

A Comparative Study of Family-Friendly Policies and Benefits in Public Organizations: South Korea and the United States

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Abstract: This paper analyzes the family-friendly policies and benefits currently offered by public organizations in South Korea and the United States. This study found that leaves of absence are the first types of family-friendly policy that reflect an acknowledgment on the part of government agencies in South Korea and the United States that both men and women must face work/family conflicts in their lives. The South Korean government provides more generous leave policies than those of the American public sector. However, several family-friendly benefits provided by federal agencies in the United States, including flexible workplace and telecommuting programs, job sharing, and dependent care counseling and referral services were rarely offered by the South Korean government. Finally, the paper discusses policy implications and emphasizes managerial leadership affecting the implementation process behind these policies in public agencies.

Keywords: family-friendly policies and benefits; public sector workforces; South Korean women

INTRODUCTION

Demographic and sociological changes in the South Korean workforce during the past 20 years have spotlighted the need for new policies to help employees achieve a balance between work and family life. South Korean women's participation in the labor force has increased from 37.2 percent in 1965 to 48.3 percent in 2000 (Kim & Go, 2001). Current predictions are that the percentage will increase to 55 percent by

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2010 (Kim & Go, 2001). With an increase in divorce, the number of single-parent families in South Korea has jumped from 642,000 in 1975 to 940,000 in 1996 (Kim & Go, 2001). Furthermore, South Korea's fertility rate dropped from 4.53 in 1970 to 1.26 in 2005 (The Republic of Korea Civil Service Commission, 2006). Increases in dual-career couples, an aging society, and nontraditional families have all added to the levels of home- and work-related stress felt by both male and female workers, but due to traditional Korean expectations for female behavior, the increase has been especially large for female workers.

Striking a balance between an employee's work and family responsibilities continues to be a major human resource management concern in many industrialized countries, especially in light of the increased number of female employee, two-job families, single-parent families, and families in which elderly relatives are in need of special care. The challenges involved in this issue are reflected in the wide variety of personal leave and so-called "family-friendly" policies and benefits offered by public and private sector organizations, including flexible work schedules, on-site childcare, and family care-focused leave policies. The offering of diverse family-friendly benefits has been touted as an important factor in improving organizational performance (Rainey, 1994; Roman & Blum, 1993) and employee job satisfaction (Bohen and Viveros-Long, 1981; Ezra and Deckman, 1996; Hochschild, 1989; and Saltzstein, Ting, and Saltzstein, 2001). Others have identified associations between work-family conflicts and psychological distress (Burke, 1986; Frone, Barnes & Farrell, 1994; MacEwen & Barling, 1994), general life dissatisfaction (Aryee, 1992; Rice, Frone & McFarlin, 1992), physical health problems (Frone, Russell & Cooper, 1991; Thomas & Ganster, 1995), and alcohol abuse (Frone, Russell & Cooper, 1993).

The literature also contains a number of gender-specific studies. The conflicts that working women face between their roles as workers and primary caretakers for children and/or elderly parents have been documented by Higgins, Duxbury & Irving (1992), Hochschild (1989), Kim (1998a, 1998b), Saltzstein et al. (2001), and Kelley & Voydanoff (1985). Kim (2002) and Vincola (1998) have all reported that employee usage of available family-friendly benefits in South Korea and the United States has been lower than expected, and that female employees are much more likely than male employees to take advantage of them.

The purpose of this paper is to analyze family-friendly policies and benefits in the South Korean public sector and the American public sector. The goal of the comparison is to help government officials understand various family-friendly policies and programs in the public sector. South Korean women have not constituted a significant share of public sector jobs, but they have made some gains in government jobs. According to the Ministry of Gender Equity and Family (2005) in the South Korean

government, women made up 35.8 percent (298,352) of all public employees in the South Korean government in 2004; less than 10 percent of them worked at the higher-level positions in government, described as level 1 to 5. In 1995, the national South Korean government proclaimed that it would address the current imbalance by actively recruiting women for public sector jobs. A minimum goal of filling 10 percent of all upper level public sector jobs with women has been established for 2006. As part of this effort, the South Korean government has started to view “family-friendly” policies as important tools for recruiting women and supporting their career advancement efforts. Meanwhile, as an employer, the federal government in the United States has introduced diverse benefits programs that serve as models for private businesses (Gore, 1997). Many of the changes in family-friendly benefit programs that have occurred in the American public sector are the result of a basic demographic shift in American government workplaces: in 1998, 44 percent of federal executive branch (nonpostal) were female, an increase from 41 percent in 1986 (Ricucci, 2004).

