independence from parents and others	Not living with parents (guardian)	Getting married	Giving birth to a child	Buying a house	Having the rights as an adult	Other
Total		(2,041)	11.1	35.4	25.2	4.0	7.4	0.8	0.4	15.5	0.1
Gender	Male	(1,074)	11.2	36.5	24.5	3.9	8.2	1.0	0.5	14.1	0.1
	Female	(967)	10.9	34.2	25.9	4.3	6.5	0.6	0.3	17.1	0.1
Age	18-19 years	(185)	19.8	30.2	29.8	2.7	3.8	0.0	1.4	11.8	0.6
	20-24 years	(588)	12.2	34.4	26.2	4.1	5.7	0.7	0.4	16.2	0.1
	25-29 years	(668)	9.4	38.0	23.1	4.6	6.9	0.5	0.4	17.0	0.1
	30-34 years	(600)	9.3	35.2	25.0	3.8	10.8	1.6	0.1	14.1	0.0
Academic level	High school graduate or lower	(565)	11.2	34.7	23.9	5.0	6.5	1.5	0.8	16.2	
	College/graduate student	(451)	13.5	33.5	28.8	3.4	4.6	0.0	0.1	15.8	0.4
	College graduate or higher	(1,025)	10.0	36.7	24.2	3.8	9.3	0.9	0.3	14.9	0.0

\*Source: Kim Ki-Hun, Bae Jeong-Hee, Kim Chang-Hwan, Seong Jae-Min (2021: 47). 2021 Results of Survey on Socio-Economic Status of Youths

## 2. Meaning of 'First Job'

### ■ The Meaning of 'First job' from the perspective of youths

- From the perspective of youths, the meaning of the first job was the "regular work that you do for 35 hours or more per week over 6 months or more after graduation."
- As for graduation status, 59.2% regarded the work you have 'After graduation' as the first job.
- The most common response for employment period was '6 months or more' in 30.9% of the respondents, followed by '12 months or more' in 27.8% and '1 month or more' in 25.6%.
- For working hours per week, the most common response was '35 hours or more per week', accounting for 88.7%.



\*Source: Kim Ki-Hun, Bae Jeong-Hee, Kim Chang-Hwan, Seong Jae-Min (2021: 48). 2021 Results of Survey on Socio-Economic Status of Youths

**Figure 2** The Meaning of 'First job' from the perspective of youths

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## ■ Difference in the perception of 'First job' between males and females

- Both males and females recognized the 'work that you do for 35 hours or more per week over 6 months or more after graduation' as the first job.

## ■ Difference in the perception of 'First job' depending on age

- In the respondents aged 18 to 19 years, the proportion of 'Irrespective of graduation' and '24 months or more' was higher than in other groups.
- In the respondents aged 20 to 24 years, the proportion of '6 months or more' was highest among all the age groups.
- In the respondents aged 25 to 29 years, the proportion of 'After graduation' was highest at 61.2% among all the age groups.
- In the respondents aged 30 to 34 years, the proportion of '1 month or more' was highest among all the age groups.

## ■ Difference in the perception of 'First job' depending on education level

- In high school graduates or lower, the proportion of '24 months or more' was higher than in college graduates or college/graduate students.
- In college/graduate students, the most common responses for graduation status and employment period were 'After graduation (60.8%)' and '6 months/12 months or more,' respectively.
- In college graduates or higher, the most common response was '35 hours or more per week.'

**Table 2** Results of the responses for the Meaning of 'First job' from the perspective of youths per variable

(Unit: N, %)

Category		No. of cases	Graduation status		Employment period						Working hours per week	
			Irrespective of graduation	After graduation	1 day or more	1 week or more	1 month or more	6 months or more	12 months or more	24 months or more	1 hour or more per week	35 hours or more per week
Total		(2,041)	40.8	59.2	1.4	4.2	25.6	30.9	27.8	10.0	11.3	88.7
Gender	Male	(1,074)	40.9	59.1	1.1	3.7	26.0	31.2	27.9	10.1	11.3	88.7
	Female	(967)	40.6	59.4	1.8	4.9	25.1	30.5	27.7	9.9	11.3	88.7
Age	18-19 years	(185)	44.8	55.2	1.0	6.2	23.4	29.9	28.9	10.6	13.9	86.1
	20-24 years	(588)	42.2	57.8	1.6	3.9	22.2	33.9	28.6	9.9	12.7	87.3
	25-29 years	(668)	38.8	61.2	1.7	3.6	26.6	29.4	28.5	10.3	10.0	90.0
	30-34 years	(600)	40.4	59.6	1.1	4.8	28.4	29.9	26.0	9.7	10.5	89.5
Education level	High school graduate or lower	(565)	43.9	56.1	1.5	6.9	29.2	26.8	24.6	11.0	14.1	85.9
	College/graduate student	(451)	39.2	60.8	1.1	2.9	20.4	34.4	32.1	9.1	12.4	87.6
	College graduate or higher	(1,025)	39.8	60.2	1.5	3.4	25.9	31.6	27.7	10.0	9.2	90.8

