

# Summary of the 2023 Student Human Rights Situation Survey

## I. Purpose of the Survey

This survey was conducted targeting students of the KDI School of Public Policy and Management in 2023. The primary aim was to assess the sensitivity towards human rights, including gender awareness, and to examine the institution's current state of human rights violations.

Through this research, with the foreign student population standing at 41.6% (based on the 2022 university disclosure<sup>1</sup>), the intention is to grasp the perception of human rights among Korean and international students in the KDI School of Public Policy and Management. The findings will serve as foundational data to prevent and respond to future human rights infringements.

## II. Survey Overview

- Target:** 616 Master's and Ph.D. students at KDI School of Public Policy and Management<sup>2</sup> (as of June 2023)
- Survey Period:** 2023. 6. 14 ~ 2023. 6. 30
- Number of **Respondents:** 201 (▲71 from the previous year)
- Response Rate:** 32.6% (201/616<sup>3</sup>) (▲11.9% from the previous year)
- Method of Survey:** Google online survey  
\* Combined after excluding the first response of 5 duplicate respondents

## III. Summary of Survey Results

- Analysis of Respondents' Characteristics & Status on Gender and Human Rights Awareness**
  - The gender of the respondents was equally divided, with 50% male and 50% female, showing an 11.9% increase in response rate compared to the previous year.
  - The majority age group of the respondents was in their 30s at 93 individuals (46%), followed by those in their 20s and 40s at 61 individuals (30%) and 43 individuals (21%), respectively.

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1 (Foreign student/Total student) (Total Foreign students: 313 / Total students: 752)

2 Excluding those on a leave of absence.

3 Survey Respondents: All enrolled students as of June 12, 2023

- 95% of the respondents were master's students, and 45% of the 201 respondents held South Korean nationality. Among the foreign students, 56 individuals (28%) were from Southeast Asia, while 34 individuals (17%) were from Africa.
- In a self-assessment, about 87% of the respondents felt that they had high or very high gender awareness sensitivity.
- No significant difference was found in 'Human Rights and Gender Awareness Sensitivity' between South Korean and foreign students. However, the 'interest level in human rights issues in the international community' showed a notable difference: foreign students scored 4.35 out of 5, while South Korean students scored 3.74 out of 5.
- The main causes of human rights violations were identified as: 'lack of understanding about human rights violations' (39%), 'difference in understanding others' uniqueness' (27.4%), 'cultural differences' (14.4%), 'lenient penalty regulations' (8%), and 'unequal organizational culture' (5.5%).
- South Korean students identified the 'difference in understanding others' uniqueness' (41.8%) and 'lack of understanding about human rights violations' (30.8%) as the main causes, while foreign students pointed out 'lack of understanding about human rights violations' (46.4%) and 'cultural differences' (20%) as their main concerns.
- Foreign students also reported additional issues related to racial discrimination.
- Causes of violations against sexual autonomy were: 'lack of understanding about the violation' (33.3%), 'lenient penalty regulations' (28.4%), 'cultural differences' (11.9%), and 'difference in understanding others' uniqueness' (10.4%).
- South Korean students pointed out 'lack of understanding about human rights violations' (35.2%) and 'unequal organizational culture' (13.2%) as the primary reasons, whereas foreign students indicated 'lack of understanding about violations' (31.8%), 'lenient penalty regulations' (24.5%), and 'cultural differences' (18.2%) as their main concerns.
- The response rate for 'lenient penalty regulations' was lower for South Korean students (3.3%) compared to foreign students (24.5%). The response rate for 'cultural differences' was also lower among South Korean students (4.4%) compared to foreign students (18.2%). On the other hand, the response rate for 'unequal organizational culture' was lower for foreign students (3.6%) compared to South Korean students (13.2%), indicating differences in perspectives on primary causes between domestic and international students.
- 83.6% stated they had received human rights education. Among them, 90% were South Korean students, and 78% were foreign students.
- Of those who experienced human rights education, 48.8% (82 individuals) took both online and offline courses, 33.3% (56 individuals) only took online courses, and 17.9% (30 individuals) only participated in offline courses.

