

The Evaluation of Higher Education Restructuring in Korea: Problems and Suggestions for Improvement

BYUN Hoseung

<Abstract>

The purpose of this article is to understand the evaluation of the 1st period of Korean higher education structural reform that occurred during 2014-2016 in terms of problems and suggestions for improvement. To achieve the goal, the author analyzed 24 articles through content analysis method. In terms of problems, evaluation criteria, polarization of universities, violation of autonomy, purpose of evaluation, and decline of academic discipline were frequently mentioned. For suggestions for improvement, customization and autonomy of restructuring, university system reform, financial support, legislation, enforce retirement of HEIs, and provide necessary data were on the top list. The number of categories for problems was greater than for suggestions for improvement with the most frequently mentioned being: 'customization and autonomy of restructuring,' 'university system reform' and 'financial support.' These reflect the rigid reform process and propose macro approach for reform while urging enhancement of public benefits by increasing the role of public and national universities. Minor significance was given to 'market driven policy' because of its potential for controversy.

Professor, Department of Education, Chungbuk National University, Korea
(Visiting Professor, Center for the Studies of Higher Education, Nagoya University)

1. Introduction

Globalization and the decrease in the birth rate are changing the landscape of higher education around the world (British Council 2012). As in other industrialized countries, reforming higher education has been a hot topic in Korea for some time. Of even stronger importance is how the term “structural reform” is now being used instead of the term “downsizing.”

It is a known fact that higher education has played a huge role in the economic development of Korea. As a result, quantitative growth has been the norm for higher education in recent history. In 1995, the first directly-elected president, Kim Young-Sam, implemented his policy of deregulating higher education. This included the abolition of the quota system and changed the previous permission-based university establishment policy to a minimum condition-based policy. This resulted in a rapid increase in the number of higher education institutions as well as in new forms of educational institutions (Kwon 2012). Student quotas in the capital area were still restricted, however, the number of university students has increased from 498,250 in 1995 to 656,783 in 2002.

The Korean government’s response to the higher education problem was to reduce the freshmen student quotas and enhance the quality of education by evaluating and connecting government financial projects to guide the restructuring process. This plan has already been implemented and the results of the first stage (2014-2016) evaluation have been announced.

So far there have surfaced many arguments concerning the Korean HEI restructuring process but there has not been much clarification of the many issues raised nor about any of the suggestion solutions. This study hopes to clarify these issues and their suggested solutions as they were portrayed in various academic journals.

Thus, the primary research questions for this paper are two-fold: What are the main problems in Korea’s higher education restructuring? What are the best suggestions for improving higher education structural reform?

2. Background

2.1 History of Higher Education Reforms

Higher education reform can be traced back to 2000 when the Korean government started to find ways to streamline similar departments among the national universities. Consecutively, 'Plans for Strengthening University Competitiveness (2003)' and 'Plans for University Structural Reform (2004)' were announced to include private universities. Improvements in educational conditions and accounting system were suggested for national universities and for private universities, improvements in educational conditions, amendment of dissolution, merger and retirement, and tightened requirements for university establishment were implemented.

The strategies used by the government were to link university evaluation with financial support to guide structural reform. For example, in 2004, national universities were to reduce the number of freshmen students by more than 10% by 2007, and 15% by 2009. Private universities were not allowed to participate in any national financial support projects if the 10% reduction was not met and if the procurement rate of full-time faculty was lower than the standard by 2009, a reduction in student quota was to be enforced. The Brain Korea 21 (BK21) project, administered from 1999-2005, was designed to support higher education workforce training by investing 1.4 trillion Won compared to the 2 trillion Won invested in BK21-2 (2006-2012). BK21 Plus is now in progress. In applying for BK21 one must meet the criteria for full-time faculty procurement rate, faculty evaluation, and achieve reform in the academic affairs system.

Plans for Specialization of Universities (2005) were announced to promote universities to select areas in which to invest; another strategy to boost structural reform. The University Information Disclosure System (2007) was introduced to open the educational environment to the public and to university management. The Korean government also urged universities to merge with one another. From 2005-2010, 18 national universities and 2 public universities were merged into a total 10. Compared to 2004, a reduction of a total of 8,768 students and 103

undergraduate departments was achieved. In terms of private universities, 14 universities and colleges were merged into a total of 7, reducing enrollment to a total of 9,807 students (Yoo 2011).

