

The Research on Recognition of National Professional Dancers' and Learners for Vocational Competence Development

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I. Introduction

Youth unemployment is a severe issue in the contemporary world. Staggering economic growth and lack of circulation has risen as a problem for all nations and generations, which is increasing the burden on youth who are about to enter the work environment. This problem is confronted by university students of all majors - regardless of whether they are majoring in language and literature, social sciences, or commerce - and students of art universities are also faced with the inevitable issue of unemployment. This problem is especially severe for students of dance majors due to the schools' failure to respond effectively to oversupply of workforce, unrealistic university curriculums, and short work lifespan of dancers who face an early retirement compared to other employment.

Graduates of Ewha Womans University, the first college institution to offer dance majors in Korea, currently account for roughly a third of all dance major professors. Many other colleges started to offer dance majors, following the footsteps of Ewha University, which increased the demand for professors and teachers with educational background in dance. Thus, graduates of dance majors were able to find sufficient employment until the 1990s. However, unemployment emerged as a severe challenge for dance major graduates thereafter (Moon, 2011).

Ever since the establishment of the first dance major in Ewha Womans University in 1963, 46 dance majors have been introduced to college institutions nationwide - which resulted in the addition of 2,000 dance major graduates every year. However, this educational offering was not followed by further development of career opportunities in the field, which has caused dance-major graduates to

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face a significantly lower employment rate compared to other majors. According to a physical education evaluation conducted by the Korean Council for University Education in 2005, the official full-time employment rate of dance major graduates fell short of 20%.

Furthermore, arguments are being made that university curriculums fail to reflect practical needs. The dance curriculums offered by all universities lack distinction and professional expertise. All institutions offer undifferentiated courses which results in a uniform curriculum - thus unable to offer departmentalized professional education for dance educators(professors, teachers, and private instructors), dance instructors (choreographers, dance trainers, producers, etc), and dancers (members of dance companies). (Park, 2012). In short, failure to develop sufficient dance curriculums fitted to modern needs is held accountable for the failure to raise employment rates of dance major graduates. To provide a more detailed explanation, social demands have been rising in the fields of jazz, yoga, pilates, and dance sports, which has fueled demand for dance-related management, planning, marketing, stage-producing techniques, and stage costumes. Yet, the curriculum offered at university institutions are unable to provide the systemic education required to raise a professional workforce in such fields.

Launching a career as a dancer after completing all practical training courses in college is the standard career path for most dance majors. However, there is a mismatch of supply(dance graduates from university institutions) and demand(dancers needed in dance companies). Even if the graduates were to be hired by dance companies, the short work life span of the field necessitates preparation for work after retirement.

The work cycle of a professional dancer is comprised of dance training → membership in a dance company → career as a professional dancer → retirement and change of career. Throughout this whole cycle, professional dancers face the most hardships at the point of retirement - even more so than the demanding training sessions required at the beginning of their careers. For these dancers, dance has been the center of their world and life, and retirement is paramount to losing their ground.

They have to alter their views on all they had known throughout their lives, and their world turns upside down. Many feel as if they are alone in the world. Most dancers are aware that professional dancers face earlier retirement compared to other careers. Yet, many active professional dancers believe their careers would last longer than average. If the dancers are unprepared for retirement, this juncture incurs great hardships (Lim, 2007).

There are more than 70,000 college graduates majoring in the arts. Yet, there is insufficient employment available in the arts and culture industry, resulting in high unemployment for arts major graduates and causing many students to find other employment unrelated to their fields. Arts major graduates face significantly lower employment opportunities compared to other fields of study, and even if they find employment, they tend to be short-term contract positions or small businesses (Park,

2011). Dance majors face even further limitations in their respective fields, which incurs great confusion and hardships, and most dance-major graduates end up in a field unrelated to their studies.