- The primary reason for undergoing the training was mandatory education, as indicated by 50.6% (85 individuals) of those experienced.
- After completing the training, 93.4% stated that their awareness of human rights had either increased (71.4%) or remained average (22%), suggesting that human rights education helped improve their awareness.

□ **Status on Sensitivity to Gender and Human Rights**

- The average score for human rights sensitivity was 40.46 out of 50, an increase of 1.4 points from last year. South Korean students scored 42.52 points, while foreign students scored 38.76 points.
- 99% of respondents (excluding those who answered "neutral" for "Yes" and "Strongly agree") believed that "other people's rights are as important as my own rights".
- 56.7% (114 people) saw prejudice as a "societal structural issue", whereas 16.9% (34 people) viewed it as an "individual issue".
- 85% (172 people) believed that "making light of individual characteristics such as race or age to form intimacy is problematic".
- 69.7% agreed that "even for the public interest, personal information shouldn't be sacrificed", while 12.5% believed it could be.
- 64.2% felt that "even in small organizations, there shouldn't be rumors about someone's personal life", while 16.4% thought rumors are inevitable.
- 23.8% felt that "helping someone who doesn't want to report abuse might make things worse", whereas 48.8% disagreed.
- Regarding the statement, "People with disabilities should only be given easy tasks for convenience," 56.7% disagreed, but 26.9% felt it was "neutral".
  
- The average sensitivity score for sexual harassment was 77.5 out of 90, an increase of 2.02 points from last year. South Korean students scored 80.78 points, while foreign students scored 74.83 points.
- 75.6% believed that "touch as a sign of friendliness can be sexual harassment", while 7.5% disagreed.
- Regarding the statement, "Even compliments can be sexual harassment", 55.3% agreed, but 20.4% disagreed.
- 8.5% admitted to "often greeting with comments about appearance or physique", while 70.2% denied doing so. Furthermore, 94.5% believed that "commenting on someone's body even among close friends is problematic".
- 68.2% felt that "light physical touch to express familiarity isn't necessary", while 12.4% believed it was.
- 67.7% agreed that "when someone says 'no', it's not just a polite refusal or playing hard to get", 85.6% believed that "without explicit refusal, it's not consent", and 83% agreed that "silence isn't consent".

- 35.4% believed that "in some cases, one-sided feelings of the victim can be acknowledged as sexual harassment", 31.3% disagreed, and 32.3% felt "neutral", showing diverse opinions.
- 65.1% believed that "persistently expressing affection isn't a freedom but problematic", and 80.1% agreed that "continuously expressing feelings even after rejection isn't an effort to win someone's heart".
- 96.1% agreed that "in a relationship, if the partner doesn't want sexual intimacy, it shouldn't be forced", and 85.5% believed that "even in close relationships, if there was prior consent for a certain level of physical touch, consent should be sought again".

#### □ **Evaluation of Gender and Human Rights Environment on Campus**

- 87.1% of respondents answered that "My human rights are respected in graduate school."
- 66.2% responded that "There are people I can comfortably talk to about human rights violations I experience in graduate school", while 11% said "There is no one I can talk to."
- Regarding the experience of "discomfort due to cultural differences", 64.2% responded "none", while 20.9% responded "experienced."
- 2.5% (5 people) responded "There is a hierarchical abuse between professors and students", while 88.6% (178 people) said "none."
- 76.6% responded "There is no sexual harassment or assault in graduate school", whereas 10.5% (21 people) said "it exists."
- 11.4% said "There are other human rights violations due to differences, besides abuse or sexual violence in graduate school", and 71.1% responded "none."

#### □ **Experience of Gender and Human Rights Violations on Campus**

- 91.5% responded that "I have never experienced interference, coercion, discrimination, or mockery about hairstyle or attire in graduate school." The rate of those with experience decreased by 1.5% compared to the previous year, and 92.9% of them said they experienced it from "other students."
- There is a need in graduate schools for "appropriate penalties or punishments for human rights violations", "effective prevention education", and "fair procedures."
- Being "forced to attend unwanted gatherings organized by the graduate school, or being coerced into unwanted drinking, dancing, or atmosphere-making" were rare. However, 16 people, or 8%, responded they "received uncomfortable questions about their private life or experienced discrimination or mockery."

