

Article

Priority Analysis of Right Remedies of Basic Living Recipients in Korea

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Received: 14 February 2020; Accepted: 10 March 2020; Published: 12 March 2020



Abstract: Through an active administration approach, the Local Living Security Commission (LLSC) has provided relief to protect the poor strata and reinforce the distribution of entitlements. However, the absence of a system to monitor operational performance makes it difficult to manage it efficiently. The purpose of this study is to find ways to strengthen and efficiently operate the functions of the LLSC through priority analysis of its operation. To this end, the analytic hierarchy process (AHP) was conducted based on the results of the focus group interview to derive priorities for the operation of the LLSC. The variables used in the AHP analysis included regional conditions, operational performance, organizational method, and network. The result of the analysis revealed, first, that the performance of the committee has increased due to a joint evaluation or verification survey conducted at the end of each year, second, that the creation of a budget for the organization and the operation of an independent LLSC is necessary, and third, that operational performance is the most important, followed by organizational method, network, and regional conditions. Therefore, a system for monitoring performance should be established to improve the operation performance of the LLSC. Additionally, it is necessary to establish an independent LLSC and secure the budget for each city and county. It should be possible to provide feedback on operations through regular priority analysis.

Keywords: social security services; right remedy; Local Living Security Commission; social security benefit rights; AHP

1. Introduction

Social security services in Korea have expanded not just quantitatively, but also qualitatively—the de facto security of the right to live—through legal and institutional supplementation. Recently, due to an increase in the desire for social welfare and thereby the national budget, recipient-centered welfare services have taken precedence over provider-centered services [1,2]. In particular, since its expansion to the Social Security Information System (Hangbok-e-eum) in August 2012, which integrates and manages the social welfare services of all ministries of government, including the Social Security Information Service that operates the Social Security Information System, as well as the inauguration of the Health and Medical Treatment Information System in 2015, continuous management became enabled for recipients. Importantly, there have been many developments in terms of infrastructure, such as increased accuracy in selecting recipients, the formal objection to follow-up management and investigation decisions, and so on, which have become fundamental to social welfare right remedies.

The concept of right remedies is discussed from various perspectives; however, they can be generally described as a set of procedures to ensure an individual's rights and interests by objection

when a right is violated by illegal or improper disposition of the administrative agency [3,4]. In other words, right remedies for social security can be defined as the right to demand a certain amount of active payments to the country to help individuals who need protection from social risks to live life as a human being, which corresponds to human dignity [5,6]. These social security right remedies can be largely divided into two categories: through active administration and through institutional means, pursuant to an institutionally specified procedure. Active administration seeks to relieve recipient rights in advance via identifying vulnerable social groups located in the dead zone of welfare and institutional right remedies, such as administrative procedures and administrative trials [1,7,8].

From the recipients' point of view, the right remedy system exists to prevent violation of the right to life from illegal and improper dispositions or acts by administrative agencies. Nevertheless, in the case of institutional right remedies, qualified recipients' ability to claim rights and their right awareness is relatively weak, thus weakening their chances at successful participation in the administrative trial process and with administrative procedures [9,10]. This rigidity issue for institutional right remedies has continued to mass-produce new welfare dead zones with tragic consequences. Examples include the suicide of a mother and two daughters in Songpa-gu and the starvation deaths of three North Korean defectors—a mother and her two sons—in Gwanak-gu. Therefore, considering these limitations of institutional right remedies, active administration is required [11,12]. Proactive prevention and follow-up management can take place by identifying welfare dead zones are created by a lack of information on the system itself or by the complicated application process with respect to social security benefit rights.

An example of right remedy methods through active administration is the Local Living Security Commission (LLSC). This commission adopted an active approach to identify potential welfare recipients unaware of social security benefits or unable to apply due to complex application procedures. The LLSC also sought to relieve those who failed to be selected due to the limitations of family support obligation rules and property income survey, despite being eligible [3,13]. According to Article 20 of the National Basic Living Security Act, it is stipulated that an LLSC should be established by local governments to consider and decide matters related to the planning, investigation, and implementation of the national basic living security project. Particularly, the LLSC in cities and counties is responsible for establishing the basic direction and implementation plans for the living security programs prescribed by statute. They also make various decisions such as urgent benefits, collection and exclusion of securing expenses, reduction of collection, etc., in terms of right remedies [14,15].

