

**HOW DOES WORKPLACE LEARNING AFFECT THE ADJUSTMENT TO  
CORPORATE LIVES OF YOUTH AND GENERAL EMPLOYEES? :  
FOCUSING ON STRUCTUREDNESS AND FIRM SPECIALIZATION**

By

**KIM, Junghyun**

**THESIS**

Submitted to

KDI School of Public Policy and Management

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For the Degree of

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### **Abstract**

Many researchers and organizations have emphasized the potential of workplace learning that promotes mutual benefits of organizational competency and human development since it can positively encourage an employee's behavioral changes toward the job and work. This study explores the characteristics of workplace learning, focusing on the structuredness and firm specialization, and investigates the impact on the adjustment to corporate life among general employees and young employees by measuring the changes in job satisfaction, in-house communication satisfaction, and turnover intention. Using employee survey data from Human Capital Corporate Panel (HCCP) published in 2018, it presents ANOVA and regression results to analyze how the different levels of structuredness and firm specialization of workplace learning affect individual employees' adjustment to corporate life in terms of what ways to what extent.

An employee who gets the middle or highest structuredness levels of workplace learning tends to show an increase in adjustment to corporate life compared to an employee who gets the lowest structuredness level of workplace learning. However, there is no significant adjustment level change between employees receiving the middle structuredness and the highest structuredness levels of workplace learning. Also, the influence of structuredness is not different between general and youth employees.

An employee who gets firm-specific training tends to show a decrease in adjustment to corporate life compared to an employee who gets general training. The decrement is consistently evident even controlling external conditions. Moreover, youth employees are partially more susceptible to the highest level of firm specialization, showing a significantly decreased job satisfaction and increased turnover intention for young workers in firm-specific training than those in general training.

This study identifies that structured and general workplace learning positively affects employees' adjustment. Companies can gradually increase the training's structuredness since it may take effect from the early stage. Companies can consider revising firm-specific training contents to align more with the acknowledged qualification framework in the labor market.

## 국문초록

많은 연구자들은 일터 학습(Workplace learning)이 개인의 직무역량과 조직의 생산성을 높인다는 점에 주목하고 있다. 직업과 업무에 대한 근로자의 행동을 긍정적으로 변화시키는 데 일터 학습이 기여할 수 있기 때문이다. 본 연구는 일터 학습의 체계화(Structuredness)와 기업 특화(Firm specialization) 특징이 청년과 일반인 근로자의 직장생활 적응도에 미치는 영향을 분석하였다. 체계화와 기업 특화 수준에 따라 직장생활 적응의 주요 요소인 직무 만족도, 사내 소통 만족도, 이직 의사가 어떤 양상으로 변화하는 지 확인하였다. 2018년 인적자본기업패널의 근로자 설문결과를 활용하여 분산분석과 회귀분석 결과를 제시하였다.

일터 학습의 체계화 특징을 분석한 결과, 체계화 수준이 높거나 보통 수준인 일터 학습을 받은 근로자는 체계화 수준이 낮은 일터 학습을 받은 근로자에 비해 직장생활 적응도가 높은 경향을 보였다. 하지만 체계화 수준이 높은 일터 학습을 받은 근로자와 체계화 수준이 보통 수준인 일터 학습을 받은 근로자 간의 비교에는 직장생활 적응도의 유의미한 차이가 없었다. 또한 체계화 수준이 직장생활 적응에 미치는 영향력은 청년 근로자와 일반 근로자 사이에 다르지 않았다.

일터 학습의 기업 특화 특징을 분석한 결과, 기업 특화 훈련(Firm-specific training)을 받은 근로자는 범용적인 훈련(General training)을 받은 근로자에 비해 직장생활 적응도가 낮은 경향을 보였다. 이러한 적응도의 감소는 외부 조건을 통제하더라도 일관되게 나타났다. 특히 청년 근로자의 경우, 범용적인 훈련을 받을 때보다 기업 특화 훈련을 받을 때 직무만족도 감소와 이직 의사의 증가가 유의미하게 큰 것으로 나타났다. 따라서 청년 근로자의 직장생활 적응은 일터 학습의 기업 특화 수준에 부분적으로는 더욱 취약하다는 것을 확인하였다.

본 연구를 통해 일터 학습은 체계적이고 범용적일 때 근로자의 적응에 긍정적인 영향을 미친다는 것을 알 수 있었다. 따라서 기업에서는 다음과 같은 방법으로 일터 학습을 설계하는 것을 고려할 수 있다. 첫째, 일터 학습의 체계화는 초기 단계부터 효과를 발휘하므로, 일터 학습의 체계화 수준을 점진적으로 높여가는 것을 검토할 수 있다. 둘째, 기업 맞춤형 특화 교육내용은 노동시장에서 공통적으로 인정되는 역량 체계에 보다 부합하도록 조정하는 것을 검토할 수 있다.

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## **I. Introduction**

### **1.1 Background**

Workplace learning, which includes workplace components in training and delivers problem-solving skills for the actual workplace environment, has been considered effective in improving organizational competency as well as human development in recent years. Since the world is rapidly changing, corresponding to the globalization and innovations of information technology, enterprises face more substantial challenges in coping with constant change and taking the lead in the competitive environment. The characteristics of increased automation, computerization, and Post-Fordism production trends require more sophisticated decision-making for individual workers to handle the complex and emerging issues. Therefore, the mutual benefits of workplace learning are noticeable that can help each worker deal with complicated situations more comfortably and offer enterprises to build up the organizational capability to provide an active response in the fast-paced world.

The importance of workplace learning has been presented in various fields. International organizations, governments, and enterprises have paid attention to the outputs that workplace learning can provide related to youth employment, sustainable and inclusive growth. International Labour Organization (ILO) emphasized the importance of enhanced technical vocational education (TVET), including apprenticeships, other work-experience schemes, and work-based learning considering the benefits such as school-to-work transition (Steedman et al., 2014). G20 Leaders, in November 2015, concluded “Actively promote quality work-based learning” as one of the important policy principles they need to achieve for solid and inclusive growth (OECD & ILO, 2015). In recent years, enterprises in the United States have proactively participated in apprenticeships, showing 128% growth in new apprentices and 115% growth in new programs between 2009 and 2019 (U.S. Department of Labor, 2019). POSCO, the steel manufacturing company in Korea, has provided exemplary workplace

learning programs, especially on-the-job training, for newly recruited field workers since 2007. POSCO's workplace learning programs aimed to train workplace skills and take a leading role individually in their field of work. It was considered to help maintain the firm's competency by promoting individual worker's motivation to develop their skills (Jang, 2010).

The government of Korea focused on the potential benefits of school-to-work transition and better job matching by reviewing the evidence of lower youth unemployment even after the global financial crisis in Germany and Swiss, where a strong tradition of work-based learning exists. Korea Dual Program, one of the representative policies in workplace learning, was initiated in 2014 to address the job mismatch, lack of smooth school-to-work transition, and youth unemployment. It showed rapid quantitative growth in the number of participants and positive outcomes in employee competency development, continuous service period extension, and decent jobs for the youth (KRIVET, 2020). As a result, in 2020, it was legislated by the law to support Korea Dual Program continuously. Korea Dual Program is expected to be strengthened in its size of budget investment and range of student participation from secondary and higher education levels (Presidential Committee on Jobs & Related Ministries Korea, 2019).

Although the positive impacts of workplace learning in addressing youth unemployment are discussed at the national policy and corporate business level, it is crucial to recognize that those impacts are brought by the changes in personal attitudes on the job and company at the individual level. Worker's adjustment and improvement lie at the bottom of the positive effect of workplace learning that enhances the degrees of understanding and satisfaction with each worker's job, the level of communication trust in the company, and the willingness to do continuous service. This study notes that various implications of workplace learning come from the individual's better adjustment to the organization's working environment.

## 1.2 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to figure out the effect of internal characteristics of workplace learning – the structuredness and the firm specialization - on an individual employee's adjustment to business life by measuring the levels of job satisfaction, in-house communication, and turnover intention in Korea.

Internal characteristics of workplace learning, i.e., structuredness and firm specialization, can provide different effects. The level of structuredness describes the amount of systemic design for the workplace learning curriculum. A highly structured workplace learning curriculum can contain a planned process of delivering training objectives to guide employees with consistent training content, methods, and outcomes (Jacobs & Jones, 1995). The level of specialization describes the firm-specific training contents of workplace learning. Highly specialized training contents are beneficial only for the in-house duties, while general training contents are useful to employees regardless of the firm and industry. Internal characteristics of workplace learning can determine the effectiveness of an employee's adjustment to corporate life differently.

Organizational socialization measures can capture an employee's adjustment to corporate life. It is based on the notion that an employee's adjustment is improved when the behavioral attitudes of an employee are strengthened towards the organization: growing job satisfaction, in-house communication satisfaction, and decreased turnover intention. A better adaptation can make individual employees satisfactory. It is also the key for employers and government to achieve positive social outcomes, including sustainable business, inclusive growth, better school-to-work transition, less job mismatching, and youth employment.

External conditions of workplace learning are controlled and reviewed for analyzing more concrete evidence. The external conditions include the circumstances in which workplace learning occurs, such as the firm characteristics and individual demographic factors.

Workplace learning can have various forms and effectiveness depending on the size of the business considering the conglomerate-dependent business environment in Korea. Employee demographic factors such as gender, years of service, educational background, and income can provide different implications for workplace learning effectiveness.

The effect of workplace learning on the youth may have substantial implications since many youth newcomers are significant participants in workplace learning programs. The youth group is one of the major vocational training recipients to enter the labor market, find a suitable job, and do productive work upon graduation. Governments and international organizations also emphasize the impact of workplace learning in accordance with youth policy, including youth employment and school-to-work transition. Especially in the Korean context, the youth's years of service rate only an average of 18 months in their first job despite the preparation periods for job rate an average of 11 months (Yoon et al., 2017). It recalls more attention to the youth's labor market mismatch and their adjustment to corporate life. The varying impact of workplace learning among youth is worth analyzing since it can change the workplace learning program and its delivery in terms of policy and curriculum more suitable to youth's corporate adjustment.

The study will improve the understanding of effective mechanisms of workplace learning. Stakeholders from enterprises can develop the idea of enhancing organizational competency and facilitating sustainable growth through re-designing the workplace learning curriculum. Additionally, this study may be of use to the government and international organizations to study the determinants of workplace learning policy outcomes revealed in Korea. It can help change the policy measures to focus on increasing the workplace learning effectiveness on youth employment and school-to-work transition based on the evidence found in the study.

### 1.3 Development of Research Questions

The study will investigate the following three research questions by analyzing the seventh wave employee and dataset from Human Capital Corporate Panel (HCCP) provided by Korea Research Institute for Vocational education & Training (KRIVET), released in 2018.