In this paper, I will review the status of South Korean women in public sector workforces and analyze the family-friendly policies and benefits currently offered by the South Korean government. Next, it analyzes some comparable public sector policies and benefits in the United States. Finally, I will discuss policy implications of this study and describe the influence of managerial leadership on family-friendly policy implementation in public agencies.

WOMEN WORKFORCE IN THE SOUTH KOREAN PUBLIC SECTOR

In the wake of the United Nation’s International Women’s Year in 1975, the South Korean government created a number of committees for the purpose of addressing the concerns of its female citizens (Hampson, 2000). The National Assembly passed the Equal Employment Opportunity Act of 1989 and the Gender Discrimination Prevention and Relief Act of 1999 to prevent employment discrimination in hiring and promotion on the base of sex, marital status, or pregnancy. In addition, because of the time and energy given to human rights by former President Kim Dae Jung (1998-2002), greater attention has been paid to women’s issues. In 2000, former President Kim established a Ministry of Gender Equality (MGE) for the purpose of formulating national policies regarding gender equality, women’s leadership and workforce development, and women’s social and political participation (Kim G, 2002).

The number of South Korean women in decision-making positions in the legislative branch and in the executive branch, however, is lower than Japan and China and far lower than that of the advanced industrialized countries, such as the UK, Germany,

and the USA (United Nations, 2000). South Korean women have not constituted a significant share of public sector jobs, but they have made some gains in government jobs. This section begins by taking a brief look at the gender mix in public workforces at the central and local governments in South Korea.

Tables 1 and 2 provide a snapshot of women in central and local government jobs. The grade system in the General Service of the South Korean government consists of nine grades in which grade 1 is the highest level and grade 9 is the lowest level. As the data show, women's employment in public sector jobs has incrementally increased since the late-1990s. As mentioned earlier the South Korean government is currently making a special effort to increase the percentage of female employees at upper level public sector jobs. The research, however, shows that women tend to be concentrated in lower-level, lower-paying positions in the public sector workforces (see Table 2). As the tables show, the higher-level professional jobs are dominated by men, while the lower-level jobs are filled with women.

Table 1. South Korea's Public Sector Employment by Gender, 1998-2004*

Year	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Total	888,217	865,650	849,152	859,329	869,030	891,949	834,109
Women	263,853	258,347	267,647	282,028	286,074	302,830	298,352
%	29.7	29.8	31.5	32.8	32.9	34.0	35.8
Men	624,364	607,303	581,505	577,301	582,956	589,119	535,757
%	70.3	70.2	68.5	67.2	67.1	66.0	64.2

* Includes the executive branch, the legislative branch, the judiciary branch, the Constitution Committee, and the Central Election Management Committee.

Source: South Korea Ministry of Government Administration and Home Affairs (2003). *Women and Public Service*; Ministry of Gender Equity and Family (2005). *Female Workforce in Government and Statistics*.

Table 2 indicates that the higher the level, the lower the percentage of female employees—only 1,051 (3.6 %) at grade levels 1 through 5, compared to 27,694 men in the General Service. For local governments, the number of female employees in 2001 was 55,002, or 30.8 percent of the total (*ibid.*); only 596 women held positions at grade levels 1 through 5, compared to 13,882 men. In addition to spotlighting the under-representation of women in significant public decision-making positions, this new attention has resulted in a number of family-friendly policies being implemented by central and local government agencies. According to a recent report by the Ministry of Gender Equity and Family (2005), 1,203 women (7.4. percent) held positions at grade levels 1 through 5 in 48 central agencies, compared to 15,141 men.