Through the active administration approach, the LLSC has provided relief to protect the poor strata and reinforce the distribution of entitlements, following the amendment of relevant laws since 2014. Nevertheless, it is difficult to effectively manage it because there is no monitoring system for the operative performance of LLSCs in cities, provinces, and counties. Currently, the Commission collects data individually from local governments and provides feedback on the results to consolidate operation status and performance [16].

Therefore, this study intends to evaluate the current status of LLSCs and the right remedy organization through active administration, in order to strengthen and efficiently manage its functions, as well as to analyze priorities for its future operation. To this end, we are planning to examine the operative status of LLSCs in Korea and in other foreign cases and to conduct an interview survey for the commission administrators in charge regarding problems faced by the LLSC, from the viewpoint of organizational method, operating performance, and networks, based on prior research. In addition, through analytic hierarchy process (AHP), we will attempt to draw priorities to improve the operational problems of LLSCs identified through the interview surveys. Data used in this study are based on administrative data collected annually by the Ministry of Health and Welfare, which belongs to the central government.

2. Literature Review

In Korea, the scope and target of social security are being expanded for the purpose of right remedies by linking income property through social security information systems. Nevertheless, there is little research on right remedies in social security, most of which just analyzes the legal issues. Since LLSCs in Korea have been established from 2014 as a means for the active administration of right remedies, it is necessary to explore new directions via the analysis of prior studies. Above all, Langford (2007) states that sufficient support and active relief works may be formally provided for the right to social security, but the scope of right remedies has greatly expanded, and new approaches will be necessary to strengthen realistic responsibilities. In other words, a variety of considerations are needed for right remedies: clear goals, securing sufficient budgets, strengthening the participation of beneficiary groups, eliminating discrimination, etc. In particular, Langford (2007) emphasizes the importance of active administration by insisting on guaranteeing immediate, minimum, and essential social security rights [5].

Kim (2018) compared and analyzed the right remedy issues in Korea and the UK social security tribunal system, in terms of social security right remedies. The UK social security tribunal system is part of jurisdiction and is being operated as a complete entity, right from administration. It views right remedies as a legal liability and trial procedures place citizens and administrators as equals. In contrast, the Korean Social Security Right Remedy Agency is not independent and was designed for the expertise and promptness of administration. That is, right remedies in Korea see the legitimacy and validity of the administrative decision as an administrative structure organized under self-control within the executive branch [17].

Jung (2015) analyzed the provisions of social security law in Korea, derived the problems of right remedies through administrative procedures or administrative trials, and sought a plan for improvement. Particularly, they address the problem of administrative procedures in the process of right remedies including the lack of uniformity in terminology and procedure, and the lack of fairness, objectivity, and effectiveness. In addition, they found that the relationship with the Administrative Trial Act is not clear, and that the decision-making manpower and expertise, with regard to raising an objection, were insufficient [1]. They also assert that to remedy these problems, a system should be established so that recipients' property income might be clearly examined through enhancing the professionalism of the LLSC and the social security information system overall.

Kim (2013) reviewed the problems and possible improvements for right remedies through the Social Security Information System (Hangbok-e-eum). They state that although the means test using public data has been reinforced via establishment of the Social Security Information System, there are time lags between public data generation, linkage, and usage, and improvement on that is needed. In particular, they argue that the problem of right remedies could be solved through the prompt application of the updated data on administrative decisions, as well as faithful reporting from the recipients [18].

Given the above referenced definitions, the Korean Local Living Security Commission is a means for the active administration of right remedies which does not belong to the area of jurisdiction, like the UK Social Security Tribunal System. Notably, as the scope and target of social security have been expanded, the role of the LLSC should be further reinforced via a new approach to right remedies. Particularly, various challenges can be identified such as securing professionalism and ensuring consistency in the method linking with the means test of the Social Security Information System, etc.

