

Korean Occupational Outlook Handbook: first edition

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The crisis of the Korean economy increased the unemployment rate sharply in the country. Consequently, the government gave much greater attention and resources to employment policy. The *Korean Occupational Outlook Handbook* is a result of one of the employment policy programs. The project took a year to complete, of which 2 months were used for the translation and study of the Bureau of Labor Statistics *Occupational Outlook Handbook* of the United States, the *Occupational Handbook* of Japan, and the *Job Futures* of Canada. Seven researchers and a specialist prepared the *Korean Occupational Outlook Handbook*, but many other researchers, specialists, and academics were consulted and contributed their expertise.

The first edition of the *Korean Occupational Outlook Handbook* (*Korean Handbook*) was issued in July 1999. It is published by the Central Employment Information Management Office, Ministry of Labor, Republic of Korea. This report briefly summarizes the contents of the first *Korean Handbook*, explains the projection methodology, and discusses plans for future editions.

The contents

The first *Korean Occupational Outlook Handbook* took much of its template from the BLS *Occupational Outlook Handbook* of the United States and the *Occupational Handbook* of Japan. The contents of the *Korean Handbook* are composed of individual occupational statements, each with seven sections: Nature of the Job; Working Conditions; Educa-

tion, Training and Other Qualifications; Employment; Earnings; Job Outlook; and Related Information Sources.

Nature of the Job includes a brief history or overall explanation about the job and the process of the work and the workers' duties or responsibilities.

Working Conditions outlines workplace circumstances, including weekly or monthly working hours, job-related stress, and other environmental conditions.

Education, Training, and Other Qualifications covers educational requirements and related academic majors, vocational training, certificates, licenses, and examinations for entry and advancement, and the advancement procedures.

Employment describes the number of persons in the occupation, the proportion of female workers in the profession, the geographic distribution of workers, and counts of workers who have certificates and academic degrees.

Earnings covers the monetary earnings and other benefits of workers in the occupation.

Job Outlook outlines trends of employment in the job during the next 5 years (including, if possible, yearly employment plans during the next 5 years), and the factors which positively and negatively affect the rate of employment of the occupation.

Related Information Sources lists contacts for obtaining additional information on the occupation.

Projection methodology

The employment projections in the *Korean Handbook* describe factors that affect labor market demand positively or negatively. In addition, the job outlook during the next 5 years is described in one

of three degrees: employment will increase, decrease, or remain the same. The employment projection process concentrates mainly on interviewing representatives, specialists, and researchers in the occupation who can predict the outlook in their fields. Through interviews, researchers draw out the positive factors and negative factors which affect the rate of employment of the occupation. If the positive factors have greater strength than negative ones, for instance, they anticipate the employment will increase during the next 5 years. If both factors have nearly the same strength, they will describe that the employment rate in the occupation will not change during the next 5 years.

The occupational employment data for regression analysis is only available for the nine major occupational groups; therefore, formal statistical projections could not be used at the much more specific level of detail required for the *Korean Handbook*. The labor ministry researchers consulted the statistical estimates produced for the nine major groups by other government agencies, but the results did not significantly affect the qualitative judgments that were produced by the interviews.

A sample statement

Subway operators are one of 214 occupations in the *Korean Handbook*; its "Job Outlook" statement follows:

"During the next five years the employment of subway operators will increase overall, but the job opportunities will be different among six major cities. In Seoul, though there will be some lines opening up partly, the number of job openings will be few, and the replacement openings will also be very few because many workers were recently employed. Therefore, during the next five years, there will be no large-scale recruitment as in 1996 or 1997. In Inchon, there was recruiting for the opening of the subway in 1999, so job openings can not be expected dur-

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ing the next five years.

“However, in four other major cities, a number of job openings are expected because the construction of the subways will be finished within five years. The first opening of a subway in Daejeon (in the year 2001) and in Kwangju (in the year 2001), and the second openings in Pusan (in the year 2000), in Daegu (in the year 2002), in Daejeon (in the year 2003) and in Kwangju (in the year 2004) will create between 100 and 200 job openings in the given year for each city.

“The recent competition rate for entry was approximately 1 out of 6 in Seoul and 1 out of 4 in other cities, and the stiff competition is expected to continue during the next five years.”

Plans for future editions

The first *Korean Handbook* has considerable importance for employment policy programs in Korea. Nevertheless, the many changes planned for future editions can be summarized in three main categories:

- In developing the employment projection methodology fitted for Korean labor market environments, the researchers believe that qualitative analysis and judgment will be better and more useful in occupational projection than numerical estimation. To develop and prove the effectiveness and usefulness of qualitative projection methodology, the researchers will consider social-scientific methods

such as the Delphi survey.

- Constructing an employment database—perhaps an industry-occupation matrix—will be a major advancement. Although it will take many years before there is sufficient data for statistical regression analysis, the numerical information is important in its own right and is needed for employment projections and its evaluation process.
- The Korean Standard Occupational Classification was revised in late 1999. Studying or a new occupational classification system will allow the researchers to establish more specific rules to classify the occupations for future editions of the *Korean Handbook*. □