

THE IMPACT OF YOUTH POLICY SATISFACTION QUALITY OF LIFE: FOCUSING ON THE RURAL AREAS OF SOUTH KOREA

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Abstract. This study aimed to investigate the relationship between the satisfaction of youth with policies and their overall quality of life. Conducted through an online survey spanning from August 25th to August 31st, 2021, the survey involved 304 participants, yielding several important findings. Among the youth in Jeollanam-do Province, welfare and cultural policies garnered the highest satisfaction, while participation rights policies received comparatively lower ratings. Concerning quality of life, a sense of value in life ranked high, contrasting with relatively lower scores for an ideal life. Economically active youth reported a higher quality of life than those not engaged in economic activities. Furthermore, married youth indicated a better quality of life compared to their unmarried counterparts. Notably, a positive correlation was established between policy satisfaction and an improved quality of life. This emphasizes the potential influence of policy contentment on overall well-being. To enhance participation rights policies, policymakers should design strategies to boost participation rates, ultimately enhancing the policy experience. Policymakers need to tailor strategies based on factors like economic activity and marital status to effectively elevate well-being. Developing policies that increase youth's satisfaction can notably augment their quality of life, emphasizing the importance of well-constructed policy frameworks.

Key words: youth, youth policy, policy satisfaction, quality of life, survey.

Introduction

One of the major reasons that make the lives of young people unhappy is job and employment stress, and in addition to jobs, they also highly value a balanced life with sufficient leisure and rest. The roles of society and the government for this purpose are crucial (Office for Government Policy Coordination: 146-151). It is necessary to address the youth issues not only focusing on jobs but also on various aspects of life. The difficulties that young people face are not resolved even after employment. Among the problems young people face, housing and debt-related issues have received significant attention, and recently, problems related to physical and mental health have also emerged (Kim Hyungju et al., 2018; Byun Geumseon & Lee Giheon, 2019: 261). It is necessary to examine young people's perceptions of the benefits and satisfaction levels related to youth policies, especially those related to employment. In particular, if there are regional disparities around jobs, active examination is needed in these areas, and efforts from the

government and local authorities are required to ensure equal support.

The total population of Jeollanam-do is 1,817,697, among which the youth (ages 18 to 39) account for 391,309 people (Statistics Korea, 2022). The population of Jeollanam-do has experienced significant migration between geographically adjacent areas like Gwangju. In 2022, 76,000 people migrated to Jeollanam-do from other cities, and the number of people moving out of Jeollanam-do to other provinces was also 76,000. The main reason for net outmigration from Jeollanam-do was education, and the Honam region had net outmigration among people in their teens, twenties, and thirties, while it had net immigration in other age groups. This phenomenon is due to the movement of highly skilled individuals to larger cities for education and employment. Businesses based in medium-sized cities are trying to find high-quality workforce, creating a situation where job seekers in those areas experience job shortages. Medium-sized cities and rural areas tend to have relatively high levels of income inequality due to

lower wages and job shortages compared to the national average.

The issue of youth outmigration from certain areas hampers the overall vitality of cities. To address such youth-related issues, local governments are promoting various policies including jobs, housing, and welfare, tailored to the characteristics of their regions (Kim Dohyeong, 2018: 56-57). Young people are experiencing internal inequality in terms of income, asset education, labor market, housing, and family formation. To improve the overall inequality faced by young people, the effectiveness of individual youth policies should be enhanced. Additionally, although the government and local authorities are implementing various policies that reflect the lives of young people, it is important to improve existing social security systems to adequately include economically vulnerable young people (Kim Seungyeon et al., 2020). Moreover, since income inequality is influenced by complex and diverse factors, continuous effort, evaluation, and improvement of policies are necessary.

Currently, in Jeollanam-do, which encompasses medium-sized cities and rural areas, what kinds of youth policies are being pursued? Are there policies that address not only job-related issues but also income inequality among young people? Have the lives of young people improved through youth policies? With these questions in mind, this study aims to recognize young people as a policy target, understand their satisfaction with policies, and seek policy solutions for enhancing the quality of life.

Literature review

Review of previous studies

Recent studies utilizing surveys and statistical analyses on youth policy satisfaction are as follows. Yu Jaeun et al. (2021) analyzed the participation factors and satisfaction of beneficiaries of youth policy projects in Gyeongsangnam-do among 200 young individuals. It was found that as individuals pursued success, salary, work-life balance, and job stability, their participation in the projects increased, leading to higher satisfaction levels. The authors emphasized the importance of understanding the desires of beneficiary youth for enhancing the effects of youth project participation.

