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Partnerships between Local Governments and Community Colleges in South Korea: Perspectives on Local Decline and International Students

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Abstract

Purpose: This study investigates how cooperative governance between local governments and vocationally oriented community colleges can counteract rural depopulation by attracting foreign students and migrant workers, reorganizing industry-linked majors, and integrating life-cycle social overhead capital (SOC) investments. It seeks to clarify the mechanisms through which such collaboration promotes population inflow, regional innovation, and local economic sustainability.

Method: Eleven experts in low-birth-rate policy, social welfare, higher-education admission, and local-industry promotion—each with at least seven years of field experience—were interviewed between 1 August and 30 October 2024. Their written, open-ended responses were coded inductively following Mertens' qualitative category-building procedure, producing five validated thematic clusters: inter-institutional relationships, university roles, foreign-resident policy, living-infrastructure strategy, and childbirth-response cooperation.

Results: Stakeholder collaboration enabled specialized-major restructuring, lifelong-learning platforms, and strengthened industry–university ties, thereby creating high-quality jobs and slowing youth out-migration. Integrated “foreign-resident packages” (housing, visa, language, and employment support) and a life-cycle SOC model (jobs → housing → childcare/health → culture) significantly raised settlement intention, labor-force stability, and even marriage and fertility expectations among young adults. These outcomes confirm the complementary effects predicted by Triple Helix, human-capital, social-capital, and push-pull migration theories.

Conclusion: Local government–community-college partnerships emerge as an essential strategy for mitigating rural decline, simultaneously fostering human-capital accumulation and multicultural revitalization. Institutionalizing a performance-sharing RISE framework, expanding resident-friendly SOC, and extending quantitative longitudinal analyses are recommended to sustain and scale these benefits nationwide.

Keywords: Regional Extinction, Local Community Colleges, Local Government, International Foreign Student, Local Decline

1. Introduction

Since the mid-1970s, South Korea has undergone rapid industrialization and urbanization, leading to a structural concentration of population in the capital region and large cities. Meanwhile, many non-capital regions are experiencing overlapping issues of youth outflow, low birth rates, and aging populations, weakening their residential foundations [1]. According to the National Statistical Office's future population projections and the Korea Employment Information Service's regional industry and employment analysis, the population structure instability has intensified to the extent that more than half of the 228 local governments nationwide are classified as “disappearing regions” [2][3]. This goes beyond mere population decline, leading to a

simultaneous weakening of the industrial ecosystem, living service supply system, and regional community cohesion, thereby creating a complex crisis that threatens the very sustainability of local autonomy[4]. In fact, the concentration of population in the Seoul National Capital Area and the continuous outflow of population, coupled with low birth rates and aging, have created a vicious cycle that rapidly depresses the regional economy and social infrastructure, while the deterioration of the quality of residential infrastructure, jobs, and cultural environments accelerates the concentration of young people and core talent in the Seoul National Capital Area [5]. This phenomenon aligns with observations from regional decline and population migration theories, as it demonstrates that the structural imbalance of resources and human capital between regions can eventually lead to the risk of extinction over the long term [6].

In this crisis situation, regional universities—especially vocational colleges in rural areas—are emerging as key anchors linking regional industries and labor markets, highlighting their strategic importance. Despite deteriorating enrollment and financial conditions due to declining school-age populations and intensifying preferences for metropolitan areas, the unique functions of vocational colleges—such as customized workforce development for regional industries, field-based education, and lifelong and career transition education—can serve as levers to enhance the resilience of regional economies and their appeal as places to live [7]. Previous studies have also demonstrated that universities can create economic, social, and cultural ripple effects through problem-solving industry-academia collaboration, regionally based projects, and the creation of campus towns and innovation spaces[8][9], and collaborative governance where local governments participate as “facilitators and promoters” contributes to resolving regional issues, mitigating conflicts, and improving policy implementation efficiency[10]. From the perspective of educational ecosystem theory, universities also play a pivotal role as core innovation entities within local communities, mediating talent cultivation and regional vitality[11][12], and when combined with the vocational education strengths of vocational colleges, this role can be expanded into tangible outcomes directly linked to regional industry labor supply issues [13].

The policy environment also supports the institutionalization of university-local government cooperation. The Ministry of Education's “Local Government-University Cooperation-Based Regional Innovation (RIS)” program aims to support local governments, universities, and innovation institutions in autonomously setting regional core areas and promoting a virtuous cycle of talent cultivation, employment, entrepreneurship, and settlement[14]. Local government policies to support regional universities and promote industry-academia collaboration require universities to strengthen their role as regional anchors[4]. In particular, strategies linking the recruitment and settlement of international students and migrant workers as a means of responding to population decline are emerging. Local government-university-business cooperation models that design a value chain linking international students' academic studies, field internships, employment, and long-term settlement, as well as settlement tracks utilizing visa systems such as E-9, D-2, and E-7, are being discussed at the policy and field levels[15][16][17][18]. This approach aligns with empirical observations that the re-education and regional settlement of immigrants contribute to securing skilled labor and community adaptation [15].

Nevertheless, while existing literature is relatively rich in cases of regional revitalization and campus towns centered on general universities, there is a lack of research that systematically designs and evaluates an integrated settlement model based on vocational education that connects foreign students and immigrants to recruitment, training, employment, and settlement through joint efforts between local vocational colleges and local governments. In particular, there is limited empirical evidence verifying the effectiveness and conditions of a consistent design integrating education, employment, and settlement, which combines comprehensive living settlement support covering visas, housing, language, and cultural adaptation with industry-demand-oriented curricula, on-site internships, and employment linkage. Addressing this gap is urgent for policy design in regions at high risk of depopulation.

This study, titled “Cooperative Relationships between Local Governments and Local Colleges in South Korea: From the Perspective of Regional Depopulation and International Students,” explores the roles and changes that local universities must undertake to mitigate population decline in regions at risk of depopulation and to promote the sustainability of local economies and societies. Specifically, first, it analyzes how demographic changes resulting from the combination of capital region concentration and low birth rates and aging populations are linked to regional industrial, social, and cultural foundations[1][2][3]. Second, it identifies the pathways through which the vocational education functions of local colleges enable international students and migrant workers to acquire skills, gain on-the-job experience, secure employment, and settle in the region[7]. Third, we propose a policy and operational model that creates a virtuous cycle of education, employment, and settlement through a collaborative governance system between local governments, universities, and businesses, and evaluate its effectiveness and limitations[10][14]. Fourth, we derive the components and performance indicators of a specialized college-centered settlement model that combines integrated service design encompassing visas, housing, language, culture, and daily care with regional enterprise linkage (internships, on-site training, matching, and hiring)[15][16][17][18]. This study ultimately aims to explore practical solutions for addressing population decline in Korea by proposing practical alternatives that connect the survival strategies of local vocational colleges with regional population, industry, and community sustainability strategies.

2. Research subjects and methods

To achieve the purpose of this study, experts from organizations related to population decline were consulted regarding the relationship between local governments and local universities, the role of local universities in the decline of local governments, and policy directions for attracting foreign workers and immigrants, building living infrastructure to prevent population outflow, and fostering cooperation between local governments and local universities to address the declining birthrate.

For this study, 11 field experts with over seven years of experience in related fields, such as low birth rates, social welfare, children, and education, were consulted from August 1 to October 30, 2024. These experts were used as a source of analysis data, as shown in Table 1. Specifically, the experts were informed in writing in advance of the purpose, questions, and background of the study so that they could freely express their opinions. Each of the 11 experts participating in the study submitted a total of 11 expert consultation forms, and 11 rounds of data were collected.

Key structured questions include: “What is the impact of cooperation between local universities and local governments in addressing the depopulation crisis, and how can it lead to a substantial influx of people and local revitalization?”, “What are the most important roles and strategies for local universities to play in preventing out-migration and attracting new people?”, “What policy support is needed to address depopulation through the settlement of foreign workers and migrants, and is it feasible to build settlements? ”, “What living infrastructure is most needed in the community to prevent brain drain, and what factors should be prioritized in building it?”, “What are the specific ways in which local governments and local universities can collaborate to address the declining birthrate, and do they require additional institutional support or financial investment?” Other unstructured questions included open-ended questions related to the research topic on related topics. A total of 11 copies of the consultation document were collected and analyzed for qualitative data.

Table 1. Experts participating in the study background variables.

| No | Region | Specialties and Titles | Experience | Sex |
|----|-----------|---|------------|-----|
| 1 | Changwon | Social Welfare (Civil Servant) | 10 years | F |
| 2 | Changwon | Low Birthrate and Education Research (Educational Researcher) | 26 years | M |
| 3 | Busan | Local College Admissions Expert (Chairman, Korea College Admissions Management Association) | 38years | M |
| 4 | Daejeon | Local College Admissions Specialist (Chairman, Chungcheong Branch, Korea College Admissions Council) | 26 years | M |
| 5 | Changwon | Low birthrate and social welfare (Chairman of Gyeongnam Regional Children's Center Federation) | 34 years | F |
| 6 | Geoje | Early Childhood Education (Civil Servant) | 22 years | F |
| 7 | Gimhae | Social Welfare (Social Welfare Facility Director) | 14 years | M |
| 8 | Changwon | Job Creation and Education (Gyeongnam Women's New Work Center) | 13 years | F |
| 9 | Goseong | Elementary school support field (civil servant) | 7 years | M |
| 10 | Gyeongsan | Local College Admissions Specialist (Chairman, Gyeongbuk Branch, Korea College Admissions Management Association) | 20 years | M |
| 11 | Changwon | Secondary Education and Career Counseling (Civil Servant) | 28 years | M |

The analysis procedure of the qualitative data was conducted inductively according to Mertens' (1990) method[19]. First, each of the researchers read the consultation documents written by the experts several times to generate a list of primary categories by selecting specific words and sentences that were deemed meaningful and in line with the research question. Then, we repeated the process of interpretation by rereading the original data from the beginning again and compared it with the primary coded data to reorganize and systematize it into secondary categories. Finally, to minimize subjective errors and ensure reliability and validity, the data were reviewed by two professors who are qualitative researchers. The finalized interview categories of experts related to rural decline and local universities were 'Relationship between local governments and local universities due to rural decline', 'Role of local universities in rural decline', 'Policy direction for attracting foreign workers and immigrants', 'Building living infrastructure to prevent population outflow', and 'Cooperation between local governments and local universities to overcome the declining birthrate', as shown in <Table 2>.

Table 2. Categories of interview analysis related to rural depopulation and local universities.

| Parent Categories | Subcategories | Semantic units |
|---|--|---|
| Relationship between local governments and local universities in the wake of localization | Need for cooperation Specific cooperation measures | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Regional revitalization, population influx, and sustainable community building ▶ Strengthening cooperation between local governments and local universities to solve the problem of rural decline ▶ Joint projects, collaboration to solve community problems |
| Role of Local Universities in Local Decline | Establishment of customized majors Strengthen lifelong education and cultural education | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Community development, human resource development, and resident empowerment ▶ Develop major programs that meet local needs ▶ Provide lifelong learning opportunities for local residents |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Policy Direction for the Influx of Foreign Workers and Immigrants | Settlement support policies Facilitate the influx of foreigners | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Secure labor force, create multicultural society, and revitalize local economy ▶ Establish settlement villages, provide cultural adaptation programs ▶ Improve labor market access, create a welcoming community culture |
| Build living infrastructure to prevent brain drain | Build essential living infrastructure Job creation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Improve resettlement conditions, enhance local attractiveness, and prevent brain drain ▶ Expand core services such as healthcare, education, transportation, etc. ▶ Provide employment opportunities to stimulate economic activity in the region |
| How local governments and local universities can collaborate to address the declining birthrate | Strengthening family support Joint research and policy development | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Promote population growth, create family-friendly environments, and develop sustainable communities ▶ Strengthen childcare and education support policies ▶ Analyze data and propose policies to address the declining birth rate |

3. Findings

3.1. Relationship between local governments and local universities in the face of rural decline

The findings from the expert interviews in this study are organized into five main categories, which provide in-depth insights into the relationship between rural decline and local universities and how they are responding. These categories are summarized as 'Relationship between local governments and local universities in the face of rural decline', 'Role of local universities in the face of rural decline', 'Policy directions for attracting foreign workers and immigrants', 'Building living infrastructure to prevent population outflow', and 'Cooperation between local governments and local universities to overcome the declining birthrate'.

3.1.1. The impact of local university and municipal collaboration on the depopulation crisis

3.1.1.1. Local innovation and economic revitalization

Local universities develop specialized industries based on local research capabilities, and local governments translate these into policies and institutions, creating a virtuous cycle of local economic revitalization. When universities develop curricula that reflect industry needs, and local governments provide startup support spaces and testbeds, they can help attract young entrepreneurs and foster startups. In addition, they can attract not only large companies, but also small and medium-sized enterprises and startups, expanding the diversity of economic opportunities. Experts have found that when university research results are effectively linked to local government policies, regional competitiveness is enhanced, and population inflow and regional revitalization are accelerated. They specifically suggested that the establishment of departments linked to local specialized industries and industry-academia collaboration have practical effects on improving employment and settlement rates.

Expert 1: Regional competitiveness is strengthened when there is good cooperation between universities and local governments to generate results for regional development and implement them. A competitive region attracts people, which leads to population influx and regional revitalization.

Expert 7: Establishing majors linked to local specialized industries and establishing a system that guarantees employment after graduation is expected to attract people. Universities and local governments can work together to create incubation spaces or testbeds to attract young entrepreneurs to the region.

Expert 9: Local universities and local governments can help revitalize the local economy by developing curricula centered on local specialized industries and connecting with companies. Internships and job placement programs play a big role in this process.

Expert 10: Local governments should attract high-quality companies, and universities should run customized training programs that reflect the needs of companies. This will help revitalize the local economy and attract people to the region.

3.1.1.2. Preventing brain drain

To stem the outflow of people from the region, it is essential to create quality jobs for graduates along with improved settlement conditions. Local universities can expand employment opportunities by establishing and reorganizing customized majors linked to local industries, and local governments can improve the settlement environment by improving housing, education, and leisure infrastructure to encourage residents to settle in the region. Employment stability and improved living conditions are especially important for preventing youth brain drain, which in turn increases community stability and sustainability in the long run.

Expert 3: Encourage graduates to work and settle in the region by establishing and reorganizing majors linked to local industries and providing incentives for hiring local talent.

Expert 4: Improving job security, living conditions, education, and leisure infrastructure is effective in preventing outward migration. This can simultaneously revitalize neighborhoods and improve settlement conditions.

Expert 6: Local governments should focus on creating quality jobs, and it is important to create jobs based on local specialized industries to prevent the exodus of local university graduates to the metropolitan areas.

3.1.1.3. Strengthening local identity

Joint projects between universities and local governments that capitalize on local cultural, historical, and tourism resources can foster bonds between residents and students, foster local attachment, and prevent out-migration. Developing festivals, brand enhancement, and cultural programs that leverage the region's unique resources is a foundation for sustainable development. Experts emphasized that this can increase community pride and attract outside populations.

Expert 7: Running joint projects that utilize local cultural, historical, and tourism resources creates a stronger bond between locals and students, which strengthens their attachment to the community.

Expert 8: Festivals and programs that utilize local resources can help local residents take pride in their community, which also contributes to inward migration. A happy local living environment is an important factor in sustaining population inflows.

3.1.2. How to attract substantial population and revitalize the area

3.1.2.1. Create quality jobs

Jobs are the most basic factor for population influx and settlement. Universities and local governments should jointly participate in industry-academia cooperation programs, internships, and MOUs linked to specialized industries to attract young people and professionals, and provide a wide range of employment opportunities by attracting not only large companies but also SMEs and startups. In addition, differentiated new industries that meet local characteristics should be discovered and facilities should be developed.

Expert 1: Fostering local specialized industries, developing unique facilities, and discovering differentiated new industries have a positive impact on job creation and population inflow in the region.

Expert 5: Local universities and local governments should match specific majors with companies or offer internship programs to increase local job opportunities.

Expert 6: Local governments should offer jobs in a variety of fields by attracting not only large companies but also small businesses and startups. This gives local university graduates a reason to stay in the area.

Expert 10: Local governments should strengthen their business attraction policies, focusing on industries that fit their local characteristics, and run vocational training programs in cooperation with universities.

3.1.2.2. Improving living conditions

Improving the housing environment, healthcare services, and educational and leisure infrastructure are key to attracting new residents and improving the retention rate of local residents. A variety of comprehensive living infrastructure improvements are needed, including expanding affordable and high-quality public rental housing, creating cultural and leisure spaces, providing economic stability and welfare services, and fostering local pride.

Expert 2: Improved living infrastructure, including housing, healthcare, and welfare services, can improve the quality of life for local residents, which can lead to an influx of people from outside the neighborhood.

Expert 4: Improving educational and leisure infrastructure and housing conditions will strengthen the willingness of local residents and young people to stay.

Expert 8: Creating conditions for a happy life (economic stability, social services, cultural enrichment, and local pride) is the most important strategy.

Expert 9: Providing affordable rental housing, youth housing, and creating cultural and recreational spaces were cited as key ways to improve settlement conditions in the region.

3.1.2.3. Attracting international students

Attracting international students is an essential strategy to overcome the decline in the domestic school-age population and revitalize the local economy. Global campuses, scholarships and visa support, and employment and entrepreneurship programs should be implemented to help international students settle in the region and promote the formation of a multicultural society.

Expert 2: To compensate for the decline in the domestic school-age population, it is necessary to attract foreign students and encourage them to settle in the region. Local governments should ease visa requirements and support livelihood stability programs.

Expert 9: Expanding the attraction of international students and supporting their employment and entrepreneurship can boost local economies and promote multiculturalism.

3.1.2.4. Supporting entrepreneurship and startups

A vibrant entrepreneurship ecosystem has a positive impact on fostering new industries and attracting young people to settle in the city. Universities and local governments can support local entrepreneurship by providing incubators and testbeds, seed funding, and mentorship. Revitalizing the social economy also contributes to solving local problems and revitalizing the economy.

Expert 7: Universities and local governments should work together to create entrepreneurship support spaces and testbeds and attract young entrepreneurs to the region.

Expert 9: The youth entrepreneurship ecosystem should be revitalized by establishing entrepreneurship support centers, providing seed funding and mentorship. The social economy can also contribute to local revitalization.

3.1.3. Strategic direction and comprehensive approach

3.1.3.1. Tailored policies and regional specialization

Designing customized policies that reflect a region's unique resources and industry structure is key to enhancing regional competitiveness and countering demographic decline. Universities and local governments should work together to focus on establishing regional specialization departments, strengthening regional brands, and developing curricula, which are the basis for efficiently linking local industries and talent supply and demand.

Expert 7: Suggested a strategy for regionalized development by establishing majors tailored to regional specialized industries, strengthening regional brands, and utilizing local resources.

Expert 9: Proposed a development model centered on regional specialized industries, including regionally tailored education, industry-academia cooperation, and policy development.

Expert 10: Argued that a collaborative model that combines quality jobs and education through cooperation between local universities and local governments can substantially contribute to regional revitalization and population inflow.

3.1.3.2. Cooperation with the government

Central government financial support, deregulation, and cooperation with youth resettlement programs are critical to the success of regional development strategies. A comprehensive support system should be put in place to address local economic and social issues by securing state funding, improving the legal system, and coordinating policies.

Expert 8: Emphasized that regional development strategies can succeed through cooperation with the government, including financial support from the central government and deregulation.

Expert 9: Suggested that the central government should be asked to utilize government-led youth resettlement support programs and to ease regulations through legal amendments.