- 92.5% responded they "hadn't heard words that were insulting to their dignity, such as swearing or abusive language." 9 people said they heard such words from "fellow students." The content was mostly about sexual harassment made in jest.
- Respondents said they didn't experience physical violence, threats, or unwanted personal contacts outside of work, study, or research from members of the graduate school. However, 2 people responded that they had been persistently contacted or obsessively pursued by members of the graduate school against their wishes.
- Regarding the experience of violations of the right to education and labor rights, the number of respondents who experienced a "lack of academic and career counseling," "insufficient guarantees of the right to learn due to online classes," and "requests or restrictions for specific course registrations" decreased in 2022. However, the number of respondents who experienced "not receiving dedicated lectures due to a professor's circumstances," "arbitrary changes to the curriculum," "restricted access to research resources," and "forced mobilization outside of research topics" increased.

#### **□ Prevention and Response to Human Rights Violations**

- Regarding human rights violations, 57.2% reported the incident to the 'Human Rights Center for Action,' 18.4% sought help by telling 'family, friends, and acquaintances,' and 14.4% 'confronted the perpetrator.' 2.5% responded that they 'did nothing.'
- For the prevention of human rights violations, 'educational, campaign, and promotional activities' (44.8%) were deemed most necessary, followed by 'punishment of the perpetrator' (40.8%) and 'activation of communication channels' (12.4%).
- In response to what measures graduate schools should take in the future for the prevention of human rights violations, the respondents answered: 'providing regular education programs like small-group training' (36.8%), 'strengthening punishment through regulation revisions' (32.3%), 'activating communication channels ensuring anonymity' (24.4%), 'declaration of commitment by the head of the organization' (4%), and 'others' (2.5%).
- Necessary actions when human rights violations occur were: 'separative measures' (28.9%), 'support for victim recovery' (27.4%), 'education and punishment of the perpetrator' (26.4%), 'efforts to prevent recurrence' (16.4%), and 'others' (1%).
- An additional opinion stated that 'all measures are necessary' for prevention and response.
- Concerning the measures to be taken if a committee decision contrary to one's wishes is made after a human rights violation, respondents chose: 'filing objections and requesting re-investigation' (30.8%), 'using other communication channels' (25.9%), 'accepting the committee's decision' (18.9%), 'requesting other separation methods' (11.4%), 'legal response' (11.4%), and 'others' (3%). Other respondents mentioned that they would take different actions depending on the situation.

#### □ **Witnessing Human Rights Violations (Third-Party Experience)**

- 156 respondents (77.6%) stated they 'hadn't witnessed human rights violations as a third party,' while 29 (14.4%) said they had.
- Types of witnessed human rights violations in 2022 were limited to 'discrimination/ignorance,' 'stalking,' 'sexual harassment/violence,' 'physical assault or threatening behavior,' and 'verbal abuse.' However, in 2023, responses varied with 'sexual harassment/violence' (8 people), 'discrimination/ignorance' (7 people), 'abuse/harassment' (4 people), 'verbal abuse' (4 people), 'physical assault or threatening behavior' (3 people), 'stalking' (1 person), and 'others' (1 person).
- In terms of the response when witnessing an incident, respondents chose: 'helped the victim' (12 people), 'spoke about the injustice to the perpetrator' (8 people), 'asked for help from those around and responded together' (2 people), 'informed the Human Rights Center' (2 people), 'did nothing' (2 people), and 'accompanied the victim to the police station' (1 person).
- The reason for inaction was 'fear of retaliation.'

#### □ **Use of the Human Rights Center**

- 91.5% of respondents knew about the Human Rights Center within the graduate school, an increase of 8.4% from the previous year.
- They learned about the Human Rights Center through human rights education (54.3%), posters and notice boards (33.2%), card news (4.9%), acquaintances (4.3%), counseling and reporting experiences (2.2%), and others (1.1%).
- 86.6% responded that they would use the Human Rights Center if there were a human rights violation, a 1.9% decrease from the previous year.
- When using the Human Rights Center, the highest expectation was confidentiality (25.4%), followed by fair investigations (17.9%), victim protection (16.9%), monitoring and preventive measures (12.9%), efforts for punishing the perpetrator (9.5%), system improvement (3%), with 28 respondents (13.9%) not answering.
- Another opinion stated that 'everything is necessary.'
- The reasons for hesitating to use the Human Rights Center were: thinking there is no problem (28.4%), fearing others might find out about their visit (18.9%), believing it would not help resolve the issue (12.4%), thinking they can handle it alone (10.9%), not knowing the role of the Human Rights Center (7.5%), believing a fair investigation would not occur (7.5%), and others (6.5%). 8% did not respond.
- Other responses included the opinion of having witnessed the issue, but since they were not directly affected, they were unsure.
- The most desired role of the Human Rights Center was the 'activation of communication channels,' followed by the activation of education, protective measures for victims, emotional support roles, providing legal help, efforts for system improvement, and punitive measures for perpetrators.