Kim Dohyung (2018) examined the satisfaction and necessity levels of local government youth policies among 50 young individuals. A positive correlation was identified between satisfaction scores of specific measures within Ulsan's youth comprehensive support plan and overall satisfaction

with youth policies. Kim Jiyoung and Chu Juhee (2019) analyzed the policy effects and satisfaction of Gwangju Youth Dream Subsidy among 706 young individuals. High levels of satisfaction and perceived effectiveness were reported regarding the subsidy, highlighting the necessity for comprehensive support beyond just economic and employment assistance.

Cho Hanna and Kim Myungjin (2019) analyzed satisfaction with government support policies for young entrepreneurs among 182 young individuals. They argued that diverse and detailed support policies are more beneficial than consistent entrepreneurial support measures. Choi Seon and Lee Jeongeun (2022) analyzed local government youth policies and migration factors among 1000 young individuals, emphasizing that effective local policies and perceived benefits of these policies contribute to encouraging youth to settle in the area.

Meanwhile, studies on life satisfaction are still dominated by research on the elderly compared to the youth (Kim Gyeonga, 2015; Seo Jonggeon & Yang Seongwook, 2017, etc.), but research on the quality of life and life satisfaction of young people is consistently progressing. These studies have covered specific groups such as university students, policy beneficiaries, disabled individuals, multicultural families, dropouts, and single households. Research on the relationship between young people's living environments, such as housing, and their quality of life, as well as factors influencing life satisfaction, has also been conducted.

In summary, existing research underscores the need for multi-dimensional policies beyond job-focused measures, aiming to address issues like youth migration and regional imbalances. This study builds upon this prior research, delving deeper into the relationship between youth policy satisfaction and quality of life.

Youth policy in Jeollanam-do

According to the «Youth Basic Law,» 'youth development' is defined as improving the quality of life for young people in all areas of politics, economy, society, and culture through the protection and growth of youth rights, expanding participation in policy decision-making processes, promoting employment, enhancing skills development, and improving welfare. Additionally, 'youth support' refers to the social and economic support provided to young people for their development, and 'youth policy' is defined as the social and economic support provided to young people for their development (Youth Basic Law, enforced on February 18, 2022).

The «Jeollanam-do Youth Basic Ordinance» guarantees various opportunities for social participation to Jeollanam-do's youth according to the «Youth Basic Law.» Its purpose is to provide necessary regulations to enhance the rights of youth and support them to contribute to the development of the local community. It also acknowledges youth as independent members of our society and ensures their right to pursue a happy life. The key points of Jeollanam-do's youth policy cover all areas including economy, society, education, and culture. These encompass expanding youth participation, developing youth's skills, enhancing youth employment and job quality, promoting youth welfare, activating youth culture, protecting and enhancing youth rights, and supporting international

cooperation among youth (Jeollanam-do Youth Basic Ordinance, enforced on March 10, 2022).

Jeollanam-do's youth policy is divided into five areas. The first is the job sector, covering youth employment and support for Changwon, with 32 tasks being pursued. The second is housing, focusing on stable housing for youth and enhancing independent support, with 7 tasks. The third is education, emphasizing the development of leading manpower for local industries, with 19 tasks. The fourth is welfare and culture, supporting youth welfare and cultural activities, with 12 tasks. The fifth is participation and rights, expanding opportunities for youth to participate in policy and enhancing their policy involvement, with 10 tasks (Jeollanam-do Provincial Office, 2023).