\*Source: Kim Ki-Hun, Bae Jeong-Hee, Kim Chang-Hwan, Seong Jae-Min (2021: 49). 2021 Results of Survey on Socio-Economic Status of Youths

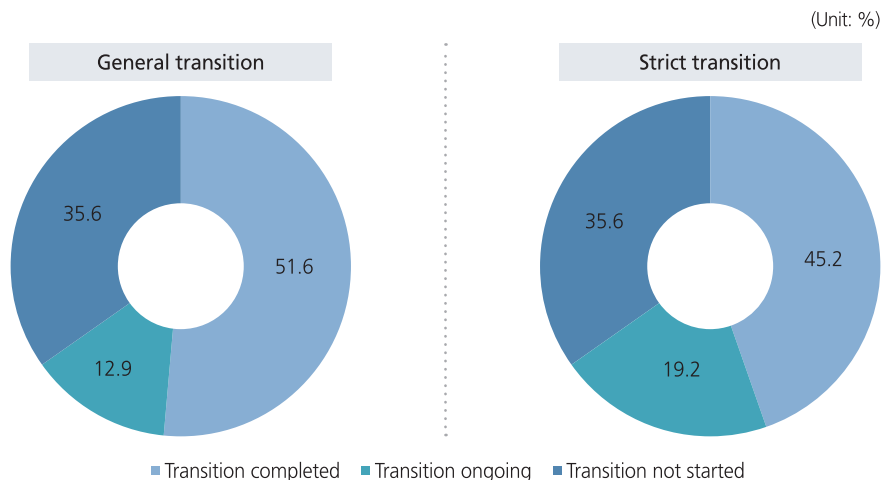
### 3. Status of Transition from School to Work in Youths

#### ■ Criteria for decent work by the International Labour Organization (ILO)

- The ILO (2009) classified transition from school to work into general transition and strict transition.
- General transition and strict transition
  - In the case of general transition, the following cases are defined as ‘completion of transition’: transition to regular work, transition to satisfactory irregular work, or transition to satisfactory unpaid work. The following cases are defined as ‘ongoing transition’ (or called ‘unstable transition’): unemployed, transition to unsatisfactory irregular work, or transition to unsatisfactory unpaid work. The reason why even the post-employment cases are defined as ‘ongoing transition’ is because there is a possibility of transition to desired work in the future. Finally, no intention of seeking work due to currently attending school or belonging to the economically inactive segment of the population is defined as ‘non-initiation of transition.’
  - Strict transition refers to transition to decent work. Work is deemed as decent if it guarantees a secure form of employment and safe working conditions and pays an average or more fair income. Therefore, such strict conditions determine if strict transition is completed.

#### ■ Status of transition from school to work in youths

- About half of the youths (51.6%) experienced transition to regular or satisfactory work, and less than half of them (45.2%) experienced transition to decent work.
- The general transition included 51.6% of ‘Transition completed,’ 35.6% of ‘Transition ongoing,’ and 12.9% of ‘Transition not started.’
- The strict transition included 45.2% of ‘Completion of transition,’ 35.6% of ‘Ongoing transition,’ and 19.2% of ‘Non-initiation of transition.’



\*Note: The criteria for decent work by the ILO (2009) were applied. General transition is classified into ① Transition completed (transition to regular work, transition to satisfactory irregular work, or transition to satisfactory unpaid work), ② Transition ongoing (unemployed, transition to unsatisfactory irregular work, or transition to unsatisfactory unpaid work), ③ Transition not started (no intention of seeking work due to currently attending school or belonging to the economically inactive segment of the population). Strict transition is classified based on whether or not transition to decent work has been achieved (payment of an average or more fair income).

\*Source: Kim Ki-Hun, Bae Jeong-Hee, Kim Chang-Hwan, Seong Jae-Min (2021: 100). 2021 Results of Survey on Socio-Economic Status of Youths

Figure 8 Status of transition from school to work in youths

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## ■ Difference in ‘transition from school to work’ between males and females

- There was an insignificant difference regarding the transition to regular or satisfactory work between males and females, but a significant 6.2%p difference in the strictly defined transition to decent work between males (48.1%) and females (41.9%).