41 four-year college institutions in Korea offer dance majors, and more than 2,000 students graduate each year. Yet, there is limited employment opportunities at dance companies and institutions that offer basic work insurance. Many graduates work freelance, which has compounded the difficulties in employment (Na et al, 2015). According to ‘the factual survey of cultural•artist’ by Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism in 2012, they are hardly recognized economic activities and not signed up 4-insurance policy. Also, their ratio in ‘subsidy for creative activities’ and ‘benefits by enterprise funding’ are relatively low; thus they get by and have a difficulty in performing art for a living (Kim, 2015).

Many dance major university students in Korea lack detailed career planning, and failure to establish careers as a dancer or choreographer is considered a failure by many. Such distorted view of one's career is common in the field. In the past, the prerequisite for dancers was to have the basic physical fitness. However, recent changes in the career field have expanded the scope of skills expected of dance major university students, which has also expanded the types of experiences that are deemed desirable for college students seeking a career in dance (Park, 2005).

Despite such shifts, however, most of the college students in Korea are unable to fully consider their aptitudes and future careers. Planning a career path is a crucial step that affects one's entire life, and yet many dance majors disregard paths that do not correlate with their majors or aptitudes and feel doomed by the bleak outlook. Such views are in odd with reality and many fail to make practical choices (Kim, 2005).

The dance-related industry in Korea is also aware of these shortcomings that limit a dancer's career, and efforts are being made through various approaches to analyze the social environment, improve the status and compensations for dance artists, and implement relevant policies. In the policy domain, foundations are being established to offer systemic support in career consulting, education, and welfare. However, this step necessitates a detailed study on the recent changes and needs including but not limited to the social perception, sociocultural limitations, structural limitations, and development potentials and limits in dance related employment (Tae Hae Sin, 2009).

Various studies are being conducted to resolve the unemployment problem for dancers, but there is a conspicuous lack of surveys on professors who actively assist college students in their career launch, students who are looking for employment, recently employed professional dancers. Thus, this study aims to engage such professors, students, and professional dancers and to find out their opinions on employment, differences, perspectives, and needs. Our objective is to offer a comparative analysis on each group to facilitate formulation of an effective employment-related policy by segregating the survey participants into three groups (dance educators, professional dancers, future dancers).

II. Methodology

1. Research Participants

In order to offer a comparative analysis on the perspectives on career-specific dance education, the survey participants were divided into three groups (dance educators, professional dancers, future dancers) that represented each category of interested parties. 40 people were selected from each group and all participants answered the survey questions. Dance educators are those who majored in dance in higher educational institutions and have experiences in teaching at arts high school/universities. Professional dancers are those who are full-time members of public/national dance companies. Future dancers students of Arts high schools (S Art School and K Art School) based in Seoul or Gyeonggi Province or freshman/sophomore year dance major students of seoul-based universities (H University, S University). The characteristics of each demographic group are as follows <Table 1>.

2. Methodology

In social • science research area such as education and Physical Education, if the target group cannot be assigned randomly as the existing one can do, this is mainly used. (Kim Byeongjun, Oh Suhak, 2004; Yunkyung Jeong, 2015). This research targets universities and art high schools in Seoul arbitrarily because random assignment was not available.

Surveys were distributed in person by four trained research assistants and researchers who have had past survey experiences. The survey forms were distributed and completed forms were collected at the university campus. A preliminary inspection was conducted prior to the survey in order to evaluate the validity and reliability of the survey and to confirm the comprehension/validity of each questions. Following the preliminary inspections, revisions were made to questions that were difficult to comprehend and overlapping questions were omitted. The actual survey required roughly 20 minutes to complete.