First, the study will analyze the internal characteristics of workplace learning and its effect on the employee's adjustment to corporate life.

- i) Do the internal characteristics of workplace learning affect an individual employee's adjustment to corporate life? If then, in what ways and to what extent?

Second, the study will include the external conditions of workplace learning and review the influence of internal characteristics on the employee's adjustment to corporate life.

- ii) Do the effect of internal characteristics of workplace learning on an individual employee's adjustment to corporate life change according to the levels of external conditions? If then, in what ways and to what extent?

Lastly, the study will discuss the varying impact of the internal characteristics of workplace learning by the youth group specifically, considering the youth group's importance in vocational training and workplace learning.

- iii) In the case of youth, do the internal characteristics of workplace learning have a more substantial influence on an employee's adjustment to corporate life? If then, in what ways and to what extent?

## **II. Literature Review**

### **2.1 Workplace Learning**

#### **2.1.1 Definition**

According to Spencer (2001), workplace learning is often presented in straightforward terms: it refers to the learning that takes place at work, learning that workers engage in on a daily basis. Since workplace learning is carried out in natural work settings, it can utilize the workplace components at most by practicing the actual tasks with peers using the workplace equipment. Individual workers in the workplace learning can learn the practical skills required to exercise in their corporate life through the various activities and interactions performed in the natural working environment. Therefore, workplace learning is an integrated learning experience in the work process, which draws the workplace components and human interactions into an employee's competency development.

The term and definition of workplace learning vary among researchers and organizations. It is because workplace learning entails a broad concept of learning activity inside the workplace, but also workplace learning implies diverse matters of concern among researchers. While academic researchers are more likely to focus on individual and organizational effectiveness, international organizations and governments are more inclined to focus on positive social outcomes through workplace learning.

Lim and Lee (2010) clarified components of workplace learning as the learning activity carried out inside the workplace, through the simultaneous and non-simultaneous interaction with people and the environment, including formal and informal learning experiences, and paying more attention to informal learning. Jacobs and Park (2009) focused on the interactions and outcomes by defining workplace learning as “the process used by individuals when engaged in training programs, education and development courses, or some type of experiential learning activity for the purpose of acquiring the competence necessary to meet the current and

future work requirements.” These discussions can be summarized by the three concepts of workplace learning suggested by Choi (2014) in his study:

1. The workplace is the location where various learning activities arise related to the job.
2. Workplace learning brings work-related experiences, which provide problem-solving skills based on work-contextual understandings.
3. Workplace learning includes interaction among peers and the business environment by responding to the different demands of various corporate members.

OECD defined ‘Work-based learning’ as ‘learning that takes place through some combination of observing, undertaking, and reflecting on productive work in real workplaces’ (Kis, 2016). Also, it categorized the types of work-based learning based on (1) structuredness scheme, which emphasizes determined arrangements through a regulatory framework; (2) work-placement, which usually complements formal education; and (3) informality, which does not explicitly target learning outcomes. ILO stated ‘Work-based learning’ as ‘all forms of learning that take place in a real work environment.’ ILO emphasizes the apprenticeship type of workplace learning, which combines on-the-job training and off-the-job learning (Smith, 2018). Both OECD and ILO stressed positive workplace learning outcomes on smoothing school-to-work transition, reducing skills mismatch, introducing industry-relevant skills to the youth in the fast-changing labor market, and promoting private sector development (OECD, 2010; Steedman et al., 2014).

### **2.1.2 Types of Workplace Learning**

Workplace learning involves various forms, which implies a variety of organizations, purposes, and cultures. Silverman (2003) accessed five workplace learning methods revealing the representative types of workplace learning in the study: Coaching and mentoring,

Secondments, Action-learning sets, Cross-functional teams, and Project working. Jacobs and Park (2009) proposed a conceptual framework and examples of workplace learning by using the three dimensions: location of the learning, degree of planning, and the role of the trainer.

**Table 1. Conceptual framework and examples of workplace learning**

<b>Case</b>	<b>Location of the learning</b>	<b>Degree of planning</b>	<b>Role of trainer</b>	<b>Examples of workplace learning methods</b>
<b>A</b>	Off-the-job	Unstructured	Passive	Study leave Professional attachments
<b>B</b>	Off-the-job	Unstructured	Active	-
<b>C</b>	Off-the-job	Structured	Passive	Self-directed learning
<b>D</b>	Off-the-job	Structured	Active	Web-based training Group-based classroom Corporate university
<b>E</b>	On-the-job	Unstructured	Passive	Casual coaching Ad hoc mentoring Job shadowing
<b>F</b>	On-the-job	Unstructured	Active	Unstructured on-the-job training
<b>G</b>	On-the-job	Structured	Passive	Action learning
<b>H</b>	On-the-job	Structured	Active	Structured on-the-job training Formal mentoring Formal coaching

Source: Jacobs and Park (2009), Reorganized

Many international organizations and governments pay attention to implementing apprenticeship-style workplace learning as a critical policy agenda. OECD followed the definition of apprenticeships as “a formal, structured program of vocational preparation, sponsored by an employer, that juxtaposes part-time off-the-job instruction with on-the-job training and work experience, leads to a recognized vocational qualification at craft or higher



levels, and takes at least two years to complete” (OECD, 2010). Steedman et al. (2014) identified the seven key features of apprenticeship by analyzing the ILO’s documentation of Apprenticeship Recommendation and Vocational Training Recommendation: (1) Based in the workplace supervised by an employer; (2) Intended for young people; (3) Fundamental aim is learning a trade/acquiring a skill; (4) training is ‘systemic,’ i.e., follows a predefined plan; (5) Governed by a contract between apprentice and employer; (6) Training to established standards for a recognized occupation; (7) Long-term training.

Korea Dual Program is one of the representative workplace learning systems in Korea. Korea Dual Program involves 1 to 4 years of training consisting of employer-led on-the-job training above 75% of total training hours and school-led off-the-job training below 25% of total training hours. The systemically designed curriculum aims to attain professional competencies required by the workplace and industry needs through the National Competency Standards of Korea. Employers participate in the course design so that the curriculum can reflect the workplace specialties of each task. Apprentices can obtain national qualifications after the in-house and national evaluations of capability achievements. These features of the Korea Dual Program match the definition of the apprenticeship system that international organizations recommend. The Law on Support for Apprenticeship in Industrial Sites was legislated in 2020 to improve the national economy by promoting apprentices’ employment and socioeconomic status. The Presidential Committee on Jobs decided to invest in apprenticeships for students from all levels of education, including vocational high schools, junior colleges, and universities, by the agenda of ‘Top 10 tasks for Human Investments’ (Presidential Committee on Jobs & Related Ministries Korea, 2019).

### **2.1.3 Internal Characteristics of Workplace Learning**

This study focuses on the two distinctive characteristics of workplace learning derived from its bases at work: the level of structuredness and firm specialization. Since workplace learning reflects a job and an organization in its curriculum, the delivery of workplace learning can vary by the contents it internally entails. The two distinguishing factors of structuredness and firm specialization can make workplace learning programs unique.

#### **Structuredness of workplace learning**

The structuredness refers to the depth of designing a workplace learning curriculum in advance to achieve the purpose of education and training. Jacobs and Jones (1995) defined Structured On-the-job training (S-OJT) as ‘The planned process of developing task-level expertise by having an experienced employee train a novice employee at or near the actual work setting.’ In Jacob’s definition of S-OJT, the term ‘task’ refers to the discrete sets of behaviors and outcomes that characterize the jobs. He discussed three points of being structured with workplace learning. First, it is expected to achieve training objectives more reliably as a planned process. Also, it creates interaction between individuals involved in the training to pass expertise about specific tasks. Lastly, the information about tasks is engineered into a work setting to guide learning and reduce false assumptions, whether intentionally or naturally. The training content, methods, and outcomes are consistent across employees through the S-OJT.

Apprenticeship is considered one of the most structured methods of delivering workplace learning. Steedman et al. (2014) identified that it is one of the key features of apprenticeship that ‘training is systemic, i.e., follows a predefined plan’ by analyzing the ILO’s documentation of Apprenticeship Recommendation. Moreover, according to his discussion on differences between apprenticeships and other forms of workplace learning, apprenticeship

entailed features of structuredness, including ‘program of learning’ and ‘Legislative framework,’ which distinguished apprenticeship from other types of workplace learning.

**Table 2. Principal attributes of apprenticeship compared to other workplace learnings**

	<b>Apprenticeship</b>	<b>Internship</b>	<b>Traineeship</b>
<b>Workplace-based</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Program of learning</b>	Yes	No	No
<b>Legislative framework</b>	Yes	No	No

Source: Steedman et al. (2014), Reorganized

In conclusion, structuredness is related to predefining the training components systematically for attaining the intended training outcome. This study defines the structuredness of workplace learning as systemic planning of training curriculum, including training tasks, instructor, and duration to achieve the intended skill delivery. Three different types of workplace learning are covered to make the effect of structuredness visible: (1) Colleague interaction, (2) Mentoring and coaching, and (3) Learning organization. Colleague interaction is the least structured workplace learning method because it lacks systemic planning. Learning organization is the most structured workplace learning method because the instructor, learning tasks, and duration of learning can be predetermined.

### **Firm Specialization of workplace learning**

Since workplace learning takes place in a work environment, employers can design the training contents to have specialized characteristics for each workplace. Firm specialization refers to customizing training contents useful to a firm providing the workplace learning curriculum. The level of firm specialization is high when workplace training is useful for a firm

providing it and irrelevant to other firms. Employers may provide highly customized workplace training to train employees with specialized competency for the firm's task.

The concept is derived from the traditional division of general training and specific training. Becker (1993) argued that "Much on-the-job training is neither completely specific nor completely general but increases productivity more in the firms providing it and falls within a definition of specific training." Although general training is useful in many firms and increases the future marginal productivity of workers in many firms, specific training is useful in the firm providing it by increasing the future marginal productivity of workers more to the firm providing it. He noted that the specific training produces certain external effects of having fewer incentives for employees to quit the firm and employers to lay off the employees. Therefore, the cost of specific training can be shared, which explains the low starting wage of newcomers in the firm-specific training, while the cost of general training is borne entirely by the employee.

Although Becker's argument on firm-specific training emphasized sustained advantages for employers and employees, recent studies showed that the impact of specific training is not evident. The division of training between specific and general may not be clear. Loewenstein and Spletzer (1998) concluded that "much on-the-job training is general" since "employers and workers both believe that employer-provided training typically offers skills that are useful at firms other than the one providing the training." They also found out that employees are frequently provided rewards for the general skills learned from other firms. Asymmetric information may interrupt the clear distinction between general training and firm-specific training. Barron et al. (1997) pointed out that firms would like to conceal the firm-specific characteristics and describe all the contents on the general side to avoid costs, while employees would like to describe all the training are specific to share costs.