Table 1 – Youth Policy of Jeollanam-do Province

Field	Detailed Policy Contents
Employment	Youth Village Project DNA+US-based Youth Employment Project Energy-New Deal Platform for Industrial Growth (e-New Deal Project) Green New Deal GPS Smart Manufacturing + Promising Business 2.0 Project Mobile Youth Hope Bus Operation Digital Innovation Distribution Specialist Job Program Youth Village Plus Employment Project Locally Specialized Industry Customized Youth Employment Project Supra-Metropolitan Cooperative Startup Support Project Corporate Mentor-Type Youth Startup Support Project Challenge Youth Online Marketer Training Program Youth Global Seller Operation Specialized High School Graduates' Pre-Employment and Postgraduate Study Program Dream Ladder Study Room Operation Youth Job Tenure Encouragement Fund Support Jeollanam-do Youth Overseas Employment Support Strengthening Competitiveness of Youth Farmers' Agriculture Project Social Economy Business Startup Education Creation of Youth Farming Ventures Support for Bachelor's Degree Farmers Support for Youth Farmers' Farming Settlement Rural Youth Entrepreneur Nurturing Program Inheritance of Farming to Youth Farmers Startup Support Outstanding Projects for Youth 4-H Members' Farming Ventures Establishment of Smart Farm Independent Base for Youth Farmers Smart Farm Youth Entrepreneur Incubation Center Support for University Entrepreneurship Incubation Centers Cultivation of Eco-Friendly Agricultural Contract Farming Youth Farmers Support for Youth Fisheries Entrepreneurs' English Settlement Support for Newlywed (Prospective) Couples' Health Examination Fees Content Industry Reshoring Project Locally Driven Youth Employment Certification of Outstanding Job-Creating Companies

Housing	Jeonnam Student Dormitory Operation Nampo Student Dormitory Operation Separate Payment of Youth Housing Allowance Special One-Time Youth Monthly Rent Support Youth Employed Individuals' Housing Expense Support Program Return to Farming Agricultural Startup and Housing Purchase Support Newlywed Couples and Large Families Home Support Program
Education	Support for Talent Cultivation Scholarships Repayment Support for Youth Employed in Local Small and Medium-sized Enterprises Youth Farmer Research Club Support Operation Support for Jeonnam Content Industry Development Center Operation of Local-based Content Korea Lab Engineering Education Innovation Center Support Support for Women in Science and Technology Energy Valley Industry-Academia Convergence Promotion Support Regional Energy Cluster Talent Development Industry-Academia Collaboration Employment Package Program Research Talent Enhancement Project Honam Youth Academy Operation University Student Agriculture Experience Camp Social Economy Education Course for University Students Social Economy Education Course for University Students Leading University for Industry-Academia Collaboration Cultivation Operation Support for University Job Plus Center University Student Presentation Competition Support Work-Study Combination Program Early Employment-oriented Contract Departments Operation Selection of Jeonnam Province Overseas Study Students Leading Workforce Development for Local Industries
Participation Rights	Youth Mental Health Support Program Operation of Youth Social Service Unit Support for Young Couples' Marriage Congratulations Jeonnam Youth Culture and Welfare Card Self-Reliance Preparation Youth (Formerly Protected Children) Allowance Support for Self-Reliance of Youth from Single-Parent Families Support for Hosting Jeonnam E-Sports Competitions Domestic and International Motorsports Events Jeonnam Youth Development Project
Participation Rights	Organizing Youth Communication Meetings Operation of Youth Voices Operation of Jeonnam Youth Center Support for Attracting Returning Farmers and Villagers Support for Establishing Jeonnam-style Youth Villages Support for Activating Youth Communities Overseas Mileage System for Local Contributing Talent

Methodology

Research Hypotheses and Models

This study aims to analyze the impact of youth policy satisfaction on quality of life. To achieve this, hypotheses were formulated to validate the relationship between youth policy satisfaction and quality of life. Additionally, a model was established with quality of life as the dependent

variable, policy satisfaction as the independent variable, and sociodemographic characteristics as control variables.

Research Hypothesis 1: There will be differences in youth policy satisfaction and quality of life based on the sociodemographic characteristics of the youth.
 Research Hypothesis 2: Youth policy satisfaction will have an impact on the quality of life of young individuals.