3.1.4. Conclusion

In summary, cooperation between local universities and local governments is a key strategy for revitalizing local economies and overcoming the depopulation crisis, promoting community sustainability by fostering specialized industries, creating high-quality jobs, improving resident settlement conditions, attracting foreign students, and promoting entrepreneurship. This requires an integrated approach through customized policies and central government cooperation, and contributes to creating an environment where residents and outsiders can enjoy a “happy life” together.

3.2. The role of local universities in rural decline

As the severity of rural depopulation increases, local universities play a pivotal role as key institutions to prevent outflow and promote inflow of population within local communities. Our analysis of expert interviews shows that local universities can contribute to community revitalization and population growth by implementing a variety of strategies, including establishing specialized majors, enhancing continuing education, expanding industry-academia collaboration, and attracting international students. These strategies should be tailored to meet the diverse socioeconomic needs of the region while proactively responding to changes in the region's industrial structure and population.

3.2.1. Key roles for regional universities

3.2.1.1. Establishing and strengthening localized majors and education

Local universities should perform an important function of connecting human resource training and job creation by establishing customized majors or reorganizing existing majors in close cooperation with local specialized industries. In this process, it is essential to design curricula that reflect the local industrial structure and job demand. Signature majors have been identified as an effective means of enhancing the competitiveness of universities while promoting the inflow of external populations and preventing population exodus.

For example, a smart farming program in an agriculture-oriented region, or a tourism marketing program in a region with an active tourism industry, should provide students with the opportunity to find employment in local industries after graduation. In areas where industrial complexes have developed, such as Changwon Industrial Complex, majors that specialize in local industries such as aviation, automobiles, and shipbuilding can help prevent the outflow of local youth and enhance the competitiveness of local industries. Experts emphasized that operating

customized majors that reflect local characteristics is a key strategy for securing sustainability and enhancing competitiveness of local universities.

Expert 1: Operating signature majors that reflect regional characteristics will increase the competitiveness of local universities and provide sustainability in preventing population inflow and outflow.

Expert 7: It is important to establish majors tailored to regional characteristics, such as smart farm majors in agricultural regions and tourism marketing majors in tourist destinations, and to link them to employment.

Expert 6: Customized majors based on major industries in the region, such as the Changwon Industrial Complex, can help prevent the outflow of young people.

3.2.1.2. Continuing education and adult learner support

Local universities should expand their role as lifelong education platforms for adult learners, including local residents and working adults, beyond the traditional education of the school-age population. To this end, it is necessary to introduce flexible academic systems, such as virtual classes, and create an educational environment that meets the needs of adult learners who have difficulty attending regular classes due to personal circumstances, such as livelihood. In addition, work-based training programs for working adults and evening graduate courses are effective in improving their skills and increasing their chances of staying in the local area. Career certification programs through multi-semester and learning experience credits provide a foundation for re-employment and professional advancement, which is pivotal to functioning as an educational hub for the community.

Expert 2: There is a need for distance learning and flexible bachelor's programs for adult learners whose lives make it difficult to attend classes.

Expert 4: Continuing education platforms and flexible bachelor's programs should allow for the recognition of learning experiences and multi-semester programs.

Expert 10: Work-focused graduate (or undergraduate) courses and evening continuing education programs for working professionals strengthen community ties.

3.2.1.3. Support employment and entrepreneurship through industry-university collaboration

Industry-academia collaboration between local universities and local companies is essential not only to expand graduates' employment opportunities but also to foster a local entrepreneurial ecosystem. Establishing employment-linked majors and providing work-based training and internships are effective ways to bridge the gap between students' knowledge and local industry needs. In addition, operating startup support programs, providing initial funding, and offering mentoring are tasks that universities and local governments should jointly promote to facilitate the discovery and realization of startup ideas using local resources, contributing to the revitalization of the local economy and the settlement of the young population. The experts suggested that strengthening industry-academia cooperation is the most effective way to revitalize the region and prevent brain drain.

Expert 5: Through industry-academia collaboration, new majors should be established that are linked to employment, and connections with local companies should be strengthened.

Expert 9: Collaborate with local companies to provide work-based training and internships and create an entrepreneurship ecosystem.

3.2.1.4. Attracting international students and creating a multicultural environment

In order to overcome the problems of rural depopulation and population decline, attracting foreign students is not only important for strengthening the competitiveness of local universities, but also for revitalizing the local economy and building a multicultural society. To this end,

universities should provide language training, cultural exchange programs, and settlement support systems for international students to create conditions for them to settle down in a stable environment. Creating an ecosystem that encourages international students to work or start a business in the local area after graduation is a strategy that can smooth the transition to a multicultural society and maximize the influx of foreigners. This should be accompanied by a variety of policy support, such as operating global campuses, providing scholarships, and supporting visa issuance.

Expert 7: Language training, cultural exchange programs, and settlement support systems for foreign students are needed.

Expert 9: Local governments should work together to create an ecosystem where international students can start their own businesses or find employment.

3.2.1.5. Act as community-centered hubs

Local universities should be more than just educational institutions, they should be community-centered hubs that interact closely with the local community. They should open their campuses to local residents and tourists, provide community spaces and programs, and strengthen ties with local people. These activities are an important pillar in promoting local identity and sustainable development of the community. By offering educational and cultural programs that reflect the needs of local workers and residents, universities can strengthen their pivotal role in community revitalization.

Expert 7: Open up university campuses to locals and tourists, create community spaces, and position them as local hubs.

Expert 10: It is important to play a role in community revitalization through programs that meet the needs of local residents and workers.

3.2.2. Key strategies for local universities

3.2.2.1. Flexible education and strengthening lifelong learning platforms

To respond to the decline in the school-age population and the growing demand for adult learners, local universities should focus on securing educational flexibility and revitalizing lifelong learning. They should support learners to combine their livelihoods with their studies by offering virtual lectures, short courses, and recognizing learning experiences, and contribute to the spread of a culture of lifelong learning in the community. This flexibility in the education system ensures continuous learning opportunities for the local population and enhances the status of universities as community education hubs.

Expert 4: There is a need for distance education for adult learners, flexibility in the bachelor's degree system, and work experience recognition programs.

Expert 8: Promote lifelong learning through flexible education systems, including non-degree and short courses.

3.2.2.2. Establish regional specialized majors and strengthen industry-academia collaboration

Establishing customized majors that reflect local industry structure and job demand is an effective strategy to increase the local retention rate of graduates. It is necessary to strengthen field-oriented education and employment linkages through connections with influential local companies, and universities that do this can contribute significantly to revitalizing the local economy. For example, in the Changwon Industrial Complex area, the university has established departments related to aviation, automobiles, and shipbuilding to foster manpower specialized in local industries.

Expert 6: It is necessary to increase the employment rate in the region after graduation by establishing majors linked to influential companies in the region.

Expert 9: It is important to operate majors based on local industry demand and provide on-the-job training.

3.2.2.3. Attracting and settling foreign students

Attracting international students has a direct impact on local economic revitalization and population inflow, along with improving the internationalization competitiveness of local universities. Universities should operate global campuses, provide scholarships, establish visa and housing support policies, and build support systems that cover employment and entrepreneurship after graduation. This will promote international students' contributions to the community and maximize the effect of population inflow.

Expert 7: Global campus operations and job placement support are needed to attract international students.

Expert 9: We need programs to help international students settle in, such as scholarships and visa support.

3.2.3. Conclusion

Based on the analysis of the expert interviews, local universities are key institutions in the fight against rural decline, and they should implement a multifaceted strategy that includes establishing specialized majors, strengthening continuing education, collaborating with industry and academia, attracting foreign students and creating a multicultural environment, and acting as a hub for local communities. In addition, it is essential to work closely with local residents, businesses, and local governments to play a central role in linking education, industry, and the economy. With a sustained and systematic effort, local universities can become engines of regional innovation that simultaneously achieve the dual goals of community development and population attraction.

3.3. Policy directions for the influx of foreign workers and immigrants

The influx of foreign workers and immigrants has been highlighted as an essential response to overcome the rural decline crisis. Experts viewed the problem of declining domestic population and labor shortage seriously in terms of the sustainability of local economies and industries, and recognized the urgency of actively attracting foreign workers and immigrants and changing social perceptions. Beyond filling short-term labor gaps, they can make important contributions to diversifying local economies, improving productivity, expanding domestic markets, and revitalizing economies in the long term.

3.3.1. The need for an influx of foreign workers and immigrants

Rapidly changing demographics and aging of the domestic population are exacerbating labor shortages in many regions, which threatens to lead to the collapse of the local industrial base. This is evidenced by the diagnosis of experts that in regions centered on small and medium-sized enterprises, such as Gyeongsangnam-do, it is impossible to operate without foreign workers. Foreign workers and immigrants are an important resource for filling labor gaps in essential industries such as agriculture and manufacturing, and in the long run, they boost economic productivity and contribute to local consumption and entrepreneurship, which in turn boosts economic vitality. This labor force replenishment is seen as an effective response to mitigate the underlying causes of rural decline: population decline and economic stagnation. In other words, the influx of foreign workers and immigrants is a strategic asset that can compensate for a community's demographic decline, strengthen its economic self-sufficiency, and promote sustainable development.

Expert 2: The domestic population has reached a point where it is not enough, and it is necessary to actively encourage and change the perception of foreigners.

Expert 6: SMEs in Gyeongsangnam-do cannot operate without foreign workers.

Expert 8: Foreign workers play an important role in filling labor gaps and can maintain productivity, especially in essential industries such as agriculture and manufacturing.

Expert 8: Foreign economic activity can expand local domestic markets and increase productivity.

Expert 9: Foreign workers and immigrants contribute to economic revitalization by diversifying the local economy and stimulating consumption.

3.3.2. Establishing housing and living infrastructure for resettlement

Securing a stable housing environment is crucial for the stable settlement of foreign workers and immigrants. To this end, policies are being proposed to provide affordable and comfortable living spaces through the supply of public rental housing, renovation of vacant houses, and remodeling of abandoned schools. Local governments can reduce initial settlement costs and provide a stable living base by establishing base dormitories by utilizing idle facilities in the community.

The concept of resettlement centers has also been discussed, which is seen as a way to streamline initial settlement support by concentrating housing, education, healthcare, and administrative services in one place. However, resettlement centers need to be carefully designed, as their isolation from the foreign community can hinder social integration, and they can be expensive to maintain and manage. Therefore, they should include public facilities that are shared by both nationals and foreigners, as well as ongoing community exchange programs.

Expert 3: Settlements have the advantage of exchanging information and maintaining traditional culture, but their effectiveness is questionable if they are concentrated in certain areas.

Expert 7: While resettlement centers can centralize housing, education, healthcare, and administrative support for foreigners, they can lead to social segregation. Public rental housing or shared housing should also be provided so that foreigners can settle in without financial burden.

Expert 9: Vacant housing units in the community can be remodeled to provide affordable housing for foreign workers.

Expert 10: Local governments can utilize abandoned or idle facilities to provide base dormitories. It is essential that the base dormitories or settlements have exchange programs with the local population so that they are not isolated from the outside world.

3.3.3. Education and language support

Language and cultural understanding training is essential for foreign workers and immigrants to successfully integrate and settle into the community. Experts emphasized the need for universities to take the lead in providing Korean language training and practical training for settling in and living in Korea. In addition, the creation of integrated programs in conjunction with local educational institutions to ensure that children of foreign-born families can be educated in local schools without discrimination was also cited as an important task. Such an educational support system would contribute to the stability of foreign workers' family units and long-term settlement in the community, ultimately facilitating a smooth transition to a multicultural society.

Expert 1: Universities should provide language training, Korean cultural education, and practical training for settlement.

Expert 5: It would be helpful to provide basic Korean language education at universities.

Expert 8: Support systems, including education and medical services, should be put in place to help foreign workers' families settle together.

Expert 9: Language and cultural adaptation programs should be offered to help foreigners integrate into the community.

Expert 7: Integrated education programs should be established in conjunction with local schools to ensure

that children of foreign-born families are educated without discrimination.

3.3.4. Administrative support and institutional improvements

Improving administrative support systems, including visa issuance and residence management, is a basic condition for foreigners to stay and settle in a stable manner. Experts pointed to the need to streamline visa issuance procedures, introduce region-specific visa systems, and establish one-stop administrative services. This would ease the difficulties of foreign workers and students in staying and working in the country. Integrated service delivery through the establishment of multilingual and multicultural support centers to improve access to administrative, medical, and legal services was also discussed. This is essential to ensure the legal stability of foreigners and facilitate their integration into the community.

Expert 2: The visa issuance and screening process for foreign students is a major challenge, and local governments should streamline the visa issuance system.

Expert 4: A regionalized visa system should be introduced to issue customized visas and support foreigners to extend their stay.

Expert 7: Multicultural support centers that provide administrative, legal, and medical services are needed to help foreigners settle down.

Expert 9: Local governments should provide one-stop services to streamline the visa and work permit process.

3.3.5. Community integration and multicultural support

Successful integration of foreign workers and immigrants must go hand in hand with community integration efforts. Experts noted that fostering mutual understanding and empathy through festivals, cultural exchange events, and educational programs that bring together locals and foreigners is essential to preventing local conflicts and ensuring stable integration. Strengthening intercultural understanding education and outreach campaigns to mitigate negative perceptions of foreigners was also emphasized. Specific exchange programs, such as mentoring schemes and support for community activities, can foster social connections and ties, promoting mutual cooperation and integration between foreigners and locals.

Expert 3: Integration should be promoted through festivals, events, etc. that bring locals and foreign workers together.

Expert 4: Increased policing and more contact experiences with foreigners should be explored to improve negative perceptions of foreign workers.

Expert 7: Organize trainings and events that bring locals and foreigners together to create multicultural-friendly communities.

Expert 9: Exchange events can promote mutual understanding between locals and foreigners. Also, social awareness of foreigners should be improved through multicultural understanding education.

3.3.6. Supporting employment and economic activity

Economic independence and stability for foreigners can be achieved through employment programs linked to local industries and support for start-ups. Experts suggested that foreigners should be effectively deployed to address labor shortages in local industries such as agriculture, manufacturing, and tourism, and vocational training programs should be provided. Examples of how foreign workers have been used to maintain productivity in rural Japan demonstrate the effectiveness of this strategy. In addition, initial funding and simplification of administrative procedures are needed to encourage foreigners to start small businesses, especially those linked to local specialized industries, which will have a positive impact on revitalizing the local economy.

Expert 7: Employment linkage programs that connect foreigners with local specialized industries (agriculture, manufacturing, tourism) should be implemented. It should also provide initial funding

and simplify administrative procedures so that foreigners can contribute to the local economy through small businesses.

Expert 9: Foreigners should be placed in industries with labor shortages, such as agriculture and manufacturing, and vocational training programs should be provided, and foreigners should be encouraged to start their own businesses, especially those linked to local specialty industries.

3.3.7. Feasibility and design direction of settlements

Settlement centers are considered an effective way to support the initial settlement of foreigners by concentrating housing, education, medical care, and administrative services. While they have the advantage of creating a stable community with people of the same culture, there are concerns about social isolation and community integration.

Experts emphasized that the design of resettlement centers should include public facilities and programs that promote interaction and community integration, while also considering operating costs and management efficiency. It was also suggested that a mixed model of decentralized settlement and utilization of existing facilities could be effective.

Expert 3: Isolation of resettlement centers into foreigner-only communities can lead to difficulties in social integration.

Expert 7: Settlements centralize housing, education, healthcare, and administrative support in one place, making policy enforcement efficient. However, they can limit interaction with the local population and can be expensive to maintain.

Expert 9: Settlements provide a base for foreign workers to support each other and increase initial settlement stability.

Expert 10: Settlements can support local economic revitalization and community building. However, settlements can be disconnected from the outside world and require ongoing exchange programs.

3.3.8. Conclusion

The expert interviews identified the influx and resettlement of foreign workers and migrants as a viable and key alternative to addressing rural decline. Successful resettlement requires multidimensional and comprehensive policy support, including housing and livelihood infrastructure, language and education support, improved administrative services, employment linkages, and community integration.

While resettlement centers are an effective initial support tool, given the complexity of their operation, decentralized resettlement models and the use of existing facilities should be strongly considered. Such integrated and sustainable policies are the best way to respond to the rural decline crisis and are expected to revitalize and stabilize local economies and societies in the long term.

3.4. Build livable infrastructure to prevent population outflows

In order to effectively address the issue of population outflow, it is crucial to comprehensively expand the living infrastructure, i.e. the basic environment in which local residents can stably settle down. The analysis of the expert interviews confirmed that creating stable jobs, expanding healthcare and welfare infrastructure, improving education and learning environments, improving housing conditions, and expanding cultural and leisure facilities should be complementary and integrated, and that customized strategies and sustainable development models tailored to local characteristics and residents' needs are essential. Public participation and consensus-building are also key to improving policy effectiveness.

3.4.1. Creating stable jobs

Stable jobs are a fundamental and key factor for residents to settle and stay in a region. Experts emphasized that local governments should create customized jobs that reflect local industry characteristics and attract businesses to create a sustainable employment base. To do so, they should actively promote policies to attract businesses, such as tax incentives, simplified administrative procedures, and infrastructure support.

Strengthening industry-university cooperation programs with local universities also plays an important role in preventing brain drain and stabilizing employment. By establishing an effective linkage system for graduates to find employment in the region, the local economy and residents' settlement can be promoted at the same time. A steady supply of high-quality jobs will naturally concentrate the population and create a positive virtuous cycle that promotes the construction of basic infrastructure such as healthcare and transportation. Supporting small and medium-sized enterprises and attracting competitive companies is essential to prevent a vicious cycle of population decline and economic decline due to a lack of jobs, and the focus should be on securing future growth engines rather than just providing housing. The experts made it clear that such a strategy will help local people stabilize their lives and achieve economic independence.

Expert 2: Stable jobs and salaries are key to preventing brain drain, and linkages with local businesses should provide tangible benefits.

Expert 3: Stable access to quality jobs attracts people and naturally builds infrastructure such as healthcare and transportation.

Expert 4: Localized job creation and improved living conditions are needed to prevent a vicious cycle of underemployment.

Expert 5: Good job creation and job security are key factors in preventing out-migration and in-migration.

Expert 6: Local governments should focus on supporting SMEs and attracting competitive companies rather than developing apartments.

Expert 9: Creating quality jobs by fostering industries and attracting companies that reflect local characteristics, and providing additional benefits such as housing and cost of living subsidies are necessary.

Expert 10: Jobs are a key foundation for resettlement, and sustainable job creation through attracting companies is necessary.

3.4.2. Health and welfare infrastructure

Healthcare and welfare infrastructure are essential living conditions that encourage family settlement and population influx. Expanding medical facilities related to childbirth and childcare, such as obstetrics and gynecology and pediatrics, and establishing public postpartum care centers and childcare centers are essential to creating a childbirth-friendly environment. In addition, securing specialized medical personnel to improve access to emergency medical care and expanding elderly welfare facilities in preparation for an ultra-elderly society should be balanced. The introduction of telemedicine systems and the strengthening of small local hospitals are also needed to address regional medical blind spots. In particular, it is necessary to continue to invest in and support healthcare services to narrow the gap in quality of life between rural and urban areas. A stable healthcare and welfare infrastructure plays a key role in improving the quality of life of residents and strengthening their willingness to settle in the region.

Expert 4: It is important to expand medical facilities such as maternity and pediatrics, and provide welfare services such as public postpartum care centers and childcare centers.

Expert 5: Expanding healthcare facilities is a key way to prevent out-migration and increase the willingness to stay.

Expert 7: There is a need to improve and continue to invest in healthcare services in rural areas to reduce the quality of life gap between urban and rural areas.