2.2 National Scholarship and Restructuring

After soaring tuition fees became a social issue, the government regulated tuition fee increase. The university tuition fee increase from 2006 was much higher than the inflation rate (Table 1). From 2009, the government urged the universities, via a university presidents' roundtable meeting, to stop the rapid increase in tuition fees.

Table 1 Four-year University Tuition Increase (Ministry of Education 2011)

(Unit: 1,000 Won)

Year		Public	Private	Inflation
2006	Tuition	3,423	6,473	2.20%
	Increase rate	9.90%	6.70%	
2007	Tuition	3,775	6,893	2.50%
	Increase rate	10.30%	6.50%	
2008	Tuition	4,169	7,380	4.70%
	Increase rate	8.70%	6.70%	
2009	Tuition	4,169	7,410	2.80%
	Increase rate	0.50%	0.50%	
2010	Tuition	4,247	7,519	2.90%
	Increase rate	2.40%	1.60%	
2011	Tuition	4,291	7,691	4.40%
	Increase rate	1.00%	2.30%	

Furthermore, Higher Education Laws were amended to control tuition fees. Clause 11, introduced in 2011, regulates the maximum increase of the HEIs tuition rate. The increase cannot be more than 1.5 times the previous 3 years' consumer price increase. In 2013, yearly tuition for four-year

universities was 6,678,000 Won, which was 31,000 Won (0.46%) lower than the previous year (Korea Statistics 2013).

From 2012, the National Scholarship has been awarded to students. The so called 'half-price tuition fee' motto became a symbol of government policy. Currently, 675,000-3,900,000 Won worth of scholarships has been awarded to decile 3 to 8 students, with a maximum of 5,200,000 Won awarded to decile 2 and below students (Korea Student Aid Foundation 2017).

In the awarding of the national scholarship, starting from 2012, the University Restructuring Committee and Tuition Loan System Deliberation Committee selected the bottom 15% of universities as the so called 'Government Financial Support Restricted Universities and Tuition Loan Restricted Universities' (Ministry of Education 2011). Employment rate, student recruitment rate, full-time faculty procurement rate, educational restitution rate, academic management and curriculum, scholarship rate, reduction of tuition burden, and the corporation index were used as evaluation criteria. In addition, new industry cooperation with vocational colleges was introduced.

The bottom 15% was classified as 'financial-support-restricted university,' 'tuition-loan restricted university,' and 'insolvent university.' Being included in any category was considered a very real threat to the university because its reputation in the community would be tainted especially in a country where a hierarchical structure in higher education exists. Any student discouragement would be like having salt rubbed into a wound. Students and parents, who are cautious shoppers, will also avoid such a university resulting in much difficulty for the university's recruiting of new students.

In 2012, among the 346 HEIs that were evaluated, 43 were selected as 'financial-support-restricted universities (28 four-year universities and 15 vocational colleges).' Eleven were Seoul Metropolitan area HEIs and 32 were from regional HEIs.

2.3 Student Quota Reduction

The number of Korean higher education institutions has more than doubled between 1970 to 2008, from 168 to 348, and the percentage of high school graduates enrolling in higher education institutions reached 83.8% in 2008 (Yoem 2013). Even as late as 2015 it has continued to increase (Table 2).

Table 2 Number of Higher Education Institutions (Ministry of Education 2016)

Classification	2000	2005	2010	2014	2015	2016
University	161	173	179	189	189	189
Junior College	158	158	145	139	138	138
Graduate School College	17	34	40	44	47	46
Others	36	54	47	61	59	59
Total	372	419	411	433	433	432

Even though there have been continuous government efforts at restructuring higher education, a new, bold plan came out in January 2014. The Korean government announced their major higher education reform plan named, ‘The University Structural Reform Plan for the Enhancement of University Educational Quality and to Prepare for Sharp Decrease in School Age Population.’ Government data projects that the supply of students for higher education in 2013 is about 560,000, in 2017 it will be 520,000, in 2020 it will be 470,000, and in 2023 it will be about 400,000. Thus, drastic measures are required to stem this continual decrease.