Some studies suggest that employees do not welcome firm-specific training, which challenges the external effects of firm-specific training and fewer turnover incentives. Akinsanmi-Oyedeji and Coff (2016) reported that perceptions of firm-specific skills increase the likelihood of subsequent turnover in their analysis of two different national labor and employment datasets from the United States and South Korea. The study assumed ‘the feeling of being stuck in their current job’ may arise through firm-specific training, which explains that workers who perceive their skills to be firm-specific tend to be dissatisfied with their job, uncommitted to their organization, and uncertain about their acquired skills in the labor market. Felli and Harris (2018) analyzed firm-specific training as a combination of productivity-enhancement and employee-evaluation components. They mentioned that workers would prefer to see less training if the employee-evaluation component predominates in firm-specific training. These studies suggest that firm-specific human capital may drive the opposite behavior predicted by intuition and past theories because of an employee’s perception of firm-specific training.

On the basis of existing theories, this study defines the firm specialization of workplace learning as the usefulness of training content to the firm providing it. Since the study covers the individual worker level discourse, the degree of specialization is evaluated by the employee into three different degrees: (1) Lowest Firm Specialization (General Training), (2) Middle-level Firm Specialization (Skill usability depends on the job and industry), and (3) Highest Firm Specialization (Firm-specific Training). The highest firm specialization includes the usefulness limited exclusively to the firm providing the workplace training, while the lowest firm specialization includes usefulness regardless of job and industry. The middle-level firm specialization consists of the usefulness effective other firms in the same industry with the firm providing the workplace training or usefulness effective to the task and job in other firms regardless of the industry.

### **2.1.4 Effect of Workplace Learning**

Researchers reviewed the effect of workplace learning in various levels of discourse, primarily focusing on individual and organizational effectiveness. Mincer (1962) noted the impact of on-the-job training on workers' wages by showing that the return of private investments in on-the-job training is higher than formal education. It implies that workplace learning is associated with the improvement of worker productivity as well as wages. In addition, Jacobs (2003) suggested benefits of structured on-the-job training related to productivity growth, such as 'reduced training times,' 'lower training costs,' 'improved quality rates,' and 'increased development opportunities.' Furthermore, Chang et al. (2009) provided the positive relationship between participation in communities of practice (CoP) and the organizational socialization of newcomers. According to their study, CoP, a kind of learning organization, facilitated newcomers' adjustment in terms of job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and intention to remain.

International organizations noted the importance of workplace learning in relation to its labor market influences in a broader perspective. OECD and ILO (2015) emphasized the importance of workplace learning and skill development for inclusive social outcomes. Workplace learning ensures skill development relevant to the employer's needs and industry by doing useful work in the strong learning environment of the workplace. Also, according to ILO (2019), apprenticeship is beneficial because it reduces skills mismatch and smoothens the school-to-work transition of youth by promoting coordination between education and industry for quick changes. ILO's finding highlighted a negative relationship between the prevalence of apprenticeships and youth unemployment.

Several Korean researchers made a corporate-level discourse on workplace learning effectiveness. Cho and Yoon (2011) investigated the relationship between structured on-the-job training and organizational performance. Based on the corporate level survey, structured

on-the-job training positively impacted organizational performance by increasing corporate revenue and profit. Moreover, its effectiveness was stronger in the electricity, electronics, and software industries compared to the automobile part manufacturing and machinery industries. Choi (2014) provided empirical evidence that the effectiveness of workplace learning is influenced by organizational level factors, including workplace trainer characteristics, training environment, and organizational culture. It is suggested that the trainer's competency, curriculum design, and favorable support for training are important to enhance the effectiveness of structured on-the-job training. It proposed that individual-level factors be more developed for further study. Choe (2020) figured out the impact of the Korea Dual Program on the organization's human resource development. An implementation of On-the-job training and competency qualifications, which are the components of apprenticeship, positively impacted the perceived worker's productivity and competency. While many researchers focused on organizational level effectiveness, Sun et al. (2014) researched the individual level effectiveness of workplace learning. It is reviewed that the influence of on-the-job training on the individual worker's job satisfaction and organizational commitment, with the mediating effect of work competency. It turned out that a significant impact exists on those variables for large corporations. However, the mediating effect of work competency was not statistically significant for small and medium-sized corporations. Sun et al. (2014) pointed out that large corporations tend to have a stronger systemic operation and longer years of service than small and medium-sized corporations. Enterprise-scale can be influential considering this research and the business environment of conglomerate-dependency in Korea.

## **2.2 Employee Adjustment**

### **2.2.1 Definition**

An employee's adjustment to corporate life refers to an employee's attitude and behavioral change to have a deeper understanding of a corporate and satisfy the role requirement as an insider. Organizational socialization theories identified how individuals transit from organizational outsiders to fully adjusted insiders (Fisher 1985, Bauer et al. 2007). Therefore, employee adjustment is a successful result of organizational socialization.

Fisher (1985) identified that the outcomes of the adjustment phase are thought to be job satisfaction, organizational commitment, intention to remain with the organization, and acceptable performance. Many other researchers followed a similar measurement to Fisher's study in employee adjustment research. Nelson and Quick (1991) suggested two phases of newcomer adjustment indicators: Positive indicators of job satisfaction and performance rating, Negative Indicators of psychological distress, and intention to leave. Bauer et al. (2007) provided a model of employee adjustment during socialization and suggested three main outcomes of newcomer adjustment: performance, job attitudes, and turnover intention. According to Kim's (2017) review of the literature, many researchers measured the employee's adjustment using variables of 'job satisfaction,' 'organizational commitment,' and 'turnover intention.'

This study uses three indicators measuring the level of adjustment to corporate life: 'Job satisfaction,' 'In-house communication satisfaction,' and 'Turnover intention.' These indicators align with the past literature to measure the employee's adjustment. Also, considering the individual worker level of discourse in this study, selected indicators are acceptable to reveal subjective judgment among individuals in measuring the level of adjustment to corporate life. The variables are measured on a Likert scale of 5 points.



### **2.2.2 Impact of Employee's Adjustment on the Corporate Performance**

It is intuitively acceptable that an individual worker's attitudes and behavior improvement may positively affect corporate performance. Various adjustment factors of individual workers have been investigated to figure out the effectiveness on the organizational level outcome.

Having better performance of newcomers through organizational adjustment is an important issue for every organization. According to Bauer et al. (2007)'s Meta-Analysis, it was found that indicators of newcomer adjustment, including role clarity, self-efficacy, and social acceptance, are highly correlated to newcomer performance. Carmeli et al. (2007) provided the same empirical result through their adjustment and job performance study. By analyzing the employee survey in Israel, it is concluded that employees who fit in within the organizational system exhibited a statistically significant level of increased job performance.

Researchers suggested that a correlation exists between job satisfaction and performance at an organizational level. According to Ostroff (1992), in the study of the relationship between satisfaction attitudes and performance at an organizational level, the organizations with more satisfied employees tended to be more effective than organizations with less satisfied employees based on empirical analysis using national school survey data. Judge et al. (2001) provided a qualitative and quantitative review of the relationship between job satisfaction and job performance. It suggested that job satisfaction measures are correlated somewhat highly with job performance. Imran et al. (2015) found that employees' contribution to organizational productivity is increased if the job satisfaction level among employees is high through the analysis of employee survey results. Korean researchers also reveal the importance of job satisfaction on productivity. A recent study by Choi (2019) suggested that job satisfaction has a significantly positive impact on the organizational productivity of the manufacturing industry in Korea.

Communication satisfaction and trust are essential in organizational performance. Clappitt (1993) showed the differential impact of communication satisfaction on productivity, which distinguished the impact of personal feedback with significant impact and the impact of corporate-wide information with low impact. Also, Phipps et al. (2013) provided evidence that an organization's productivity is boosted by giving workers opportunities to participate in business decision-making and access relevant information. Y.-M. Kwon and Kim (2009) emphasized the importance of organizational communication in organizational performance by analyzing the regression results from a private company survey in Seoul.

The impact of turnover on organizational performance can have complex directions. Meier and Hicklin (2008) found that not all employee turnover is always bad for organizational performance since some infusion of new personnel can be more innovative. Nevertheless, they also found that a high turnover ratio may place dysfunctional pressure on the organization's performance, so it is required to sustain a level of turnover enough to encourage healthy change. K. Kwon (2016) suggested that turnover may negatively impact business performance, whether high performer or low performer. It is assumed that the loss of human capital and social capital decreases the organizational effectiveness even if it is a turnover of low performers.

## **2.3 Youth**

### **2.3.1 Definition**

The definition of youth is not agreed upon universally. Instead, various organizations and researchers have defined it diversely depending upon the context and validity. United Nations measures the ages of 15 to 24 years as youth across other considerations that arose during International Youth Year's preparation. Most international organizations, including ILO and OECD, accept the exact measurement for statistical purposes. Korean definition of youth usually follows the ages of 19 to 34 years as stated by the Korean Law 'Framework Act on Youth'. Yoon et al. (2017) summarized the widened age range of youth in Korea because of mandatory military service of young men, higher university enrollment, and culturally postponed labor market transition. This study measures the youth group as the ages of 19 to 34 years provided by Korean Law regarding the analysis context.

Although defining the youth boundaries in measurement is blurring by the perspectives, it is much settled to understand what constitutes youth in a broader viewpoint. Youth is the transition stage from childhood to adulthood, which includes the process of obtaining a sustaining livelihood (ILO, 2006). Curtin (2001) stylized the youth's experience of moving from dependence to independence in four aspects: leaving the parental home and setting up new living arrangements, finishing full-time education, forming close stable personal relationships outside their family of origin, and settling into a more or less stable source of livelihood through employment and or carrier choice. Therefore, the duration of youth can be different between societies and individuals. Yoon et al. (2017) discussed the importance of identifying the youth category with their diverse labor market characteristics and demographic characteristics. Han (2017) also advised structuring a complementary mixture of youth policies, pointing out that the youth group is not homogeneous.