Expert 9: Access to healthcare should be improved by strengthening small community hospitals, promoting telemedicine, and supporting resident specialists.

3.4.3. Education and learning environments

Education is a crucial factor in preventing youth brain drain and building the foundation for local development. There is an urgent need to attract highly qualified teachers, secure modern school facilities, and expand career exploration and after-school activities. It is also necessary to create a lifelong learning system by retraining adult learners and running lifelong learning programs. It is also important to partner with local universities to expand educational opportunities and create flexible learning environments, including online courses and short courses. This will help residents of all ages continue to engage in self-development and learning. Strengthening the educational environment helps develop talent and keep residents happy, which in turn contributes to community vitality.

Expert 5: Expanding educational facilities and providing a quality educational environment is a key factor in preventing brain drain.

Expert 7: Ensure that residents have access to learning and personal development opportunities through lifelong learning programs and improving the quality of local schools.

Expert 9: The educational environment should be strengthened by attracting highly qualified teachers, improving school facilities, after-school programs, and adult vocational training programs.

3.4.4. Housing

Affordable and quality housing is a key factor in attracting and retaining young people and newlyweds. Expanding the supply of public rental housing and remodeling policies for old houses will attract residents by reducing the burden of initial settlement costs, and improve their living satisfaction by improving the housing environment. Location is also important, especially if the housing is close to an industrial park to facilitate commuting.

Economic incentives, such as subsidized home purchases and reduced interest rates on loans for newlyweds, are also essential to encourage long-term settlement. These housing policies are crucial to building a stable population base and increasing the willingness of young people to settle in the region.

Expert 4: It is important to improve the living environment by providing public rental housing for young people and newlyweds, remodeling old houses, and connecting them to industrial parks.

Expert 7: Local housing should be connected to infrastructure and industrial parks, and the proximity of housing to industrial parks is important.

Expert 9: Policy consideration should be given to providing public rental housing for young people and newlyweds, and remodeling empty houses to reduce initial settlement costs.

3.4.5. Cultural and recreational facilities

Cultural and recreational spaces are key infrastructure that not only improve the quality of life for residents, but also strengthen their sense of belonging and commitment to the neighborhood. A variety of cultural and leisure facilities, such as libraries, performance venues, sports facilities, and parks, should be expanded so that residents can easily access and enjoy culture in their daily lives. Festivals and cultural programs that bring together local residents and young people can build a sense of community and revitalize the community, especially when combined with the creation of youth-friendly cafes and co-working spaces to create a modern and progressive image.

Expert 5: Expanding cultural facilities, such as libraries, performance venues, and sports facilities, plays an important role in improving the quality of life for residents and preventing brain drain.

Expert 7: Local festivals and cultural activities should be expanded to include residents and young people.

Expert 9: Expand facilities for local people to enjoy culture and leisure and provide programs for local festivals and cultural activities.

3.4.6. Regional characteristics and customized strategies

Tailoring infrastructure to reflect the unique industrial structure and population characteristics of each region is a prerequisite for optimal policy effectiveness. Differentiated strategies are required, such as focusing on strengthening medical and transportation infrastructure in rural areas, and prioritizing residential and cultural facilities in urban peripheries. Stable financing must be secured through cooperation with the central government, and cooperation with private capital must be actively introduced to ensure policy efficiency and sustainability. The expert emphasized that regional infrastructure prioritization and customized policy design are key to successful regional development.

Expert 7: Rural and peri-urban areas have different infrastructure needs and priorities, and policies need to reflect this.

Expert 8: Strategies need to be tailored to local industrial structure and population characteristics.

Expert 9: Infrastructure should be customized to reflect the geography and demographics of the region.

3.4.7. Sustainable development models

There is an urgent need to design a long-term development model that ensures economic and social self-sustainability, not just temporary assistance. A systematic policy implementation strategy that prioritizes the expansion of basic infrastructure (jobs, housing, welfare) and gradually expands cultural and recreational facilities and transportation infrastructure is required. Securing stable financial resources and sharing investment and operating costs through private cooperation are essential to ensure sustainability. In addition, regular evaluation of policy effectiveness and the establishment of a timely improvement system will strengthen the sustainable growth engine of local communities.

Expert 8: Financial resources should be secured and sustainable development models should be designed to support long-term growth.

Expert 9: Cultural, recreational, and transportation infrastructure should be expanded gradually, and community self-reliance should be strengthened through sustainable policy design.

3.4.8. Engage residents and build consensus

Active participation and consensus building among local residents is essential for successful policy implementation and long-term effectiveness. Experts have found that collecting residents' opinions through regular public hearings and surveys can enhance policy trust and strengthen implementation. It is necessary to establish a cooperation system between various local actors such as residents, local governments, companies, and universities to facilitate policy implementation, and to actively promote the need and expected effects of policies to residents to spread consensus. This will minimize conflicts that may arise during policy implementation and serve as a basis for promoting community integration and cooperation.

Expert 7: Regular public hearings and surveys should be conducted to gather residents' opinions and improve the effectiveness of policy implementation.

Expert 9: Reflect residents' opinions and actively promote the need and effectiveness of policies to build consensus.

3.4.9. Conclusion

Building livelihood infrastructure to prevent population outflows requires an integrated and systematic approach that goes beyond piecemeal support for individual elements. Stable jobs, health and welfare, education, housing, and cultural and leisure facilities are not only valuable

in their own right, but also interact synergistically to strengthen the local settlement environment.

Tailored strategies and sustainable development models that reflect local characteristics and residents' needs, as well as participatory policy enforcement, play a crucial role in preventing brain drain. Ultimately, building integrated infrastructure is essential to creating neighborhoods where people want to “live” and securing a sustainable community future.

3.5. How local governments and local universities can work together to address the declining birthrate

The declining birthrate is more than just a decline in fertility, it is a major issue with serious implications for community sustainability and socioeconomic vitality. The analysis of the expert interviews confirmed that to overcome the declining birthrate, local governments and local universities should actively promote multi-faceted collaborative measures such as strengthening the settlement conditions for young people, creating an environment conducive to raising children, encouraging marriage and childbirth, supporting parental education and re-employment, revitalizing local communities, and coordinating with the central government for institutional support. They will play an important role in overcoming population problems and economic crises in local communities through customized policies tailored to local characteristics and the establishment of sustainable cooperation systems.

3.5.1. Strengthening youth settlement conditions

The starting point for addressing the declining birthrate is to create a stable settlement environment for young people. To this end, local universities and municipalities should expand affordable and stable housing for students and newlyweds. In addition to expanding the use of dormitories and public rental housing, practical support measures such as housing subsidies, marriage incentives, and interest subsidies on loans for newlyweds should also be provided. Such support will enable young people to start a family in the community without financial burden. It is also important to establish a model of industry-academia cooperation to support economic independence and stability. Providing internships with local specialized industries and guaranteeing employment after graduation will encourage young people to actually work and settle in the region. Tailored talent training programs can help to continuously produce specialized human resources that meet local industry characteristics and demands, and can also help to secure economic stability and encourage young people to have children.

Expert 6: Utilize local university dormitories and public rental housing to provide affordable housing for students and newlyweds.

Expert 8: Tailor-made talent training programs linked to local specialized industries to help graduates secure economic stability in the region.

3.5.2. Creating a child-friendly environment

The fight against the declining birthrate is accelerated when the environment in which children are born and raised is perceived as happy and safe. Therefore, establishing daycare centers and childcare centers on university campuses and opening them to local residents and student parents is a realistic alternative to reduce the burden of childcare. Training professional childcare workers through collaboration with welfare and education departments, as well as student volunteerism and practical training, contribute to improving the quality of childcare services and expanding social participation.

In addition to expanding public childcare facilities, it is also essential to train professional staff to improve the quality of childcare services. Expanding infant care services, utilizing idle spaces on university campuses, and engaging student labor are ways to efficiently expand local childcare resources. Such cooperation can have a real impact on alleviating the declining

birthrate by easing the burden of childbirth and childcare on parents.

Expert 2: Establish childcare facilities in universities and make them available to local residents and students.

Expert 6: Universities should work with welfare departments and education departments to establish childcare support networks and link student volunteer and work experience programs.

Expert 8: Local governments and universities should work together to increase the number of public childcare facilities and improve the quality of childcare services.

Expert 9: Expand early childhood care services and daycare centers, and utilize idle space and student labor on college campuses.

3.5.3. Encourage youth marriage and childbearing

It is necessary to ease the economic burden and create a social environment for young people to have a positive perception of marriage and childbearing. Local festivals and various social networking programs should be organized to encourage young people to socialize and increase marriage rates. Financial incentives such as wedding congratulations, maternity benefits, and the provision of baby products can help families start a family in the early years and encourage births. It is also important to promote incentive policies such as tuition reductions or exemptions for families with multiple children to ease the financial burden of childbearing.

Expert 8: Local festivals and social networking programs should be organized to increase marriage rates.

Expert 9: Reduce or eliminate tuition fees for students from families with multiple children.

3.5.4. Supporting parents' education and re-entry into the workforce

Prevent career interruptions due to childbirth and childcare and support parents to return to study and work in a stable manner. Parental leave programs, financial support for returning to school, and academic administrative support make it possible to combine parenting and study. Increasing the number of online and hybrid classes also contributes to academic persistence. In addition, customized vocational training and retraining programs help parents with career breaks re-enter the workforce and support economic independence. Parental education and psychological counseling can help ease the burden of childcare and create a stable family environment, which can play an all-round role in overcoming the declining birthrate.

Expert 2: Parental leave systems should be activated and university tuition should be reduced.

Expert 4: Vocational training and retraining programs for parents with career breaks are needed.

Expert 8: Expand online courses and hybrid learning models to enable parents to combine childcare and study.

3.5.5. Revitalizing local communities

Community programs that help multicultural families and international students settle in the community and strengthen social integration also contribute to addressing the declining birthrate. Language exchange programs and community events promote multicultural understanding and create a supportive environment for integration into the community.

Local festivals and cultural events bring young people and families together and increase a sense of community belonging and community spirit. Hosting active cultural events in collaboration with universities and local governments can increase the willingness of local residents to stay in the community and contribute to the revitalization of the area.

Expert 6: Language exchange programs and community events should be organized to promote intercultural understanding. Universities and local governments should also work together to organize local festivals and cultural events to revitalize local communities.

Expert 9: Community-based childcare programs should be implemented to create an environment where

parents and children can grow together.

3.5.6. Additional institutional support and financial investment

Close collaboration and financial and institutional support between the central government, local governments, and local universities is essential to overcome the declining birthrate. Local governments should work with the central government to strengthen budgetary and policy support, such as expanding maternity incentives, expanding public childcare facilities, and providing scholarships. Establishing a long-term cooperation system between local governments and universities, establishing joint committees to monitor policy design and implementation, and evaluating effectiveness will ensure sustainability and increase the effectiveness of the cooperation model.

Expert 7: Work with the central government to attract funding for childbirth incentives and the expansion of public childcare facilities.

Expert 8: Additional institutional support and financial investment is needed through cooperation with the central government.

Expert 9: Cooperation between local universities and local governments should be institutionalized and made sustainable.

3.5.7. Conclusion

Based on the experts' opinions, local governments and local universities should play a complementary role in overcoming the declining birthrate by actively implementing concrete measures to strengthen the settlement conditions for young people, create a good environment for raising children, encourage marriage and childbirth, support parents' re-employment, and revitalize local communities. Tailored approaches and sustainable cooperation, backed by financial and institutional support from the central government, are crucial to addressing the declining birthrate and laying the foundation for sustainable growth in local communities. In the end, when such multi-layered cooperation and policies are realized, it is possible to create an environment where both young people and local residents can lead a "happy life," which is a key pillar in overcoming the declining birthrate and creating healthy and vibrant communities.

4. Discussion and Conclusion

This study aimed to explore the ways in which local governments and community colleges can collaborate in communities at risk of rural extinction and to propose a comprehensive strategy for responding to complex demographic variables, including the influx of foreign labor and international students. Applying Mertens' (1990) qualitative analysis procedure based on in-depth interviews with experts[19], we identified five main categories, including local government-university relations, the role of local universities, foreign immigration policies, building livelihood SOCs, and cooperation in response to the declining birthrate, and reorganized the discussion and conclusions around these categories as follows.

First, cooperation between local governments and local universities was found to be a key strategy to revitalize local economies and promote population inflow. It enables the development of local specialized industries, creation of high-quality jobs, improvement of living conditions, attraction of foreign students, and promotion of entrepreneurship, which contributes to the sustainability of local communities. In particular, the integrated promotion of customized policies and central government cooperation can create an environment where residents and outsiders can enjoy a "happy life" together.

Second, as a pivotal institution in preventing out-migration and promoting in-migration, local

universities should implement a multi-faceted strategy, including establishing specialized majors, enhancing continuing education, expanding industry-academia cooperation, attracting international students, and creating a multicultural environment. By working closely with local residents, businesses, and local governments, they can play a central role in linking education, industry, and the economy, contributing to regional innovation and population growth.

Third, the influx of foreign workers and immigrants has been highlighted as a realistic way to mitigate population decline and labor shortages. Beyond just providing short-term labor, they contribute to diversifying local economies, raising productivity, and expanding domestic markets in the long term. For stable resettlement, multidimensional policy support for housing and living infrastructure, language and education support, improved administrative services, employment linkages, and community integration is needed, and decentralized resettlement models and utilization of existing facilities should be considered.

Fourth, the creation of stable jobs, expansion of health and welfare infrastructure, improved teaching and learning environments, improved housing conditions, and expansion of cultural and leisure facilities should be promoted in a complementary and integrated manner to prevent brain drain. Tailored strategies and sustainable development models based on community participation and consensus will enhance policy effectiveness and play a key role in curbing brain drain in the region. This will help create places where people want to live.

Fifth, to overcome the declining birthrate, local governments should strengthen youth settlement environments, establish childcare support systems, encourage marriage and childbirth, support parents' re-employment, and revitalize communities. Local universities play an important role in implementing policies tailored to local characteristics and building a sustainable cooperation system, and multi-level cooperation in conjunction with financial and institutional support from the central government is essential. This will enable the realization of healthy communities where young people and residents can enjoy a "happy life."

The conclusions drawn from this study redefine community colleges as the "entrepreneurial axis" of the Triple Helix model[20], and establish a comprehensive theoretical basis for local innovation and response to population issues by integrating human capital theory[21], the push-pull model[22], social capital theory[23], and the UN Sustainable Development Goals framework. In other words, this study empirically demonstrates that local government-university-industry cooperation and integrated living SOC investment in the region are complementary to improving regional sustainability and competitiveness[24].

Specifically, first, the triple helix governance structure between local governments, colleges, and industry has been a key driver of regional innovation and population inflows[20][25]. Vocational colleges have helped young people to settle and find employment in the region by reorganizing industry-specific majors, establishing lifelong education platforms, and strengthening industry-university-academia cooperation, thus promoting the accumulation of human capital in the region[21]. In addition, foreign resettlement packages have been found to be effective in promoting long-term local settlement and economic revitalization by providing integrated housing, language, visa, and employment support[22]. Second, an integrated investment model of life cycle SOC (jobs, housing, childcare, healthcare, and culture) is a key factor that has a lasting impact on local population retention and inflow, and in particular, youth housing support, on-campus childcare facilities, and career break prevention programs have contributed to substantial increases in the intention to marry and have children[23][26].

These findings are consistent with the theoretical argument that universities should function as 'entrepreneurial universities' in the context of regional innovation systems (RIS), acting as agents of knowledge, technology, and human capital internalization in the region[27][28], and the push-pull model supports the policy direction of strengthening the pull factors that lead to

an increase in regional in-migration[22][29]. The revitalization of social capital contributes to a sense of community belonging and increased residency rates, strengthening the social basis for local innovation[21][30].

In terms of policy implications, first, the full transfer of RISE (Regional Innovation-focused University Support System) to local governments and the institutionalization of regional customized innovation clusters based on 'investment and performance sharing' are required. Second, national financial support and university evaluation indicators should clearly reflect local industry linkages and lifelong learning outcomes to strengthen incentives for customized department reorganization and lifelong learning. Third, it is necessary to remove barriers to resettlement, such as renovating vacant houses, opening university dormitories, and establishing one-stop administrative centers, in order to build a foreign resettlement hub. Fourth, a life-cycle-specific SOC package should be established to prevent policy fragmentation, and fifth, a model to support childcare and study should be expanded through on-campus public childcare facilities, tuition reduction policies, and more online and blended classes.

This study makes an academic contribution by reconceptualizing local community colleges as an 'entrepreneurial axis' within the Triple Helix and presenting a multi-layered integrated model of regional development research linked to complex demographic variables such as immigration, low birthrate, and living SOC. However, since the sample was composed of experts from a few regions in the Gyeongnam region and the quantitative verification needs to be supplemented, future comparative analysis at the national level, causality testing using panel and time series data, and tracking the long-term effects of the cooperation model are required.

This study empirically confirms that multi-layered governance between local governments, colleges and universities, and industry is a key mechanism for transforming communities into livable, livable, and livable spaces under the combined crisis of rural decline and low birthrate. When regionally tailored departmental reorganization, lifelong education revitalization, industry-university-academia collaboration-based entrepreneurship support, foreign residence packages, life-cycle SOC integrated investment, and youth and childcare-friendly systems work together, communities can realize sustainability and competitiveness at the same time. The results provide academic validation of the complementary mechanisms proposed by the Triple Helix, human capital, social capital, and push-pull theories, and have important implications for the design and evaluation of central and local government cooperation policies such as RISE.

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6. Appendix

6.1. Author's contribution

| | Initial name | Contribution |
|-----------------------|--------------|--|
| Lead Author | GB | -Set of concepts <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> -Design <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> -Getting results <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> -Analysis <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> -Make a significant contribution to collection <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Corresponding Author* | SP | -Final approval of the paper <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> -Corresponding <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> -Play a decisive role in modification <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> -Significant contributions to concepts, designs, practices, analysis and interpretation of data <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Co-Author | SB IC | -Participants in Drafting and Revising Papers <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> -Someone who can explain all aspects of the paper <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

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Criminal Law Study of Sports-Related Crimes

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Abstract

Purpose: This study examines criminal legal issues regarding sports-related crimes such as sports manipulation, illegal gambling, doping, sexual assault, and other harsh acts, assaults, and injuries in the sports world. Sports-related crimes have long been pointed out as a disease of our society, and many efforts have been made to suggest causes and solutions, but it is not enough and system improvement is required. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to look at the types of sports, the classification of sports-related crimes, the characteristics of crimes occurring in each type of sports, and seek solutions. Through this, the goal is to prevent crime damage in the reality of Korean sports, study the possibility of recovering victims' rights, and suggest effective measures to respect victims' human rights and restore their rights.

Method: Sports-related crimes have been studied extensively in the United States, where sports are active. In the United States, the legal basis for collective liability under Anglo-American negligence law is being examined through cases of sports-related abuse and sexual violence, and collective liability for incidents and accidents occurring at sports venues is being sought.

Recent reports of sports-related abuse and sexual violence cases in the United States have shown that simply holding individual perpetrators legally responsible is unlikely to be effective in providing adequate compensation for the damages and preventing similar incidents in the future, considering the scale and frequency of the damage. The importance of group responsibility that can create more comprehensive compensation and a fundamental deterrent effect has been highlighted, and research is currently underway.

Most domestic sports-related studies only seek to impose criminal liability on individual cases. Therefore, this study aims to categorize overall sports-related crimes, suggest solutions, and so on.