<Table 1> General Characteristics of Research Participants

Classification		Participants (people)	Rate (%)	Total	
Dance educators	Gender	Male	14	35	40 people (100%)
		Female	26	65	
	Age group	Under 30	9	22.5	
		30-34	16	40	
		35-40	12	30	
		Over 40	3	7.5	
	Teaching career	Under 10 years	16	40	

		11-15 years	19	47.5	
		16-20 years	3	7.5	
		Over 20 years	2	5	
	Field	Dance educator	40	100	
Professional dancers	Gender	Male	16	40	40 people (100%)
		Female	24	60	
	Age group	Under 30	21	52.5	
		30-34	13	32.5	
		35-40	6	15	
	Dance career	11-15 years	14	35	
		16-20 years	20	50	
		Over 20 years	6	15	
Field	Professional dancer	40	100		
Future dancers	Gender	Male	9	22.5	40 people (100%)
		Female	31	77.5	
	Age group	Under 17	9	22.5	
		17-19	9	22.5	
		20-22	17	42.5	
		Over 23	5	12.5	
	Dance career	Under 5 years	11	27.5	
		5-10	14	35	
11-15		15	37.5		

3. Tools

In order to assess the needs for a career-specific dance capacity-building education, participants were divided into groups of dance educators, professional dancers in public/national dance companies, and future dancers. Survey forms were created to compare and analyze each group's perspectives regarding this issue. Survey questions were created based on a consultation meeting with five active dance professors and instructors, and the questions were evaluated by three people from each group (dance educator, professional dancer, and future dancer).

The composition of the survey questions used for the research are as follows. The questions were designed to determine the general characteristics, perceptions on career capacities, and demands related to career capacity. General characteristics include gender, age, years of experience (as a professional dancer or dance educator), and career description(or desired career path). Perceptions on career capacity consists of four questions: hardships in finding employment, reasons for such hardships, correlation of major and career path, and evaluations on career-finding procedures and policies at educational institutions. Demands related to career capacity consists of four questions: institution most helpful in finding employment, improvements required to aid employment, time

required for preparation of employment, and desired income levels <Table 2>.

<Table 2> Composition of Survey Questions

Categorization	Details	Number of Questions
General characteristics	Gender, age, years of experience, career description(or desired career path)	4
Perception on career capacity	Hardships in finding employment, reasons for hardships, correlation of major and career path, evaluation on career-finding procedures and policies at educational institutions	4
Demands related to career capacity	Institution most helpful in finding employment, improvements required to aid employment, time required for preparation of employment, desired income level	4

4. Analysis Method

The perceptions of dance educators, professional dancers at national/public dance companies, and future dancers on career capacities were analyzed using SPSS Win 18.0. Descriptive statistics was used for further analysis.

III. Results

1. Perception on career capacity

1) Difficulties in employment faced by dance major students

Based on the survey of dance educators, professional dancers, and future dancers, the results on the perception of career capacities are as follows. The majority of dance educators and professional dancers (60% and 50%, respectively) felt it was difficult to find employment as a dance major. However, the majority (55%) of future dancers believed the difficulties faced by dance majors upon graduation was average.

2) Students Reasons for difficulties in employment

Majority (70%) of dance educators believed that lack of diverse career choice paths was the primary reason for the difficulties in employment, as students opt for careers as a professional dancer or dance educators. Meanwhile, most professional dancers (47.5%) believed the lack of hiring and employment opportunities at dance companies was the primary reason. 35% of professional dancers also cited insufficient skills or capacities of applicants as one of the reasons for unemployment.

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3) Correlation between major and career path

In the question of whether actual career choice of dance majors correlate with their field of study, an overwhelming number (72.5%) of professional dancers responded that there is a high correlation. However, dance educators and future dancers believed the correlation was at average levels (52.5% and 65%, respectively), which indicates that a high number of dance-majors in the educational field did not choose a career as a professional dancer.

4) Establishment of a career-assisting policy for dance majors

For the question on whether educational institutions had sufficient policies to prepare dance major students for future employment, the majority of dance educators (45%) replied "average" while the majority (65%) of future dancers replied "sufficient." Professional dancers, on the other hand, mostly (30%) answered "insufficient." When including the answers for "nonexistent," these negative answers accounted for the majority(55%) of answers for professional dancers. Thus, there is an apparent difference in perceptions by those in the educational environment and those in the performance environment.