Table 2. Women in Executive Branch Employment, 2001*

	Total	Female	%	Central Government Total	Female	%	Local Governments Total	Female	%
Total	262,893	62,338	23.7	84,541	13,349	15.7	178,352	48,989	27.4
Grade 1	72	0	0	56	0	0	16	0	0
Grade 2	372	2	0.5	308	2	0.6	64	0	0
Grade 3	993	19	1.9	716	15	2.1	277	4	1.4
Grade 4	6,226	157	2.5	3,846	86	2.2	2,380	71	3.0
Grade 5	21,082	873	4.1	7,732	352	4.6	13,350	521	3.9
Grade 6	63,221	5,999	9.5	20,961	1,758	8.4	42,260	4,241	10
Grade 7	89,131	22,101	24.8	24,418	3,716	15.2	64,713	18,385	28.4
Grade 8	60,293	24,064	39.9	17,122	4,661	27.2	43,171	19,403	44.9
Grade 9	21,503	9,123	42.4	9,382	2,759	29.4	12,121	6,364	52.5

* The General Civil Service only; The South Korean civil service consists of the General, Technical, Particular, Special, and Affairs Services.; The grade system in the General Service of the South Korean government consists of nine grades in which Grade 1 is the highest level and Grade 9 is the lowest level.

Source: South Korea Ministry of Government Administration and Home Affairs (2003). *Women and Public Service*.

FAMILY-FRIENDL POLICIES IN THE SOUTH KOREAN PUBLIC SECTOR

As women continue to increase their share of public sector jobs, governments at every level must be prepared to develop programs and policies that not only eradicate discriminatory practices but also work to attract and retain this important and considerable cohort of workers. As part of this effort, the central South Korean government has started to view family-friendly policies as important tools for recruiting women and supporting their career advancement efforts. Family-friendly employee benefits currently offered by the central South Korean government include family leave (starting in 2001), parental leave, maternity leave, and on-site childcare centers. In 2001, the country's Labor Standard Act was revised so as to extend paid maternity leave from 60 to 90 days for women working in the private sector. According to another change in the act, pregnant employees are no longer required to work on night shifts or holidays as a condition of their employment. The revision of Equal Employment Act of 2001 also established a small (\$180/month) stipend for workers on parental leave to be paid for from a fund managed by the central government (Ministry of Government Administration & Home Affairs [MOGAHA], 2002; Ministry of Labor [MOL], 2001). The primary family-friendly policies and benefits in the South Korean govern-

ment are:

Family leave: Family leave is defined as paid or unpaid leave taken by employees of either sex for business related to childbirth or emergencies involving a child, spouse, parent, or in-law. Family-focused leaves of absence have become more common among governments and private businesses in many countries, with benefits ranging from a few days or weeks of unpaid leave to as much as 24 months of paid leave (Crampton & Mishra, 1995). Germany and Sweden are among the most generous in terms of paid family leave, while the United States does not mandate paid family leave for either public or private sector employees (Crampton & Mishra, 1995).

Revisions made to the South Korean Civil Service Law in 1995 allow individual public agencies to give their employees up to 1 year's worth of unpaid family leave to care for children, spouses, parents, or parents-in-law with serious health conditions. In those agencies that offer this benefit, employees are limited to three 1-year family leaves during their careers as civil servants (MOGAHA, 2002; MOL, 2001).

Parental leave: Paid or unpaid parental leave provides opportunities for both female and male employees to take time off from their jobs to address childcare responsibilities. A growing number of industrialized nations are providing either paid

Table 3. Parental Leave Policies in Various Countries

Country	Duration (weeks)	Set Benefit/Paid Leave
Austria	96 (single parent: 72)	\$398/mo (single parents: \$564/month)
Canada	10	55% of regular pay
Denmark	10	\$335.70/week
Finland	26	60-70% of regular pay
France	144	First child, none; every additional child, \$428.87/month
Germany	144 (for children under 3 years of age)	First two years, \$285.42/mo; third year, none
Italy	40	30% of regular pay
Japan	48 (for children under 1 year of age)	40% of regular pay (voluntary)
Sweden	72	First year, 80% of regular pay (maximum \$30,584 per year), \$6.72/day for the next 90 days; for twins, 80% of regular pay, none for the next 90 days
United Kingdom	13 (for children under 5 years of age, 4 weeks per year)	None
United States	12	None

Source: Ministry of Labor in South Korea (2002). *Protection of Motherhood & Family-Friendly Policies and Benefits*, p. 38.

or unpaid parental leave to workers (Ministry of Labor, 2001). The difference between family and parental leave is that the former addresses a broader range of family care needs and the latter focuses on care for newborns and very young children. While some countries define parental leave as one component of family leave, others view them as administratively separate policies, each with its own set of benefit guidelines. The most liberal rules on leave-taking are found in Finland, Germany, and Sweden, all of which require employers to offer extended periods of paid leave to workers who have exceptional childcare needs (see Table 3).