## ■ Difference in ‘transition from school to work’ depending on age

- The proportion of ‘Transition not started’ was high among youths aged 18 to 19 years, but the proportion of ‘Transition completed’ was high in youths aged 25 to 29 years and other older groups.

## ■ Difference in ‘transition from school to work’ depending on education level

- In high school graduates or lower, only 55.4% experienced transition to regular or satisfactory work, whereas 72.6% of college graduates or higher achieved such transition, indicating a 7.2%p difference between these two groups. As for the strictly defined transition to decent work, there was a 7.5%p difference (high school graduate 47.0, college graduate 64.5).

**Table 3** Status of transition from school to work in youths per variable

(Unit: N, %)

Category		No. of cases	General transition			Strict transition		
			Transition completed	Transition ongoing	Transition not started	Transition completed	Transition ongoing	Transition not started
Total		(2,041)	51.6	12.9	35.6	45.2	19.2	35.6
Gender	Male	(1,074)	52.1	13.6	34.3	48.1	17.6	34.3
	Female	(967)	50.9	12.1	37.0	41.9	21.1	37.0
Age	18-19 years	(185)	4.9	4.2	90.9	4.5	4.6	90.9
	20-24 years	(588)	26.8	16.0	57.3	22.2	20.6	57.3
	25-29 years	(668)	65.4	14.8	19.8	55.6	24.5	19.8
	30-34 years	(600)	74.0	10.4	15.6	68.0	16.4	15.6
Education level	High school graduate or lower	(565)	55.4	21.2	23.4	47.0	29.6	23.4
	College/graduate student	(451)	0.0	0.0	100.0	0.0	0.0	100.0
	College graduate or higher	(1,025)	72.6	14.1	13.3	64.5	22.2	13.3

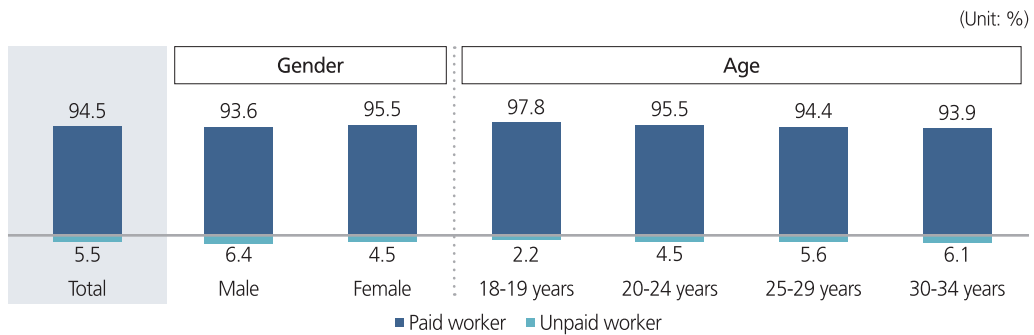
\*Note: The criteria for decent work by the ILO (2009) were applied. General transition is classified into ① Transition completed (transition to regular work, transition to satisfactory irregular work, or transition to satisfactory unpaid work), ② Transition ongoing (unemployed, transition to unsatisfactory irregular work, or transition to unsatisfactory unpaid work), ③ Transition not started (no intention of seeking work due to currently attending school or belonging to the economically inactive segment of the population). Strict transition is classified based on whether or not transition to decent work has been achieved [payment of an average or more fair income].

\*Source: Kim Ki-Hun, Bae Jeong-Hee, Kim Chang-Hwan, Seong Jae-Min (2021: 101). 2021 Results of Survey on Socio-Economic Status of Youths

## 4. First Job after Graduation from the Final School

### ■ Employment status of the 'First job' after graduation from the final school

- The proportion of paid work as the first job after graduation from the final school accounted for the majority at 94.5%.
- The proportion of paid workers was higher in females (95.5%) than in males (93.6%), and also higher in those of a younger age.

