CASE STUDY OF AN EXCELLENT TVET INSTITUTION¹:

Busan Meister Technical High School, Korea

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Introduction

Background

East Asian countries are among the fastest growing economies in the world over the last
decade. However, as growth continues, the countries in East Asia are faced with a skills
shortage and mismatching that has limited their economic growth. To tackle this issue,
regional governments are currently restructuring their respective Technical and Vocational
Education and Training (TVET) systems to guide schools towards demand-driven education
and training.

In this context, the World Bank’s East Asia Education team has embarked on an in-depth
study of “Excellent Institutions” by selecting particularly outstanding cases in select countries
of East Asia to research (a) which factors contribute to a particular school’s successful
outcomes; (b) how the school developed its demand-driven system; and (c) how the school
utilizes finite resources to enhance school performance. The purpose of this study is to
provide policy makers with empirical evidence that will be used to develop new policies to
direct schools towards more market-responsive and demand-driven approaches. Specifically,
it aims to; (1) offer guidance for individual institutions to develop innovative methods to
improve the internal and external efficiency of their programs and determine resource
priorities; (2) provide the World Bank with empirical evidence to guide the knowledge services it offers client countries regarding TVET policies and practices; and (3) engender a productive dialogue on the improvement of TVET relevance within the EAP region.

This report summarizes the successful experience of Korea’s Busan Meister Technical High School (BMT), analysing the problems it has encountered in its operation and providing lessons learned to improve vocational education. This research is part of the “Excellent TVET Institutions in East Asia and Pacific (EAP)” study commissioned by the World Bank.

Literature Review

Definition

The definition of excellent is measured by the school’s internal and external efficiency. Internal efficiency refers to the relationship between the inputs and outputs and focuses on what occurs within the educational and training processes. Then, what happens to the outputs of the training process in relation to economic and social requirement is defined as external efficiency, which is also referred to as relevance of the program (Johanson and Adams, 2004). Therefore, the excellent TVET institutions produce the best training outcomes by retaining high internal efficiency.

Premised Four Factors Contributing to School Outcomes

Based on the literature review, the study premises that a school becomes excellent when it (1) conserves adequate resources; (2) delivers relevant programs; (3) develops an effective management system; and (4) establishes linkages with enterprise in the three previously discussed areas. Additionally, there are external factors impacting the success of schools, called “ecosystem factors” (Altbach and Salmi, 2011).

Research Design and Method

Research Design

By conducting an in-depth analysis, this study seeks to find (1) whether or not the above premise factors impact school outcomes; and if so, then, (2) which of these factors is the determining factor that contributes most to the enhancement of school performance and in what context (various settings and time periods within respective countries); and (3) how this factor can be strengthened based on suggestions from teachers/instructors and school administrators. Korea’s BMT was selected because it meets all three criteria.

Research Method

The study collected data from multiple sources (archived information, quantitative measures, a survey, and interviews) to increase validity.
The Survey

The survey was conducted with students, teachers, vice principals, and the principal. 555 2nd and 3rd grade students out of a total of 600 responded to the survey. 1st grade students were excluded, as they are assumed to have a lack of learning experiences with BMT. 107 teachers (including the principal, two vice principals and 104 teachers) responded to the survey out of the total number of 113 teachers. The survey is designed to address whether or not schools retain each factor (resources, teaching, management, and linkage with industry) and these factors’ impact on school outcomes.

The Interview

In order to conduct an in-depth analysis, interviews were conducted with 10 students, 10 specialty teachers, the principal, and one vice principal. Interview questions were structured to investigate the association between the premise factors and the factor most effective in enhancing school outcomes and how this identified factor can be improved.

About BMT

History

BMT was founded in 1967 by the government to supply skilled workers to Korea’s newly established industry, and as of 2015 the school has produced 28,415 graduates in the field of mechanical engineering. The school became a Meister High School (MHS) in 2009. This same year, it reorganized the program to cover Precision Machine, Mold Design, Shipbuilding and Machine, and Robot Tech classes. The program changes and a series of reforms within the school system were undertaken to meet new industry demands for the 21st century global economy.

Educational Goals

BMT aims to help students become future industry leaders through self-development. The educational goal is to produce Young Meisters who are self-motivated and have problem-solving skills and warm hearts. More specifically, the school focuses on developing basic occupational competencies and problem-solving skills; combining academic knowledge with industry-specific technical skills; providing students with an excellent learning environment; and ensuring teacher competency.