## IV. Summary of Survey Findings

### □ Human Rights Status

- According to the respondents' feedback, the human rights and gender sensitivity index of KDIS students is generally high. There is a need to raise the awareness of Korean students about human rights issues in the international community.
- Approximately 90% of respondents have received human rights education, and considering that half of them have undergone both online and offline training, a significant number of graduate students have received human rights education more than once.
- Awareness of the Human Rights Center is high, but as it is a small community, maintaining confidentiality and victim protection is crucial in the event of an incident.
- In addition to the survey questions, there is a need for an in-depth investigation of subjective responses (others) and considering the large number of foreign students at KDI Graduate School, a separate survey question analysis is required.

### □ Recommendations for Prevention, Response, and Recurrence Prevention Based on Human Rights Violation Experience Results

#### ○ Prevention and Reporting/Counseling Phase

- **(Human Rights Education Development)** Given the multicultural environment of KDIS, where students of various nationalities live together, there is a need to develop a human rights education program (standard lectures and online classes) that includes case studies related to discrimination based on nationality, race, sexual harassment, and the prohibition of hate speech.  
※Note: Most of the currently developed preventive education is a translation of domestic content into English and is somewhat abstract.
- **(Encouragement for Education Completion)** Need to encourage all members to take mandatory human rights and preventive education at least once a year.
- **(Training of Peer Educators)** Consider developing a human rights educator training program in collaboration with professional organizations such as the National Human Rights Commission for foreign students (including peers, juniors, seniors, and alumni).
- **(Active Promotion)** Need for active promotion of ongoing projects in the Human Rights Center.  
※Note: Although small-scale human rights education is being conducted, 36.8% responded that there is a need for "continuous education program provision."
- **(Diversification of Communication Channels)** Plans should be prepared to activate the communication channels of the Human Rights Center. Consider using SNS DM for students who are hesitant to visit in person or only want counseling, and consider actively offering community-linked counseling services.
- **(Improvement of Counseling/Reporting Channels)** Currently, anonymous (or pseudonymous) reporting is possible via QR code, and

email addresses are not exposed, but profiles or pictures can be sent. Considering the small community and the potential difficulty of submitting reports in a short time, an anonymous reporting app (e.g., ListenToMe) is needed.

- **(Legal Counseling Service)** Offer quarterly legal counseling services by utilizing internal and external legal experts (lawyers, etc.)  
※Note: If necessary, coordinate with the Immigration and Foreign Policy Division of the Ministry of Justice.

#### ○ Investigation Phase

- **(Preliminary Measures)** Upon receiving a report, measures such as 1) ensuring the reporter's anonymity, 2) immediate separation measures, and 3) victim support plans should be prepared quickly through a committee or internal meeting.  
※Note: It is necessary to post more simplified measures that can be taken when counseling/reporting to the center.
- **(Follow-up Measures)** When the committee decides, in addition to individual recommendations like disciplinary actions, institutional improvement recommendations necessary for members should also be included: (e.g., regulation revision, preparation of manuals/guidelines).

#### ○ Others

- **(Improvement of Administrative Procedures)** When there are inevitable changes in academic administration, such as classes, there should be a channel to consult with students in advance and communicate with them.
- **(Measures Following the Fact-finding Survey)** ① Confirm the intention to report according to the seriousness of the matter ② Investigate ex officio in cases where there is no intention to report, but the matter is serious ③ Improve areas that can be improved immediately after the fact-finding survey (e.g., education on Korean laws and systems like the Stalking Punishment Law) ④ Enhance trust by announcing system improvement (draft) notices.