3. Materials and Methods

AHP contains multiple evaluation contents, and is a decision-making support technique for the systematic evaluation of mutually exclusive alternatives. It is widely used in multi-criteria decision-making processes involving qualitative elements. In this study, the variables related to the operation of the LLSC were divided into organizational method, operational performance, network, and regional characteristic variables, and the weight of each element was drawn through pairwise

comparison after hierarchizing the detailed elements for each variable. Specifically, AHP undergoes 6 steps: problem definition, goal setting, comparison matrix creation, relative importance calculation, consistency verification, and final priority derivation. Here, the pairwise comparison reveals the importance after coupling 12 components in this study, which is performed 66 times by the calculation $n(n-1)/2$. Based on this pairwise comparison matrix, the relative weights of attributes are calculated as follows [19]. Supposing that $a_{ij} = w_i / w_j$, for all i and j , the importance w_i may be estimated through the following process:

$$\begin{bmatrix} 1 & a_{12} & a_{13} & \cdots & a_{1n} \\ a_{21} & 1 & a_{23} & \cdots & a_{2n} \\ a_{31} & a_{32} & 1 & \cdots & a_{3n} \\ \vdots & \vdots & \vdots & \cdots & \vdots \\ a_{r1} & a_{r2} & a_{r3} & \cdots & 1 \end{bmatrix} \equiv \begin{bmatrix} \omega_1/\omega_1 & \omega_1/\omega_2 & \omega_1/\omega_3 & \cdots & \omega_1/\omega_n \\ \omega_2/\omega_1 & \omega_2/\omega_2 & \omega_2/\omega_3 & \cdots & \omega_2/\omega_n \\ \omega_3/\omega_1 & \omega_3/\omega_2 & \omega_3/\omega_3 & \cdots & \omega_3/\omega_n \\ \vdots & \vdots & \vdots & \cdots & \vdots \\ \omega_n/\omega_1 & \omega_n/\omega_2 & \omega_n/\omega_3 & \cdots & \omega_n/\omega_n \end{bmatrix}$$

$$\begin{aligned} &\triangleright \sum_{j=1}^n a_{ij} \cdot w_j \cdot \frac{1}{w_i} = n \\ &\triangleright \sum_{j=1}^n a_{ij} \cdot w_j = n \cdot w_i \\ &\triangleright A \cdot w = n \cdot w \end{aligned}$$

Meanwhile, the consistency index is used to determine the consistency of respondents in AHP. For example, if some respondents marked A as more important than B and B as more important than C, but evaluated C as more important than A, it can be regarded as inconsistent. This consistency index is verified by the inconsistency index, in which it is judged to be consistent if it is lower than 0.1.

$$C.I. = \frac{\lambda_{max} - n}{n - 1}$$

In order to continuously monitor the operational performance, organizational status, and network, etc. of the LLSCs after loading them in the Social Security Information System (Hangbok-e-eum) of the Social Security Information Service, it is necessary to analyze the content composition and related priorities. Thus, this study intends to conduct AHP for the civil servants, committee members, assistant administrators, etc. of the LLSC; officials related to the Ministry of Health and Welfare; staff in the project department within the Social Security Information Service; other related experts, etc. To this end, FGIs were conducted on municipal and local officials in charge of the respective LLSCs, and a questionnaire was prepared based on the results analyzed above (Figure 1).

In order to derive priorities through AHP analysis, the main categories are set up as regional conditions, operational performance, organizational method, and network. First, we selected the social welfare budget ratio, fiscal independence ratio by cities and counties, and the aging index, which was correlated with operational performance, as regional conditions.

Second, in the operational results, as indicators of sub-classification, we used the number of agenda-introduced households, the number of protection-decided households, the collection and redemption of securing expenses, and other household characteristics and living conditions, which the Division of Basic Livelihood Security in the Ministry of Health and Welfare has collated from the cities and counties to use as joint evaluation indicators for local governments.

Third, in the organizational method, we used items that appeared as slack values affecting operational efficiency through data envelopment analysis, among the items surveyed in 229 cities and counties. Specifically, they include the number of meetings held by the LLSC, the number of members, and the budget for operating expenses.