Four Majors

Since 2009, the school has reorganized its majors, the number of classes, and the number of students in each class. Currently, the school offers four majors: Precision Machining, Mold Design, Shipbuilding and Machining, and Robot Tech; each major includes three classes, except for Robot Tech which has six classes, and each class has about 20 students.
Outcomes

BMT has showed very high graduate employment rates particularly after being transformed into a Meister High School. Prior to becoming a MHS in 2009, its graduate employment rate was between 45% and 55%. Upon reforming its program and transforming into a MHS, BMT’s employment rate increased to 83% in 2010. Since 2013, when the school first began producing MHS graduates, the graduate employment rate has consistently been above 90%.

In 2014, public enterprises and large companies hired approximately 40% of BMT’s graduates, while about 50% were hired by SMEs. By major, Precision Machine shows a very high employment rate, while Shipbuilding and Machine shows the lowest employment rates. Considering its comparatively larger number of students, Robot Tech also shows a high employment rate, particularly in the public enterprises and larger companies most pursued by BMT graduates. According to a survey conducted by BMT, the majority of students (70%) responded that their plan after graduation was either employment with large companies (35.6%) or public enterprises (34.8%); 21.5% responded that they were planning to work at SMEs (Educational Planning, 2015, BMT).

BMT teachers believe their students are highly competent. During the teacher survey, 96% responded that their students are highly competent and 97% believe that BMT is attractive to highly competent students. During the interview, teachers mentioned a “virtuous circle,” indicating that because the school achieves successful results, graduates have a high chance of being employed, which makes the school very attractive to prospective students who are already competent and can easily obtain the skills taught by BMT. As a result, the school produces successful outcomes again and again.

Findings

In this paper, ‘excellent TVET’ institution’ means that it helps students’ transition smoothly into the labor market upon graduation by inputting adequate resources. BMT teachers agree, stating that ‘excellent school’ means that it produces a high employment rate and, in order to do so, the school requires competent teachers, demand-driven programs, and well-established school-industry linkages. The teachers pointed out that the skills currently in-demand by industry include basic technical skills along with socioemotional (SE) skills such as adaptation, diligence, consideration for others, problem solving and work ethic.

BMT’s teachers further described an excellent school as one having a “virtuous circle.” If the school inputs key resources and uses them efficiently, then more students become employable, which in turn results in a higher graduate employment rate. This outcome in turn increases the school’s brand power, which attracts even better teachers and more competent students. Also, when the school produces high employment rates, it receives more financial support from the government, which enables the school to acquire and retain expensive equipment and practical training facilities. With the high social recognition of
being a top performing school, more companies are interested in hiring BMT graduates. This is BMT’s virtuous circle.

BMT’s students agree with its teachers. During the interview, students stated that the factors contributing to BMT graduates’ high employment rate are good teachers and facilities, and the school’s well-established school-industry cooperation. In addition, some students highlighted the school’s reputation, and alumni support, while others mentioned its strong emphasis on employment and provision of various employment service programs.

All students stated that they choose BMT because they believe it will help them secure a job upon graduation. Currently, they are satisfied with their choice and with the school’s facilities, equipment and teachers, who they view as competent in their technical and teaching skills and actively able and committed to helping them secure a job. Given Korea’s high youth unemployment rate, BMT’s success is all the more remarkable.

**Factor 1: Adequate Financial and Human Resources**

1. **Financial Resources**

   **Budget.** BMT is overseen by three government agencies: the Ministry of Education, Busan government’s local education office, and the Small and Medium Business Administration (S MBA). SMBA is the main agency that provides annual funding to BMT, and it also funds two other Meister High Schools for the purpose of producing and supplying adequate skilled workers to SMEs. According to 2015 data, the government (SMBT and the provincial office) provides the highest percentage (about 60%) of BMT’s total revenue, followed by parental support. Regarding expenditures, the school spends the most on student welfare (i.e. dormitories and food), followed by administration. More than 20% of the total budget is allocated to curriculum development. BMT spends 16% of its total budget on teachers’ wages. Teacher and student survey and interview results demonstrate that the school retains adequate financial resources with 85% of surveyed students responding that at least some portion of course fees, residential costs, and academic materials are covered by the school.