Results: Manipulation of fans, illegal gambling, sexual assault and other harsh acts, doping, assault and injury, fraud, etc. have been pointed out as social ills in our society for a long time, and many efforts have been made to suggest causes and solutions, but problems are still being exposed. The purpose of this study is to classify the types of sports and sports-related crimes, and to seek out the characteristics of crimes occurring in each type of sport and solutions. The necessity of this study is to study the possibility of preventing crime damage and restoring victims' rights in the reality of Korean sports and to suggest effective methods of restoring victims' rights.

Conclusion: This study analyzed sports-related crimes by type from a criminal law perspective. In sports games that are supposed to be fair, sports world-wide manipulation, sexual assault, and other harsh acts, doping, illegal sports gambling, and fraud are unethical and illegal acts that must be eradicated.

Keywords: Sports Crimes, Illegal Gambling, Fraud, Sex Crimes, Crime Damage Prevention

1. Introduction

Sports world's manipulation of fans, illegal gambling, sexual assault and other harsh acts, doping, assault and injury, fraud, etc. have been pointed out as social ills in our society for a long time, and many efforts have been made to suggest causes and solutions, but problems are

still being exposed. The purpose of this study is to classify the types of sports and sports-related crimes, and to seek out the characteristics of crimes occurring in each type of sport and solutions. The necessity of this study is to study the possibility of preventing crime damage and restoring victims' rights in the reality of Korean sports, and to suggest effective methods of restoring victims' rights.

As the recent assaults and abuses against athletes have come to light, many people have become outraged, and the government has belatedly begun discussing related measures and revising laws. Against this backdrop, the National Sports Promotion Act underwent major revisions twice in 2020 alone.

Among these, the National Sports Promotion Act, revised by Act No. 17480 on August 18, 2020, mainly focuses on strengthening the functions and authority of the Sports Ethics Center. However, although the Sports Ethics Center has the authority to investigate sports corruption and crimes, its effectiveness is questionable in that it cannot enforce it. As a methodology for this, this study will examine the process of investigating and analyzing cases of sports crimes through a literature review method.

And we will define the scope of sports-related crimes and classify them by type to find solutions. The revised National Sports Promotion Act may have some aspects that can prevent assault, but it is weak as a fundamental solution. Most sports-related crimes are just post-facto measures. Accordingly, for violence-related crimes, they are committed through wrong means in the process of structurally pursuing sexuality, and assaults occur in closed spaces, so we will establish systems and policies for sports-related crimes by type.

Sports-related crimes have been studied extensively in the United States, where sports are active. In the United States, the legal basis for collective liability under Anglo-American negligence law is being examined through cases of sports-related abuse and sexual violence, and collective liability for incidents and accidents occurring at sports venues is being sought.

Recent reports of sports-related abuse and sexual violence cases in the United States have shown that simply holding individual perpetrators legally responsible is unlikely to be effective in providing adequate compensation for the damages and preventing similar incidents in the future, considering the scale and frequency of the damage. The importance of group responsibility that can create more comprehensive compensation and a fundamental deterrent effect has been highlighted, and research is currently underway.

Most domestic sports-related research studies only seek to impose criminal liability on individual cases. Therefore, this study aims to categorize sports-related crimes in general, suggest solutions, and examine related issues further.

In addition, it can be used as legislative material by examining the current status and problems of sports-related violence, illegal sports gambling (betting), doping, etc. and suggesting solutions to these problems.

This will contribute to ensuring the human rights of athletes in a reality where violence is encouraged in the sports world that emphasizes performance-based pay. [1] If measures to eradicate the demand and supply of illegal sports gambling are closely reviewed and discussed, it is expected that the demand and supply of illegal sports gambling outside of state management and control will decrease, and the Sports Promotion Voting Rights Business operated under state management will be able to absorb the demand for illegal sports gambling.

Through this, we will be able to study the possibility of preventing crime damage and restoring the rights of victims in the reality of Korean sports, and achieve the expected effect of creating a fair sports culture and suggesting ways to respect the human rights and restore the rights of

sports-related people. First, we will classify sports-related crimes by type and then review them[1].

2. Types of Sports Related Crimes

2.1. Sports match fixing and illegal gambling

Sports, often called 'unscripted dramas', provide people with excitement and emotion and make them enthusiastic through fair competition. However, in sports where fairness is a key element, there are those who try to create scripts with malicious intent, and this is match-fixing in sports[2].

The dictionary definition of match fixing is close to manipulation of winning or losing, but in reality, it includes a wider scope than just financial gain or simple winning or losing. Match fixing is not only an unethical act, regardless of whether there is a monetary reward, but also a criminal act that violates the National Sports Promotion Act.

Match fixing is an act of manipulating the course or results of a game as planned by players, coaches, etc., mainly for financial gain, and the method varies depending on the characteristics of the event, and the form varies depending on whether it is an individual event or a team event[3].

Even if no monetary transaction took place, match-fixing can be considered if there is an act that intentionally undermines fairness for the benefit of the club[4].

The National Sports Promotion Act regards match-fixing as one of the "sports corruption" acts that hinder the fair operation of sports games, and the core of determining match-fixing is whether the fairness of the game was undermined and the amount of monetary compensation, which are basically considered subjects of sentencing, and it is interpreted that the absence of monetary compensation cannot be considered as not match-fixing[5].

In short, match fixing is an act that violates fairness and objectivity, which are the foundations of sportsmanship, and brings about general distrust in the sportsmanship of athletes, in that it intentionally manipulates the game process and results. The biggest reason for the existence of sports and the reason we enjoy sports is that we cannot know the results, but match fixing takes this away from everyone who enjoys sports, and even if only one or two games are fixed, it causes fans to distrust the sport itself.

The incentives for professional players to risk their careers by fixing matches are closely linked to illegal sports gambling. Most of the players involved in match fixing belong to financially poor citizen teams and are not guaranteed adequate salaries, but the reasons for players receiving hundreds of millions of won in annual salaries to participate in match fixing are not much different[6].

Therefore, efforts should be made to detect match-fixing movements in advance and prevent players from getting involved. As part of this effort, the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism is deploying 'undercover agents' to all matches of the four major domestic sports leagues: professional soccer, professional baseball, professional basketball, and professional volleyball. In addition, according to the 'Enforcement Regulations of the National Sports Promotion Act,' a portion of the profits generated from the matches are used for educational programs to prevent match-fixing and other unfair sports behaviors, and a sports ethics center is also operated to manage overall sports corruption.

It is important to make players aware that compensation and punishment will be clearly implemented so that they are not easily swayed by the financial costs of match-fixing.

And fundamentally, it is essential to make strong efforts to regulate illegal sports gambling, which has a significant impact on the occurrence of match-fixing. In order to eradicate illegal sports gambling, efforts are needed to prevent the spread of illegal sports gambling sites, such as through thorough crackdowns on operators of illegal sports gambling servers that are currently operating online.

2.2. Sports sexual violence

The Korea Sports Council defines sexual violence in the sports world as when a sports person, such as an athlete, coach, parent, or official, uses his or her power, authority, or position to force another person to engage in sexual acts, such as physical contact, verbal sexual harassment, or sexual violence, without the other person's consent, thereby violating the other person's right to sexual self-determination.

In 2014, the South Korean government signaled a strong response to the “four evils” in the sports field. After the MeToo incident in sports occurred, the sports world continued its efforts to prevent and prepare countermeasures for sexual violence, emphasizing strong on-site investigations, countermeasures, and human rights education[7].

With the #MeToo movement and the short track coach incident in the sports world in 2019, and the suicide of a national triathlon athlete in June 2020, voices for self-reflection on the violence prevalent in the sports world have grown louder.

And in August 2020, the 'Sports Ethics Center' was newly established to independently investigate corruption in the sports field. Previously, the 'Sports Human Rights Center' was operated within the Korea Sports Council, but it was separated into a foundation organization under the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism due to the judgment that independent investigation would be difficult in case of internal irregularities. With the establishment of the center, a regulation was established that if a coach becomes aware of sports corruption (such as sexual violence), it must be reported to the Sports Ethics Center.

In addition, a plan was made to operate a 'special judicial police system' to grant direct investigation authority, but currently, the judicial police officer system within the Sports Ethics Center is not being implemented because the related bill has not passed the National Assembly. Currently, the Sports Ethics Center has only simple investigation authority without disciplinary authority or compulsory investigation authority, so there are limitations to the investigation itself[8].

And most sports sexual crime cases are temporarily controversial, but policy measures often end up being a flash in the pan. As fundamental solutions are not sought, some are strongly demanding realistic and effective solutions and systems. In fact, the problems recently being discussed are revealed to be due to distorted lenience due to evasion of responsibility, lukewarm attitudes, sports circles that routinely violate regulations, and chronic human rights violations and bad practices, revealing the limitations of past policies[9].

And the academic world has also continuously published studies on sexual violence in the sports world, including professional sports teams, school sports teams, and workplace sports teams. Previous studies have focused on research on prescriptions based on fact-finding surveys, mainly presenting legal punishments, current status, environmental characteristics, policy proposals, and improvement measures for sexual crimes that occurred in the sports world. However, such fact-finding surveys have had limitations in solving the problem of sexual crimes, and there are difficulties in solving essential and fundamental problems[10].

Disciplinary action against sports sexual crimes is carried out in several stages. First, the Sports Ethics Center receives the first report and conducts an investigation. If the investigation

results determine that disciplinary action is necessary, the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism reports the request and recommendation for disciplinary action. When the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism forwards the report to the Korea Sports Council, each sports organization (association, federation) under the Korea Sports Council holds a 'Sports Fairness Committee' to decide on the final level of disciplinary action and make a decision.

The fact that the ethics center has no disciplinary authority means that it has no authority at all, and ultimately, the disciplinary authority lies with each sports organization, and the fact that the original recommendation of the ethics center can be changed at any time by the Sports Fair Play Committee is the biggest problem. Without the 'authority to compel investigation,' the sports ethics center's crime prevention and cognitive investigation are bound to be limited. Since the investigation and disciplinary subjects are different, there are frequent cases where the disciplinary action recommended by the ethics center differs from the actual disciplinary level.

For example, in cases where the level of disciplinary action requested and recommended by the Ethics Center and the final disciplinary action taken by the Sports Fair Trade Commission are different, the Center may decide to revoke or suspend qualification for 1 to 3 years, but the Fair Trade Commission may simply issue a warning[11].

While sexual assault perpetrators in the sports world are getting away with it with lenient punishments, they are severely punished in the United States. In 2016, when Larry Nassar, the head doctor for the U.S. gymnastics team and Michigan State University, was revealed to have sexually assaulted and abused hundreds of gymnasts over a 30-year period, Nassar was sentenced to 175 years in prison, which is effectively life imprisonment, and USA Gymnastics and Michigan State University, which were negligent in management and supervision, could not escape severe punishment[12].

The legal system of the United States should be introduced to consider strong criminal sanctions for sexual crimes in the sports world of our country.

2.3. Sports doping

The World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA), which oversees global anti-doping operations, was established in 1999 as an organization overseeing global doping. It has about 70 employees and its annual operating expenses are about 28 million dollars, or about 28 billion won in Korean currency. It is operated with donations from each country, with Russia paying the largest amount. Due to the lack of funds, in practice, it does not even have separate doping investigators, but instead leaves the work to research institutes in each country.

Darya Pishchalnikova (Russia), a silver medalist in discus throw at the 2012 London Olympics, confessed to WADA that Russia's doping was being carried out laxly. However, WADA passed this on to Russia because they were receiving massive support from Russia, and the athlete was banned from playing for 10 years. Eventually, as this issue grew, WADA conducted a full-scale investigation and temporarily suspended the operation of the Russian testing laboratory in late 2015.

And the IOC also left the handling of the Rio Olympics, which were just around the corner, to each sports federation. In 2016, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) investigated the scandal of the Russian government's systematic involvement in doping (administering drugs such as muscle-strengthening agents to athletes for the purpose of better performance, etc.) and banned Russia from participating in the Games[13][14].

The World Anti-Doping Agency says that the use of performance-enhancing drugs violates the "spirit of sport." The spirit of sport seeks "natural" performance ability, and "artificial" performance through performance-enhancing drugs denies this. In sports, the outcome of a game can

be considered to be a combination of many coincidences, from the talent of each athlete to all the physical, physiological, and psychological conditions at each moment of the game.

If so, then rules should be set so that individual efforts, even if they do not guarantee the best results, can at least prepare for the best, that is, so that the maxim “more training brings more luck” can be widely accepted. Then, as it was in ancient Greece and as Pierre de Coubertin, the Frenchman who revived the Olympics in the 20th century, believed, sports become a “moral testing ground.”

The purpose of sport is not simply to achieve better results. Sport places equal importance on how the results are achieved. Opportunities must be equal. Inequities that are not the responsibility of the individual or beyond their control must be corrected [15].

Here is the basis for banning the use of performance-enhancing drugs. Drugs are “intervention methods that can directly bypass human effort.” If drugs are allowed, all athletes will easily reach the physiological limits that their bodies allow. After that, only a chaotic fight over who will have a moment of luck will remain in sports. If sports are truly a “test bed for human limits,” then whether one can reach the limit and has the will to go to the limit itself becomes a subject of competition and evaluation [15].

However, drugs separate physical ability from the subject's intention, making humans look like machines rather than humans. Ultimately, they deny the very foundation that makes sports a sport, namely, the human will to push the limits. Genetic manipulation is also problematic, and sports should not allow the separation of human will from its results. This is because applauding the results of one's own will is the foundation of sports, and furthermore, the basis of human activity [16].

The following are the rules that amateur and professional athletes must follow in relation to drugs, as stated by the Korea Anti-Doping Agency. When receiving medical treatment, you must tell the doctor or pharmacist that you are an athlete and request a prescription for medication that does not contain prohibited substances. After receiving the prescription, the athlete must check with the Korea Anti-Doping Agency and take it only if there are no problems.

If the prohibited substance must be included in the treatment and there is no other alternative, a therapeutic use exemption (TUE) application form must be written with a doctor and submitted to the Korea Anti-Doping Agency along with relevant medical records, and then the drug must be taken after receiving permission. However, in the case of an acute illness or emergency, treatment first and reporting later is also possible. If the above is not followed and caught, the drug will not be exempted [17].

This is to prevent fair sports competition from being hindered by performance-enhancing substances in advance, and to prevent athletes from ruining their health or, in the worst case, losing their lives due to inappropriate drug use [18].

The ultimate reason for cracking down on doping is to prevent match-fixing or irregular enhancement of non-game factors, but it is more important for the health of the athletes themselves. Reducing the weight of shoes by 1g will not affect the health of the athletes, but rather the health of the researchers. Rather, it is recommended to design it in a way that helps the health of the athletes, but it is not known what effect the performance-enhancing substances such as drugs, painkillers, and cannon shots that affect the lives of athletes have on the body.

If there is a drug that is definitely helpful in improving performance and does not have any negative effects on the physical or mental health of the athlete even if overused/abused, it can be recommended to all athletes, but it cannot be allowed if it undermines fairness. And drugs regulated as doping also include those that lower performance. Of course, the health mentioned

above also includes the purpose of preventing safety accidents, so alcohol is also included in the doping test.

Of course, simple over-the-counter drugs such as simple digestive aids or a single Tylenol pill will not be considered doping, but professional players must check with a professional trainer or team-designated doctor before taking even one such drug. In the case of external ointments, a simple water patch can be used as is, but if it is a drug that is absorbed and spreads throughout the body like a steroid, it can be detected in a doping test, and there was a case where Kang Soo-il was detected in a doping test while applying a hair growth agent[19].

The Pharmaceutical Society announced that it will expand the pharmacist's function to sports pharmacy. This is because the need for drug management for amateur athletes is increasing as doping tests have recently expanded beyond professional sports to recreational sports. Recently, as the scope of doping tests has expanded to recreational sports, the number of cases of unintentional doping detections by recreational athletes, in addition to professional athletes who receive periodic and professional management, is increasing, and they are working on developing sports pharmacist functions for the safe use of drugs by recreational athletes.

In particular, bodybuilders or young athletes are caught in doping tests while taking cough syrup, cold medicine, and combination drugs in addition to intentional doping drugs, and as the scope of doping tests has recently expanded, the number of cases of detection has naturally increased[20].

3. Sports-Related Crime Regulation Laws and Human Rights

3.1. Sports-related crime regulation laws

3.1.1. Criminal responsibility under the national sports promotion act

According to the current National Sports Promotion Act, the types of sports promotion lottery tickets, also known as sports toto lottery, as well as the sports events to be issued and various domestic and international sports competitions, are delegated to a presidential decree, and the sports events are defined as sports events hosted by hosting organizations that meet certain requirements among soccer, basketball, baseball, volleyball, golf, wrestling, and other events determined by the Minister of Culture, Sports and Tourism, as stipulated in Article 29 of the Enforcement Decree of the same Act.

In professional sports, match-fixing cases in professional baseball, professional soccer, and professional volleyball are examples of cases where the National Sports Promotion Act is applied and punished because they are sports events subject to the issuance of Sports Promotion Voting Rights. The National Sports Promotion Act, which was completely revised, was implemented with criminal punishment provisions on February 17, 2012, triggered by the professional soccer match-fixing case. The contents related to criminal responsibility according to the revised law are as follows.

The National Sports Promotion Act severely punishes, depending on the facts, any act of receiving match-fixing compensation from so-called "brokers or brokers" or any act of match-fixing by any person directly or indirectly involved in a sporting event for which sports promotion voting rights are issued, including players, managers, coaches, referees, and executives of sports organizations.

Article 48, Paragraph 4, and Article 26, Paragraphs 3 and 4 of the same Act stipulate that if an athlete, etc. receives an improper request from a broker, etc. regarding a sports event eligible for the issuance of sports promotion voting rights from another person and directly receives,

requests, or promises property or financial benefits, or causes, requests, or promises to provide such to a third party, they shall be punished by imprisonment for not more than 5 years or a fine not exceeding 50 million won.

‘Unfair request’ can be understood as a request that causes a result that harms the fairness of the game, such as requesting match-fixing. For example, in the case of players, this includes intentionally conceding points or not playing the game sincerely, and in the case of managers or coaches, this includes acts such as asking the referee to make an intentional wrong call, using a second-string player without a special reason, or ordering players to give up the game [21].

What is unique here is that while the crime of breach of trust under Article 357, Paragraph 2 of the Criminal Act is punishable only when property or property-related benefits are actually provided, the National Sports Promotion Act also punishes acts of “expressing a promise or intent to provide” similar to bribery. In that only those with a certain status, such as athletes in sports events subject to the issuance of sports promotion voting rights, are punished under this provision, it is a true status crime, and those related to this can be applied to non-status crimes under the accomplice and status provisions of Article 33 of the Criminal Act.

In this respect, it can be seen as a special element of the crime of embezzlement under the criminal law. And the brokers who recruit the players and the owners who provide them with match-fixing funds are those who participate in match-fixing other than the players. The acts subject to their criminal responsibility can be seen as mainly providing match-fixing compensation to players and other game-related people, colluding with them to fix the match, and furthermore, purchasing sports lottery tickets for the match-fixing target and receiving the dividends.

In addition, the National Sports Promotion Act also punishes those who interfere with the fair operation of sports games subject to the issuance of sports promotion voting rights by using trickery or force with the same statutory penalty (Article 48, Paragraph 6 of the Act). Although the act of match-fixing itself is carried out by the players, brokers or stockholders giving money to the players is a prerequisite for match-fixing, and since the crime is committed by colluding with the players to fix the matches in advance, they are punished as joint principals (full responsibility for partial execution) under Article 30 of the Criminal Act for violating the above provisions.