The practice of providing parental leave to public sector employees to care for children under the age of 1 was started by the South Korean government in 1995; revisions to the policy in 2001 and 2002 now make it possible for both male and female central and local government employees to take leave for the purpose of providing care to children under 3 years of age. The newest policy provides job protection for

Table 4. Family-Friendly Policies in the Public Sector (South Korea)

Policy	Public Sector	
Family leave	<i>Qualifications</i>	Proven need to care for a child, spouse, parent, or parent-in-law with a serious health problem. 1 year (maximum of three family leaves during an employee's career as a civil servant).
	<i>Duration</i>	No paid leave. Voluntary
Parental leave	<i>Qualifications</i>	Proven need to care for a child under 3 years of age
	<i>Duration</i>	1 year per child Job protection. Partial paid leave: \$180 per month (since 11/1/2001). Mandatory for all government agencies.
New Policy Plan in 2006*	<i>Qualifications</i>	Proven need to care for a child under 7 years of age
	<i>Duration</i>	Maximum 3 years
Maternity leave	<i>Qualifications</i>	Pregnancy and childbirth.
	<i>Duration</i>	90 days (>45 days post-natal); 90 days in cases of a miscarriage, premature birth, or stillbirth after 8 months of pregnancy; less than 90 days in cases of a miscarriage between the 4th and 7th month of pregnancy. Fully paid leave (Mandatory). Female employees with a child under 1 year of age: 1 hr/day for child care (voluntary).
Childcare		Central and provincial governments can provide on-site childcare centers.

Source: Adopted from The Ministry of Government Administration & Home Affairs in South Korea (2002);

* The Republic of Korea Civil Service Commission (2006).

public sector employees who are given permission to take parental leave. Those that do take advantage of this provision are eligible for \$180/month from a government-managed fund (see Table 4).

The law provides job protection for all employees taking parental leave. Public employees' use of parental leave data shows that less than 3 percent of employees who were eligible for parental leave in the central government used parental leave in 2001 (MOGAHA, 2003). Among the parental leave takers in the central government, there were 383 female employees (9.1%) and 29 male employees (0.2%) (MOHAHA, 2003).

Table 5 shows parental leave usage in seven large metropolitan governments and the nine provinces in which they operate autonomously. The data shows that there were 989 female employees and 97 male employees, who took advantage of the parental leave in 2005 (MOHAHA, 2005).

Table 5. Usage of Child-Care Leave of Absence in Local Governments in 2005

(South Korea)

Local Governments	Number of eligible employees			Less than 6 months Number of applicants			6 months or longer Number of applicants		
	Total	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male
Seoul	3,703	1,507	2,196	46	40	6	244	235	9
Busan	1,318	741	577	0	72	68	4		
Daegu	834	391	443	8	7	1	50	42	8
Incheon	1,167	378	789	12	11	1	80	67	13
Gwangju	620	266	354	0	0	0	8	7	1
Daejeon	823	476	347	0	0	0	20	20	0
Ulsan	688	321	367	14	8	6	40	36	4
Gyeonggi	3,989	1,745	2,244	31	25	6	224	219	5
Gangwon	713	387	326	6	5	1	23	22	1
Chungbuk	965	349	616	5	5	0	10	9	1
Chungnam	709	280	429	5	3	2	26	25	1
Jeonbuk	776	396	380	13	8	5	19	19	0
Jeonnam	1,450	710	740	26	14	12	25	24	1
Gyeongbuk	1,636	513	1,123	6	6	0	22	20	2
Gyeongnam	1,047	501	546	8	6	2	26	23	3
Jeju	692	247	445	3	2	1	12	11	1
Total	21,130	9,208	11,922	185	142	43	901	847	54

Source: Adopted from The Ministry of Government Administration & Home Affairs in South Korea (2005).

In responding to the nation's low rate of fertility, the Civil Service Commission in South Korea (2006), in responding to the nation's low rate of fertility, the government plans to extend the parental leave to public sector employees to care for children under

the age of 7 in the near future. The revision plan of the parental leave policy will include the extended duration of the leave up to 3 years.