   **Facilities and Equipment.** During the teacher survey, 85% responded that school building conditions are excellent or good, 84% believe equipment maintenance is excellent or good, and 83% agree that retention of full or updated equipment is excellent or good. Overall, the majority of teachers are satisfied with school facilities, equipment and their maintenance. The student survey showed majority satisfaction regarding school’s facilities and equipment. Sixty-seven percent responded that they are satisfied with classroom conditions, 61% are satisfied with computer labs and access, and 72% are satisfied with practical training resources. All ten of the interviewed students agreed that BMT retains adequate training facilities and equipment, providing each student with practice space and materials.
2. Human Resources

Number of Teachers and Staff

As one of largest Meister High Schools, BMT also retains a large number of teachers and staff, including one principal, two vice-principals and 113 teachers.

Teacher Characteristics

The majority of BMT teachers are in their 50s, while there is a shortage of teachers in the 40s age-range. This shortage prevails throughout Korean TVET schools, because during the 1990s government policy on TVET teachers limited their numbers. The average years of teaching experience is high, with nearly half of BMT teachers possessing over 20 years. The average educational level of the teachers is an undergraduate degree, and roughly one third have also obtained a master’s degree in their areas of specialty.

In-service Training

BMT requires its teachers to receive 90 hours of in-service training per year. According to their 2015 Educational Planning, among 65 specialty teachers, 4 from Precision Machining, 8 from Mold Design, 17 from Shipbuilding and Machining, and 15 from Robot Tech, received in-service training in their respective areas. Our teacher survey results show that 96% of BMT’s teachers received in-service training, and among them 59% had received more than 61 hours by April of 2015. The majority (61%) had received seminar/workshop training.

During the survey teachers were asked to assess their own competency. Ninety-eight percent regard themselves as a competent teacher who possesses the required technical and teaching skills. The same proportion of BMT’s teachers believes that the school has adequate teacher recruitment standards. During the in-depth interview, all teachers indicated that the most important element of being a competent TVET teacher is technical skill. However, newly hired teachers often lack technical skills due to a lack of practical training during tertiary teacher training programs. According to the Principal, BMT offers 3-6 months of training to newly hired teachers, hiring substitute teachers during their absence, in order to overcome this issue. The school also appoints industry mentors for teachers to help them improve their technical skills.

According to the student survey, 75% of students agree that their teachers are competent. Interviewed students further stated that BMT’s teachers are competent in both technical knowledge and teaching. Students said the older teachers have more teaching and technical skills than younger teachers, and that older teachers are able to teach the latest skills. Students also mentioned that teachers support them in acquiring certificates by working with them even after class, on weekends and during vacations. Students further report that their teachers actively find prospective companies for them, continually providing information on employment with these companies.
Career Development Support Programs
BMT offers various programs to help its students build their career plans. First, “Semester for Promotion of Learning Motivation” is a new initiative developed by the current Principal, Dr. Lee. The program is offered to freshmen during the first month of the high school year and aims to improve learning motivation to help them develop career plans. The program also seeks to enhance students’ sense of community, self-reflection, self-esteem, self-control, commitment to and respect for others. During this month, students participate in various group activities and attend special lectures conducted by prominent graduates. They also visit large companies and SMEs. Overall, the teachers (59.5%), parents (63.5%), and students (63%) are satisfied with this program (The Educational Planning of 2015, BMT). During our interview, students said that “My future company visit” during the Motivation program was key in helping them understand how a manufacturing plant operates and the workings of a real job. Another program, “Weekly Special Lectures of Personalities,” invites prominent alumni (such as corporate CEO) to foster student motivation for future achievement and job acquisition. Lectures are aimed at increasing student self-confidence, helping them develop their future career plans and cultivate a sense of caring for others. Overall, the teachers (69.7%), parents (57.3%), and students (51.9%) are satisfied with this program (The Educational Planning of 2015, BMT).

The fact that BMT has instituted an excellent support system to enhance student employment is supported by evidence collected by our study. During the teacher survey, 38% rated BMT’s support system as excellent, particularly in the area of career services. During the interview, they agreed that the school has successfully motivated student learning, helping them develop career plans. According to the Principal, BMT’s support system directly and positively influences the graduate employment rate. As of April, 90 students out of 295 (3rd grade) had secured employment and in order to make this happen, the school has provided various other programs, besides the two aforementioned, such as Employment Camp, Job Fair, and Company Field visits.

BMT’s students also said that the school’s support system has been very helpful. During the survey, 63% reported receiving career counseling, and among them, 89% responded that the counseling has helped them navigate their career plans. In particular, homeroom teachers guide them in finding their specific interest, occupation and companies. Then, the school provides information on the company and employment opportunities: for example, assisting students in acquiring certifications needed for the specific job and company, improving their interview skills, and supporting them in writing a resume and self-introduction letter.