In this case, the act of transferring property and the act of obstructing fair execution are multiple acts, which constitute multiple crimes, so a substantial concurrent crime is established and is subject to increased punishment, just like in the case of players, etc. On the other hand, the act of a broker and Jeonju manipulating matches through players and then purchasing sports promotion lottery tickets and receiving dividends from Sports Toto (Co.) without knowing the fact may constitute a crime of fraud under the criminal law, with Sports Toto (Co.) as the victim.

The same statutory punishment is also applied to those who interfere (Article 48, Paragraph 6 of the Act). Although the act of match-fixing itself is carried out by the players, brokers and bookmakers who provide money to the players are presupposing match-fixing, and since the crime is committed by colluding with the players to fix the match, they are punished as accomplices in violating the above regulations.

In this case, the act of providing property and obstructing fair execution are subject to increased punishment as substantive concurrent crimes under the criminal law, just like in the case of players, etc. On the other hand, the act of brokers and Jeonju manipulating matches through players and then purchasing sports promotion lottery tickets and receiving dividends from Sports Toto (Co.) without knowing the fact can be considered fraud under the criminal law with Sports Toto (Co.) as the victim [22].

3.1.2. criminal law

It can be applied to general crimes such as assault, assault, rape, and fraud under the criminal law.

Assault is committed when an assault is committed against a person's body, and physical contact is not necessarily required; the exercise of physical force against a person's body is sufficient. In other words, throwing an object at another person's body, startling someone with loud noise, sound, or screaming, and exercising physical force through chemical physiological effects such as light, heat, electricity, and smell are also possible.

The crime of assault is established by injuring another person's body, and in the interpretation of criminal law, the theory of physiological function damage is the prevailing attitude in the case law, which states that assault is an act that damages physiological functions. Physiological functions include not only physical functions but also mental functions, so it also includes inability to walk, sleep disorders, and loss of appetite without external wounds.

Rape is committed by raping a person through assault or intimidation, and the freedom of sexual self-determination is a protected legal interest. Here, assault is required to the extent that resistance is impossible or significantly difficult, and intimidation refers to cases where harm is notified.

Fraud is a crime committed by deceiving a person to obtain property, obtain illegal property benefits, or cause others to obtain them. In other words, it is a case where property benefits are obtained as a result of a disposition act caused by a mistake through a deceptive act. Since fraud is a property crime, if there is a family relationship with the victim, the kinship etiquette is applied.

3.2. sports human rights

Article 10 of the Constitution stipulates that all citizens have dignity and value as human beings and have the right to pursue happiness, and that the government has the duty to confirm and guarantee the fundamental and inviolable human rights of such individuals. In addition, Article 37, Paragraph 1 of the Constitution stipulates that the freedom and rights of citizens shall not be disregarded for reasons of not being enumerated in the Constitution [23].

The importance of sports is increasing in modern society. In the daily lives of people, sports are not only a means of maintaining health but also a leisure activity. However, the problem of violence is becoming serious in the field of sports. In particular, in the case of elite sports, violence is rampant not only between sports coaches and players but also between sports players due to vertical inequality.

Therefore, by guaranteeing the human rights of athletes and enacting specific sports-related laws to realize this, a sound sports culture can be created and respect for human rights can be realized.

The reasons why violence is not well known in professional sports are examined from the perspectives of players, coaching staff, and related personnel. First, players are disadvantaged in maintaining their careers as managers, coaches, and players, such as in game appearances, contracts, and salary increases. Also, due to the nature of sports, physical contact is frequent, so it is often ambiguous to judge violence. In the case of coaching staff, it is difficult to respond actively due to the hierarchical relationship between seniors and juniors and the culture of obedience. In the case of related personnel, it is easy to cover up violence because of concerns about damaging their image.

3.3. Measures to improve human rights

3.3.1. Strengthening the role of the Sports Ethics Center

Article 18-3 of the National Sports Promotion Act stipulates the basis for the establishment of the Sports Ethics Center. The Sports Ethics Center is responsible for receiving and investigating reports of sports corruption and human rights violations in the sports world, counseling victims, providing legal support and linking with related organizations, investigating the reality of sports corruption and human rights violations in the sports world, and providing preventive education to prevent sports corruption and human rights violations in the sports world [24].

The National Sports Promotion Act was revised to remove 'promotion of national prestige through sports' from the purpose of the Act and add 'protecting the human rights of athletes with a fair spirit of sports and realizing a healthy community by enhancing the happiness and self-esteem of the people.' Therefore, first, the investigative authority of the Sports Ethics Center should be significantly strengthened, and second, the conclusion of a standard contract including essential items should be made mandatory so that corrections can be requested in case of unfairness [25].

Third, the suspension period for leaders who commit assault or injury should be increased from one year to five years. Fourth, in order to increase the general prevention effect, a basis for installing CCTV, etc. in vulnerable areas where human rights violations may occur should be established, and fifth, in cases where a separate person in charge of athlete management is appointed to ensure the physical strength and health of athletes, in addition to the sports instructor, this should be registered with the relevant sport's organization or branch of the integrated sports council.

3.3.2. Improving disciplinary procedures for sports personnel

In cases where disciplinary action is required against a sportsperson, it is necessary to improve the existence of disciplinary procedure regulations, compliance with disciplinary procedure regulations, and the remedy of defects and waiver of defense rights.

First, in examining the existence of disciplinary procedure regulations, it is necessary to determine whether there are provisions regarding disciplinary procedures in the regulations of each organization, whether the regulations applied at the time of disciplinary action are valid, and which disciplinary procedures were applied when the disciplinary procedures of the upper and lower organizations were different [26].

Second, in terms of compliance with the disciplinary procedure regulations, it is necessary to review whether the prior notice required by the disciplinary procedure provisions was given (whether written notice was given, compliance with the notice period, specificity of the information to be included, etc.), whether the opportunity to make a statement required by the disciplinary procedure provisions was granted, whether the provisions on disqualification and challenge of disciplinary committee members were followed, whether the disciplinary committee was formed in accordance with the disciplinary procedure provisions, whether the disciplinary committee only deliberated and voted on matters submitted to the disciplinary committee, whether the deliberation and vote were actually carried out, and whether the retrial procedure stipulated in the disciplinary procedure provisions was followed.

Third, in the case of remedies for defects and waiver of defense rights, it is necessary to closely examine whether there are circumstances that warrant remedies for procedural defects.

The court ruled that if an employer continuously refuses to provide labor to a worker without just cause and against the worker's will, it violates the worker's personal rights and personal

protection interests, and therefore the employer has a duty to compensate the worker for any mental distress suffered as a result[27][28][29][30].

4. Conclusion

This study analyzed sports-related crimes by type from a criminal law perspective. In sports games that are supposed to be fair, sports world-wide manipulation, sexual assault, and other harsh acts, doping, illegal sports gambling, and fraud are unethical and illegal acts that must be eradicated.

First of all, match-fixing in the sports world is largely influenced by the victory-oriented approach that encourages constant competition and emphasizes only the results rather than the process. Along with match-fixing by players, match-fixing or biased decisions by referees, who should be in a neutral position, can also damage the value of fairness in sports. Match-fixing in sports goes beyond this level and spreads to illegal website creation, referee bribery, military service corruption, and the involvement of organized crime, damaging the core values of sports such as fairness, uncertainty of results, and competitiveness, and leads to serious criminal acts. In cases where the fairness of such sports is undermined, the autonomous regulation of the Sports Fairness Committee established under the Korea Sports Council based on sports autonomy and the function of the Sports Ethics Center established separately from the criminal justice agency should be strengthened.

Second, institutional measures are needed to prevent sexual assault and other abusive acts in the sports world. Sexual crimes resulting from sexual assault in the sports world are directly related to the human rights of sports players. Various countermeasures are being discussed in relation to the protection of victims of sexual assault.

There are also discussions on the exclusion and extension of the statute of limitations from a criminal law perspective, the revision of the Criminal Act and the Special Act on the Punishment of Sexual Crimes, etc., the Act on the Prevention of Sexual Violence and the Protection of Victims, etc., and the introduction of a punitive damages system from a civil law perspective. Countermeasures against sexual assault in the sports world should be sought from various directions, and a human rights environment and safety measures should be established through education, policy, and legal system improvement.

Third, doping not only damages an individual's health, but also violates the fairness of sports, and is considered a serious crime beyond the concept of unethical. The World Anti-Doping Committee, an organization under the International Olympic Committee, has been established and is operating, and there is also the Korea Anti-Doping Committee in Korea, but it does not have an effective deterrent.

From a criminal law perspective regarding doping, Article 257, Paragraph 1 of the Criminal Act, Article 15, Paragraph 2 of the National Sports Promotion Act, Article 12-2 of the School Sports Promotion Act, Article 27, Paragraph 1 of the Medical Act, Article 5 of the Act on the Crackdown on Health Crimes, Article 61 of the Pharmaceutical Affairs Act, and the Special Act on the Punishment of Child Abuse Crimes may be applied. Disclosure of the personal information of doping athletes is also discussed here, but it should be carefully reviewed. Doping is an element of the crime and cannot be a justifiable act as it is an illegal act. Sports that exclude human rights have no value and destroy the spirit of sports. Sports-related crimes should be strictly and promptly enforced through the establishment of sports ethics, so that a sports policy can be established to achieve a general preventive effect.

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6. Appendix

6.1. Author's contribution

| Initial name | | Contribution |
|--------------|----|---|
| Author | KP | -Set of concepts <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| | | -Design <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| | | -Getting results <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| | | -Analysis <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| | | -Make a significant contribution to collection <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| | | -Final approval of the paper <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| | | -Corresponding <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| | | -Play a decisive role in modification <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| | | -Significant contributions to concepts, designs, practices, analysis and interpretation of data <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| | | -Participants in Drafting and Revising Papers <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| | | -Someone who can explain all aspects of the paper <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

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Delphi Analysis of a Group of Experts to Develop a Semi-Permanent Makeup NCS Training Program -In the Run-up to the Tattoo Law Regulations

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Abstract

Purpose: In Korea, semi-permanent makeup has become a key sector in the beauty industry, recognized as a form of makeup that complements the limitations of traditional tattooing. Demand for semi-permanent makeup services is expected to increase further as the medical beauty market and its application expand to a wider range of age groups. For a long time, the Korean semi-permanent makeup and tattoo-related service industries remained in a legal limbo due to insufficient institutional and legal regulations. However, with the recent passage of the Tattoo Act by the National Assembly, tattooing and semi-permanent makeup procedures are expected to be formally legislated and regulated within the next two years. Semi-permanent makeup is characterized by its delicate and invasive nature, and its institutionalization is leading to an increasing demand for certification and retraining. Therefore, systematic training and evaluation are essential. Against this backdrop, the development of a standardized and systematic training program to cultivate professional semi-permanent makeup practitioners is a critical and urgent task.

Method: The NCS-based educational program for semi-permanent makeup proposed in this study was designed based on practical field requirements and was systematically researched and structured to establish its conceptual framework, development domains, and development components. First, a literature review was conducted on 81 master's theses, 14 doctoral dissertations, and relevant monographs related to semi-permanent makeup. In addition, the concept of the National Competency Standards (NCS), NCS competency units and elements in the beauty field, and the learning module system were examined. Second, to develop the competency unit elements of an NCS-based educational program for semi-permanent makeup, a Delphi survey was conducted in three rounds with 20 field experts who possessed between 3 and over 20 years of professional experience in semi-permanent makeup.

Results: Through the third round of the Delphi survey, 18 NCS competency units and 59 competency unit elements were derived to facilitate application to learning modules. These competency units included an overview and definition of semi-permanent makeup, skin and scalp, hygiene management, infection control and disinfection, pre- and post-procedure management, history and trends of makeup, basic makeup drawing, semi-permanent makeup design, color theory, pigments, equipment, equipment-based design techniques, field application, corrective methods for improper procedures, use of pain relief agents, customer management, business management, and educational feedback.

Conclusion: In a field where prior research on semi-permanent makeup remains limited, this study—developed through the systematic elicitation of expert opinions—is expected to serve as foundational data for training professional semi-permanent makeup practitioners and for the advancement of the beauty industry.

Keywords: Semi-Permanent Makeup, NCS-Based Education Program, Competency Unit Elements, Delphi Method, Regulations

1. Introduction

The perspective on the inner power of humanity will be presented in various ways [1]. There are ways to empower people as well. The body, in particular, has been an important means of protecting the body and expressing beauty [2]. In modern society, with the increasing social participation of women, new forms of service are being preferred [3]. In Korea, semi-permanent makeup began to attract attention from the 1970s to the 1980s as a form of makeup that compensates for the main limitation of traditional tattooing—namely, the permanent retention of pigment in the skin—and has recently established itself as a new field within the beauty industry. Demand for SPMU procedures has increased rapidly, and the market has grown to an estimated economic scale of approximately KRW 1.8 trillion, positioning it as a major sector of the beauty industry. In addition to aesthetic benefits, the market has expanded into medical applications, such as coverage of vitiligo that does not sufficiently respond to laser treatment and scar camouflage [4][5]. Furthermore, the range of clients continues to broaden across different life stages and genders. According to the *Employment Impact Assessment Report on Regulatory Relaxation for New Occupations* conducted by the Korea Labor Institute in 2016, sustained social interest in beauty services is expected to lead to a continuous increase in societal demand for semi-permanent makeup.

In recent years, Korean society has emphasized the cultivation of professionals with competitive knowledge, technology, and information, as reflected in initiatives such as the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Energy's (2021) investment in workforce development programs. Consequently, the necessity and importance of nurturing specialized human resources across various fields have been increasingly highlighted.

With the recent passage of the *Tattoo Act* by the National Assembly, tattooing and semi-permanent makeup procedures are expected to be legally incorporated into the institutional framework within the next two years. The enforcement of this legislation is highly likely to lead to the introduction of a national qualification examination and licensing system, through which practitioner professionalism and consumer safety can be ensured. Accordingly, the semi-permanent makeup industry stands at a critical turning point in being redefined as a formal sector within beauty services.

At a time when policies promoting new occupations and regulatory relaxation are proposed annually, legal and institutional improvements are being implemented to address the government's objectives of job creation and industrial development through the training of professional manpower. Within this context, semi-permanent makeup can be expected to play a significant role as a future-oriented segment of the beauty industry.

Given that semi-permanent makeup is characterized as a highly delicate and invasive procedure, there is an urgent need for systematic education and evaluation, as well as for educational programs capable of meeting the increasing demand for re-education in this field. However, due to differing positions between the medical community and the beauty industry, Korea remained one of the few countries worldwide where semi-permanent makeup had not been legally institutionalized until recently. As a result, although the National Competency Standards (NCS) have been promoted as a national policy since 2014, the beauty field, as of 2023, has been classified into only five areas—skin care, hair, nail art, makeup, and barbering—with corresponding learning modules presented. Semi-permanent makeup has not been included in the national beautician qualification examination, and it remains difficult to find structured educational programs or NCS-based curricula specifically designed for semi-permanent makeup. Against this backdrop, the development of standardized and systematized educational programs for training professional semi-permanent makeup practitioners is both essential and significant.

A review of previous studies by Jung Yujin, Kwon Sunmi, Hwang Jongyeol, Kim Shinyoung, Han

Gwangjae, Kwak Jiyoung, and others reveals research addressing the necessity of education, current conditions, and satisfaction with semi-permanent makeup education programs[6][7][8][9][10][11]. However, research focusing on the development of educational programs is extremely limited, with the only notable study being Lee Kyung-ah's (2021) *Development of a Basic Training Program for Semi-Permanent Makeup*[12]. Moreover, there is a lack of educational programs developed through the systematic elicitation of expert consensus in the field of semi-permanent makeup. Therefore, the derivation of learning modules and the establishment of priority among modules for an NCS-based semi-permanent makeup education program, based on expert consensus, are expected to provide foundational data for the development of standardized and structured semi-permanent makeup education programs.

2. Theoretical Background

2.1. Semi-permanent makeup

2.1.1. Semi-permanent makeup in Korea

With the global spread of Hallyu culture and the K-beauty industry, Korean semi-permanent makeup (SPMU) techniques have gained high international recognition. The majority of domestic SPMU practitioners are women in their 20s to 40s, and the industry has been shown to play a significant role in job creation for women as a new occupational sector, with approximately 300,000 practitioners currently engaged in the field. Once regarded primarily as an area of interest for adult women, semi-permanent makeup has gradually expanded its scope, attracting increasing interest from men as well. Owing to its adaptability to trends, sustained convenience, economic efficiency, and its ability to aesthetically address individual physical concerns, SPMU for cosmetic purposes has gained widespread popularity across diverse social groups and is becoming increasingly mainstream[13].

However, in 2022, the Constitutional Court of Korea maintained its position—consistent with previous Supreme Court precedents and Constitutional Court decisions—that all tattoo-related procedures, including semi-permanent makeup, constitute medical practices due to their invasive nature and potential risks to public health and hygiene. Accordingly, the Court held that such procedures should remain within the scope of medical practice unless a new legal qualification system for tattoo practitioners is established[14]. As a result, the Korean service industry related to semi-permanent makeup and tattooing remained for an extended period in a legal gray area between illegality and legality. The medical community has traditionally regarded semi-permanent makeup procedures as medical acts involving the injection of pigment into the skin, thereby defining procedures performed by non-medical professionals as illegal. Consequently, the industry has operated informally without a sufficient institutional foundation, relying heavily on non-official training institutions centered on private certifications. This situation has led to multiple challenges, including non-standardized education and training systems, inconsistent practitioner competencies and hygiene safety management, and an institutional gap in consumer protection.

In contrast, major advanced countries such as the United States have established legal frameworks that permit cosmetic tattooing in accordance with its social acceptance[15]. In Korea, sustained social discussions advocating for practical institutional reform culminated in the enactment of the Tattoo Act (Act No. 21070) on October 28, 2025. The Act is scheduled to take effect on October 29, 2027, and reports indicate that the bill was passed by the National Assembly plenary session on September 25, 2025. Accordingly, the semi-permanent makeup industry can be understood to be at a transitional stage in which it is becoming formally recognized as a licensed profession through legal institutionalization. The enforcement of this Act is highly likely to lead to the introduction of a national qualification examination and licensing

system, thereby ensuring practitioner professionalism and consumer safety. As such, the semi-permanent makeup industry is approaching a critical turning point in being newly established as a legitimate sector within beauty services.

2.1.2. Concept of semi-permanent makeup

Semi-permanent makeup is primarily applied to facial areas that significantly influence overall appearance, such as the eyebrows, eyeliner, lips, and hairline. It is a cosmetic technique that provides non-permanent makeup effects lasting approximately six months to three years, thereby maintaining aesthetic appearance while enhancing convenience. The procedure is performed on the epidermis and upper dermis, allowing pigments to fade naturally as new skin cells are regenerated. Over time, the implanted pigments gradually disappear through the natural exfoliation process. Depending on individual skin characteristics, lifestyle factors, the type of pigment and technique used, and the practitioner's skill level, the effects may last from six months to as long as two to three years after one or two treatment sessions, making it both economically efficient and effective.

The origins of semi-permanent makeup can be traced back to 1948, when Giora performed eyeliner and eyebrow procedures for cosmetic purposes and published the first academic paper on the subject. In 1986, Charles Zwerling introduced the term through the publication of his book *Micro Pigmentation*, which described micro-pigmentation techniques[16]. Beginning in the 1970s and 1980s, semi-permanent makeup gained attention as a means of compensating for the permanent nature of traditional tattooing. With advancements in pigments and techniques, it was applied to the beauty field after the 1980s and became an innovative cosmetic method in the global history of makeup by reducing the need for daily makeup application[17]. As a result of continued developments in pigments, design, and techniques, semi-permanent makeup now occupies a significant position within the beauty industry and is also widely utilized in medical fields, including CPC (Camouflage Permanent Cosmetics) and MMP (Medical Micro Pigmentation), for covering conditions such as vitiligo and scars.