Fourth, in terms of organizational method, we utilized cooperation and interaction between the number of civil servants in charge of the LLSC and its interests among the survey items for

cities and counties as sub-categories. Accordingly, a total of 12 subcategories were created under 4 major categories.

The organized questionnaire was distributed to 20 experts related to the Basic Living Security or LLSCs on November 23, 2018 and collected on the 27th. All 20 copies were collected and subsequently analyzed using Expert Choice 2.0, the AHP statistics program. In this study, as the survey is the pairwise comparison for key persons related to the right remedy organizations, the sample size should not have to be large at any cost [20].

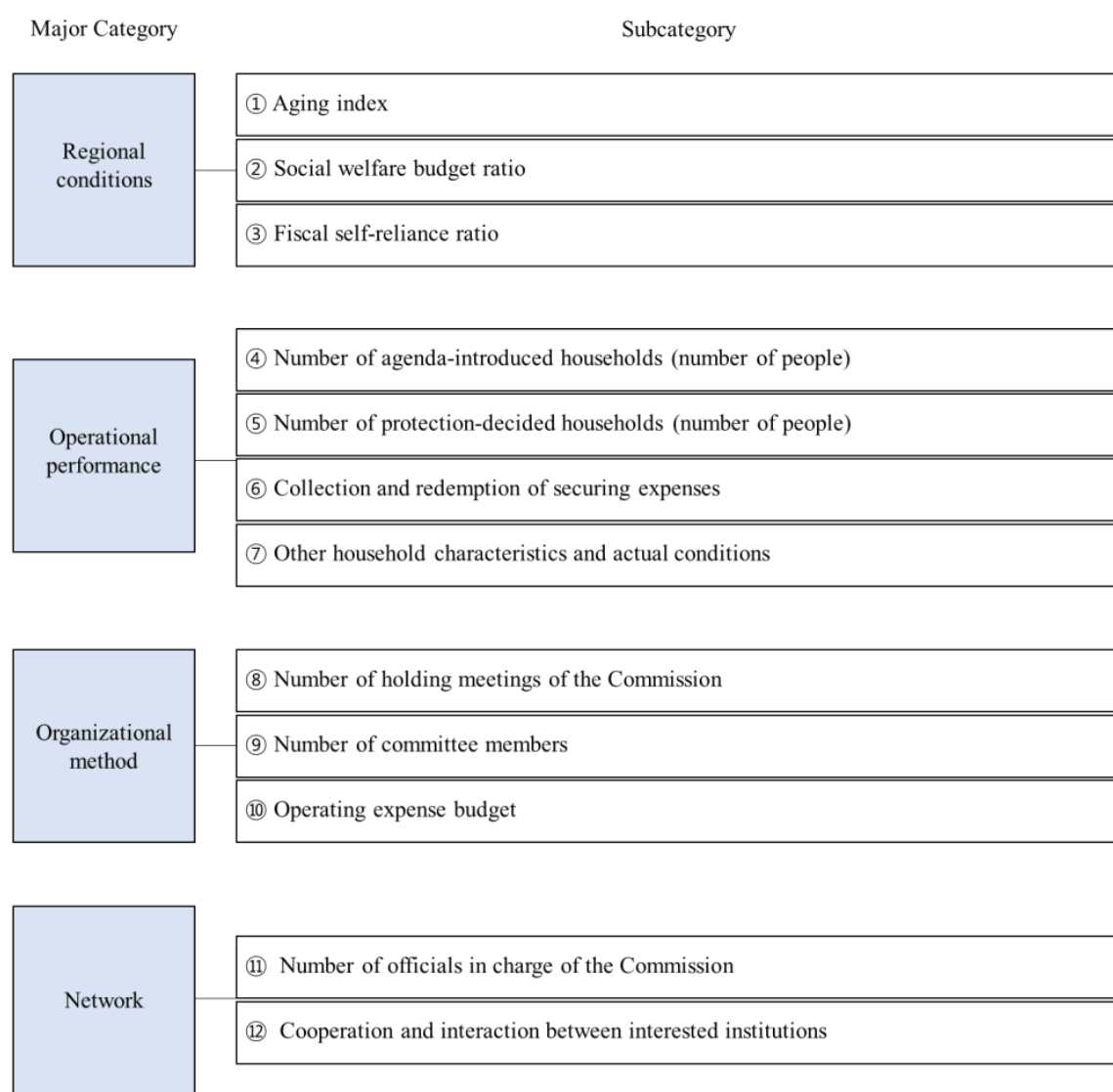


Figure 1. AHP for the LLSC.