### **2.3.2 Youth in workplace learning**

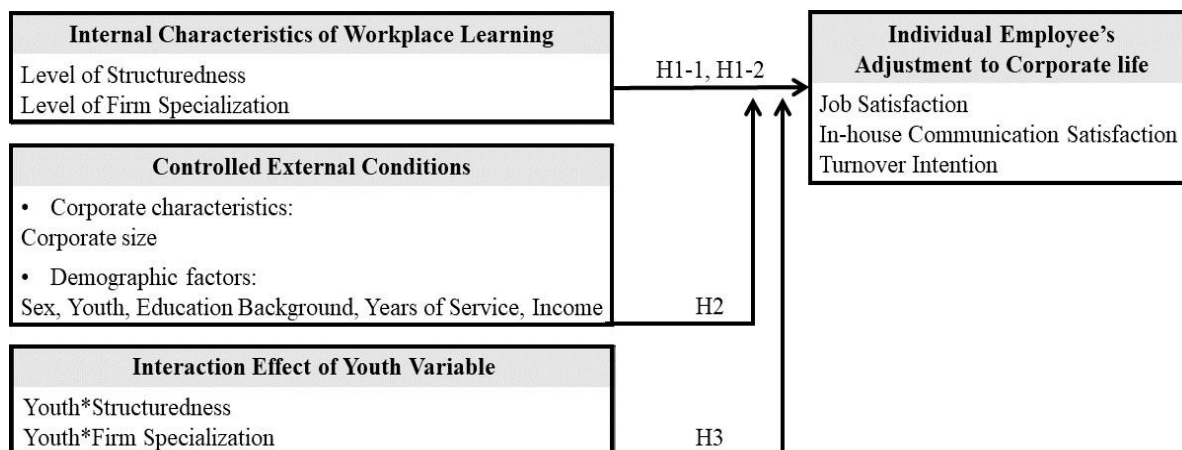
The implications of youth in workplace learning often go along with employment policy. OECD and ILO emphasized workplace learning as an attractive policy option against youth unemployment, showing the low unemployment and high labor market integration of the youth in the countries with the prevalence of apprenticeship (OECD, 2010, ILO, 2019). According to the meta-analysis of youth employment programs, including workplace learning, programs were generally more successful in labor market outcomes when conducted in the middle- and low-income countries or integrating multiple intervention options, even though only just more than one-third of youth employment programs showed a significant positive impact (Kluve et al., 2016).

Some researchers figured out that workplace learning can improve youth behavior in organizations. Oh (2016) examined the adjustment process and organizational socialization of high school graduate newcomers in the workforce through the experience of formal and informal learning. It showed that formal learning and intended informal learning have a strong positive relationship with high school graduate newcomers' personal-organizational fit. DeLuca et al. (2010) concluded that the interaction between supportive adults and at-risk youths could foster resilience in the workplace through qualitative research in Canada. It suggested that tailored workplace learning programs are required for the disengaged youth.

## 2.4 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study is derived from the literature review and is shown in Figure 1.

**Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of the Study**



The study will review the following hypothesis derived from the research questions and literature review.

**Hypothesis 1-1.** *There is a difference in group means of an individual employee's adjustment to corporate life depending on the level of structuredness of workplace learning.*

**Hypothesis 1-2.** *There is a difference in group means of an individual employee's adjustment to corporate life depending on the level of firm specialization of workplace learning.*

**Hypothesis 2.** *Controlling the external conditions constant, the structuredness and firm specialization of workplace learning have a statistically significant positive influence on an individual employee's adjustment to corporate life.*

**Hypothesis 3.** *Controlling the external conditions constant, the structuredness and firm specialization of workplace learning among the youth group have a statistically stronger positive influence on an individual employee's adjustment to corporate life.*

### III. Research Design

#### 3.1 Research Data

This study uses data from the Human Capital Corporate Panel (HCCP) survey conducted by the Korea Research Institute for Vocational Education & Training (KRIVET) published in 2018 (7th wave). HCCP is one of the Korean government's officially approved panel surveys to track the accumulation of the human resources in corporations and employees every other year since 2005. It is composed of corporate-side and worker-side surveys of human resource management and development.

Among the seventh wave of data from HCCP, this study uses the employee-side survey to figure out the individual level effectiveness of workplace learning. It includes the questionnaire related to participation in workplace learnings, the internal characteristics of workplace learnings, job satisfaction, in-house communication, and turnover intention. The respondents are employees of the sampled companies for the HCCP company-side survey. Employees are selected from all sampled companies with the target allocation considering the industry and corporate size to ensure a better representation. Although the original dataset provided 10,005 responses in total, this study excludes 1,663 cases providing 'missing values' or 'no response' in some variables. Also, extra 175 cases responding 'No special knowledge or skills acquired in the current job' are excluded so that this study can analyze the workers revealing workplace learning experiences in their working environment. As a result, a total of 8,167 cases from 406 companies are involved in the analysis.

The respondents' characteristics are summarized in table 3. Of the 8,167 respondents, 6,493 were male (79.5%) and 1,674 were female (20.5%). In terms of the final educational background completed, the majority of respondents earned a bachelor's or associate's degree (5,323, 65.2%), and 29.6% of them graduated from high school or middle school (2,420). By the years of service, 29.3% were in the service under five years (2,390). 3,706 were from the

smallest company size with employees below 300 (45.4%), and 674 were from the largest company size with employees above 2,000 (8.3%). 2,696 respondents belonged to the youth based on the definition by Korean Law ‘Framework Act on Youth’ (33.0%). The average monthly income and log-transformed monthly income were 3,881,585 Korean Won and 5.8878.

**Table 3. Descriptive statistics of the case in the analysis**

<b>N=8167</b>	<b>Section</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Gender</b>	Male	6493	79.5
	Female	1674	20.5
<b>Educational Background</b>	Middle/High School Graduate	2420	29.6
	Associate’s/ Bachelor’s Degree Graduate	5323	65.2
	Master’s Degree Graduate	405	5.0
	Doctor’s Graduate	19	0.2
<b>Years of Service</b>	Under 5 years	2390	29.3
	5-10 years	2000	24.5
	10-15 years	1437	17.6
	15-20 years	1023	12.5
	20-25 years	709	8.7
	Above 25 years	608	7.4
<b>Company Size</b>	Below 300 employees	3706	45.4
	300-999 employees	3032	37.1
	1000-1999 employees	755	9.2
	Above 2000 employees	674	8.3
<b>Youth (KR)</b>	Korean definition of youth (aged 19-34)	2696	33.0
	Others	5471	67.0
<b>Monthly Income</b>	(Unit: 10,000 KRW)	(Mean) 388.1585	(S.D) 155.65269
<b>Monthly Income (Log)</b>		(Mean) 5.8878	(S.D) 0.38266

## 3.2 Measures

### 3.2.1 Independent Variables

#### Level of Structuredness

In order to measure the level of structuredness of workplace learning, this study employs three workplace learning participation questionnaires from the HCCP survey. These include 'Learning by co-worker interaction' (Interaction), 'Mentoring or Coaching' (Mentoring), and 'Learning group or community' (Learning-Group). HCCP questionnaires ask respondents about the participation of each workplace learning, and notably, it takes every respondent to participate in 'Learning by co-worker interaction' at work. This study defines the level of structuredness as high for the Learning-Group, followed by the Mentoring. It is the lowest for the Interaction.

The operational definition of the level of structuredness is based on the availability of predefining the learning schedule and the respondent's participation in each workplace learning, which is discussed in the literature review of the structuredness in workplace learning. The most structured category consisted of respondents who participated in all three workplace learnings. The second highest group belonged to those who participated in the Learning-Group and the Interaction. The low middle group belonged to those who participated in the Mentoring and the Interaction. Respondents who participated only in the Interaction are categorized in the least structured group.

Table 4 presents the descriptive statistics of the level of structuredness analyzed in this study. Most respondents received the lowest structuredness form of workplace learning from the corporate, showing that 74.1% of respondents participated in the Interaction form of workplace learning alone. The low middle structuredness group follows the second biggest group - 16.3% of respondents participated in Interaction and Mentoring. The 5.6% of respondents suggested that they participated in all three workplace learning forms provided by



the corporate, consisting of the third biggest respondents group as the highest structuredness. High middle structuredness was the least participation combination of workplace learning, showing that only 4.0% of respondents participated in Learning-Group and Interaction.

**Table 4. Descriptive statistics of the level of structuredness**

<b>N=8167</b>	<b>Section</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Level of Structuredness</b>	Lowest Structuredness (Participated only in Interaction)	6052	74.1
	Low middle Structuredness (Participated in Mentoring/Coaching and Interaction)	1331	16.3
	High middle Structuredness (Participated in Learning-Group and Interaction)	330	4.0
	Highest Structuredness (Participated in Learning-Group, Mentoring/Coaching, and Interaction)	454	5.6

### **Level of Firm Specialization**

The level of firm specialization is measured using the HCCP questionnaire of ‘Which of the following statement describes the knowledge or skill you acquired in your current job?’ with the response categories: (a) Useful only at the current job, not used by other companies, (b) Useful for other companies in the same industry as well as the current job, (c) Useful only for the same type of work regardless of industry, and (d) Widely useful regardless of industry or job. Item (a) and (d) match the meaning of specific and general training studied in the literature review. Therefore, this study defines (a) as the highest level of specialization and (d) as the lowest level of firm specialization. Both (b) and (c) are categorized in the middle-level firm specialization.

Descriptive statics of the level of firm specialization is provided in Table 5. Middle-level firm specialization is the most common firm specialization of workplace learning provided by the corporate, showing that 80.4% of respondents described their knowledge or

skill acquired in the current job as usable depending on the job and industry. General training is the second biggest type of firm specialization offered by the corporate, with 10.7% of respondents in the group. Firm-specific training is the minor type of firm specialization of workplace learning given to employees; 8.9% of respondents said the skills and knowledge learned in the workplace were useful only at the current job.

**Table 5. Descriptive statistics of the level of firm specialization**

N=8167		Section	Frequency	%
<b>Level of Firm Specialization</b>		Lowest Firm Specialization (General Training)	870	10.7
		Middle-level Firm Specialization (Skill usability depends on the job and industry)	6569	80.4
		Highest Firm Specialization (Firm-specific Training)	728	8.9

### 3.2.2 Dependent Variables

This study uses Employee Adjustment as the dependent variable. It is captured in three aspects: Job Satisfaction, In-house communication satisfaction, and Turnover intention. The aspects of employee adjustment were similar to the research model of employee adjustment reviewed by Fisher (1985), Bauer (2007), and Kim (2017). In order to measure three aspects of employee adjustment, five items are selected from the HCCP survey. All items are measured on 5-point Likert Scale ranging from 1 to 5. The Cronbach's alpha of these five items is acceptable (Cronbach's alpha = 0.756). Table 6 suggests the mean and standard deviation of each aspect reviewed in the study.

#### **Job Satisfaction**

Job satisfaction of an employee is measured using a questionnaire: 'How satisfied are you with your current job overall?' The response consisted of a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly unsatisfied) to 5 (Strongly satisfied). The mean and standard deviation of job

satisfaction are 3.52 and 0.686, which shows the highest mean and lowest standard deviation among the three aspects of employee adjustment.