Three basic directions were laid out.

First, all universities, except for the excellent-rated, will have their student quotas differentially reduced.

Second, a new university evaluation system regarding specialization and quality of education will be introduced.

Third, legal and institutional arrangements for continuous and systematic structural reform will be established.

The Government has calculated that without a reduction in the new

freshmen quota, there will be growing enrollment shortfalls, 38,300 in 2017, 88,200 in 2020, 160,800 in 2023, and 162,900 in 2026.

There are three features of evaluation for structural reform of university. First, both quantitative and qualitative criteria were used to comprehensively assess HEI. Second, capital and regional areas, national, public, and private HEIs, and 4-year and 2-year HEIs were considered in the evaluation. Third, absolute criteria were introduced in quantitative criteria and 3-years of continuous efforts of HEIs were assessed.

The plan is to reduce the 160,000 university student quota by 2023, based on the results of 3 periods of evaluation. In every period, all universities will be included in the evaluation and all those, except for the excellent-rated group, will have their student quotas differentially reduced. If universities voluntarily reduce their quotas, it will be later calculated toward their structural reform reduction. The Four-year universities and 2-year Junior colleges' reduction will be based on their current proportion 63:37 (universities 25,300, colleges 14,700).

Universities focused on educating religious leaders, the arts and physical related departments, and those who are less than 2 years after being merged with other universities, were allowed to be exempt from evaluation when requested. However, they would then incur restrictions in participating in other government support projects.

Table 3 Goals for University Student Admission Quota Reduction

Evaluated Period	Period 1 (2014-2016)	Period 2 (2017-2019)	Period 3 (2020-2022)	Total Reduced Students
Reduction Goal	40,000	50,000	70,000	160,000
Reduction Period	2015-2017	2018-2020	2021-2023	

Absolute evaluation is implemented at all universities and is rated in 5 grades based on the results. All the universities' student quotas, except for those excellent-rated, shall be reduced differentially based on the results.

- Excellent-rated universities will have voluntary reduction and are allowed to participate in government projects.
- Good-rated universities shall have partial quota reduction and are allowed to participate in government projects.
- Fair-rated shall have average quota reduction and are allowed to participate in government projects.
- Poor-rated shall have more than average quota reduction, be prohibited from government projects and national scholarship aid, and subject to partial student loan restriction.
- Excessively-poor-rated universities shall have high quota reduction, be prohibited from government projects and national scholarship aid, and subject to full student loan restriction. Those who are rated as excessively-poor for two consecutive times will be retired.

HEIs were evaluated in two stages. The evaluation was conducted in absolute criteria base. In the first stage, universities were categorized into group 1 and 2. Group 1 was graded as A, B, and C. Group 2 was graded as D and E. However, 10% of group 2 had the possibility to be upgraded to group 1 when the evaluation result was good.

Sixty-six HEIs (32 four-year universities and 34 vocational colleges) were below average (D and E). That amounts to 19.6% of 4-year universities, and 25.2% of vocational colleges.

Table 4 Results of 1st Period HEI Evaluation

Rate	A	B	C	D	E	Separate Measure	Excluded Schools
Universities	34	56	36	26	6	5	29
Colleges	14	26	58	27	7	3	2

The following reduction was ‘advised’ to the corresponding schools due to pending law in the National Assembly since 2014. Altogether, the 5,439 freshmen student quota is expected to be reduced by 2018.

Table 5 Advised Freshmen Reduction Rate in 1st Period Evaluation

Grade		A	B	C	D	E	Excluded Schools
Reduction Rates	Universities	Voluntary Reduction	4%	7%	10%	15%	7%
	Colleges		3%	5%	7%	10%	5%

2.4 Legal and Institutional Arrangements

The University Structural Reform Committee (USRC) deliberates the primary plan, evaluation plan, evaluation criteria, ratings, and implementation. The committee members are composed of 20 people from various professional disciplines: law, accounting, industry, economy, and education. Evaluators are composed of 400-500 people from the sectors of industry and education.

Bills introduced for the university structural reform, however, were not passed due to disagreements and the political situation. Some of the issues were rigid and uniform structural reform, enforcement of quota reduction, and the articles that allowed the founders of private foundations to dispose of school property.