Factor 2: Relevant Program
As BMT is a specialized high school whose specific purpose is to produce skilled workers within relevant fields, the specialist subjects occupy the most (50%), and are comprised primarily of required credits. BMT’s 1st year program focuses on the National Common Basic Curriculum, while the 2nd and 3rd year programs focus on Optional Subject Curriculum.

Our study findings support the fact that BMT is providing its students with programs that enhance industry-required skills. Ninety-three percent of teachers said BMT offers high
quality programs and 87% believe its curriculum is industry-relevant. Sixty percent of the teachers reported that students need to take additional training to be employed. This is because in Korea’s case, the students need to acquire certificates, and additional training serves this purpose. Overall, 95% of surveyed teachers believe that the school provides relevant programs (including practical training) to produce competitive graduates. During the in-depth interview, teachers generally agreed that the school offers its students what industry requires. Furthermore, 90% of teachers believe that BMT’s program can also help students advance to higher education.

According to the Principal, currently needed skills include basic technical skills, cognitive skills, and SE skills such as adaptation, consideration for others, diligence, patience, problem-solving skills, and self-determination. In regard to technical skills, teachers believe that the school should impart basic technical skills because these are the job-ready skills needed on production lines and they form the basis for acquiring firm-specific skills. To meet the rapid changes in industry, BMT annually reviews its curriculum and updates supplemental training materials.

Students agree that BMT provides industry relevant programs. During the internal survey, 63.7% of students responded that they are satisfied with their major (The Educational Planning of 2015). In our survey, 72% of students responded “Yes” to the question of whether they believe BMT is preparing them adequately, skill-wise, to find a job and 56% mentioned receiving more than 20 hours of practical training each week at BMT. Nevertheless, 78% of students said that they take additional training outside of BMT’s regular program, and among them, more than half are receiving 10-15 hours of additional training per week. Students said that they take additional training aside from school’s regular program not because they lack practical training but because they need to prepare for certain certificates. According to students, Korean companies emphasize whether or not an applicant holds needed certifications during the hiring process.

**Factor 3: Effective Management System**

The teachers all agreed that BMT’s management contributes to its positive school outcomes.

**Organization of School Management**

BMT’s management includes one principal, two vice principals, seven center heads and 25 team leaders. Under the Principal, there are two vice-principals and one head of Administration. Each vice principal is responsible for the three centers, and each head of center manages their own department. The head of Administration under the Principal manages the school administration center that consists of five departments, including school-industry cooperation.

**Center-focused Department Management**

BMT’s unique Center-focused Department Management aims to improve open communication, unity, and harmony among faculty members by integrating 25 departments
into seven major centers. The seven centers are the Education Planning Research Center; Meister Center; Technical Education Center; Creative Design Center; Cognitive Education Center; Student Support Center and; the School Administration Support Center. The school holds bi-weekly meetings to discuss and share the centers’ issues, including curriculum, budget, and facilities; therefore, during the meetings, the teachers understand the total workflow across the department as well as among the centers. Also, this center-focused management approach enables BMT to use the budget efficiently as funds are allocated by center, and departments within the center share the funds overall.

To assess management perceptions, BMT conducted an internal survey of its teachers. Regarding the question of to what extent teachers’ suggestions and demands are reflected in the school’s education plan and aim, 36.7% of the teachers responded “some” and 44.3% responded “moderate.” In response to the question of to what extent teachers’ suggestions and demands are reflected in the school’s division of duties and personnel management, 40.5% of teachers responded “some” and 35.4% responded “moderate.” On school support for in-service training, 17.7% of the teachers responded “very satisfied” while 46.8% said “satisfied.” Another question concerned whether they were satisfied with BMT’s suggested 2014 educational goals and 62% responded “satisfied.” Lastly, 35.4% of the teachers said they are “satisfied” with the center-focused management (The Educational Planning of 2015, BMT). Overall, BMT’s teachers are satisfied with its management system.