### **In-house communication satisfaction**

In-house communication satisfaction is measured by the summed and averaged score of three items: 'Our company informs employees in detail about the company's circumstances.', 'Our company is free to express opinions to supervisors,' and 'Our company has good communication between departments.'" These items concern the communication trust between individuals, businesses, and the management inside the company. The responses are measured on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 5 (Strongly agree). The Cronbach's alpha of these three items is 0.803 with sufficient internal consistency. The highest score of composited measure indicates greater satisfaction in the communication. The mean and standard deviation of composite in-house communication satisfaction are 3.30 and 0.743.

### **Turnover intention**

The turnover intention is measured using a questionnaire: 'I will consider turnover if there is a company that offers even the slightest good condition.' The response consisted of a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 5 (Strongly agree). This study reverse-recodes the response of turnover intent so that the higher score indicates a higher intention to stay in the current company, which is a positive signal to the adjustment on the current corporate. The mean and standard deviation of reversed turnover intention are 3.17 and 1.010, which shows the lowest mean and highest standard deviation among the three aspects of employee adjustment.

**Table 6. Descriptive statistics of the dependent variables**

<b>N=8167</b>		<b>Mean</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>
<b>Cronbach's Alpha=0.756</b>			
<b>Job Satisfaction</b>		3.52	0.686
<b>In-house Communication Satisfaction</b>		<b>Composite</b> 3.30	0.743
<b>(Cronbach's Alpha=0.803)</b>		(Individual-Management)	3.23 0.905
		(Individual-Supervisor)	3.34 0.863
		(Department-Department)	3.32 0.862
<b>Turnover Intention (Reversed)</b>		3.17	1.010

### 3.3 Research Model & Methodology

This study is to figure out the effect of workplace learning on an employee's adjustment to corporate life, focusing on the level of structuredness and firm specialization of a training program. In order to analyze the research questions and hypothesis, ANOVA and regression analysis are employed. Data cleanup and quantitative research methods are run using Windows SPSS version 28 at the significance level of 5%.

In the first part of the analysis, this study presents ANOVA to investigate whether the mean difference in an individual's adjustment to corporate life is statistically significant by the level of internal characteristics. The independent variables are the level of structuredness and firm specialization. The dependent variables are three aspects of adjustment to corporate life defined in this study: Job satisfaction, In-house communication satisfaction, and Turnover intention.

#### ANOVA by a workplace learning characteristic

$$Y_{ij} = \mu_j + \varepsilon_{ij}$$

Where;

- $Y_{ij}$  = Set of outcomes (Job satisfaction, In-house communication satisfaction, Reversed turnout intention) for  $i$ -th response in  $j$ -th category of a workplace learning characteristic
- $\mu_j$  = mean of  $j$ -th category
- $\varepsilon_{ij}$  = Error terms

The second part of the analysis suggests regression analysis to measure the influence of both internal characteristics on an employee's adjustment to corporate life. External conditions are incorporated in the regression model to evaluate the statistical significance of

internal characteristics when other conditions are controlled. The model provides empirical evidence of how workplace learning and its characteristics serve for an employee's adjustment to corporate life in terms of direction and magnitude.

### Regression models controlling external conditions

$$Y_i = \beta_0 + \sum_{j=1}^3 \beta_j \text{STRUCTUREDNESS}_j + \sum_{k=1}^2 \beta_k \text{FIRM\_SPECIALIZATION}_k + \sum_{l=1}^{14} \theta_l \text{CONTROL}_l + \varepsilon_i$$

Where;

- $Y_i$  = Set of Outcomes (Job satisfaction, In-house communication satisfaction, Reversed turnout intention)
- $\text{STRUCTUREDNESS}_j$  = A set of structuredness dummy variable
- $\text{FIRM\_SPECIALIZATION}_k$  = A set of firm specialization dummy variable
- $\text{CONTROL}_l$  = Controlled external conditions (Company Size, Sex, Youth, Educational Background, Years of Service, Log-transformed Monthly Income)
- $\varepsilon_i$  = Error terms

Lastly, the extended regression model includes interaction terms evaluating the varying influence of workplace learning's structuredness and firm specialization among the youth specifically. It measures the extent to which internal characteristics' effects on corporate adjustment are increased or decreased in the case of the youth group. The analysis shows the differences in corporate adjustment levels between groups affected by the internal characteristics of workplace learning.

### Extended Regression models with interaction terms

$$\begin{aligned}
 Y_i = & \beta_0 + \sum_{j=1}^3 \beta_j \text{STRUCTUREDNESS}_j + \sum_{k=1}^2 \beta_k \text{FIRM\_SPECIALIZATION}_k \\
 & + \sum_{l=1}^3 \beta_l \text{YOUTH} \times \text{STRUCTUREDNESS}_l \\
 & + \sum_{m=1}^2 \beta_m \text{YOUTH} \times \text{FIRM\_SPECIALIZATION}_m + \sum_{n=1}^{14} \theta_n \text{CONTROL}_n + \varepsilon_i
 \end{aligned}$$

Where;

- $Y_i$  = Set of Outcomes (Job satisfaction, In-house communication satisfaction, Reversed turnout intention)
- $\text{STRUCTUREDNESS}_j$  = A set of structuredness dummy variable
- $\text{FIRM\_SPECIALIZATION}_k$  = A set of firm specialization dummy variable
- $\text{YOUTH} \times \text{STRUCTUREDNESS}_l$  = A set of interaction term between youth and structuredness dummy variable
- $\text{YOUTH} \times \text{FIRM\_SPECIALIZATION}_m$  = A set of interaction term between youth and firm specialization dummy variable
- $\text{CONTROL}_n$  = Controlled external conditions (Company Size, Sex, Youth, Educational Background, Years of Service, Log-transformed Monthly Income)
- $\varepsilon_i$  = Error terms

## **IV. Data Analysis and Discussion**

### **4.1 Analysis of the means difference in adjustment to corporate life by the level of internal characteristics of workplace learning**

#### **4.1.1 Difference in employee's job satisfaction, in-house communication satisfaction, and turnover intention by the level of structuredness of workplace learning**

The first part of the analysis tests whether the mean difference in an employee's adjustment to corporate life exists depending on the level of structuredness of workplace learning. According to the ANOVA results shown in table 7, there is a statistically significant difference in job satisfaction ( $F=49.969$ ,  $p<.001$ ), in-house communication satisfaction ( $F=75.459$ ,  $p<.001$ ), and reversed turnover intention ( $F=14.254$ ,  $p<.001$ ) by the level of structuredness of workplace learning. Moreover, Scheffe's post hoc analysis results show that every aspect of an employee's adjustment measurement is statistically more prominent in the highest structuredness group than in the lowest structuredness group of workplace learning.

According to the ANOVA results, hypothesis 1-1 is accepted that an individual worker's adjustment to corporate life can differ by the level of structuredness of workplace learning. Every mean of the adjustment measurement is the smallest for the lowest structuredness group, while the means of job satisfaction and in-house communication satisfaction are the biggest for the highest structuredness group.

The result suggests that the workers tend to be better adjusted to the companies with structured training programs. Workers in companies that provide systemically predefined workplace learning are more favorable to their job and in-house communication as well as relatively low in turnover intention. It is similar to the findings reported by Jacobs (2003) and Chang et al. (2009) that a structured form of workplace learning can bring a positive influence on productivity and newcomer adjustment.



Although the mean difference is statistically significant between the lowest and highest level of structuredness groups at the broader level, it is less clear among low middle and high middle groups. Scheffe's post hoc analysis shows that the mean difference is not found between the low middle and high middle structuredness groups in all aspects of adjustment measures. These results imply two possible interpretations: First, the structuredness characteristics of workplace learning distinguish the low-level adjustment group only. Second, the current measures may require a more clarified classification to access structuredness characteristics above the middle level.

**Table 7. The difference in employee's adjustment to corporate life by the level of structuredness of workplace learning**

Dependent Variable	Level of Structuredness	Cases	Mean (Standard Error)	Standard Deviation	F	Scheffe
<b>Job Satisfaction</b>	Lowest (a)	6052	3.47 (.009)	.681	49.969***	a<c,b<b,d
	Low middle (b)	1331	3.66 (.018)	.655		
	High middle (c)	330	3.62 (.040)	.735		
	Highest (d)	454	3.76 (.033)	.698		
<b>In-house Communication Satisfaction</b>	Lowest (a)	6052	3.23 (.010)	.740	75.459***	a<b,c<d
	Low middle (b)	1331	3.48 (.019)	.702		
	High middle (c)	330	3.45 (.041)	.752		
	Highest (d)	454	3.59 (.033)	.708		
<b>Turnover Intention (Reversed)</b>	Lowest (a)	6052	3.13 (.013)	1.010	14.254***	a<b,c,d
	Low middle (b)	1331	3.30 (.027)	.993		
	High middle (c)	330	3.29 (.056)	1.017		
	Highest (d)	454	3.29 (.048)	1.013		

\*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$

#### **4.1.2 Difference in employee job satisfaction, in-house communication satisfaction, and turnover intention by the level of firm specialization of workplace learning**

The mean difference in employee adjustment is analyzed by the level of firm specialization of workplace learning. According to the ANOVA results shown in table 8, there is a statistically significant difference in job satisfaction ( $F=118.037$ ,  $p<.001$ ), in-house communication satisfaction ( $F=88.694$ ,  $p<.001$ ), and reversed turnover intention ( $F=16.187$ ,  $p<.001$ ) by the level of firm specialization of workplace learning. The means are shown to decrease in every aspect of an employee's adjustment to corporate life as the level of firm specialization increases. Moreover, Scheffe's post hoc analysis results show that every aspect of employee adjustment measurement is statistically significant in the general training group, followed by middle-level specialization. Specific training group showed the minor employee's adjustment measurement.

According to the ANOVA results, hypothesis 1-2 is accepted that an individual worker's adjustment to corporate life can differ by the level of firm specialization of workplace learning. However, the higher firm specialization of workplace learning affects the adjustment measurement in a negative direction. The group means of every aspect of adjustment measurement are highest for workers in companies that provide general training, whereas the rate is lowest for workers in companies that provide firm-specific training.

The result suggests that the workers are likely to be better adjusted to the companies providing general training programs. Workers in companies that offer training only useful for their company, i.e., firm-specific training, are less satisfied with their job, in-house communication, and reveal high turnover intention. Since the low adjustment level among firm-specific training recipients may reveal the weak benefits for workers regarding the productivity growth in the current workplace, the result may reject Becker's argument that

specific training can provide external incentives to decrease worker turnover and employer layoff. The implication of specific training and general training may not be apparent to Korean workers' perception, considering the chances of an actual turnover decision may increase for employees with decreased adjustment through firm-specific training.