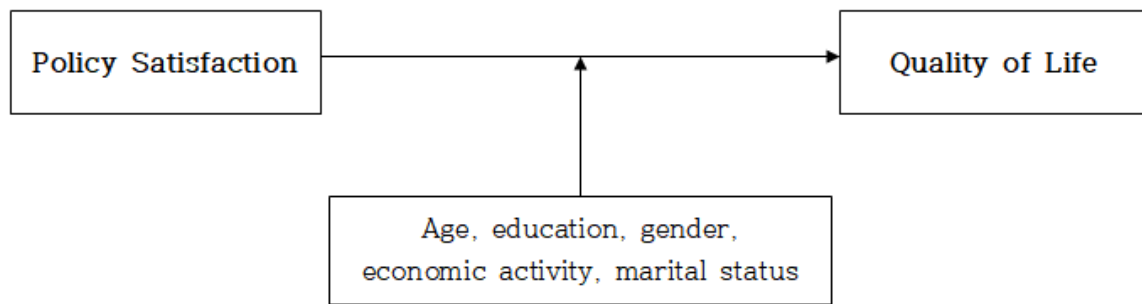


Figure 1 – Research Framework

Research Subjects and Analysis Methods

In this study, according to the «Jeollanam-do Youth Basic Ordinance,» the age range of youth was defined as individuals aged 18 and above, but not exceeding 39 years old. The purpose of this study is to identify the policies experienced by the youth, and to understand how they perceive policy satisfaction and quality of life in relation to these policies. For this purpose, in collaboration with youth centers in the cities and counties of Jeollanam-do, an online survey was conducted from August 25th to August 31st, 2021, utilizing a total sample of 304 participants.

The collected data was analyzed using SPSS 21.0. Descriptive statistics were conducted to explore youth policy satisfaction and quality of life. Independent samples t-test and one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) were performed to analyze differences between groups. Correlation analysis was carried out to examine relationships between

variables. Hierarchical regression analysis was conducted to analyze the influence relationship between youth policy satisfaction and quality of life.

This study aimed to comprehend the policies experienced by the youth in Jeollanam-do, and their perception of policy satisfaction and quality of life. Various statistical methods were employed to achieve this goal, including the utilization of SPSS 21.0 for data analysis.

Composition of the Survey Tool and Measurement Instruments

1) Composition of Survey Instruments

This study evaluated the perception of youth only for items assessing policy satisfaction and quality of life. Detailed measurement items were selected based on Jeollanam-do's youth policy. The survey instrument was composed to include independent variables, dependent variables, and control variables, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2 – Composition of Survey Instruments

Category		Variable	Number of Items
Independent Variable	Policy Satisfaction	Job Sector, Housing Sector, Education Sector, Welfare and Culture Sector, Participation and Rights Sector	5
Dependent Variable	Quality of Life	Life Subjective Life Satisfaction, Ideal Life, Happiness, Valuable Life , Work-Life Balance	5
Control Variables	Demographic Characteristics	Gender, Age, Education, Economic Activity, Marital Status	5

The independent variable, policy satisfaction, was administered in Jeollanam-do and encompasses satisfaction with policy domains including employment, housing, education, welfare and culture, and participation and rights. Respondents used a Likert scale ranging from 1 («Not at all

satisfied») to 4 («Very satisfied») to indicate their responses for each item. This scale employs the Likert technique. Higher scores indicate higher levels of policy satisfaction, with a total of 5 items.

The dependent variable, quality of life, measures the youth's subjective satisfaction with life, ideal

life, happiness, meaningful life, and work-life balance. Respondents used a Likert scale ranging from 1 («Not at all») to 4 («Very much») to rate their responses for each item. This scale also employs the Likert technique. Higher scores indicate a higher quality of life, with a total of 5 items.

Control variables include respondents' demographic characteristics such as gender (male and female), age group (early 20s, late 20s, early 30s), education level (high school or less, college graduate, four-year university graduate or higher), economic activity status (engaged in economic activity, not engaged in economic activity), and marital status (single, married).

2) Validity and Reliability Analysis of Measurement Instruments

To understand the underlying factors of youth policy satisfaction and quality of life, an exploratory factor analysis was conducted on relevant items. Principal component analysis was used as the method for exploratory factor analysis, and Varimax rotation was employed to group common factors based on factor loading values. Each factor was extracted as a factor if its eigenvalue was above 1.0, and variables with factor loading values of 0.4 or higher were considered for inclusion in each factor. The results of the factor analysis are presented in Table 3.

Table 3 – Exploratory Factor Analysis for Youth Policy Perception Level

Category		Factor 1	Factor 2	Commonality	Reliability
Policy Satisfaction	Educational Policies	.814	.124	.679	.862
	Welfare and Cultural Policies	.811	.162	.684	
	Employment Policies	.795	.101	.642	
	Housing Policies	.780	.134	.626	
	Participation Rights Policies	.761	.107	.590	
Quality of Life	Work-Life Balance	.095	.788	.630	.810
	Ideal Life	.142	.781	.630	
	Happiness	.057	.763	.585	
	Life Satisfaction	.228	.720	.570	
	Valueful Life	.092	.667	.453	
Initial Eigenvalues		4.016	2.073	-	-
Variance Explained (%)		40.162	20.731	-	-
Cumulative Variance (%)		40.162	60.893	-	-
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy		.834			
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy		1191.623			

Based on the factor analysis results, after 3 rounds of iteration, factor rotation converged, and 2 factors were extracted. These factors collectively explain 60.893% of the total variance. Exploratory factor analysis revealed that all 10 items were loaded onto the extracted factors. Factor 1 was labeled as «Policy Satisfaction-related Factor,» and Factor 2 was labeled as «Quality of Life-related Factor.» Additionally, all items had factor loading values of .667 or higher.