The Bank also conducted a teacher survey to assess their perception of school management, particularly leadership. Ninety-one percent of the teachers believe that BMT’s school leaders have consistent school policies and an equal percentage believe that the school leaders execute BMT’s guiding principles with clarity. Ninety-two percent believe their school leaders envisage the future and consistently look for new and innovative products, processes, and services. Seventy-four percent of teachers find school leaders encourage collaboration by building trust among faculty members while the same percent indicated that their school leaders encourage self-determination and ongoing competency development among teachers. Eighty-two percent teachers responded that BMT has a vision that is shared among faculty and staff. Seventy-six percent said that school leaders are consistent about their words and deeds and 87.7% of the teachers said, “the school leaders recognize my contribution by showing appreciation.” Lastly, 82% of the teachers responded that the school has the capacity to deal with both anticipated and unexpected challenges/risks.

The teachers indicated that the Korean education system confers strong management power to the Principal. For example, Principals can reorganize the school system, manage teachers, and even develop new curricula. This is particularly so in Meister High Schools, which have more freedom to develop their own curricula to meet industry demands. Accordingly, BMT’s Principal is able to develop and institute new initiatives and he has a strong vision. Several teachers referred to the school’s new initiative programs as one example of the principal’s strong leadership.

One teacher pointed out that management impacts graduate employment rates by increasing student motivation and confidence. In particular, student experiences during the new
initiative programs, directly influence their motivation for learning and acquiring a job. This view is supported by the students as well. During the interview, students stated that their experiences during “Semester for Promotion of Learning Motivation” helped them find the purpose of their study and navigate a career plan, which pushed them to work harder during the school year to achieve their employment goals.

Factor 4: School-Industry Linkages

To strengthen school-industry linkages, BMT has created various departments, including School Industry Cooperation TF, the School-Industry Cooperation Advisory Committee, Council for Operation Field Practice, and Management of Job Career Development Center. Furthermore, the school organizes several field visits to select companies for the students.

School-Industry Cooperation Advisory Committee

The committee is composed of the school teachers/staff and representatives from enterprises. The chair is selected from industry, and the head of the Meister Center is designated as an assistant administrator. Within the committee, operation committee members are composed of the vice principal, the head of five centers, and the team leader of the 3rd grade, two staff members from the school-industry cooperation department, and the head of four major departments; while advisory Committee members are composed of representatives from enterprises. The meeting is held annually, and during the meeting, the members discuss specific programs, textbooks, curriculum to meet industrial demands, share employment information, and discuss the possibility of in-company training for both the students and teachers.

Council for Operation Field Practice

The council is composed of the vice principal, the head of five centers, and the team leader of 3rd grade, the head of four major departments. The vice principal is designated as a head and the head of the Meister Center is designated as an assistant administrator. Their main tasks include selecting companies for practical training; defining procedure for in-company practical training; and assessing practical training.

School Industry Cooperation TF

Its role is to develop a MoU with prospective companies, and their specific activities include finding excellent SMEs, visiting these SMEs, developing a MoU with them, and sending students to these companies for in-company practical training and employment.

Job Career Development Center

The center’s main responsibilities include building a database on company information in connection with SMEs administration; supporting educational programs offered by the companies; organizing staff’s company visits to develop MoU for employment. In addition, the center provides the students with the latest information on the companies, helping them
prepare self-introductions, resumes, and job application letters, and providing personalized career counseling via job interview simulation. According to the internal survey, 65.9% of teachers, 55.9% of parents, and 62% of students are satisfied with their experience with the Job Career Development Center (The Educational Planning of 2015, BMT).

Field Trip to Select Companies

The school provides students with an opportunity to visit prominent companies to help them understand how products are manufactured in the production lines, to help them develop their career roadmaps, and to promote school-industry linkages. Because the students of 3rd year are taking in-company training during summer, the site visit is designed specifically for 1st and 2nd year students who are still developing their career plans.

According to the teacher survey, 95% reported a belief that BMT has built successful partnerships with companies that enhance school outcomes. Also, in regard to the type of cooperation, 96% of teachers believe that a school should have a formal partnership with companies. However, teachers often face difficulty in finding interested companies. Indeed 67% of those surveyed identified companies’ disinterest as the main impediment to MoU development. During the interview, all teachers stated that in particular SMEs are generally not interested in developing school-company cooperation.

To overcome this challenge, BMT teachers have made tremendous efforts by visiting companies in person to discuss possible collaboration and MoU. Once a MoU is developed, then the companies participate in developing training materials and curricula as well as provide scholarships, in-company training for the students and teachers, places for the field visits and employment.

Also, all teachers agreed that their cooperation with the companies is systematic as the MoU defines each party’s roles and responsibilities. The role of companies is rather advisory: for example, during the School-Industry Cooperation Advisory Committee meeting, the representatives from the companies provide advice on the direction of the program and curriculum. In regard to developing BMT’s own training materials, the teachers of each department work closely with the representatives from four companies according to their relevant fields.