2.5 Results of 1st Period Evaluation

In August of 2015, the Ministry of Education (MOE) announced the results of the first period evaluation (Ministry of Education 2015). For a period of 5 months, 298 HEIs (163 four-year universities and 135 two-year vocational colleges) were comprehensively evaluated for their efforts during the years 2012 through 2015.

University evaluation criteria included 18 items: in the first stage, 6 quantitative, 4 qualitative, and 2 mixed indices. Stage 2 had 6 qualitative indices. Vocational colleges had 6 quantitative, 8 qualitative, and 2 mixed indices, with 16 in total. The use of the qualitative indices was to evaluate the ‘efforts’ each college and university put in during the evaluation period.

Table 6 First-stage Evaluation Criteria for 4-year Universities

Category (60)	Evaluation Criteria
Educational Environment (18)	Full-time faculty procurement rate (8) (National/Private separate)
	School building procurement rate (5)
	Educational restitution rate (5) (National/Private separate)
Academic Management (12)	Course management (8)
	Student evaluation (4)
Student Support (15)	Support for student learning competency (5)
	Career & psychological counselling (3)
	Scholarship (5)
	Employment & start-up assistance (2)
Educational Outcome (15)	Student recruitment rate (8) (Capital/provinces separate)
	Employment rate (5) (Regions separate)
	Management of education consumer satisfaction (2)

Qualitative criteria included ‘course management’ (8 points), ‘management of education consumer satisfaction’ (2 points), ‘support for student learning competency’ (5 points), and ‘career & psychological counselling’ (3 points); areas covered by government projects and considered key factors in the evaluation. Qualitative criteria that are ‘course management’ (8 points), ‘management of education consumer satisfaction’ (2 points), ‘support for student learning competency’ (5 points), and ‘career & psychological counselling’ (3 points) were areas covered by government projects and were considered key factors in evaluation.

Table 7 Second-stage Evaluation Criteria for 4-year Universities

Category (40)	Evaluation Criteria
Medium & long-term development plan (10)	Appropriateness of medium & long-term development plan (5)
	Connection between medium & long-term development plan and undergraduate & quota adjustment (5)
Curriculum (20)	Liberal education curriculum (5)
	Major education curriculum (5)
	Improvement of curriculum /and teaching (10)
Specialization (10)	Establishment, implementation, and output of specialization plan

3. Research Methodology

In order to identify what the key concerns of government HEI restructuring are, ‘content analysis’ was used (Holsti 1969). The researcher gathered academic papers from three major research databases: DBPia, E-articles, and Kyobo Scholar. Keyword search using ‘university structural reform,’ in Korean, was used for articles published from January, 2014 through August, 2017.

The following criteria were used in screening appropriate journals:

- 1) Articles analyzing current Korean government HEI restructuring that started in 2014.
- 2) Academic journal papers, conferences proceedings, academic magazine articles.
- 3) Printed materials of statements, debates, and hearings were excluded.
- 4) Related articles that did not provide the author’s opinion on ‘problems’ or ‘suggestions’ were excluded (Objective description or sole referencing of other’s opinion was excluded).
- 5) Overlapping articles were omitted.

Using keyword searching, 25, 45, and 48 articles were found respectively among the databases. Through a screening process a total of 24 articles were selected to be analyzed.

In content analysis, categorization is considered a critical issue in the success of the analysis (Berelson 1952). Categories are often developed in a trial-and-error process and the familiarity with the data in developing valid and reliable categories is crucial (Holsti 1969). In developing the categories, the researcher reads through the articles consciously paying attention to commonly claimed problems and suggestions for the improvement of the restructuring process. In this study, 'problems' and 'suggestions' about the restructuring forms the categories.

The first step for the analysis was summarizing the results. While reading the articles, the researcher wrote down the key arguments of the articles. Key arguments were selected in terms of 'problems' and 'suggestions' for the HEI restructuring. For example, 'unfairness of evaluation,' 'lack of discrimination of criteria,' 'lack of financial support,' and etc. were turned into categories. Referencing of other journals alone was not considered as an argument or opinion. When a key 'opinion,' 'claim,' or 'assertion' was found, it was coded as '1 appearance.' Multiple appearances of a category in one article were coded once. After the first round of coding, the second round of coding was done by combining similar or overlapping categories and clarifying the categories. Categories were developed based on texts used by the original authors.