2. Demands related to career capacity

1) Institution most helpful in finding employment

Based on the survey of dance educators, professional dancers, and future dancers, the results on demands related to career capacity are as follows. The majority of dance educators and future dancers replied that assistance by universities and higher educational institutions is crucial for finding employment (30% and 47.5%, respectively). This was followed by assistance by professors and instructors (27.5% each), indicating a high reliance on the educational institution. On the other hand, most (47.5%) professional dancers believed developing one's own expertise and self development was most crucial.

2) Improvements required to aid employment

For the questions regarding improvements required to aid employment, dance educators and professional dancers both mostly cited the introduction of internship programs and public/national dance companies (45% and 52.5%, respectively). The second highest response to the question for dance educators was expansion of career scope (42.5%), which was the highest response for future dancers (80%).

3) Time required for preparation of employment

In regards to the questions regarding preparation time for employment (including the education

received at higher level educational institutions), the majority of dance educators and professional dancers both responded 5-7 years (47.5% and 45%, respectively). This implies that dance majors require more time compared to other college majors.

4) Desired income level upon employment

The opinions regarding desirable income levels for dance majors are as follows. The majority (47.5%) of dance educators believed the appropriate income for first employment was 1.50 ~ 2.00 million won. However, most(47.5%) professional dancers replied that the actual income received was below 1.00 million won. The desired income level for future dancers was 2.01~2.50 million won (30%), followed by more than 3.01 million won (22.5%). This shows the difference of perception at the educational environment and the performance stage environment, as well as the disparity of expectations and reality to be faced by future dancers.

IV. Discussion and Conclusion

As previously mentioned, the annual supply of dance major graduates exceed demand. Most dance majors desire a career as a professional dancer, dance educator, or choreographer, but only a small percentage are able to enter such fields. Numerous studies have been conducted to resolve the problems in unemployment, but existing research tends to focus on students or policies. This study attempts to fill in the void by examining the perceptions on career by dance educators (who play a crucial role in assisting employment), future dancers, and professional dancers who had recent experience as a member of a dance company. The results are as follows.

First, the following are the results concerning perceptions on career capacities of dance major graduates. The majority (60% and 50%, respectively) of dance educators and professional dancers believed employment was difficult. However, most future dancers (55%) believed the difficulties were average. This implies that educators who play a crucial role in preparing students for society and professional dancers who have been hired by actual dance companies were aware of the difficulties in employment while future dancers were unaware.

Future dancers (45%) believed the difficulties in employment was due to lack of diversity in desired careers, and most of them (65%) believed their careers did not have to be directly related to their field of studies. A high number of participants (80%) also replied they would explore other areas for employment. This can be interpreted as a development of new trend among future dancers, who are attempting to explore diverse career options apart from the existing preference on dancers, educators, and choreographers.

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Second, the results for the demands related to career capacity are as followed. In regards to the questions regarding the adequacy of career policies at educational institutions, most educators replied average (45%), while future dancers believed the policies were adequate (65%). However, professional dancers who had graduated from high level institutions and found employment at national/public dance companies replied "insufficient" (30%) and "nonexistent" (25%) - resulting in a majority (55%) dissatisfaction of the educational institution's career assistance policies.

The majority of dance educators believed the educational institution (30%) and professors/instructors (27.5%) played a crucial role in finding employment - which indicates a view that educational institutions are windows to finding new careers. Future dancers also showed high reliance on educational institutions(47.5%). On the other hand, professional dancers believed self development and exploration was crucial(47.5%) - indicating a difference of opinion in the educational environment and the actual work environment.