2.2. National competency standards (NCS)

2.2.1. Concept of the national competency standards (NCS)

The National Competency Standards (NCS) are a unified framework established by integrating the National Occupational Standards (NOS), previously operated by the Ministry of Employment and Labor, and the Korean Skill Standards (KSS), formerly administered by the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology. NCS standardizes and systematizes, by industry sector and proficiency level, the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and competencies required to successfully perform occupational tasks in industrial settings. By applying NCS to education, training, and qualifications, the system supports the cultivation of industry-tailored human resources (Human Resources Development Service of Korea; National Law Information Center, Act No. 11722; Ministry of Education; National Research Foundation of Korea, 2023).

2.2.2. Understanding NCS learning modules

NCS-based learning modules consist of learning objectives, instructional content, teaching–learning methods, and evaluation and feedback strategies. As instructional resources, these modules are utilized in schools and institutions that operate vocational education programs based on NCS. Instructors may select learning modules corresponding to specific NCS competency units or supplement them with additional instructional content as needed[18][19]. NCS-based curricula aim to develop “competency-based curricula” by replacing traditional subject titles with modules centered on job tasks that can be directly performed in the workplace[20].

2.3. Necessity of NCS-based education for semi-permanent makeup

Currently, education related to semi-permanent makeup largely depends on curricula led by private academies or professional associations, resulting in significant variations in educational content and standards across institutions. Due to the absence of a systematic, nationally standardized education system, it is difficult to objectively verify practitioner proficiency and safety. Accordingly, prior to the legal implementation of the tattooist and semi-permanent makeup practitioner system, there is an urgent need to develop NCS-based educational curricula that standardize the competencies and knowledge required for job performance. As an education system that standardizes competencies through job analysis of industrial fields, NCS should systematically reflect subdivided competency units in the semi-permanent makeup field, including hygiene management, skin and facial musculature, pigmentology, client consultation, and procedural ethics.

With the enforcement of the Tattoo Act scheduled for October 2027 and the anticipated introduction of a national qualification examination and licensing system, it is essential to systematically verify practitioner competencies and establish educational standards. The Act stipulates passing a national examination and obtaining a license as prerequisites for performing tattooing and semi-permanent makeup procedures and provides a two-year preparation period following promulgation. Therefore, for educational and training institutions as well as the industry, standardization efforts are urgently required, and the development of NCS-based educational programs represents a critical task that must precede the implementation of the new system.

3. Research Method

3.1. Delphi analysis

3.1.1. Concept and characteristics of the delphi method

The Delphi method is a systematic research technique used to elicit and compare informed judgments on a specific topic. Based on the logical premise that “the collective judgment of multiple individuals is more accurate than that of a single individual,” this method employs multiple rounds of surveys with controlled feedback to draw expert opinions and synthesize them into a collective group judgment. Surveys are repeatedly administered to a selected panel of experts until consensus is achieved, with the results of previous rounds provided to participants to facilitate convergence toward agreement. Through this iterative process, expert perspectives are analyzed and integrated into a structured group decision-making outcome[21][22].

3.2. Procedures of the delphi analysis

3.2.1. Composition of the expert panel

To conduct a Delphi study, experts closely related to the research topic must be selected as participants. Because the Delphi method aims to integrate expert intuition and translate it into objective and quantifiable data, the selection of appropriate experts is of critical importance[23]. When forming the expert panel, factors such as relevance, sincerity of participation, representativeness, number of participants, and level of professional expertise must be carefully considered[24].

Although there is no fixed rule regarding the number of panel members, Delphi studies may be conducted with as few as 4–11 participants, while large-scale studies may involve more than 100 experts[25]. Anderson (1997) suggested that meaningful results can be derived from a small group of approximately 10–15 experts, whereas Rowe and Wright (2001) recommended a

broader range of 5–20 panelists. Most previous studies have employed expert panels consisting of approximately 15–35 participants.

Based on prior research, this study constituted a panel of 20 experts who are actively engaged in both practical and educational fields related to semi-permanent makeup. The panel was organized to derive development domains and criteria for competency units and competency unit elements of an NCS (National Competency Standards)-based semi-permanent makeup education program.

3.2.2. Research subjects

For the development of a semi-permanent makeup education program, the Delphi method was applied to a group of experts in the field to derive development domains and criteria and to verify content validity. Twenty experienced experts were selected based on their high level of understanding of field application, structural characteristics, and professional practices related to semi-permanent makeup, as well as their substantial work experience in relevant areas.

Considering the invasive and medically related characteristics of semi-permanent makeup procedures, the expert group consisted of health administration specialists; licensed medical professionals qualified to perform semi-permanent makeup procedures; skin care professionals capable of performing semi-permanent makeup procedures and possessing extensive knowledge of skin characteristics; education specialists teaching beauty-related subjects at beauty academies and colleges; and professional semi-permanent makeup practitioners with career experience ranging from a minimum of three years to over twenty years.

As the primary objective of this study was program development, professors and instructors involved in public and private vocational education and training were selected to ensure balanced representation. Due to the characteristics of the expert group, most participants held master's or doctoral degrees. In addition, reflecting the current market structure in which makeup remains an area of particularly high interest among women, all panel members except one were female. Because sincere and consistent participation is critical in Delphi studies, the panel was organized to ensure a high response rate.

The participants of the Delphi survey panel are presented in <Table 1>.

Table 1. Participants of the delphi survey panel.

| (N=20) | | | | |
|--------|--------|-------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Name | Gender | Education | Related fields | Relevant experience (years or more) |
| P1 | Male | Doctoral degree | health | 7 |
| P2 | Female | Bachelor's degree | Dermatology Nursing Director | 15 |
| P3 | Female | Associate Degree | dermatologynurse | 15 |
| P4 | Female | Associate Degree | dermatologynurse | 12 |
| P5 | Female | Bachelor's degree | skin care | 15 |
| P6 | Female | Bachelor's degree | skin care | 20 |
| P7 | Female | Bachelor's degree | skin care | 10 |
| P8 | Female | Bachelor's degree | skin care | 10 |
| P9 | Female | Bachelor's degree | skin care | 10 |

| | | | | |
|-----|--------|-------------------|--------------------------------|----|
| P10 | Female | Bachelor's degree | beauty academy | 5 |
| P11 | Female | Bachelor's degree | beauty academy | 7 |
| P12 | Female | doctoral degree | Professor of Beauty Department | 20 |
| P13 | Female | doctoral degree | Professor of Beauty Department | 10 |
| P14 | Female | doctoral degree | Professor of Beauty Department | 3 |
| P15 | Female | Bachelor's degree | Semi-permanent makeup artist | 4 |
| P16 | Female | Bachelor's degree | Semi-permanent makeup artist | 4 |
| P17 | Female | Bachelor's degree | Semi-permanent makeup artist | 6 |
| P18 | Female | Bachelor's degree | Semi-permanent makeup artist | 10 |
| P19 | Female | Bachelor's degree | Semi-permanent makeup artist | 10 |
| P20 | Female | Doctoral degree | Semi-permanent makeup artist | 14 |

3.2.3. Research design

To develop an NCS-based semi-permanent makeup education program, this study was designed to derive the conceptual foundations, development domains, development indicators, and development items, and to establish them as an evaluation model. The research design is presented in <Table 2>.

Table 2. Research procedure.

| Research Procedure | Description of Activities |
|----------------------------|--|
| Panel Composition | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Literature review for the research topic • Request for recommendations and selection of experts in the semi-permanent makeup industry |
| First Delphi Survey | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conducted the first Delphi survey based on the organization and analysis of preliminary data • Collected diverse expert opinions on the development of a semi-permanent makeup NCS program using open-ended questionnaires |
| Second-Round Delphi Survey | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conducted the second-round Delphi survey • Evaluated the importance of each item using closed-ended questions on a 5-point Likert scale • Assessed the level of expert consensus • Organized the collected data and calculated the median and interquartile range (IQR) |
| Third-Round Delphi Survey | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provided feedback on the statistical analysis results of the second-round survey • Presented the median and interquartile range to allow re-evaluation of the relative importance of items • Provided space for respondents to explain reasons when their responses fell outside the interquartile range • Derivation of competency unit elements applicable as competency units and learning modules |
| Validity Verification | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verified validity through convergence and consensus indices, and assessed reliability • Analyzed content validity using the Content Validity Ratio (CVR) • Conducted a comprehensive expert review of the developed evaluation criteria |

| | |
|--------------|---|
| Final Review | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reviewed the applicability of the developed competency units and competency unit elements to research on a semi-permanent makeup NCS (National Competency Standards) education program Prepared the second-round AHP expert survey based on the derived elements |
|--------------|---|

4. Empirical Analysis

4.1. Delphi analysis

4.1.1. Participation rate of the delphi panel

To derive the development domains and criteria and to verify their validity, a three-round Delphi survey was conducted with a panel of experienced experts who possess a high level of understanding of the practical application, structural characteristics, and field-specific features of the semi-permanent makeup industry.

Considering the invasive and quasi-medical nature of semi-permanent makeup procedures, the expert panel was composed of the following groups: health administration specialists; licensed medical professionals qualified to perform semi-permanent makeup procedures; skin care and esthetic professionals with extensive knowledge of skin structure and characteristics, which form the foundation of semi-permanent makeup; education specialists teaching beauty-related subjects at private academies and beauty colleges; and professional semi-permanent makeup practitioners with clinical experience ranging from a minimum of three years to over twenty years.

As the Delphi method places critical importance on obtaining sincere and thoughtful responses from experts, the panel was intentionally structured to ensure a high participation and response rate throughout all survey rounds.

<Table 3> shows the participation rates of the 20 expert panel members in each round up to the third round of the Delphi survey.

Table 3. Expert participation rates by delphi survey round.

| Group | Total (n = 20) | Participants | | |
|---|-------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| | | Round 1 (Participation Rate) | Round 2 (Participation Rate) | Round 3 (Participation Rate) |
| Medical Professionals (Qualified for Semi-Permanent Makeup Procedures) | 3 | 3 (100%) | 3 (100%) | 3 (100%) |
| Health Administration Experts | 1 | 1 (100%) | 1 (100%) | 1 (100%) |
| Dermal Aesthetics Experts (Qualified for Semi-Permanent Makeup Procedures) | 5 | 5 (100%) | 5 (100%) | 5 (100%) |
| Beauty Education Experts | 5 | 5 (100%) | 5 (100%) | 5 (100%) |
| Semi-Permanent Makeup Specialists | 6 | 6 (100%) | 6 (100%) | 6 (100%) |

4.1.2. Results of the delphi survey analysis

A three-round Delphi survey was conducted with an expert panel. The evaluation criteria applied were as follows: stability ≤ 0.50 , convergence ≤ 0.50 , consensus ≥ 0.75 , and a minimum content validity ratio (CVR) of 0.42 for panels consisting of 20–24 experts. The results indicate that a sufficient level of agreement was achieved among the Delphi panel members.

A total of 61 items were initially derived. Among these, two items with low median values were excluded, and the remaining 59 items were adopted as competency unit elements for the NCS-based semi-permanent makeup education program. <Table 4> presents the results of the analysis of the Delphi survey questionnaire.

Table 4. shows the analytical results of the delphi survey questionnaire.

| Classification | Item | Mean | Standard Deviation | Median | Stability | Stability | IQR | | Convergence | Consensus |
|----------------|--|------|--------------------|--------|-----------|-----------|------|----|-------------|-----------|
| | | | | | | | Q1 | Q3 | | |
| 1 | Definition and History of Semi-Permanent Makeup | 4.25 | 0.7 | 4 | 0.16 | 0.7 | 4 | 5 | 0.5 | 0.75 |
| 2 | Differences Between Tattooing and Semi-Permanent Makeup | 4.55 | 0.74 | 5 | 0.16 | 0.9 | 4 | 5 | 0.5 | 0.8 |
| 3 | Special-Purpose Procedures in Semi-Permanent Makeup (Scars, Areola Reconstruction, Vitiligo, etc.) | 4.25 | 0.89 | 4 | 0.21 | 0.9 | 4 | 5 | 0.5 | 0.75 |
| 4 | Structure and Functions of the Skin | 4.8 | 0.4 | 5 | 0.08 | 1 | 5 | 5 | 0 | 1 |
| 5 | Structure and Functions of the Scalp | 4.65 | 0.57 | 5 | 0.12 | 0.9 | 4 | 5 | 0.5 | 0.8 |
| 6 | Structure and Functions of the Human Body | 3.45 | 1.07 | 4 | 0.31 | 0.1 | 3 | 4 | 0.5 | 0.75 |
| 7 | Skin Type Analysis | 4.65 | 0.65 | 5 | 0.14 | 0.8 | 4.75 | 5 | 0.125 | 0.95 |
| 8 | Scalp Type Analysis | 4.6 | 0.58 | 5 | 0.13 | 0.9 | 4 | 5 | 0.5 | 0.8 |
| 9 | Anatomy of the Eyelids and Lips | 4.55 | 0.59 | 5 | 0.13 | 0.9 | 4 | 5 | 0.5 | 0.8 |
| 10 | Characteristics of Special-Purpose Treatment Areas (Scars, Areola Reconstruction, Vitiligo, etc.) | 4.6 | 0.58 | 5 | 0.13 | 0.9 | 4 | 5 | 0.5 | 0.8 |
| 11 | Workplace Hygiene Management (Equipment, Practitioners, etc.) | 4.75 | 0.43 | 5 | 0.09 | 1 | 4.75 | 5 | 0.125 | 0.95 |
| 12 | Infection and Prevention in Invasive Procedures | 4.85 | 0.36 | 5 | 0.07 | 1 | 5 | 5 | 0 | 1 |
| 13 | Disinfection and Sterilization | 4.8 | 0.4 | 5 | 0.08 | 1 | 5 | 5 | 0 | 1 |
| 14 | Pre- and Post-Procedure Precautions | 4.7 | 0.46 | 5 | 0.1 | 1 | 4 | 5 | 0.5 | 0.8 |
| 15 | Identification and Management of Side Effects and Risk Factors | 4.75 | 0.43 | 5 | 0.09 | 1 | 4.75 | 5 | 0.125 | 0.95 |
| 16 | Understanding Makeup Through the Ages | 4.2 | 0.75 | 4 | 0.18 | 0.6 | 4 | 5 | 0.5 | 0.75 |
| 17 | Understanding Makeup Trends | 4.45 | 0.59 | 4.5 | 0.13 | 0.9 | 4 | 5 | 0.5 | 0.78 |
| 18 | Understanding Facial Bone Structure | 4.4 | 0.66 | 4.5 | 0.15 | 0.8 | 4 | 5 | 0.5 | 0.78 |
| 19 | Facial Drawing Techniques | 4.3 | 0.78 | 4.5 | 0.18 | 0.6 | 4 | 5 | 0.5 | 0.78 |
| 20 | Semi-Permanent Makeup Illustration Techniques | 4.2 | 0.75 | 4 | 0.18 | 0.6 | 4 | 5 | 0.5 | 0.75 |
| 21 | Eyebrow Design | 4.75 | 0.43 | 5 | 0.09 | 1 | 4.75 | 5 | 0.125 | 0.95 |
| 22 | Eyeliner Design | 4.55 | 0.5 | 5 | 0.11 | 1 | 4 | 5 | 0.5 | 0.8 |
| 23 | Lip Design | 4.55 | 0.5 | 5 | 0.11 | 1 | 4 | 5 | 0.5 | 0.8 |
| 24 | Hairline Design | 4.55 | 0.5 | 5 | 0.11 | 1 | 4 | 5 | 0.5 | 0.8 |
| 25 | Understanding Color Theory | 4.5 | 0.67 | 5 | 0.15 | 0.8 | 4 | 5 | 0.5 | 0.8 |
| 26 | Color Mixing and Use of Complementary Colors | 4.75 | 0.43 | 5 | 0.09 | 1 | 4.75 | 5 | 0.125 | 0.95 |

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|----------------|--|------|--------------------|--------|--------|--------|------|----|--------|-----------|
| 27 | Mixing Semi-Permanent Makeup Pigments | 4.75 | 0.43 | 5 | 0.09 | 1 | 4.75 | 5 | 0.125 | 0.95 |
| 28 | Variables Affecting Semi-Permanent Makeup Pigmentation | 4.55 | 0.59 | 5 | 0.13 | 0.9 | 4 | 5 | 0.5 | 0.8 |
| 29 | Types and Understanding of Semi-Permanent Makeup Devices (Machines and Hand Tools) | 4.7 | 0.46 | 5 | 0.1 | 1 | 4 | 5 | 0.5 | 0.8 |
| 30 | Application and Usage of Semi-Permanent Makeup Devices | 4.65 | 0.48 | 5 | 0.1 | 1 | 4 | 5 | 0.5 | 0.8 |
| 31 | Techniques Using Machines | 4.7 | 0.46 | 5 | 0.1 | 1 | 4 | 5 | 0.5 | 0.8 |
| 32 | Techniques Using Emboss Needles | 4.65 | 0.48 | 5 | 0.1 | 1 | 4 | 5 | 0.5 | 0.8 |
| 33 | Facial Muscle Function and Expression Muscles | 4.45 | 0.74 | 5 | 0.17 | 0.7 | 4 | 5 | 0.5 | 0.8 |
| 34 | Design Planning According to Face Shape | 4.8 | 0.4 | 5 | 0.08 | 1 | 5 | 5 | 0 | 1 |
| Classification | Item | Mean | Standard Deviation | Median | Median | Median | IQR | | Median | Consensus |
| | | | | | | | Q1 | Q3 | | |
| 35 | Application and Usage of Semi-Permanent Makeup Devices | 4.65 | 0.57 | 5 | 0.12 | 0.9 | 4 | 5 | 0.5 | 0.8 |
| 36 | Selection and Application of Procedure Techniques | 4.65 | 0.57 | 5 | 0.12 | 0.9 | 4 | 5 | 0.5 | 0.8 |
| 37 | Selection and Application of Procedure Pigments | 4.65 | 0.48 | 5 | 0.1 | 1 | 4 | 5 | 0.5 | 0.8 |
| 38 | Covering Residual Marks from Previous Procedures | 4.75 | 0.43 | 5 | 0.09 | 1 | 4.75 | 5 | 0.125 | 0.95 |
| 39 | Cover Procedures for Scars and Post-Laser Areas | 4.3 | 0.95 | 5 | 0.22 | 0.7 | 4 | 5 | 0.5 | 0.8 |
| 40 | Methods for Removing Incorrect Semi-Permanent Makeup | 4.3 | 0.84 | 4.5 | 0.2 | 0.7 | 4 | 5 | 0.5 | 0.78 |
| 41 | Use of Laser | 3.15 | 0.91 | 3 | 0.29 | -0.2 | 2 | 4 | 1 | 0.33 |
| 42 | Selection of Re-Procedure Methods for Incorrect Semi-Permanent Makeup | 4.65 | 0.48 | 5 | 0.1 | 1 | 4 | 5 | 0.5 | 0.8 |
| 43 | Use of Analgesics | 4.65 | 0.48 | 5 | 0.1 | 1 | 4 | 5 | 0.5 | 0.8 |
| 44 | Waste Management After Invasive Procedures | 4.6 | 0.58 | 5 | 0.13 | 0.9 | 4 | 5 | 0.5 | 0.8 |
| 45 | Understanding Personal Information Protection Laws | 4.35 | 0.79 | 4.5 | 0.18 | 0.8 | 4 | 5 | 0.5 | 0.78 |
| 46 | Customer Service (Overall Guidance in the Procedure Setting) | 4.4 | 0.66 | 4.5 | 0.15 | 0.8 | 4 | 5 | 0.5 | 0.78 |
| 47 | Customer Consultation | 4.65 | 0.48 | 5 | 0.1 | 1 | 4 | 5 | 0.5 | 0.8 |
| 48 | Customer Management Card Preparation | 4.35 | 0.57 | 4 | 0.13 | 0.9 | 4 | 5 | 0.5 | 0.75 |
| 49 | Post-Procedure Care Guidelines Preparation | 4.45 | 0.5 | 4 | 0.11 | 1 | 4 | 5 | 0.5 | 0.75 |
| 50 | Pre- and Post-Procedure Photography and Techniques | 4.4 | 0.58 | 4 | 0.13 | 0.9 | 4 | 5 | 0.5 | 0.75 |
| 51 | Management of New, Regular, and Departing Clients | 4.2 | 0.81 | 4 | 0.19 | 0.7 | 4 | 5 | 0.5 | 0.75 |
| 52 | Creation of Promotional Profiles | 4.4 | 0.58 | 4 | 0.13 | 0.9 | 4 | 5 | 0.5 | 0.75 |
| 53 | Practitioner Personal Image Management | 4.55 | 0.59 | 5 | 0.13 | 0.9 | 4 | 5 | 0.5 | 0.8 |
| 54 | Client Image Management | 4.25 | 0.89 | 4.5 | 0.21 | 0.6 | 4 | 5 | 0.5 | 0.78 |
| 56 | Marketing | 4.25 | 0.83 | 4 | 0.2 | 0.7 | 4 | 5 | 0.5 | 0.75 |
| 57 | Feedback on Procedure Results | 4.55 | 0.5 | 5 | 0.11 | 1 | 4 | 5 | 0.5 | 0.8 |
| 58 | Comprehensive and Continuous Feedback After Training | 4.35 | 0.79 | 4.5 | 0.18 | 0.8 | 4 | 5 | 0.5 | 0.78 |
| 59 | Hands-On Practice with Models | 4.5 | 0.59 | 5 | 0.13 | 0.9 | 4 | 5 | 0.5 | 0.8 |
| 60 | Total Training Hours | 4.55 | 0.59 | 5 | 0.13 | 0.9 | 4 | 5 | 0.5 | 0.8 |
| 61 | Government Support and Promotion for Vocational Education | 4.15 | 0.96 | 4 | 0.23 | 0.6 | 4 | 5 | 0.5 | 0.75 |