4. Results

The number of initial categories in the first round of coding was 30 for 'problems,' 23 for 'suggestions for improvement.' In the second round, the categories were 27 and 16, respectively.

4.1 Problems in Reform

The most frequently mentioned problems of HEI restructuring were 'evaluation criteria' and 'polarization of universities.' These appeared in one-half of the total articles. 'Evaluation' was one of the most frequently

mentioned areas. ‘Frequencies in evaluation criteria’ (12), ‘purpose of evaluation’ (8), ‘unjust evaluation’ (8), and ‘uniform evaluation’ (5) ranked high on the list. These show that the evaluation system had the most complaints in the structural reform of HEI. The evaluation criteria often were criticized for their reliability and validity. They overlap with university certification evaluation criteria thus making it redundant (Kim and Oh 2014). Employment rate and student recruitment rate are considered to be absurd because they do not consider the surroundings of where the HEIs are located, and proportion in evaluation is too much (Kim 2015). The contradiction of purpose and means of the evaluation were brought up in a number of articles, questioning the integrity of the structural reform (Kang 2015, Park and Koh 2016, Ban 2016a). Unjust evaluation also had high frequency meaning that the evaluation was not fair, inconsistent, and sometimes involved politics. Though it was not one of the criteria, ‘withdrawal from the direct election of university president’ was known as an option in order to receive a good evaluation and this eventually affected the result (Kang 2015). Uniform evaluation showed that the evaluation process was not planned meticulously. Shin (2016) argues that specialization was emphasized and applying uniform criteria has a high possibility of producing isomorphic institutions across the nation.

‘Polarization of universities’ (12) also received one of the most frequent results. It is a concern that the structural reform of HEIs will aggravate the current ranking system of universities and widen the gap between capital area universities versus local universities.

‘Violation of autonomy’ (11) indicates that the HEI community was coerced into restructuring and that the government controlled the total restructuring process. The Ministry of Education (MOE) could wield power to retire a university (Park 2014) while universities could only decrease the number of students (Ban 2015). The control of HEIs by bureaucrats was one topic that raised the most criticism about structural reform (Hur 2016).

‘Decline of academic discipline’ (9) was third on the list. Even though universities were free to reduce the number of their students, so called “unpopular” departments such as arts, sports and foundational discipline

will eventually be streamlined (Kim 2015) either because they are costly, low-profit departments (Park 2014) or because they have low employment rates (Park 2015).

‘Decrease in competitiveness’ (8) is conspicuous as many think the government’s structural reform will not contribute to enhancing the competitiveness of the institutions (Park 2014) or even worse, degrade the overall quality of education (Ji 2014, Ban 2015, Hur 2016).

‘Lack of communication’ (7) indicates that the process of reform did not have an appropriate discussion and feedback system. An and Lee (2015) see the process as a government driven power structure without any mutual understanding or communication. Roh (2016) argued that although the government held numerous public hearings and discussions, they were no more than instruments in hiding repressive measures.

‘Negative approach’ (5) is about the characteristic of reform that requires the merger and retirement of HEIs and the reduction of students without any clear proof of quality enhancement (Ban 2015). ‘Negative approach’ has a high possibility of being used as a mechanism for control rather than as motivation (Ban 2016a) and punishment-based reform will further deteriorate the educational environment (Yoon 2017).

‘Lack of foundation’ (5) has multiple aspects. It is a question about whether the government’s assumption is based on solid labor market projections, philosophy, or a long-term plan (Ban 2015, Shin 2016, Choi and Lee 2017).

‘Legislation required’ (5) points out that the government’s reform is not yet supported by law and has no real ground for enforcement. Due to the opposition parties’ disagreement with the hasty drive and controversy clauses, such as allowing owners of school corporations to dispose of the school property on their own, the bill is not yet approved.

‘Violation of rights’ (4) is concerned with human, teaching, and learning rights. Reform creates contract professors and workers as they are counted as full-time faculty or workers. Mergers and the reduction of schools and student quotas inevitably destabilize jobs and violate students’ rights to learn (Park 2015, Hur 2016, Roh 2016).