This disparity between the educational environment and work environment was also apparent in the preparation period required for employment and desired income levels. When asked about the total time required to prepare for employment (including the time required for education), professional dancers replied 5-7 years (45%), while most future dancers replied less than 5 years (52.5%). In short, professional dancers believed further preparation was needed after graduation to be prepared for employment, while future dancers believed such preparation should take place while attending the universities.

In regards to desired income levels, dance educators (47.5%) believed a monthly income of 1.51 million - 2.00 million won was appropriate. The desired income levels for future dancers were 2.01 million won - 2.50 million won (30%) and 3.01 million won(22.5%). However, the initial income received by actual dance professors were below 1.00 million won (47.5%) and 1.00 million won - 1.50 million won (37.5%). These results show a considerable disparity between the actual income and the appropriate income levels perceived by dance educators and future dancers.

Finally, regarding the improvements to be made to assist employment, dance educators and professional dancers both believed the introduction of internship policies was crucial (45% and 52.5%, respectively). In short, both groups believed that employment opportunities offered by public/national dance companies and public institutions played the largest role. Changes in employment opportunities at public/national dance companies and public institutions were seen as necessary prerequisites for exploration into new fields.

Most professional dancers are currently being hired by public/national dance companies through the internship policies. The dance companies also believe internship programs are the best methods to secure the most outstanding talent, and as such, intern-hiring practices have long been relied upon as the primary window for employment. In Korea, there are 17 dance companies for Korean dance, 2

dance companies for ballet, and 1 dance company for contemporary dance that are affiliated with public institutions or national institutions. Yet, the internship hiring dates and number of interns to be hired is not clear, which invites confusion to dance major students preparing for employment.

Studies on the employment of dance major students must reflect the fundamental issues. As such, these studies should consider not only the dance major students, but the opinions of educators who are closest to the students and professional dancers who have recently found employment at public/national institutions. The results of our study showed that future dancers were unaware of the difficulties in employment due to their lack of exposure, while dance educators and professional dancers were fully aware of the hardships and opined the need for improvement.

Educators and professional dancers believed internship programs played an important role in encouraging employment. The establishment of a stable internship program at national/public dance companies would encourage other fields to follow course and lead to a better employment policy. It is our hope that the results of this study would be used for the formulation of effective employment assistance measures and career-assisting policies that would promote employment for dance major graduates.

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무용수 직업 능력개발에 대한 인식도 연구

- 교수자 · 학습자 · 전문무용수의 관점에서 -

김 이 경

창원대학교 겸임교수

청년실업 문제가 심각한 현대에 특히 무용부분의 사회진출과 취업은 매우 심각한 문제가 아닐 수 없다. 각 대학과 정부차원에서 대학 평가등을 통해 취업을 장려하고 있는 실정이지만 예능계의 특수한 상황으로 전문적이지만 취업을 하기 위한 발판이나 환경에는 제도적, 환경적인 문제들이 있음을 문제 의식화하여 본 연구는 무용수 직업능력에 대한 인식을 알아보기 위해 무용 교수자, 학습자, 전문무용수를 대상으로 설문을 실시하였다. 각 40명씩 총 120명을 대상으로 이들의 직업 관련 인식도와 직업 관련 요구도를 조사하였다. 분석방법은 SPSS 18.0을 사용하여 기술통계를 실시하였고, 빈도를 분석하였다. 연구결과 취업 어려움에 대한 체감도가 교육가와 무용수는 높았으나 예비무용수들은 낮게 나타났다. 교육가들과 무용수들은 취업을 위해 전공 능력을 발휘하여야 하며, 인턴십 제도의 정착이 중요하다고 응답하였다. 그러나 예비무용수들은 무용 외에도 다양한 능력 개발의 필요성을 느낀다고 응답하였다.

키워드: 무용수직업능력(Dancers' Professional Capabilities), 직업인식도(Profession-related Recognition), 직업 요구도(Profession-related Demand), 국립무용단체(National Dancing Organization), 인턴십제도(Internship System)