**Table 8. The difference in employee's adjustment to corporate life by the level of firm specialization of workplace learning**

Dependent Variable	Level of Specialization	Cases	Mean (Standard Error)	Standard Deviation	F	Scheffe
<b>Job Satisfaction</b>	General training (a)	870	3.76 (.024)	.704	118.037***	a>b>c
	Middle level Specialization (b)	6569	3.52 (.008)	.672		
	Firm-specific Training (c)	728	3.24 (.025)	.678		
<b>In-house Communication Satisfaction</b>	General training (a)	870	3.50 (.025)	.743	88.694***	a>b>c
	Middle level Specialization (b)	6569	3.30 (.009)	.726		
	Firm-specific Training (c)	728	3.01 (.030)	.796		
<b>Turnover Intention (Reversed)</b>	General training (a)	870	3.30 (.034)	1.017	16.187***	a>b>c
	Middle level Specialization (b)	6569	3.17 (.012)	.996		
	Firm-specific Training (c)	728	3.02 (.041)	1.108		

\*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$

## 4.2 Analysis of the influence of internal characteristics on employee adjustment controlling external conditions of workplace learning

### 4.2.1 Statistical significance of regression models and coefficients

The second part of the analysis provides regression results to evaluate the influence of both internal characteristics on an employee's adjustment to corporate life, holding other conditions constant. The regression models include the level of structuredness and firm specialization as dummy-transformed independent variables. Other external conditions such as company size, sex, youth, educational background, years of service, and log-transformed monthly income are counted as control variables. Tables 9, Table 10, and Table 11 show the regression result on each aspect of an employee's adjustment to corporate life.

All regression models are statistically significant ( $P^{\text{Job Satisfaction}} < 0.001$ ,  $P^{\text{In-house Communication Satisfaction}} < 0.001$ ,  $P^{\text{Turnover Intention}} < 0.001$ ), with the models  $\text{adj}R^2$  between 0.060 and 0.101. Since the Durbin-Watson statistics show values close to 2, all models confirm the assumption of residuals independence. The multicollinearity assumption is not violated, considering the VIF results are smaller than 10 for all coefficients.

The coefficients of internal characteristics, specifically structuredness and firm specialization, have statistical significance in every regression model with a p-value smaller than 0.05. This result proves that the internal characteristics of workplace learning affect the employee's adjustment to corporate life significantly, even controlling external factors constant. The quantitative influences of workplace learning's characteristics are valid over an individual's adjustment. Therefore, this study accepts the statistical significance assumption of hypothesis 2 that the internal characteristics of workplace learning impact an individual employee's adjustment to corporate life, even controlling the other factors constant. The direction and magnitude of the influence are discussed in the further coefficient analysis.

#### **4.2.2 The direction and magnitude of internal characteristics coefficients of workplace learning**

##### **Level of Structuredness**

The regression models maintain the reviews in the previous ANOVA analysis and hypothesis 1-1 that the workers tend to be better adjusted to corporate life when their companies provide more structured training programs than the lowest structured training program. All dummy coefficients of the structuredness in workplace learning are turned out to be positive, showing that employees' adjustment to corporate life improved significantly in each of the three levels compared to the lowest level of structuredness. Compared with the lowest level of structuredness of workplace training, the more structured workplace learnings indicate a positive direction for job satisfaction, in-house communication satisfaction, and reverse-coded turnover intention.

On the other hand, when comparing the standardized coefficients, the magnitude of influence is not matched to the hierarchical order of structuredness. In table 10 and table 11, the standardized coefficients of highest structuredness ( $\beta=0.094, 0.030$ ) are smaller than the standardized coefficients of low middle structuredness ( $\beta=0.100, 0.040$ ), according to the regression analysis result on In-House Communication Satisfaction and Turnover Intention,

Although the influence of structuredness in a workplace learning program is statistically significant by the p-value of each dummy coefficient, the inconsistent magnitude of each coefficient suggests a limitation of the current study and the necessity for further discussions. It could tell the influence of structuredness is significant until a certain level and remain constant beyond it. In this case, it is required to evaluate a certain level point that allows structuredness effective. Otherwise, it may imply that the current measurement of upper-level structuredness is broad and limited to capturing the exact magnitude of each influence. This case requires other elaborative factors to categorize the structuredness in detail.

### **Level of Firm Specialization**

Along with the preceding ANOVA result, the regression model maintains the hypothesis 1-2 that the workers tend to be better adjusted to the corporate life when their companies provide general training than firm-specific training. All dummy coefficients of firm specialization have a statistically significant negative effect on every aspect of employee adjustment. In contrast to general training, more specialized training has negatively influenced job satisfaction, in-house communication, and turnover intention.

The magnitude of standardized coefficients is in a negative hierarchy rank of firm specialization. Compared with the standardized coefficients of middle-level specialization ( $\beta = -0.115, -0.086, -0.049$ ), standardized coefficients of firm-specific training are bigger in negative extent ( $\beta = -0.179, -0.154, -0.081$ ). It suggests the negative relationship of decreasing worker's adjustment as the level of firm specialization of workplace learning increases.

This result proves that firm-specific training does not provide external incentives for the employee's adjustment to corporate life in Korea, which is different from the anticipation by several past articles that firm-specific training could allow long tenure. Moreover, firm-specific training has a strong disincentive on individuals to adapt to business life.

There could be several reasons for the counter-intuitive result. It is worth reviewing the different conceptions of firm-specific training among employees and employers to understand the strong negative impact of firm specialization. Employees could feel differently by understanding firm-specific training as trivial pieces of knowledge or doctrinaire lectures, even though employers could emphasize firm-specialized curriculums for workplace learning to deliver customized knowledge. Moreover, employees could feel 'stuck in the current job' by accumulating firm-specific human capital, as assumed in the prior studies (Akinsanmi-Oyedeji and Coff, 2016). In other words, employees could feel that firm-specific skills are not recognized in the labor market without the acknowledged qualification framework.

**Table 9. Regression analysis on individual employee's adjustment to corporate life**

	Dependent Variable								
	Job Satisfaction			In-house Communication Satisfaction			Turnover Intention (Reversed)		
	B (S.E)	$\beta$	T	B (S.E)	$\beta$	T	B (S.E)	$\beta$	T
<b>Internal Characteristics of Workplace Learning</b>									
<b>Structuredness</b>									
Lowest (Ref)									
Low middle	0.11 (0.02)	0.059	5.416***	0.2 (0.022)	0.1	8.997***	0.109 (0.03)	0.04	3.670***
High middle	0.095 (0.037)	0.027	2.532*	0.196 (0.041)	0.052	4.796***	0.113 (0.054)	0.022	2.075*
Highest	0.198 (0.033)	0.066	6.087***	0.304 (0.036)	0.094	8.542***	0.134 (0.047)	0.03	2.820**
<b>Firm Specialization</b>									
General Training (Ref)									
Middle Level Specialization	-0.199 (0.024)	-0.115	-8.349***	-0.16 (0.026)	-0.086	-6.127***	-0.124 (0.035)	-0.049	-3.574***
Firm-specific Training	-0.431 (0.034)	-0.179	12.737***	-0.401 (0.037)	-0.154	10.832***	-0.287 (0.049)	-0.081	-5.818***
<b>Controlled External Conditions</b>									
Constant	1.833 (0.157)		11.685***	2.733 (0.172)		15.901***	0.824 (0.229)		3.606***
<b>Company Size</b>									
Below 300 employees (Ref)									
300-999 employees	0.055 (0.016)	0.038	3.324***	-0.01 (0.018)	-0.006	-0.529	0.138 (0.024)	0.066	5.758***
1000-1999 employees	0.136 (0.027)	0.058	5.018***	0.074 (0.03)	0.029	2.475*	0.086 (0.04)	0.025	2.186*
Above 2000 employees	0.107 (0.029)	0.043	3.672***	0.035 (0.032)	0.013	1.11	0.133 (0.042)	0.036	3.140**
<b>Sex</b>									
Female (Reference)									
Male	0.009 (0.02)	0.005	0.469	-0.042 (0.021)	-0.023	-1.953	-0.04 (0.028)	-0.016	-1.421

Table 9 Continued

	B (S.E)	$\beta$	T	B (S.E)	$\beta$	T	B (S.E)	$\beta$	T
<b>Youth</b>									
Do not belong to Youth (Ref)									
Youth	0.019 (0.021)	0.013	0.899	0.006 (0.023)	0.003	0.243	-0.137 (0.03)	-0.064	-4.537***
<b>Educational Background</b>									
Middle/High School Graduate(Ref)									
Associate's/Bachelor's Degree Graduate	0.054 (0.018)	0.038	3.001**	0.086 (0.02)	0.055	4.372***	-0.139 (0.026)	-0.065	-5.276***
Master's Degree Graduate	0.108 (0.037)	0.034	2.916**	0.128 (0.04)	0.037	3.154**	-0.052 (0.054)	-0.011	-0.966
Doctor's Degree Graduate	0.217 (0.152)	0.015	1.424	0.416 (0.167)	0.027	2.497*	0.088 (0.222)	0.004	0.396
<b>Years of Service</b>									
Under 5 years (Ref)									
5-10 years	-0.079 (0.021)	-0.049	-3.735***	-0.1 (0.023)	-0.058	-4.322***	-0.138 (0.031)	-0.059	-4.470***
10-15 years	-0.058 (0.026)	-0.032	-2.224*	-0.103 (0.029)	-0.053	-3.607***	-0.077 (0.038)	-0.029	-2.024*
15-20 years	-0.027 (0.03)	-0.013	-0.899	-0.036 (0.033)	-0.016	-1.083	0.048 (0.044)	0.016	1.088
20-25 years	-0.009 (0.034)	-0.004	-0.27	0.043 (0.037)	0.016	1.167	0.142 (0.049)	0.04	2.904**
Above 25 years	0.024 (0.036)	0.009	0.667	0.099 (0.039)	0.035	2.512	0.404 (0.052)	0.105	7.742***
<b>Income</b>									
Monthly Income (Log)	0.305 (0.027)	0.17	11.134***	0.109 (0.03)	0.056	3.639***	0.428 (0.04)	0.162	10.707***
	F=39.260***			F=28.336***			F=49.443***		
	R <sup>2</sup> =0.084, adjR <sup>2</sup> =0.082			R <sup>2</sup> =0.062, adjR <sup>2</sup> =0.060			R <sup>2</sup> =0.103, adjR <sup>2</sup> =0.101		
	Durbin-Watson=1.733			Durbin-Watson=1.616			Durbin-Watson=1.758		

\*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$



### 4.3 Analysis of the interaction effect between the youth and internal characteristics of workplace learning over employee adjustment

#### 4.3.1 Statistical significance of extended regression models and coefficients

The third part of the analysis presents the extended regression results to evaluate the changes in the influence of workplace learning characteristics among youth specifically. The models additionally incorporate the interaction effect between workplace learning characteristics and youth while keeping other external conditions remaining the same as discussed in the second analysis. Table 12, Table 13, and Table 14 show the extended regression result on each aspect of an employee's adjustment when the interaction terms - youth and structuredness, youth and firm specialization - are further included.