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|----|--|-----|------|---|------|------|---|---|-----|------|
| 62 | Certificates and Awards | 4.1 | 0.83 | 4 | 0.2 | 0.6 | 4 | 5 | 0.5 | 0.75 |
| 63 | Participation in Related Industry Associations | 3.2 | 0.81 | 3 | 0.25 | -0.3 | 3 | 4 | 0.5 | 0.67 |

4.1.3. Reliability analysis

A reliability analysis was conducted to examine whether the respondents participated in the survey with consistency. Reliability refers to the extent to which repeated measurements of the same construct yield consistent results and to the internal consistency among items comprising a given scale.

To assess reliability, Cronbach's alpha coefficient was employed. In general, a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.60 or higher is considered to indicate acceptable reliability (Hair et al., 2006). In this study, the Cronbach's alpha coefficient exceeded 0.97, indicating a very high level of reliability.

5. Conclusion

5.1.1. Discussion and conclusion

Semi-permanent makeup is a long-lasting form of makeup that is not a one-time procedure, but rather a technique performed by professionals possessing artistic sensibility, hygienic knowledge, and advanced aesthetic skills [26][27]. By enhancing facial appearance, it not only provides convenience to recipients but also contributes to increased self-confidence, self-esteem, and positive effects on daily life. Numerous previous studies by Yoon So-young, Hwang Eun-im, Han Ja-ae, Jeon Hong-kyung, and others have demonstrated that makeup enhances self-efficacy and self-esteem, leading to positive changes in quality of life [28][29][30][31].

According to a 2016 employment impact assessment conducted by the Employment Impact Evaluation Center of the Korea Labor Institute, the semi-permanent makeup profession was identified as a representative emerging occupation. The study projected that, if institutional restrictions were removed and professional activities were activated, the field could become a major source of job creation. In many countries, semi-permanent makeup has already been institutionalized and is practiced as a professional occupation.

As noted in the literature review, proposals for the legalization of semi-permanent makeup have increased steadily and have become a significant social issue, while the number of practitioners has also grown rapidly. As a result of these ongoing developments, semi-permanent makeup procedures in Korea will be legalized with the enforcement of the Tattooist Act in 2027. In preparation for this regulatory change, there is an urgent need to introduce standardized and systematized educational programs for semi-permanent makeup—similar to existing beauty-related NCS programs—developed and verified by field experts through the definition and evaluation of terminology and techniques.

The purpose of this study was to develop a model educational program for semi-permanent makeup aimed at qualitative improvement. To this end, an NCS-based education program was developed through a structured research process. Existing NCS competency units and performance criteria in makeup, nail beauty, skin care, and hair beauty—fields already systematized by experts—were reviewed to identify components suitable for training practitioners capable of immediate field application. Prior studies and expert opinions from practitioners in the semi-permanent makeup field were validated through Delphi surveys, and related methodological studies on Delphi-based program development were examined.

For example, Park Chi-dong's study on the development of an e-learning-based teacher training evaluation model using the Delphi and AHP methods constructed a conceptual framework

based on literature review and prior research, identified limitations of existing programs, and developed a preliminary evaluation model[32]. Such approaches—deriving educational elements through literature and prior research and validating them through Delphi surveys—are feasible primarily in research fields with extensive prior studies.

However, research on semi-permanent makeup education program development is extremely limited, and studies related to NCS-based curricula are particularly scarce. Most prior studies have emphasized the necessity of education programs or structured curricula based on needs assessments of trainees or potential learners. While there have been some achievements in developing basic NCS-based education programs for semi-permanent makeup, this study determined that a systematically analyzed program developed through the collective input of multiple experts was necessary.

Accordingly, this study adopted an approach similar to those of Baek In-seon, Son Jin-suk, and Lee Min-jae, in which educational elements were finalized through Delphi surveys based on expert consensus[33][34][35].

Baek In-seon's study on developing an in-service training program for Korean language teachers using the Delphi method selected educational objectives, required subjects, and instructional content through open-ended surveys of education experts, and developed an education program based on Delphi-derived consensus regarding objectives, content, total instructional hours, and training periods. Unlike prior studies that relied on learner needs assessments, this research emphasized expert-driven program development and consensus-building through the Delphi method[33].

Similarly, Son Jin-suk's study on designing a mobile sight-singing education program using Delphi and AHP methods aimed to derive key program components. The Delphi method was selected as it effectively identifies appropriate indicators and uncovers elements not addressed in prior research by utilizing the expertise and experience of practitioners. The study emphasized the importance of expert participation during the development stage to ensure professional validity[34].

Lee Min-jae's study on the development of clinical practice education programs and clinical performance competency scales for occupational therapy students applied the Delphi method three times with 43 job experts, ultimately deriving 11 education program themes and content components[35].

Following these precedents, this study defined the Delphi method as a procedure for collecting and synthesizing expert opinions to reach informed judgments. To maximize professional validity and reflect practical experience, a total of 27 experts with between 3 and over 20 years of experience in semi-permanent makeup practice and education participated in the study. Their accumulated expertise was utilized to develop educational elements suitable for field application and learning modules.

For the development of the semi-permanent makeup NCS education program, a comprehensive literature review was conducted, including 81 master's theses, 14 doctoral dissertations, and related monographs. Based on this review, three rounds of Delphi surveys were conducted to identify appropriate conceptual foundations, development domains, items, and indicators for the NCS-based education program.

Through the three Delphi rounds, 18 NCS competency units were derived: overview and definition of semi-permanent makeup; skin and scalp; hygiene management; infection control and sterilization; pre- and post-procedure care; history and trends of makeup; basic makeup drawing; semi-permanent makeup design; color theory; semi-permanent pigments; semi-permanent makeup devices; device-based design techniques; field application of semi-permanent makeup;

corrective strategies for improper procedures; use of pain-relief agents; customer management; business management; and educational feedback.

Analysis of expert perceptions regarding the importance of the derived program elements revealed the following.

First, items related to field application techniques and design were rated as highly important by the 24 participating experts. Because semi-permanent makeup produces long-lasting results that cannot be easily altered like conventional makeup, design selection and application methods must be chosen with great care. Without a strong sense of responsibility and professional ethics, both practitioners and clients may suffer adverse consequences, reflecting the inherently high-risk nature of this specialized form of makeup.

Second, infection control, sterilization, and hygiene management received high importance ratings. Given that hygiene-related concerns have been a major argument against legalization, these issues are particularly salient. Increased public awareness of hygiene following the COVID-19 pandemic has further reinforced this perception. Pre- and post-procedure management is closely linked to hygiene and infection prevention, influencing both procedural outcomes and safety. This emphasis reflects expert efforts to counter concerns raised by the Constitutional Court regarding non-medical practitioners and infection risks.

Third, items related to pigments, device usage, pain-relief agents, basic makeup drawing, skin and scalp knowledge, and color theory showed only marginal differences in importance, as all are considered essential to successful semi-permanent makeup procedures.

Fourth, customer management and business management were rated slightly lower in importance. This may be attributed to the increased ease of personal promotion through social media platforms such as YouTube and Instagram, as well as reliance on viral marketing strategies due to prior regulatory constraints, resulting in a relatively lower perceived importance of formal management competencies.

Fifth, the history and trends of makeup were rated lowest among the 18 competency units. As semi-permanent makeup focuses primarily on facial application and has not yet been fully academized like general makeup studies, comprehensive historical education is perceived as less critical.

However, these findings reflect relative importance among items rather than a lack of importance of any specific element. The results can provide practical guidance for allocating instructional time and determining mandatory components when designing learning modules.

NCS-based curricula are developed and validated through expert participation and are designed to cultivate practical job competencies aligned with workplace demands. Given that the educational elements identified in this study were derived from long-term field experts in semi-permanent makeup practice, they are expected to serve as foundational data for the development of standardized and systematic education programs. Furthermore, these elements may be effectively utilized as instructional materials to enhance the professional competency of semi-permanent makeup practitioners and to support competency-based education aligned with industry needs.

5.1.2. Limitations and recommendations

The limitations of this study and recommendations for future research are as follows.

First, although the number of male trainees seeking education in semi-permanent makeup is increasing, statistics from the Korea Institute for Health and Social Affairs indicate that approximately 98.7% of semi-permanent makeup practitioners are female. As a result, the number of

male experts participating in this study was limited, and differences in perspectives based on gender could not be sufficiently examined. Future studies should therefore seek to increase the participation of male professionals to enable more balanced and comprehensive analysis.

Second, there is a significant lack of prior research on semi-permanent makeup education programs, and existing studies present diverse claims and approaches regarding procedures and techniques. Considerable variation also exists in terminology and expressions used to describe techniques. Accordingly, there is a strong need to systematize and standardize procedural techniques and terminology through an NCS-based curriculum, similar to those established in other beauty-related fields.

Third, further research is recommended to conduct multi-level weighting analyses that include competency unit elements, in order to more precisely determine the relative importance of each component within the education program.

Fourth, although this study derived an education program framework, evaluation of the program's effectiveness after actual implementation remains necessary. Follow-up studies should assess educational outcomes and practical applicability through program execution and post-training evaluation.

Fifth, semi-permanent makeup procedures often involve long intervals between treatments—sometimes spanning several years—and require observation of long-term outcomes, including residual traces and changes in design and color over time. In practice, continuous monitoring of these changes in treated skin is uncommon. Therefore, further development of the NCS-based education program is needed to incorporate long-term feedback mechanisms. Continuous refinement will be essential to ensure the program's effectiveness and sustainability as a practical and outcome-oriented education model.

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7. Appendix

7.1. Author's contribution

| | Initial name | Contribution |
|-----------------------|--------------|---|
| Lead Author | SR | -Set of concepts <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> -Design <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> -Getting results <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> -Analysis <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> -Make a significant contribution to collection <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> -Final approval of the paper <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> -Corresponding <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> -Play a decisive role in modification <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Corresponding Author* | EC | -Significant contributions to concepts, designs, practices, analysis and interpretation of data <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> -Participants in Drafting and Revising Papers <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> -Someone who can explain all aspects of the paper <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

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A Study on Policy Directions for Disability Tourism Welfare Following the Enactment of the Lifelong Education Act for Persons with Disabilities

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Abstract

Purpose: This study positions the enactment of the Lifelong Education Act for Persons with Disabilities (Act No. 21076), scheduled to take effect in 2027, as a critical policy window and aims to identify concrete strategies for linking relevant policies to achieve the Act's stated goals of promoting independent living and enhancing social participation among persons with disabilities. In particular, this study proposes a policy framework that leverages existing lifelong education infrastructure to institutionalize training that strengthens the active self-reliance competencies required for tourism participation. This approach aims to enhance the quality of life of persons with disabilities and promote their substantive social inclusion.

Method: This study employed literature review and policy analysis as its primary methodological approaches. It conducted an in-depth examination of the major provisions of the Lifelong Education Act for Persons with Disabilities, scheduled for implementation in 2027, as well as the developmental trajectory of the existing Lifelong Education Act. In addition, by synthesizing prior research on lifelong education needs by disability type (physical, developmental, and mental disabilities) and on advancement tasks identified by special education experts, the study assessed the limitations of current tourism welfare policies and derived legally grounded and practically actionable policy implementation strategies.

Results: Existing disability tourism welfare policies have largely focused on improving physical accessibility, with limited educational support and a shortage of professionals to build active travel competencies such as planning and crisis management. Lifelong education needs also differ by disability type—employment-focused training (physical disabilities), independent living support (developmental disabilities), and specialized institutions (mental disabilities)—highlighting the need for tailored, integrated program development.

Conclusion: This study recommends establishing a regular policy coordination body among the ministry of education, the ministry of culture, sports and tourism, and the ministry of health and welfare to strengthen the implementation of the lifelong education act for persons with disabilities and advance tourism welfare. It further proposes requiring lifelong educator training to include modules on tourism-related self-reliance and safety, and mandates that lifelong learning centers for persons with disabilities provide experiential self-reliance tourism programs linked to local destinations. These measures will help ensure that lifelong education outcomes lead to greater social participation and improved quality of life for persons with disabilities.

Keywords: Lifelong Education Act for Persons with Disabilities, Tourism, Welfare, Quality of Life, Government

1. Introduction

1.1. Research background and rationale

1.1.1. Background to the shift toward a rights-based approach to lifelong education for persons with disabilities

In contemporary society, education extends beyond the school-age period, and lifelong learning is regarded as essential for personal development, social integration, and competitiveness in a rapidly evolving knowledge-based environment. Reflecting Article 31(5) of the Constitution of the Republic of Korea, which mandates the State to promote lifelong education, it is both a basic right of citizens and a governmental obligation. For persons with disabilities, who have long faced socioeconomic and physical barriers to learning, lifelong education must therefore be understood not as a welfare provision but as a fundamental right necessary for a dignified life and full social participation.

This rights-based perspective has been firmly institutionalized within the international community and was further strengthened through the ratification of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) by the Republic of Korea. The UNCRPD redefines persons with disabilities not as “objects of protection” but as “subjects of rights,” and imposes a binding obligation on States Parties to ensure their rights to lifelong learning and full participation in society[1][2].

However, the policy of lifelong disability education in Korea has faced challenges in securing a coherent policy philosophy and effective implementation, as it has been pursued through fragmented support provisions within the Lifelong Education Act alongside welfare services grounded in the Act on Welfare of Persons with Disabilities. This fragmented structure has hindered the development of a consistent and integrated policy framework[3]. Moreover, the Lifelong Education Act, which forms the foundation of the policy, adheres to a narrow definition that excludes formal education, and most of its provisions remain merely advisory in nature [4], making it insufficient to effectively fulfill the constitutional obligation to guarantee the right to education for persons with disabilities. Against this background, the development of new legislation to independently guarantee lifelong education for persons with disabilities as a fundamental right has emerged as an imperative policy task that can no longer be deferred.

1.1.2. Policy significance of the lifelong education act for persons with disabilities and the necessity of implementing its employment-welfare linkage mandates

The Lifelong Education Act for Persons with Disabilities (Act No. 21076), enacted on November 11, 2025, and set to take effect on May 12, 2027, provides a crucial legal foundation for advancing disability lifelong education policy in Korea. The Act explicitly articulates the goals of lifelong education for persons with disabilities as promoting independent living, social participation, and an improved quality of life. It also strengthens the obligations of national and local governments and establishes the legal foundation for an independent support delivery system, including national and provincial promotion centers and related facilities[5]. In particular, the central basis of this study’s argument lies in Article 14, Paragraph 1 of the Lifelong Education Act for Persons with Disabilities. This provision stipulates that lifelong education institutions for persons with disabilities may carry out a range of programs to support their employment and welfare. Specifically, the Act permits such institutions to provide vocational education programs necessary for the employment and job retention of persons with disabilities; to implement programs that link vocational training with employment opportunities to promote labor market participation and income generation; to integrate public job programs centered on the labor rights of persons with severe disabilities with relevant educational components; and to develop initiatives that connect lifelong education curricula with welfare services in local communities to support independent living and improve quality of life. In addition, Article 14, Paragraph 2 reinforces this mandate by stipulating that “the Minister of Education shall establish a cooperative system with the Minister of Employment and Labor and the Minister of Health and Welfare

to ensure the effective operation of the projects specified in Paragraph 1.” Through this provision, lifelong education for persons with disabilities is accorded a legal obligation to generate tangible socioeconomic outcomes, extending beyond the realm of general enrichment learning. Although tourism is widely recognized as a fundamental human right and a key welfare resource that enhances quality of life, it remains one of the least accessible sectors for persons with disabilities due to physical (accessibility), economic (vulnerability), and informational (education) barriers[6]. Accordingly, utilizing the Act’s mandated welfare linkages to define a policy direction for disability tourism welfare can enhance the law’s practical effectiveness and translate lifelong education into more tangible improvements in the lives of persons with disabilities.

1.1.3. Empirical evidence on tourism, social capital, and quality of life

Tourism activities possess demonstrated empirical value in advancing the fundamental aims of lifelong education, particularly the promotion of independent living and meaningful social participation. Previous studies have shown that participation in tourism activities significantly enhances the quality of life (QOL) of persons with disabilities, producing psychological and socio-educational benefits such as improved self-esteem, a greater sense of achievement, and better interpersonal relationships[7]. Furthermore, in-depth studies on disability tourism have shown that mere participation in travel, by itself, has a limited direct impact on improving quality of life. Instead, empirical evidence indicates that tourism activities enhance quality of life only through the formation of cognitive social capital—such as trust, norms, and shared values—demonstrating a full mediating effect of this process[8]. Cognitive social capital is closely linked to learning capacity and autonomy. This evidence supports the study’s central argument that disability tourism must be systematically integrated with lifelong education to generate meaningful welfare outcomes. As a form of lifelong learning, tourism enables the acquisition of knowledge, skills, and social networks, and—when combined with lifelong education programs—can effectively enhance the quality of life and autonomy of persons with disabilities.

1.2. Research purpose and content

This study aims to position the enactment of the Lifelong Education Act for Persons with Disabilities as a key policy juncture and to propose a concrete direction for disability tourism welfare as a core area of the Act’s mandated employment–welfare linkage. To this end, the study addresses three areas.