The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy, used to validate the suitability of the sample for this study's measurement items,

was .834. The significance value from Bartlett's test of sphericity was .000, indicating good suitability of the sample size. In terms of reliability of the measurement instruments, the analysis showed that Cronbach's Alpha coefficients for all factors were .810, indicating desirable internal consistency and reliability of the factor scales.

Please note that translating technical terms accurately requires a deep understanding of the field. If this translation will be used for academic or professional purposes, it's recommended to consult with someone knowledgeable in the specific domain to ensure the accuracy of the translation.

Results & Discussions

1) Descriptive Statistics and Difference Analysis

Looking at the sociodemographic characteristics of the survey subjects, there were 123 male youth (40.5%) and 181 female youth (59.5%). In terms of age distribution, there were 52 young adults in their early twenties (17.1%), 93 in their late twenties (30.6%), 85 in their early thirties (28.0%), and 74 in their late thirties (24.3%). Educational background included 50 high school graduates (16.4%), 97 vocational college graduates (31.9%), and 157 university graduates (51.6%). Among the youth, 230 were economically active (75.7%), while 74 were not economically active (24.3%). In terms of marital status, 211 were unmarried (69.4%) and 93 were married (30.6%).

To understand the overall response tendencies and distribution of respondents, the averages and standard deviations of the measurement items for youth policy satisfaction and quality of life were examined. In this study, youth policy satisfaction was measured using 5 items in various domains of Jeollanam-do's youth policy, while quality of life was measured using a total of 10 items on a 4-point scale. Table 4 below shows the descriptive statistics results for youth policy satisfaction and quality of life. (Note: The translated table content is not provided here as the formatting might not be suitable for the text format. If you need further assistance with the translation of the table content, please let me know.)

Table 4 – Descriptive Statistics of Key Variables

Category	Variable	M	SD
Policy Satisfaction	Employment Policies	2.60	.756
	Housing Policies	2.51	.771
	Educational Policies	2.49	.775
	Welfare and Cultural Policies	2.62	.791
	Participation Rights Policies	2.43	.801
	total	2.53	.625
Quality of Life	Life Satisfaction	2.80	.683
	Ideal Life	2.52	.796
	Happiness	2.86	.749
	Valueful Life	2.95	.771
	Work-Life Balance	2.73	.825
	total	2.77	.578

The overall average of the youth policy satisfaction items showed that the average score for «Welfare and Cultural Policy Satisfaction» was the highest at 2.62, while the average score for «Participation Rights Policy» was relatively lower at 2.43. The quality of life had an average score of 2.53. Among the quality of life items, the highest average score was for «Values» at 2.95, while the average score for «Ideal Life» was relatively lower at 2.52.

Differences in policy satisfaction and quality of life were examined based on sociodemographic characteristics. Firstly, the analysis of differences

in policy satisfaction between groups showed that differences in policy satisfaction based on age, education, gender, economic activity status, and marital status were statistically insignificant ($p > .05$). Secondly, the analysis of differences in quality of life between groups indicated that differences in quality of life based on age, education, and gender were statistically insignificant ($p > .05$). However, youth who were economically active had a higher quality of life compared to those who were not economically active ($t = -2.002, p = .046$). Additionally, married youth had a higher quality of life than unmarried youth ($t = -4.573, p = .000$).

Table 5 – Difference Analysis According to Sociodemographic Characteristics

Category	Variable	N	Policy Satisfaction		Quality of Life	
			M	SD	M	SD
Age	19 to 24 years old	52	2.52	.616	2.76	.484
	25 to 29 years old	93	2.58	.598	2.70	.579
	30 to 35 years old	85	2.50	.644	2.76	.586
	35 to 39 years old	74	2.50	.650	2.87	.621
F(p)		-	.350(.789)		1.170(.321)	
Education	High school graduate or below	50	2.56	.719	2.76	.637
	Vocational college graduate	97	2.57	.574	2.81	.535
	University graduate or above	157	2.50	.625	2.75	.585
F(p)			.473(.624)		.433(.649)	
Gender	Male	123	2.56	.689	2.84	.622
	Female	181	2.51	.578	2.72	.542
t(p)		-	.781(.436)		1.714(.088)	
Economic Activity	Not economically active	74	2.53	.640	2.65	.604
	Economically active	230	2.53	.621	2.81	.565
t(p)		-	.034(.973)		-2.002(.046)	
Marital Status	Unmarried	211	2.51	.593	2.67	.567
	Married	93	2.58	.693	2.99	.542
t(p)		-	-1.013(.312)		-4.573(.000)	