All extended regression models are statistically significant ( $P^{\text{Job Satisfaction}} < 0.001$ ,  $P^{\text{In-house Communication Satisfaction}} < 0.001$ ,  $P^{\text{Turnover Intention}} < 0.001$ ), with the models  $\text{adj}R^2$  between 0.060 and 0.102 showing small improvement in explanatory power. Durbin-Watson statistics are close to 2, which suits the assumption of residuals independence. VIF values are smaller than 10 for all coefficients except for the simple Youth variable ( $\text{VIF}^{\text{Youth}} = 10.585$ ). It can inflate the VIF value slightly over 10 in the extended models if the simple Youth term and interacted Youth term share the influence on the dependent variables. Therefore, this analysis focuses on the interacted Youth term and interaction effects rather than the inflated simple Youth term and main effects in the coefficient interpretation.

All interaction terms relevant to youth and structuredness characteristics of workplace learning are not statistically significant in every extended regression model with a p-value bigger than 0.05. Though structuredness of workplace learning positively affects the employee's adjustment to corporate life for the general workers, as suggested in the second part of the analysis, the interaction effect analysis shows the positive influence does not increase or decrease for the youth group specifically. There is no statistically significant

evidence that the employee's adjustment to corporate life changes differently among the youth group than the other group due to the impact of structuredness characteristics of workplace learning.

Interaction terms relevant to youth firm specialization have a different pattern to structuredness characteristics. Some interaction term coefficients between youth and firm specialization characteristics provide statistical significance with a p-value smaller than 0.05 – coefficients of firm-specific training in the job satisfaction and turnover intention model. Other coefficients such as middle level specialization are not statistically significant. The interaction coefficients show that a few negative influences are significant for the youth group specifically, which indicates the employee's adjustment to corporate life may change partially in a different strength between the youth group and the other group.

#### **4.3.2 The direction and magnitude of interaction coefficients of workplace learning**

Most interaction coefficients of the extended regression model do not have statistical significance. The positive influence of structuredness characteristics of workplace learning remains the same statistically among the youth and others. However, certain interaction coefficients between youth and firm-specific training show a statistically significant negative impact on job satisfaction and reversed turnover intention. Coefficients in Table 12 and Table 14 show the difference in job satisfaction and reversed turnover intention by firm-specific training depending on the youth and the others. Compared to the other group's standardized coefficients ( $\beta^{\text{Simple Firm-specific training on Job Satisfaction}}=-0.160$ ,  $\beta^{\text{Simple Firm-specific training on Turnover Intention (Reversed)}}=-0.055$ ), the youth group shows extra negative effects ( $\beta^{\text{Interacted Firm-specific training on Job Satisfaction}}=-0.034$ ,  $\beta^{\text{Interacted Firm-specific training on Turnover Intention (Reversed)}}=-0.055$ ) on job satisfaction and reversed turnover intention. Therefore, the youth has a stronger negative effect of firm

specialization on some part of the adjustment to corporate life when the firm specialization reaches most level.

The interaction effect result concludes that youth is partially more vulnerable to adaptation in the business environment by firm specialization characteristics of workplace learning. Whereas the negative influence of firm specialization among the general workers forms a negative hierarchy rank in all adjustment indicators in the second part of the analysis, the negative influence among the youth group forms significance at the highest level of firm specialization for two parts of adjustment indicators.

The opposition to firm specialization in the youth group implies that ‘feeling of stuck’ affects more substantially for the youth group as discussed in the literature review, and the external incentives of fewer quits do not apply to youth employees. Even though the employers’ intuition is to deliver better adjustment to corporate life through a customized workplace learning curriculum, the youth employees understand it as locking themselves up to each workplace. For an employee’s better adjustment to corporate life, companies in Korea should overcome the employee’s negative perception of firm-specific training by increasing the structuredness characteristics and general acknowledgment of their workplace learning curriculum.

**Table 10. Regression analysis on individual employee's adjustment to corporate life with interaction effects of youth variable**

	Dependent Variable								
	Job Satisfaction			In-house Communication Satisfaction			Turnover Intention (Reversed)		
	B (S.E)	$\beta$	T	B (S.E)	$\beta$	T	B (S.E)	$\beta$	T
<b>Internal Characteristics of Workplace Learning</b>									
<b>Structuredness</b>									
Lowest (Ref)									
Low middle	0.097 (0.025)	0.052	3.900***	0.207 (0.027)	0.103	7.604***	0.093 (0.036)	0.034	2.568*
High middle	0.051 (0.047)	0.015	1.101	0.155 (0.051)	0.041	3.035**	0.101 (0.068)	0.02	1.491
Highest	0.185 (0.042)	0.062	4.400***	0.319 (0.046)	0.098	6.912***	0.148 (0.061)	0.034	2.417*
<b>Firm Specialization</b>									
General Training (Ref)									
Middle Level Specialization	-0.187 (0.03)	-0.108	-6.302***	-0.175 (0.032)	-0.094	-5.398***	-0.106 (0.043)	-0.041	-2.441*
Firm-specific Training	-0.386 (0.041)	-0.16	-9.450***	-0.369 (0.045)	-0.141	-8.250***	-0.195 (0.059)	-0.055	-3.276**
<b>Interaction Effect of Youth Variable</b>									
<b>Youth-Structuredness</b>									
Youth x Lowest (Ref)									
Youth x Low middle	0.037 (0.042)	0.012	0.879	-0.021 (0.046)	-0.006	-0.45	0.044 (0.062)	0.01	0.709
Youth x High middle	0.119 (0.077)	0.021	1.538	0.112 (0.085)	0.018	1.316	0.031 (0.113)	0.004	0.271
Youth x Highest	0.03 (0.065)	0.007	0.456	-0.038 (0.072)	-0.008	-0.533	-0.041 (0.095)	-0.006	-0.429
<b>Youth-Firmspecialization</b>									
Youth x General Training (Ref)									
Youth x Middle Level Specialization	-0.033 (0.05)	-0.021	-0.666	0.044 (0.055)	0.026	0.809	-0.05 (0.073)	-0.022	-0.682
Youth x Firm-specific Training	-0.151 (0.072)	-0.034	-2.078*	-0.126 (0.079)	-0.026	-1.587	-0.311 (0.106)	-0.047	-2.944**

Table 10 Continued

	B (S.E)	$\beta$	T	B (S.E)	$\beta$	T	B (S.E)	$\beta$	T
<b>Controlled External Conditions</b>									
Constant	1.792 (0.159)		11.296***	2.723 (0.174)		15.678	0.751 (0.231)		3.251**
<b>Company Size</b>									
Below 300 employees (Ref)									
300-999 employees	0.054 (0.016)	0.038	3.271**	-0.009 (0.018)	-0.006	-0.513	0.137 (0.024)	0.065	5.703***
1000-1999 employees	0.136 (0.027)	0.057	5.010***	0.074 (0.03)	0.029	2.490*	0.086 (0.04)	0.025	2.171*
Above 2000 employees	0.106 (0.029)	0.042	3.631***	0.035 (0.032)	0.013	1.088	0.13 (0.042)	0.035	3.071**
<b>Sex</b>									
Female (Reference)									
Male	0.009 (0.02)	0.005	0.469	-0.042 (0.021)	-0.023	-1.984*	-0.042 (0.028)	-0.017	-1.464
<b>Youth</b>									
Do not belong to Youth (Ref)									
Youth	0.046 (0.05)	0.031	0.913	-0.018 (0.055)	-0.012	-0.333	-0.075 (0.073)	-0.035	-1.03
<b>Educational Background</b>									
Middle/High School Graduate (Ref)									
Associate's/Bachelor's Degree Graduate	0.056 (0.018)	0.039	3.089**	0.087 (0.02)	0.056	4.402***	-0.136 (0.026)	-0.064	-5.165***
Master's Degree Graduate	0.109 (0.037)	0.035	2.949**	0.128 (0.04)	0.037	3.161**	-0.048 (0.054)	-0.01	-0.901
Doctor's Degree Graduate	0.224 (0.152)	0.016	1.469	0.417 (0.167)	0.027	2.502*	0.096 (0.222)	0.005	0.433
<b>Years of Service</b>									
Under 5 years (Ref)									
5-10 years	-0.079 (0.021)	-0.049	-3.726***	-0.101 (0.023)	-0.058	-4.364***	-0.137 (0.031)	-0.059	-4.467***
10-15 years	-0.058 (0.026)	-0.032	-2.206*	-0.103 (0.029)	-0.053	-3.594***	-0.077 (0.038)	-0.029	-2.013*
15-20 years	-0.027 (0.03)	-0.013	-0.915	-0.037 (0.033)	-0.017	-1.129	0.046 (0.044)	0.015	1.059
20-25 years	-0.01 (0.034)	-0.004	-0.284	0.042 (0.037)	0.016	1.129	0.141 (0.049)	0.039	2.882**
Above 25 years	0.022 (0.036)	0.008	0.612	0.097 (0.039)	0.034	2.480*	0.401 (0.052)	0.104	7.681***
<b>Income</b>									
Monthly Income (Log)	0.31 (0.027)	0.173	11.296***	0.112 (0.03)	0.058	3.734***	0.436 (0.04)	0.165	10.894***
	F=31.433***			F=22.856***			F=39.659***		
	R <sup>2</sup> =0.085, adjR <sup>2</sup> =0.082			R <sup>2</sup> =0.063, adjR <sup>2</sup> =0.060			R <sup>2</sup> =0.105, adjR <sup>2</sup> =0.102		
	Durbin-Watson=1.732			Durbin-Watson=1.613			Durbin-Watson=1.761		

\*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$

## V. Conclusion

### 5.1 Summary of the Study

Workplace learning, which takes place at work and includes workplace components in training, is a useful tool for delivering problem-solving skills and improving competency for employees and organizations in a challenging environment. Many researchers and organizations pay attention to the mutual benefits of workplace learning for businesses and workers through a facilitated school-to-work transition and inclusive growth. The better adjustment to the job and company among individual workers is the driver of the positive outcomes of workplace learning.

This study focuses on the two internal characteristics of workplace learning, i.e., structuredness and firm specialization of the training program, and its effects on an employee's adjustment to corporate life. The first analysis reviews the mean differences of individual adjustment measures brought by the internal characteristics. In the second analysis, the impact of internal characteristics on employee adjustment is measured in terms of direction and magnitude, holding external variables constant. Lastly, the third analysis examines the differences in the impact of internal characteristics among the youth and others by evaluating interaction effects. The Human Capital Corporate Panel (HCCP) dataset, provided by Korea Research Institute for Vocational education & Training (KRIVET) and released in 2018, is brought to analyze the research questions.