However, most teachers indicated that the companies need to be more active in this cooperation. Although the formal School-industry Cooperation Advisory Committee is held twice a year, sometimes one third of representatives of the companies fail to attend the meeting. Therefore, the teachers note that school-industry cooperation can have the best outcome only when the companies also actively participate in this cooperation.
Conclusion

This study reversely examined the relationship between outcomes and premise factors by selecting a high-performance school and the impact of the premise factors on school outcomes. The logic is that if this high-performance school demonstrates that it possesses these factors, then these premise factors likely raise employment rates.

The first research question is whether or not the school possesses these factors. The findings strongly support that BMT has 1) adequate resources, 2) relevant programs, 3) excellent management, and 4) well-established school-industry linkages. The second question is whether or not the above premise factors impact school outcomes. The findings suggest that these factors both directly and indirectly influence BMT graduate employment rates. According to the survey and interview conducted with teachers and students, these factors increase student employability. The third question concerns which of these factors contributes most to the enhancement of school performance, in what context, and how this factor can be strengthened. According to the findings, the primary factor has changed over time due to economic and social conditions.

During the 1970s, because the country shifted from a lighter to heavier manufacturing industry, it required different types of labor force, such as skilled technicians and experts. Accordingly, the government expanded technical and vocational education to meet the demand for skilled workers in the heavier manufacturing industry (Zang, 2009; Kim, 2000; Lee et al, 2012). Given this economic context, BMT was strongly supported by the government. In fact, the government founded BMT in 1967 to meet this shortage of skilled workers with support from the German government as well as IBRD. Then, the government produced practical trainers within a short time period by issuing a practical trainer certificate to those who graduated from BMT. The teachers stated that during this period, both financial and human resources were the most important factors contributing to the school’s performance. Although BMT faced a lack of resources, strong government support, along with support from IBRD and other donor countries, and their ability to expedite technical teachers enabled them to overcome the odds.

Since 1985, higher education enrollment (both 2 year technical and vocational college and 4 year university) has rapidly increased due to economic growth and social demands. As a consequence, according to the teachers, all TVET schools had the most difficult time during the 1990s: most students entered academic high school to pursue higher education, while stigma attached to those who studied at TVET schools prevailed. During this time, the teachers generally agreed that management, particularly a strong leadership and vision, was the most important factor contributing to school outcomes. First, BMT management efficiently utilized its resources in the face of a lack of financial support from the government. Second, management focused on establishing school-industry cooperation with strong alumni support. Because of its long history, BMT had a good number of prominent alumni, including CEO of SMEs. Their companies provided scholarships, lectures, and employment to BMT students. Also, under strong leadership direction, the teachers not only taught but also actively worked on establishing the school-industry cooperation. Therefore, the teachers said that during the 1990s when there was low demand for and high stigma attached to TVET
In 2008, the government made a major policy change in the TVET system. Due to a shortage of technical skilled workers and stigma attached to TVET schools, it decided to establish the Meister High Schools by selecting 39 existing TVET schools whose performance meet the criteria. The purpose of establishing the Meister High School is to produce skilled workers via a curriculum tailored to industry needs in order to reduce skills mismatching. By transforming TVET schools into specialized high schools purposed to produce the best skilled workers, the Meister High Schools would reduce the stigma attached to TVET schools. To achieve this goal, the government first provides the schools with financial resources to substitute their students’ tuition, dormitory, and fees, as well as to maintain training facilities and equipment. Second, the schools are given the autonomy to develop customized curricula to meet the demands of companies in their relevant fields. Third, due to increasing school autonomy, the government encourages the schools to select a Principal with strong management skills via public contest. Lastly, the government encourages Meister from industry to train Meister High School students via school-industry cooperation.

Since becoming a Meister High School BMT has received strong government support, particularly financial resources. BMT has built a strong reputation and high employment rate outcomes. Given that a Meister High School has strong autonomy in the areas of curriculum development and management (including the Principal’s), most of BMT’s teachers agreed that management, particularly leadership, is a key factor in determining school outcomes. They recommended that schools should have a good leader who has vision, manages resources efficiently, encourages teachers to improve their competencies, develops demand-driven, tailored curricula, and establishes meaningful school-industry cooperation. In Korea’s BMT Meister High School, all school inputs are created and utilized under the direction of the Principal’s strong leadership.