4. Results

As a result of the analysis, examining the priority of major categories, operational performance was the highest with 0.442, followed by organizational method with 0.251, network with 0.200, and so on, respectively. However, the priority of regional conditions was somewhat low at 0.106. The inconsistency ratio was 0.006, lower than the standard value of 0.1, indicating high logical consistency (Table 1).

Table 1. Priority of major categories on the content of the Local Living Security Commission.

Item	Importance	Priority
Network	0.200	3
Organizational method	0.251	2
Operational performance	0.442	1
Regional conditions	0.106	4

Inconsistency ratio: 0.00607.

Next, we analyzed the priority of each major category in order to organize the contents to monitor the operational performance of the LLSC. First, in terms of regional conditions, the social welfare budget ratio was highest in importance at 0.401, followed by fiscal independence at 0.338, and aging index at 0.262, etc., respectively. Second, regarding operating performance, the number of households with protection decisions was the highest at 0.379, followed by other household characteristics and current status at 0.271, and number of agenda-introduced households at 0.204, etc., respectively. Collection and redemption of securing expenses was 0.146, showing somewhat lower importance. Third, investigating priorities in the organizational method, the number of holding meetings was the highest at 0.463, followed by operating expense budget at 0.285, and so forth. The number of Committee members showed relatively high importance at 0.251. Fourth, in the network, cooperation and interaction between related agencies was high at 0.524, and the number of officials in charge of the committee was 0.476, showing similar importance (Table 2).

Table 2. Priority of sub-categories on the content of the Local Living Security Commission.

Variable	Item	Importance	Inconsistency Ratio	Priority
Regional conditions	Fiscal self-reliance ratio	0.338	0.0034	2
	Social welfare budget ratio	0.401		1
	Aging index	0.262		3
Operational performance	Other household characteristics and actual conditions	0.271	0.00305	2
	Collection and redemption of securing expenses	0.146		4
	Number of protection-decided households	0.379		1
	Number of agenda-introduced households	0.204		3
Organizational method	Operating expense budget	0.285	0.00149	2
	Number of committee members	0.251		3
	Number of holding meetings of the Commission	0.463		1
Network	Cooperation and interaction between interested institutions	0.524	0	1
	Number of officials in charge of the Commission	0.476		2

Finally, the priorities on the entire contents to be used in establishing a system for monitoring the operational performance of the LLSC are as follows. The number of households with protection decisions was the highest in importance at 0.188, followed by other household characteristics and actual conditions at 0.134, the number of holding committee meetings at 0.107, and the number of agenda-introduced households at 0.101, respectively. The overall importance level for the major categories of operational performance was high, and the relative importance of network was higher than that of organizational method. Relatively, regional conditions such as social welfare budget ratio, fiscal self-reliance ratio, aging index, etc., were low in importance. However, based on interviews with

local government officials and experts, the role of adjusted values for LLSCs in local governments' joint evaluation was judged to be important (Table 3).

Table 3. Priority of the entire contents of the Local Living Security Commission.

Variable	Item	Importance	Priority
Regional conditions	Fiscal self-reliance ratio	0.038	11
	Social welfare budget ratio	0.045	10
	Aging index	0.029	12
Operational performance	Other household characteristics and actual conditions	0.134	2
	Collection and redemption of securing expenses	0.072	7
	Number of protection-decided households	0.188	1
	Number of agenda-introduced households	0.101	4
Organizational method	Operating expense budget	0.066	8
	Number of committee members	0.058	9
	Number of holding meetings of the Commission	0.107	3
Network	Cooperation and interaction between interested institutions	0.085	5
	Number of officials in charge of the Commission	0.077	6

5. Discussion

In order to reinforce and efficiently manage the functions of the Local Living Security Commission (LLSC), a right relief entity through active administration, this study attempted to conduct focus group interviews (FGI) with the relevant officials in charge of the LLSC and then to derive the priority of each detailed indicator through AHP by utilizing major categories such as organizational method, operational performance, network, and regional conditions, etc., drawn from the results.