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The next most frequent topics were: ‘favoritism to school corporations’ (3) which is closely related to legislation, ‘no unemployment measures’ (2), ‘decrease of revenues’ (2), and ‘conflicts among members’ (2) followed. ‘No financial support,’ ‘decrease in education’ and ‘research capability,’ ‘neo-liberalism,’ ‘collapse of democratic governance,’ ‘passive activities of faculty members,’ ‘private school nepotism,’ ‘competition & work environmental degradation,’ and ‘support of sloppy HEIs to revive’ were also mentioned.

Table 8 Frequencies for Problems

Rank	Problem	Frequency
1	Evaluation criteria	13
2	Polarization of universities	12
3	Violation of autonomy	11
4	Purpose of evaluation	10
5	Decline of academic discipline	9
6	Decrease in competitiveness	8
7	Unjust evaluation	8
8	Lack of communication	7
9	Negative approach	5
10	Lack of foundation	5
11	Legislation required	5
12	Uniform evaluation	5
13	Violation of rights	4
14	Favoritism to school corporation	3
15	Qualitative evaluation	2
16	No unemployment measures	2
17	Decrease of revenues	2
18	Conflicts among members	2
19	No financial support, decrease in education & research, neo-liberalism, collapse of democratic governance, passive activities of faculty members, private school nepotism, competition & work environmental degradation, support of sloppy HEIs	1

4.2 Suggestions for Improvement

‘Customization and autonomy of restructuring’ (12) was most mentioned. Its main aim is to adjust the reduction based on the regional settings or an individual HEIs circumstances (Kang 2014), and by the plans of HEIs (Park 2014). ‘Differentiating private and public universities in reduction rates’ was also suggested (Kim and Oh 2014, Lee 2014). The fact that HEIs have different characteristics of their own and are dispersed across different regions require differentiated approaches in reform. Autonomy is, after all, about less oppressive measures.

‘University system reform’ (9) was the next hot topic. Kang (2014) proposes to unite all national universities into one university, except for Seoul National University. Ji (2014) and Park (2014) emphasize the role of national universities in enhancing public benefits. Kim (2015), Ban (2015), and Ban (2016b) support the introduction of the national university association system. Private universities could also be selectively accepted into this system and the proportion of national and public universities would be increased (Yoon 2017).

‘Financial support’ (8) calls for the increased role of government in higher education. This category could be combined with ‘university system reform.’

‘Legislation’ (5) highlights the lack of legislative precondition and the new law to support development of HEI systems was also suggested by Ban (2016b).

‘Enforce retirement of HEIs’ (4) shows the spirit of the reform measure that shuts down sloppy and uncompetitive HEIs being the prerequisite for successful reform. This is one of the purposes the government claimed to enhance the competitiveness of higher education. ‘Provide necessary data’ (4) links to the justifiability of the drive. The government should base the reform on solid data and logic (Park 2015, Ban 2015). ‘Communication and agreement’ (4) and ‘protect minor disciplines’ (4) were frequent topics that reflect other problems of the reform.

‘Improve evaluation criteria’ (3), ‘improve system and quality’ (3), ‘long-term plan’ (3), and ‘improve and develop evaluation system’ (2) were the next most frequent alternatives.

‘Espousing market driven policy’ (2) was supported by two authors affiliated with capital area private universities. Their opinion was that regulation and control of the government will do harm to the competitiveness of HEIs and the reduction of students at popular universities is absurd (Lee 2014, Choi Kang and Lee 2017).

Finally, ‘systemize goals,’ ‘tailored consulting,’ and ‘enhance competitiveness’ were also suggested.

Table 9 Frequencies for Suggestions for Improvement

Rank	Suggestions for Improvement	Frequency
1	Customization & autonomy of restructuring	12
2	University system reform	9
3	Financial support	8
4	Legislation	5
5	Enforce retirement of HEIs	4
6	Provide necessary data	4
7	Communication & agreement	4
8	Protect minor disciplines	4
9	Improve evaluation criteria	3
10	Improve system & quality	3
11	Long-term plan	3
12	Improve & develop evaluation system	2
13	Market driven policy	2
14	Systemize goals, tailored consulting, enhance competitiveness	1

5. Discussion

Using the content analysis method to analyze research papers regarding HEI structural reform, the following remains to be discussed.