Researchers, including Choi (2014), suggested the key concepts of workplace learning as (1) the workplace is the location where various learning activities arise related to the job; (2) Workplace learning brings work-related experiences, which provide problem-solving skills based on work-contextual understandings; and (3) Workplace learning includes interaction among peers and the business environment by responding to the different demands of various corporate members. Jacobs and Park (2009) suggested that the types of workplace learning can

be various by the location of the learning, degree of planning, and role of the trainer. Examples of workplace learning can be Mentoring/Coaching, Project working, Action learning, and Structured On-the-Job training.

The structuredness of workplace learning is referred to as systemic planning of training curriculum, including training tasks, instructor, and duration to achieve the intended skill delivery. Jacobs (2003) and Chang et al. (2009) suggested that the structured form of workplace learning can positively influence productivity growth and newcomer adjustment. This study employs three different types of workplace learning in measuring the structuredness considering the availability of predetermined systemic planning: (1) Colleague Interaction, which is the least structured type; (2) Mentoring and Coaching, which is the middle level structured type; and (3) Learning Organization, which is the most structured type.

The firm specialization of workplace learning is referred to as customization of training contents useful to a firm providing the curriculum. The concept is derived from the traditional division of general training, which increases the future marginal productivity of workers in many firms, and specific training, which increases the future marginal productivity of workers more to the firm providing it. Becker (1993) noted that specific training produces certain external effects preventing employee turnover and employer layoff. On the other hand, Loewenstein and Spletzer (1998) noted that much on-the-job training is general. Moreover, general skills are frequently rewarded by other firms providing the training. Also, Akinsanmi-Oyedeji and Coff (2016) reported that firm-specific skills increase the likelihood of subsequent turnover based on the national labor and employment datasets from the United States and South Korea, mainly focusing on the perceptions of firm-specific skills among employees. On the basis of existing theories, this study measures firm specialization in three levels based on the employee's response: (1) Lowest firm specialization (General Training); (2) Middle-level firm

specialization (Skill usability depends on the job and industry); and (3) Highest firm specialization (Firm-specific Training).

An employee's adjustment to corporate life refers to an employee's attitude and behavioral change to have a deeper understanding of a corporate and satisfy the role requirement as an insider. Many researchers have identified organizational socialization using job satisfaction, organizational commitment, intention to remain, and performance ratings (Fisher 1985, Bauer et al., 2007). This study uses three indicators measuring the level of adjustment to corporate life: Job Satisfaction, In-house communication satisfaction, and Turnover intention. Youth is measured as the ages of 19 to 34 years following the Korean Law 'Framework Act on Youth' and dataset context accordingly.

The first part of the data analysis demonstrates a statistically significant mean difference in adjustment to corporate life by the level of internal characteristics of workplace learning. According to the ANOVA results, there is a statistically significant difference in job satisfaction, in-house communication satisfaction, and reversed turnover intention by the level of structuredness. The workers tend to be better adjusted to the companies providing more structured training programs. The mean of the adjustment measure is the biggest for the highest structuredness group, while the mean is the smallest for the lowest group. However, the mean differences are less apparent among middle-level structuredness groups.

Additionally, an individual worker's adjustment to corporate life is different by the level of firm specialization, but the mean is the smallest for the firm-specific training group. According to the ANOVA results, the mean difference is found to be statistically significant in job satisfaction, in-house communication satisfaction, and reversed turnover intention by the level of firm specialization. The group means of adjustment measures are highest for general training groups, whereas the group means are lowest for firm-specific training groups. The means are shown to decrease in every aspect of an employee's adjustment to corporate life as



the level of firm specialization increases. Becker's argument may be rejected among Korean workers since specific training does not decrease the turnover intention of Korean employees.

Regression analysis on worker's adjustment measures shows the model and dummy coefficients are statistically significant for structuredness and firm specialization, even holding external conditions of company size, sex, youth, educational background, years of service, and log-transformed monthly income constant. Every coefficient relevant to structuredness has a positive influence, showing the improvement in an employee's adjustment to the upper-level structuredness. It is also estimated that the influence of structuredness is effective only up to a certain level since the magnitudes of the structuredness dummy coefficients are inconsistent with the hierarchical order of structuredness. Firm specialization coefficients have a negative influence, indicating the worsening in an employee's adjustment to the higher firm specialization. The negative magnitude of a firm specialization dummy variable also strengthens for the higher firm specialization, suggesting specific training has a strong disincentive on individuals adjusting to corporate life.

Extended regression analysis, which further includes youth interaction terms and other external conditions, shows the varying influence of structuredness and firm specialization on the youth group specifically. Since the coefficients relevant to structuredness do not have a statistical significance, the influence of structuredness remains the same among the youth group and the other group. On the other hand, coefficients about firm-specific training in job satisfaction and reversed turnover intention models have a statistical significance, and other coefficients relevant to firm specialization did not have statistical significance. When the level of firm specialization reaches the most regarding job satisfaction and reversed turnover intention, the negative influence applies more substantially to youth employees than the other employees. It maintains and further develops the previous implications that specific training is a disincentive on individual adaptations, and it is partially severe for youth workers.

The main finding of this study explores the impact of structuredness and firm specialization of workplace learning programs on an individual worker's adjustment to corporate life. According to the statistical analysis, the workers tend to be better adjusted to the company when the company provides a more structured training program or more general training. Higher structuredness and lower firm specialization of workplace learning effectively improve the corporate adjustment measures, even controlling demographic factors and external conditions.

Higher structuredness of workplace learning positively impacts individual adaptations compared to the lowest level of structuredness. Nevertheless, this study could not find a noticeable difference in impact between upper-level structuredness groups. It may imply that structuredness may effectively enhance a worker's adjustment until it reaches a certain level. It also requires further discussion to classify upper-level structuredness better to figure out the upper-level point of structuredness that brings effective behavioral changes among workers.

Higher firm specialization negatively impacts an individual worker's adaptations to corporate life, and it is partially more intensified among youth employees. Although employers want to deliver a customized curriculum for employees' workplace adjustment, employee behavior may be the opposite of the anticipations if firm specialization of workplace learning is understood negatively. The young employees' negative perception of firm-specific human capital should be further discussed, which is understood as locking themselves in their current job and even hindering their adjustment to corporate life.

## **5.2 Recommendation for Designing Workplace Learning in Corporations**

When designing the workplace learning program, companies should decide the type of workplace training. The main findings of this study can be applicable to improve the effectiveness of workplace learning strategically in relation to the worker's adjustment.

Firstly, companies can develop a more structured form of workplace learning. It turned out that structured training programs increase job satisfaction and internal communication satisfaction while decreasing turnover intention. The structuredness affects young employees and other employees at a similar magnitude. However, its effectiveness may be indistinct after a certain level of structuredness. Companies can gradually increase the structuredness level to figure out the optimal point.

In addition, the general training approach is more effective in a worker's adjustment to a corporate in Korea. Although companies may want to deliver tailored skills for their workplace, it may negatively affect overall adaptation to the corporate. It could be partially more negative to young workers. To overcome the negative perception of firm-specific training among employees, companies can revise the curriculum aligned to the acknowledged qualification framework in the labor market.

### **5.3 Limitations and Suggestions for Further Research**

The findings provided by this study could be imprecise without understanding the limitations concerning its research design, data questionnaires, and operational definitions. Therefore, it should be interpreted upon the shortcomings. Also, further research may consider the suggestions in exploring the remaining issues.

First of all, the observed data in this study could be associated with the selection bias by an individual's intensity of participation in workplace learning, which may suggest workplace learning more effective than it is. The participation intensity in workplace learning is assumed to be high that every employee is exposed to workplace learning and acquires knowledge or skills in their working environment. It is attributed to the current research design and dataset that the HCCP dataset counts everybody participating in workplace learning, at least the lowest level of structured workplace learning (Colleague interaction type), and the

175 cases revealing no learning outcomes are excluded from the analysis. Therefore, current findings may differ by workplace and employee if the variation of volunteered and motivated employees in workplace learning fluctuates. For example, employees who stay less active in workplace learning could have different patterns of adjustments regardless of the workplace learning characteristics. Further research may discuss the influence of participation intensity by including the relevant variable in the dataset.

The classification of structuredness may not be elaborate, which could limit revealing the influence of higher level structuredness more precisely in this study. Since this study uses the accredited survey dataset providing representative samples, structuredness characteristics are measured based on preexisting HCCP questionnaires; (1) Colleague interaction, (2) Mentoring and Coaching, and (3) Learning organization. Therefore, the apprenticeship - the most structured type according to the Literature Review - could not be included in the analysis. It also introduces operational definition from its compiled experiences among employees; lowest structuredness for experiencing the Colleague interaction only, Highest structuredness for experiencing from Learning organization to Colleague interaction. It could hinder reviewing the influence of upper-level rigidly because the highest structuredness holds the experience from Colleague interaction in the classification. Therefore, the difference between structuredness levels in the analysis could be less apparent to analyzing the distinctive influence of structuredness, especially higher structuredness characteristics. Further research may consider designing more evident structuredness gaps in data collection. It may provide Apprenticeship type of workplace learning additionally in the questionnaire. Otherwise, it can collect data on each principal attribute of structured workplace learning rather than using workplace learning types as an operational definition.

The analysis of youth may have different aspects from the current study. This study measures the youth group based on the respondent's ages of 19 to 34 and excludes other

influences by including external conditions in the regression models. It helps to review the youth group characterized solely by the age aspect without other influences. However, considering one's youth period as a transition process by the various circumstances in nature, it is also worth reviewing targeted youth groups under such influences as demographic characteristics and labor market status. Several researchers focused on 'at risk youth' or 'high school graduate youth' to precisely understand the targeted youth, taking that youth group is not homogeneous. If the conglomerate-dependency business environment is strong, young employees may behave differently to the size of their company.

It is worth reviewing how Korean employees perceive firm-specific training. Since the employer's demand for workplace-tailored training may increase to cope with the challenging business environment, it is crucial to figure out what boosts the negative impact of firm-specific training. It could be boosted simply because of the relatively low quality of training content while general training contents are relatively high in quality. Young employees are assumed to be discontent with accumulating firm-specific human capital if it restricts future career development chances other than the current workplace, considering that the youth is partially more vulnerable to firm-specific training for corporate adjustment. The burdening employee-evaluation component, which comes after the firm-specific training, could facilitate an unfavorable perception of firm-specific training and corporate adjustment.

## VI. References

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