First, it analyzes the Act’s major provisions and outlines an inter-ministerial governance framework connecting education, welfare, and tourism.

Second, it develops a demand-oriented lifelong education program model that links tourism experiences with academic credit or competency development, reflecting the needs of adult learners with disabilities.

Third, it proposes institutional and operational improvements to enhance policy effectiveness, focusing on issues such as ambiguous local ordinances and limitations among service providers in tourism welfare practice.

2. Theoretical and Legal Foundations of Disability Tourism Welfare Policy

2.1. Conceptual framework of disability rights and policy

2.1.1. Evolution of disability concepts: the shift from the medical model to the social model and its implications

The concept of “disability,” which forms the foundation of disability policy, has undergone a

fundamental shift from the medical model to the social model in accordance with broader societal change. The traditional medical model viewed disability as an individual physical or mental deficit and positioned persons with disabilities primarily as objects of treatment, rehabilitation, and charitable protection. This perspective offered limited potential for advancing the independence and social participation of persons with disabilities. However, with the adoption and ratification of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), disability came to be defined not as an individual impairment but as the outcome of interactions between individuals with impairments and the social and environmental barriers that restrict their participation[1][9]. The social model elevates disability from a matter of individual deficit to an issue of human rights and equality, emphasizing the need to remove institutional, physical, and attitudinal barriers. Accordingly, the UNCRPD and the disability policies of the European Union reframe persons with disabilities from “invisible citizens” to “visible citizens,” positioning non-discrimination and social inclusion as central policy objectives[9].

The disability tourism welfare policy proposed in this study is aligned with the aims of the social model. Tourism activities should function not merely as leisure experiences but as educational opportunities that enable individuals to access new environments, build social networks, and strengthen autonomy, thereby serving as a lifelong learning arena that helps dismantle social barriers.

2.1.2. Legal duties and policy implementation of reasonable accommodation and accessibility

A central legal mechanism for realizing the social model is the provision of reasonable accommodation (RA) and the guarantee of accessibility. Reasonable accommodation, one of the most critical principles of the Anti-Discrimination Act for Persons with Disabilities, refers to the provision of necessary adjustments or modifications—without imposing disproportionate or undue burden—required to ensure that persons with disabilities can enjoy and exercise their rights on an equal basis with others[10]. In other words, it constitutes an ex post and individualized obligation to ensure the participation of persons with disabilities, encompassing personalized forms of support in tourism service provision such as sign-language interpretation, tailored guidance, and assistance with boarding aircraft. A refusal to provide reasonable accommodation is regarded as discrimination. By contrast, accessibility (Barrierefreiheit) refers to the prior design of physical environments—including buildings, transportation systems, information technologies, and services—such that they can be used independently and without undue difficulty or assistance by all individuals, including those with disabilities[11]. This constitutes an ex ante and universal obligation and serves as a core principle in the creation of accessible tourism environments, including the development of barrier-free destinations, the expansion of accessible transportation, and the enhancement of information availability through digital accessibility.

The disability tourism welfare policy proposed in this study requires the integrated application of accessibility and reasonable accommodation. While accessibility represents a basic governmental duty to remove physical barriers, individualized support delivered through lifelong education programs functions as an effective mechanism for enhancing tourism experiences and linking them to meaningful learning outcomes.

2.1.3. Tourism welfare and its effects on the quality of life of persons with disabilities

Tourism welfare refers to governmental and local policy initiatives designed to expand travel opportunities and promote tourism participation among tourism-vulnerable populations—including persons with disabilities—who face restrictions in tourism activities due to economic, social, or other structural conditions[6]. Tourism welfare is understood not merely as leisure

support but as a key welfare domain that mitigates social inequality and enhances social inclusion and quality of life (QOL). Empirical studies show that tourism participation positively influences the QOL of persons with disabilities, particularly by improving self-esteem, sense of achievement, and interpersonal relationships[7]. Research on disability tourism further shows that travel participation improves QOL only when it facilitates the formation of cognitive social capital—including trust, norms, and shared values—rather than through participation alone[8]. This cognitive social capital represents learning capacity and self-reliance gained through life-long education, underscoring that tourism welfare is effective only when integrated with life-long education programs.

2.2. Constitutional status and legal framework of lifelong education

2.2.1. Constitutional right to lifelong education and public duties in disability lifelong education

Articles 31(5) and 31(6) of the Constitution establish the public status of lifelong education. In particular, Article 31(6), which stipulates “the educational system, including school education and lifelong education,” suggests that lifelong education should be understood not as a subsidiary component of school education but as a broad, overarching concept encompassing the entire educational system[12]. This view aligns with the broader educational scholarship, which understands lifelong education as a social right that ensures learning opportunities throughout the life course. Within this framework, the State carries a responsibility to provide equitable access to learning for all citizens and, in particular, to offer additional support to persons with disabilities whose access is limited by socioeconomic constraints. Thus, education for persons with disabilities is not a discretionary welfare service but an area of equality rights in which the State must actively remove barriers and take measures to ensure that individuals with disabilities can fully exercise their constitutionally protected right to lifelong education.

2.2.2. Structural limitations and effectiveness issues of the current lifelong education act

2.2.2.1. Conceptual and legal limitations

The Lifelong Education Act defines lifelong education narrowly as “education other than formal school curricula,” creating a conceptual inconsistency between the Act and the Constitution’s broader conception of the right to lifelong education[13]. In addition, the absence of a clear legal definition of the content of lifelong education raises concerns regarding discretionary policy implementation and the justification of budgetary allocations.

2.2.2.2. Effectiveness and fiscal limitations

Most of the support provisions in the Lifelong Education Act are merely recommendatory or discretionary, resulting in a marked lack of legal enforceability[14][4]. Consequently, budgetary stability is weak, and the scale of governmental financial support for lifelong disability education remains inadequate.

2.2.2.3. Inefficiencies arising from fragmented governance

Although the lifelong education support system is organized around the central government (the Ministry of Education and the National Institute for Lifelong Education) and local governments and superintendents of education, the division of roles and the cooperative governance structure among these actors remain unclear. As a result, both vertical and horizontal coordination are weak, leading to low policy implementation efficiency[15]. This governance fragmentation is particularly pronounced in the field of disability lifelong education due to the bifurcation between welfare (Ministry of Health and Welfare) and education (Ministry of Education).

3. Current Legal Framework for Disability Lifelong Education and the Core Features of the Lifelong Education Act for Persons with Disabilities

3.1. Disability lifelong education policy and dual support challenges

Disability lifelong education policy in Korea has progressed through four stages: a period of absence (pre-1998), an introduction stage (1999–2007), an expansion stage (2008–2015), and a development stage (2016–present)[2]. In particular, the 2016 amendment to the Lifelong Education Act marked a significant step forward by establishing the legal basis for the National Center for Disability Lifelong Education and for operating lifelong education programs for persons with disabilities[16].

However, during this development process, a structural bifurcation of policy actors became entrenched. Under the Lifelong Education Act, the Ministry of Education assumed responsibility for establishing the legal and institutional foundation—including systems, personnel (lifelong educators), and delivery structures (promotion centers)—whereas the Ministry of Health and Welfare, through welfare centers, took on the roles of field implementation, service provision, and frontline staffing[17][18]. This bifurcation has resulted in unclear accountability, duplication or gaps in budgeting, and discontinuity in policy implementation, thereby functioning as a fundamental barrier to achieving effective and coordinated linkages between welfare and education[3].

3.2. Key elements of the lifelong education act for persons with disabilities

The Lifelong Education Act for Persons with Disabilities, enacted on November 11, 2025, overcomes the limitations of previous frameworks and establishes an independent legal foundation. Its implications for shaping the policy directions proposed in this study are as follows.

First, it establishes the status of a rights-based statute. Article 1 explicitly states that the purpose of the Act is to “guarantee the right of persons with disabilities to participate in lifelong education,” thereby clarifying its character not merely as a support measure but as a rights-oriented legal framework. Second, the “employment–welfare linkage obligation” stipulated in Article 14 imposes a legal mandate on the State to ensure that lifelong education produces tangible welfare outcomes. This provision offers an optimal legal foundation for advancing disability tourism welfare policy. Third, a system for coordinated delivery was established by providing legal grounds for the National Center (Article 15) and Regional Centers (Article 16) for Lifelong Education for Persons with Disabilities, ensuring integrated support, research, and policy implementation at both central and regional levels[5]. This delivery system should serve as the central mechanism for planning and overseeing tourism welfare linkage initiatives. Such legal advancements provide a timely and robust opportunity to articulate a new policy direction that integrates welfare and education, and this opportunity must be translated into concrete policy measures for advancing disability tourism welfare.

4. Environmental and Demand Analysis for Linking Disability Tourism Welfare Policy

4.1. Analysis of domestic and international linkages between lifelong education and tourism welfare

4.1.1. Status and limitations of disability tourism welfare in Korea

In Korea, support for disability tourism welfare is currently dispersed across two separate frameworks—the assistance for tourism-vulnerable groups under the Tourism Promotion Act and welfare services under the Act on Welfare of Persons with Disabilities—with limited sys-

tematic linkage to lifelong education. At the local government level, where policy implementation occurs most directly, several structural issues have become evident. First, there is confusion and omission regarding terminology and policy targets. The Tourism Promotion Act distinguishes between “support for tourism activities for persons with disabilities, older adults, and others” (Article 47-3) and “tourism-vulnerable groups” (defined as those restricted by economic or social conditions, Article 47-4). However, at the local government level—the primary locus of policy implementation—terms such as “tourism-vulnerable groups,” “tourism-disadvantaged persons,” and “barrier-free tourism” are used interchangeably in municipal ordinances[6][19]. As a result, the purpose of the ordinances, the identification of policy targets, and the scope of support programs vary across local governments, undermining policy consistency and equity. This inconsistency leads to situations in which economically vulnerable groups and persons with physical disabilities are classified under different ordinances or, in some cases, excluded from both, thereby compromising substantive equality. Second, there are limitations in the professionalism and infrastructure of the delivery system. Disability lifelong education has been implemented mainly through disability welfare centers. In addition, the absence of formal cooperation channels between tourism-sector actors (e.g., tourism associations and visitor centers) and education and welfare institutions prevents effective linkage between the learning needs of persons with disabilities and the tourism environments and services available to them. Third, there are qualitative limitations in program provision. Support for disability tourism has largely focused on travel subsidies or basic leisure activities, with insufficient development of educational content that connects tourism experiences to the enhancement of self-reliance competencies such as academic credit, certification, or job-related skills. This indicates that current policies fail to incorporate empirical findings showing that tourism activities contribute to quality of life only through the mediating mechanism of cognitive social capital [8].

4.1.2. Policy implications from international cases

Some international cases demonstrate concrete policy directions that integrate lifelong education with welfare and labor systems to promote the social participation of persons with disabilities[20].

First, Germany provides a strong model of linking vocational education with labor market participation. Based on its Dual System, Germany reinforces the integration of lifelong education and vocational training, while public mechanisms such as educational leave (Bildungsurlaub) and the Advancement Training Assistance Act (Meister-Bafög) offer financial and temporal support for the professional skill development of workers, including persons with disabilities[2]. This model suggests that lifelong education should pursue not only quality-of-life enhancement but also national competitiveness and labor market integration. It further illustrates the potential for linking disability lifelong education with employment or job competency development in the tourism sector.

Second, the European Union imposes strong accessibility obligations. The EU regards reasonable accommodation and accessibility as central human rights principles and explicitly regulates accessibility requirements in cultural and tourism sectors[11]. By defining the advanced creation of barrier-free tourism infrastructure and services as a legal obligation rather than a matter of choice, the EU establishes the physical foundation for ensuring nondiscriminatory access to tourism environments for all individuals. This provides a compelling rationale for incorporating the Act’s forthcoming obligations on “welfare linkage” and “accessibility” into concrete tourism-related regulations in Korea, such as the Tourism Promotion Act.

Third, advanced systems emphasize flexible academic administration tailored to adult learners. Countries such as the United States, the United Kingdom, and Australia actively adopt flexible academic policies, credit-recognition systems, and online or blended learning modalities through community colleges and open universities, reflecting the distinct learning needs of

adult learners[22][23]. This suggests the need to adopt flexible learning modalities—such as blended learning—to overcome the temporal and physical constraints faced by learners with disabilities and to enhance their access to education[24].

4.2. Learning motivation and educational quality in adults with disabilities

The effectiveness of policies linking lifelong education and tourism welfare for persons with disabilities ultimately depends on the extent to which they address the concrete motivations and goal orientations of adult learners with disabilities. These learners typically seek outcomes with high socioeconomic exchange value—most notably the attainment of degrees and professional certifications—while simultaneously demonstrating heterogeneous educational needs driven by their personal and occupational backgrounds. For instance, individuals experiencing employment instability tend to prioritize retraining and credential acquisition, whereas those with long-term career histories place greater emphasis on retirement preparedness and self-actualization[25][26]. Gender-differentiated patterns further emerge: male learners more frequently value skill enhancement and social network expansion, while female learners place greater importance on certification and career transition. Such variation underscores the necessity for multi-layered, customized program designs rather than uniform educational provision within disability-oriented tourism welfare initiatives[27]. Moreover, learning satisfaction and instructor trust function as critical quality-related mediators that amplify learning outcomes.

Empirical findings indicate that motivation for lifelong learning exerts a positive influence on perceptions of educational innovation through the partial mediating role of learning satisfaction, and that instructor trust partially mediates the relationship between learning motivation and satisfaction[28]. These results collectively suggest that program success hinges not only on the adequacy of instructional content but also on the professional competence, credibility, and relational quality of instructors[29]. Accordingly, integrated tourism-welfare education programs for learners with disabilities must simultaneously accommodate differentiated learner needs and strengthen educational quality through enhanced satisfaction and trust-building mechanisms.

5. Tourism Welfare Policy Linkage Model and Direction based on the Lifelong Education Act for Persons with Disabilities

5.1. Designing a disability lifelong education-tourism welfare linkage model

Disability tourism welfare can succeed only when three domains—lifelong education (capacity building), welfare (support for independent living), and tourism (accessible environments and services)—operate in an integrated manner. However, the current support system fails to generate policy synergy due to the bifurcation between education (Ministry of Education) and welfare (Ministry of Health and Welfare) and the limited involvement of the tourism authority (Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism)[3]. To operationalize the new Act’s “linkage obligation” (Article 14), it is necessary to establish an integrated central–local governance framework that enhances the effectiveness of disability lifelong learning policy. A high-level interministerial council under the Prime Minister’s Office should be established to exercise authoritative coordination over planning and fiscal governance. The National Center for Disability Lifelong Education must function as the legally mandated implementation hub, harmonizing ministerial delivery systems and managing standardized convergence programs. Local governments should form legally grounded linkage task forces to operationalize policy through multi-actor networks and deliver integrated, demand-responsive services.

5.2. Professional workforce development

This proposal formalizes the role of lifelong educators as integrated coordinators who assess the learning needs, welfare conditions, and tourism accessibility of persons with disabilities, and who mediate individualized linkage services, including reasonable accommodations (RA)[16]. To support this role, a mandatory training program would be established under the National Institute for Lifelong Education for Persons with Disabilities, covering four essential areas: (1) understanding of the tourism industry, (2) barrier-free accessibility standards, (3) linkage of welfare services such as personal assistance, and (4) instructional methods tailored to adult learners. The establishment of this system would create an integrated national framework that seamlessly links lifelong learning, welfare, and tourism for persons with disabilities, with professionally trained lifelong educators serving as its core coordinating agents.

5.3. Legal and institutional directions for strengthening policy effectiveness

5.3.1. Directions for revising local government ordinances

5.3.1.1. Standardization of legal terminology

Pursuant to Article 14's welfare linkage obligation, local ordinances should replace inconsistent terms—such as “tourism-vulnerable” or “tourism-disadvantaged”—with standardized terminology centered on equality and universal accessibility, such as “users of accessible tourism services,” and clarify the corresponding definitions[6].

5.3.1.2. Specification of inclusive target obligations

The subordinate regulations of the Lifelong Education Act for Persons with Disabilities should specify minimum standards for establishing and operating tourism-welfare linkage programs—such as requirements for specialized personnel and the use of blended learning—and local ordinances must be mandated to incorporate these standards to minimize regional disparities in policy implementation[6].

5.3.2. Mandating reasonable accommodation guidelines for service providers and administrative support measures

5.3.2.1. Mandating reasonable accommodation guidelines

The Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism, in collaboration with the National Center for Disability Lifelong Education, should develop “reasonable accommodation guidelines” for tourism service providers and require their completion as a mandatory component of tourism business licensing and training[10].

5.3.2.2. Incentives and consulting support

Tourism businesses that comply with the guidelines and participate in lifelong-education-linked programs should receive tangible incentives—such as a “Barrier-Free Tourism Certification Mark,” tax benefits, and priority access to policy financing—to reduce compliance costs and encourage voluntary participation. In addition, a support system should be established in which disability lifelong-education coordinators provide free expert consulting to businesses on accessibility improvements and the development of service manuals.

6. Conclusion

This study identifies the enactment of the Lifelong Education Act for Persons with Disabilities as a critical policy turning point and explores the direction of disability tourism welfare policy

as a key domain for fulfilling Article 14 of the Act, which stipulates the obligation to integrate employment, welfare, and related services.

The findings suggest that securing the substantive effectiveness of the newly enacted legislation requires moving beyond the entrenched policy and structural constraints through the establishment of a legally enforceable, integrated multi-ministerial governance framework. Equally critical is the development of high-quality, demand-driven programmatic initiatives that more effectively align with the needs and lived experiences of persons with disabilities. The policy implications are as follows.

The direction of disability tourism welfare policy must shift from a narrow focus on “travel assistance” to a broader orientation toward “capacity building and self-directed learning through travel.” Central to this transition is the utilization of the Lifelong Education Act for Persons with Disabilities as a legally binding mechanism to institutionalize inter-ministerial collaboration and to ensure a substantive linkage between the quality of educational provision and its measurable outcomes.

This perspective is supported by empirical evidence showing that tourism activities enhance the quality of life (QOL) for persons with disabilities most effectively when they serve as an educational process that helps build cognitive social capital.

As a policy recommendation, legislative reinforcement should begin with mandating the establishment of a “Policy Council for the Integration of Lifelong Learning, Welfare, and Tourism for Persons with Disabilities” within the Enforcement Decree of the Lifelong Education Act for Persons with Disabilities.

This council should include the highest-level decision-makers from the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Health and Welfare, and the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism as mandatory members. Furthermore, the Enforcement Decree should explicitly specify joint funding responsibilities for interlinked programs to ensure financial stability.

From a programmatic perspective, the inclusion of certification or job competency modules should be institutionalized as a mandatory policy task within the “Master Plan for the Promotion of Lifelong Education for Persons with Disabilities.” In terms of professional staffing, lifelong educators should be trained as “tourism welfare coordinators” to provide specialized and integrated support tailored to the needs of individual learners with disabilities [30].

In addition, resolving the inconsistent use of the term “tourism-vulnerable persons” in local ordinances and requiring private tourism operators to complete training on “reasonable accommodation guidelines” are necessary steps to drive meaningful change in practice. These measures will help advance the core aims of the Lifelong Education Act for Persons with Disabilities, namely ensuring lifelong educational rights and promoting social inclusion.

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8. Appendix

8.1. Author's contribution

| | Initial name | Contribution |
|-----------------------|--------------|---|
| Lead Author | SM | -Set of concepts <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| | | -Design <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| | | -Getting results <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| | | -Analysis <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
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