2) Correlation Analysis

Prior to investigating the relationships between variables, this study calculated Pearson’s correlation coefficient to determine whether there is a relationship between youth policy satisfaction and quality of life. After conducting correlation analysis

among the explanatory variables to check for multicollinearity, the resulting correlation coefficient was 0.312, indicating the absence of multicollinearity issues. There is a significant positive correlation between policy satisfaction and quality of life ($r = .312, p < .001$).

Table 6 – Correlation Analysis between Key Variables

Category	Policy Satisfaction	Quality of Life
Policy Satisfaction	1	
Quality of Life	.312***	1

3) Influence Analysis

To comprehend the explanatory power of sociodemographic characteristics and policy satisfaction on youth’s quality of life, a regression analysis was conducted, and the results are presented in Table 6 below. In the first step, sociodemographic variables were entered as independent variables, and the entered variables explained 9.8% of the variance in quality of life, which was statistically insignificant ($p < .001$). In the second step, when

policy satisfaction was added as an additional input, the explanatory power increased by 8.1%, resulting in a total explanation of 17.9% for quality of life, and it was statistically significant ($p < .001$). The explanatory power of policy satisfaction ($\beta = .287, p < .001$) added in the second step was statistically significant ($p < .01$). Accordingly, youth’s quality of life is influenced by policy satisfaction. It can be understood that as youth’s policy satisfaction increases, their quality of life also increases.

Table 7 – Hierarchical Regression Analysis Results for Youth’s Quality of Life

Category		Model 1				Model 2			
		B	SE	β	t	B	SE	β	t
(Constant)		2.410	.227		10.616***	1.713	.252		6.790***
Control Variables	Gender	-.077	.040	-.138	-1.936	-.061	.038	-.110	-1.613
	Gender	-.032	.044	-.042	-.739	-.024	.042	-.031	-.575
	Gender	-.107	.066	-.091	-1.602	-.091	.064	-.077	-1.429
	Economic Activity	.168	.080	.125	2.105*	.162	.076	.120	2.122
	Marital Status	.416	.084	.333	4.962***	.374	.081	.299	4.643***
Independent Variable	Policy Satisfaction					.265	.049	.287	5.412***
Model Fit		F=6.450*** Change in F=6.450 R=.313 R ² =.098				F=10.767*** Change in F=29.288 R=.423 R ² =.179			
Note: Dependent Variable (Constant): Quality of Life, *p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001									

Conclusion

The purpose of this study is to understand the relationship between youth policy satisfaction and quality of life. To achieve this, an online survey was conducted from August 25th to August 31st, 2021, utilizing a total sample of 304 participants.

According to the research analysis results, firstly, among the youth in Jeollanam-do, policy satisfaction was highest in the welfare and cultural domain, while it was relatively lower in the participation rights domain. Quality of life among the youth was highest in the aspect of having a meaningful life, and relatively lower in the aspect of an ideal life. Secondly, economically active youth had relatively higher quality of life compared to those who were not economically active, and married youth had relatively higher quality of life compared to unmarried youth. Thirdly, youth’s policy satisfaction has a positive influence on their quality of life. As

policy satisfaction increases, the quality of life for the youth also increases.

Based on the research findings, some implications can be suggested. First, in order to enhance the policy experience and satisfaction in the area of participation rights among youth policies, it is necessary to explore ways to divide policies into more specific aspects and increase participation rates. Second, it is important to identify factors related to changes in quality of life based on economic activity status and marital status and seek ways to improve quality of life accordingly. Third, to enhance youth’s quality of life, it is essential to develop effective policies that can increase policy satisfaction.

This study only evaluates youth’s perception of overall policy satisfaction and does not delve into specific policy evaluations. Therefore, in the future, detailed evaluations of specific policies should be conducted. Additionally, proactive policy development research to address the issue of youth outmigration should also be pursued.

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