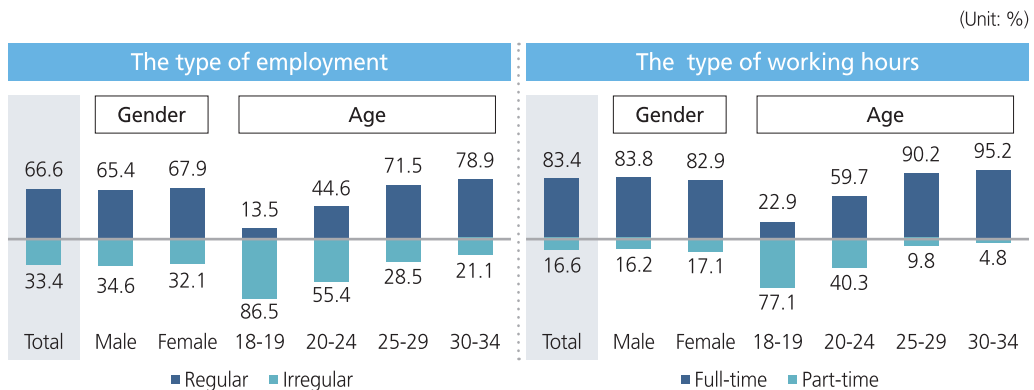


\*Source: Kim Ki-Hun, Bae Jeong-Hee, Kim Chang-Hwan, Seong Jae-Min (2021: 54). 2021 Results of Survey on Socio-Economic Status of Youths

Figure 3 Employment status of the 'First job' after graduation from the final school

### ■ Job position of paid workers

- Among paid workers, 66.6% were regular workers.
  - The proportion of regular workers was higher in females than in males, whereas the proportion of irregular workers was 86.5% among youths aged 18 to 19 years.
- In terms of working time, full-time work accounted for 83.4%.
  - The proportion of full-time workers was higher in males than in females, whereas the proportion of part-time workers was 77.1% among youths aged 18 to 19 years.



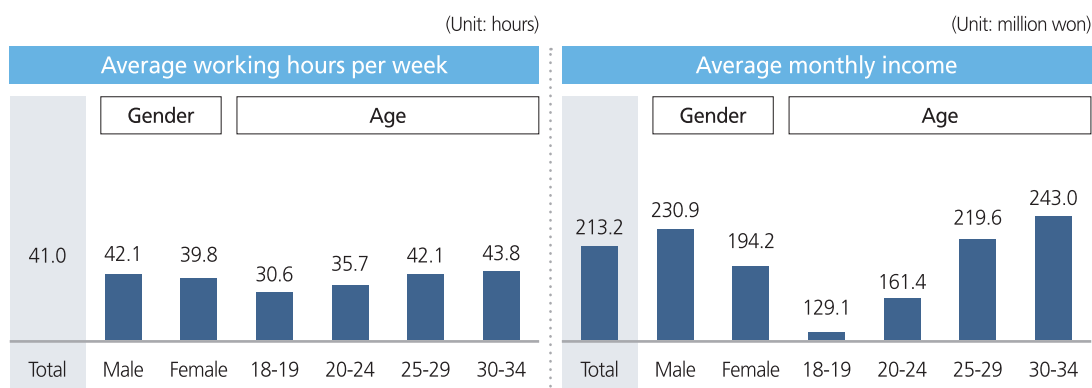
\*Source: Kim Ki-Hun, Bae Jeong-Hee, Kim Chang-Hwan, Seong Jae-Min (2021: 56). 2021 Results of Survey on Socio-Economic Status of Youths

Figure 4 Job position of paid workers

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## ■ Job type, average working time, and average income of the 'First job'

- In the fields of employment, the proportion of office workers was highest at 34.2%, whereas the proportion of those engaging in agriculture, forestry, and fishery was lowest at 0.5%.
- Service workers accounted for 26.0% followed by sales workers at 15.0%, and professionals and related workers at 11.1%. Technicians and related workers accounted for 6.2%, followed by machinery operation and assembly workers at 3.3%, simple labor workers at 2.0%, and managers at 1.4%.



\*Source: Kim Ki-Hun, Bae Jeong-Hee, Kim Chang-Hwan, Seong Jae-Min (2021: 66). 2021 Results of Survey on Socio-Economic Status of Youths

**Figure 5** First job's average working hours per week and average monthly income

- The first job's average working hours per week and average monthly income were 41 hours and 2.133 million won, respectively.
- The average working time and income level were higher in males than in females. They were also higher as age increased, and a difference in income level was much larger between younger and older groups than was the difference in working time between these groups.

## Reference

Kim Ki-Hun, Bae Jeong-Hee, Kim Chang-Hwan, Seong Jae-Min (2021). 「A Study on the First Step of Youth in Society and Policy Measures I : Employment」. National Youth Policy Institute.