First, numbers of categories for ‘problems’ (27) were greater than ‘suggestions for improvement’ (16) showing the magnitude of negative aspects of structural reform. It also implies that a solution could be related to multiple problems. What is interesting is that the ranking in the lists for

'problems' and 'solutions' were not necessarily matched. For example, 'evaluation criteria' (13) was the number one problem. However, it ranked 9th on the 'suggestions for improvement' list.

Second, in 'problems,' one of the most frequently mentioned problematic areas was evaluation. Many categories such as 'evaluation criteria,' 'purpose of evaluation,' 'unjust evaluation,' and 'uniform evaluation' were frequently mentioned. These show that 'current evaluation system' receives the most complaints and needs to be revised in the next stage of structural reform.

Third, 'polarization of universities' was also considered one of the worst problems. Even though the government emphasized that the evaluation system was designed to reflect the gap between location (capital, regions), type of foundation (national, public, private), and length of degree (2-year, 4-year), concerns that the drive will worsen the situation were deep. 'Violation of autonomy' was also at the top of the list revealing HEI communities' resistant sentiment toward the drive. Roh (2016) criticizes harshly that many public hearings and discussions were planted to disguise the oppressive bureaucratic power. 'Declining of unpopular discipline' was considered a main threat to the community. Next in line was 'decrease in competitiveness' that questions the effect of reform. 'Lack of communication,' 'negative approach,' 'lack of foundation,' and 'legislation required,' were the next frequent categories that characterize the reform. 'Frequencies of violation of human and learning rights,' 'collapse of democratic governance', 'passive activities of faculty members,' and 'competition and work environmental degradation' were low, however, revealing the change in university settings.

Fourth, at the top of the suggestions for improvement list were 'customization & autonomy of restructuring,' 'university system reform,' and 'financial support.' These reflect the rigid reform process and propose a macro approach rather than a piecemeal solution for the reform. Many reminded the low ratio of public or national HEIs and eventually urged enhancement of public benefits by increasing the role of public and national universities (Kim and Oh 2014, Park 2014, Kim 2015, Ban 2015).

Sixth, espousing market driven policy had a minor voice, however, counter to the majority of opinions, especially using employment rate and student recruitment rate (Lee 2014, Choi Kang and Lee 2017). Though minor, this has potential for controversy in reform policy.

6. Conclusion

Frequency itself cannot be wholly interpreted as importance or urgency. However, certain value could be placed on frequency and could thus be interpreted as meaningful since authors with limited space would write only on selected ‘worthwhile’ topics about the structural reform. It is also advised that the results of a content analysis are to be used with other data to better understand the phenomena.

The lists of topics show ranges of concerns and suggestions for structural reform. Other than evaluation itself, voices on autonomy, competitiveness, and urging the systemic change in the landscape of higher education were conspicuous. Since Korean higher education has always been under strong central government power (Park Nam 2015), policy to truly enhance autonomy and competitiveness of HEIs is necessary.

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韓国高等教育改革の評価

－問題の所在と改善への提案－

ホスン ビョン

＜要 旨＞

本稿の目的は、2014年から2016年を対象に、韓国高等教育の第1期構造改革を批判的に検討することである。本稿では質的研究法の1つである内容分析を用いて、24の関連文献を分析した。その結果、設定される評価基準の信頼性や妥当性、大都市への大学の一極集中、政府主導の学内構造改革、不人気学問分野の淘汰が、高い頻度で言及されていた。また、改善への示唆として、組織再編における個別事情の配慮と自律性の確保、財政支援、高等教育支援の法的根拠整備、質の低い高等教育機関の閉鎖、政府からの改革に必要なデータの提供が指摘されていた。ただし、言及の絶対数では、改善への示唆よりも問題点の指摘の方が多く言及されていた。この傾向は、国公立大学の役割強化による公的なメリットを強調しながらも、硬直的な改革プロセスと全学的な改革へ過度に焦点化された現状を反映しているものと考えられる。市場化政策については議論の余地があるために、必ずしも多く言及されていなかった。

韓国 忠北大学教育学部・教授

名古屋大学高等教育研究センター・客員教授