Based on the analysis, several conclusions emerged.

First, based on the result of the interviews with officials in charge of the LLSC, it was important to secure the budget for the organization and operation of an independent LLSC. With regards to operation, important decisions needed to be made immediately, regardless of the number of holding meetings prescribed by law. Importantly, in terms of networks, networking with various private resources was found to be necessary.

Second, in order to establish a monitoring system for the operational performance of the LLSC, based on the above analysis, we prioritized items such as three regional conditions, three operational results, three organizational methods, and two networks, and then conducted an AHP analysis. The analysis results showed that operational performance was the most important of the four categories, followed by organizational method, network, and regional conditions, respectively. The 12 subsections were prioritized as follows: number of households with protection decisions, other household characteristics and actual conditions, number of committee meetings, number of agenda-introduced households, cooperation and interaction between related agencies, number of officials in charge of the committee, collection and redemption of securing expenses, and operating costs, respectively.

Therefore, based on the analysis results above, the policy implications for improving LLSC operational performance as an implementation of active administration are as follows:

First, by establishing a system to monitor LLSC operational performance within the Social Security Information System (Hangbok-e-eum), it will be possible to compare the effectiveness of holding meetings and protection decision results for recipients across cities and counties, thereby contributing to the right remedies of recipients. This means that it must be changed into the method where the performance can be loaded into the nationally integrated system, exiting the performance management method wherein the Ministry of Health and Welfare collect data annually by way of handwriting.

Second, there is an urgent need to organize independent LLSCs by city and county and to secure their budgets. It is necessary to enhance its status as a social security right relief institution through active administration, away from the current methods of subcommittees or separate committees. Thus,

the right remedies via active administration should be prioritized over those through jurisdictions, and the role of the LLSC should be expanded and strengthened to this end.

Third, a continuous and permanent evaluation system should be developed for the analysis of priorities for right remedies in the LLSC. Analysis should be regularly performed and should be able to provide feedback for improvement of the LLSC operations, based on the results. Furthermore, consideration should be given to various variables regarding regional conditions. Therefore, at present, the role of the right remedy organizations in Korea is for the purpose of the right remedy itself and is not linked to the institutional improvement on the right remedies. Therefore, it is necessary to draw a long-term development plan for the right remedy through the establishment of an evaluation system.

Developing and operating a system for evaluating the operating performance of the Local Living Security Commission as a right remedy institution means that people in a crisis in livelihoods, health care, and education, etc. could be continuously managed. It will be able to be settled as a sustainable system by the quick institutional remedies, implemented by local governments, for socially vulnerable groups, escaping from the current temporary right remedy, and by operating the system according to order of priority and evaluating its performance.

This study focuses on priorities for strengthening functions of the LLSC as an active rights remedy organization in Korea. It introduces the right remedy methods through active administration, different from those by judicial judgment, and draws the policy priorities for effective operational management, which can be helpful to other countries. On the other hand, there is a lack of research—just as Bucciol’s study—which links the causes of inequality in social security programs to the behavior of the recipients of right remedies. Accordingly, in addition to various follow-up studies on inequality in social security programs, the studies on the behavior of the recipients of right remedies and on the environment surrounding them will have to be continuously conducted [21].

Author Contributions: Data curation, G.P.; formal analysis, G.P.; methodology, K.Y.; supervision, M.L.; writing—original draft, K.Y.; writing—review and editing, M.L. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Funding: This work was supported by the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Korea and the National Research Foundation of Korea (NRF-2019S1A5A2A03040304).

Acknowledgments: This study was prepared by revising and supplementing the Social Security Information Service Research Report (18–10).

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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