Maternity leave: Revisions to the South Korean Civil Service Law expanded maternity leave for public employees from 60 days to 90 days, including full salary for the duration (MOGAHA, 2002). In 2001, the numbers of female employees in government who took a maternity leave were 7,181 (MOGAHA, 2003). Employees with children under 1 year of age are allowed to take off up to 1 hour per day for childcare.

On-site childcare: Childcare or childcare support, which many working parents identify as one of the most critical problems they must deal with in order to balance work and family responsibilities (Berman et al., 2001; Riccucci, 2002). Ways in which employers can support their workers in this regard include on- or near-site childcare centers, programs to facilitate access to childcare providers, resource and referral programs, efforts to develop childcare resources in local communities, subsidies for employee childcare costs, and establishing childcare consortiums with other employers (Berman et al., 2001; Riccucci, 2002).

The South Korean government has been offering on-site childcare to its employees since the late 1990s. According to a study conducted by the MOGAHA (2002), 30 out of the central government's 47 agencies (63.8%) now operate their own childcare centers for their respective employees, and 4 more are under construction. The MOGAHA also reported that 10/16 provincial governments (62.5%) operate on-site childcare centers, with 3 others taking steps to establish their own.

In addition, cafeteria benefit programs would be introduced to all agencies in the South Korean government in 2004 (MOGAHA, 2002). "Cafeteria" benefit programs, which is the name used to describe a system by which employees choose from a menu of benefits those that are best suited to their individual needs (Cayer, 1998). Riccucci (2002) asserts that cafeteria-style benefit programs promote fairness and equity for all employees, including those that are childless, while providing resources needed for working parents to balance their job and family commitments.

FAMILY-FRIENDLY POLICIES/BENEFITS IN THE AMERICAN PUBLIC SECTOR

The U.S. government has been reluctant to establish national policies or to pass national laws requiring private employers to limit work hours or provide benefits to help employees meet their family responsibilities (Addison & Siebert, 1991, 1994; Kamerman, 1984; Steinberg & Cook, 1988) until the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) established in 1993. However, as an employer, the federal government has

introduced various benefit programs that serve as models for private businesses, including many of those described in the preceding section (Bruce & Reed, 1994; Gore, 1997). And American employers have steadily offered an increasing range of family-friendly benefits and policies since 1990. This change may be explained by the shortage of talented workers that marked that period of sharp economic growth. The benefits most frequently offered by corporations in the 1990s were flexible scheduling and workplaces, childcare assistance, and some form of elder-care assistance (Families and Work Institute, 1998b; Mitchell, 1997; Vincola, 1998).

Newman and Mathews (1999) note the significance of federal statutes for developing family-friendly policies in the federal government, including the Federal Employees Flexible and Compressed Work Schedule Act of 1978, the Federal Employees Part-time Career Employment Act of 1978, and the Federal Employees Family-Friendly Leave Act of 1994. Furthermore, they emphasize the impact of executive leadership (i.e., family-friendly policy memoranda issued by President Clinton in 1994 and 1996) on diverse family-friendly initiatives in federal agencies. These memoranda emphasized the expansion of family-friendly work arrangements in the executive branch and particular steps that should be taken to enhance the family-friendly workplace concept (Newman and Mathews, 1990). Specially, Vice President Gore (Gore, 1997) recommends various family-friendly policies for federal employees, including child care support, elder care information referral services, flexible hours, telecommuting, promotion of fathers' involvement in children's lives, listening to employee suggestions, and top leadership support. In the federal government, the most significant changes were in the areas of family leave, child care, telecommuting, and flexible work schedules.

Family Leave: The most important attempt to resolve employee work/family conflicts in the US to date is the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), passed by the Congress and signed into law in 1993. The law required all employers to provide up to twelve weeks of unpaid leave per year to all employees for the birth or adoption of a child, a personal medical condition, or the need to care for a child, spouse, or parent with a serious health condition (Allred, 1995; Crampton & Mishra, 1995). The FMLA requires employers to maintain all employee health benefits during the leave period. The law applies to full-time (1,250 hours/year) employees with a minimum one year of service who work for firms with 50 or more workers; virtually all full-time state and local government employees fit into this category. In 2002, California became the first state government to offer paid family leave for up to six weeks per year (Yamamura, 2002); the benefit is paid for through the state's disability insurance fund, to which employees already make regular contributions. The benefit covers care for newborns, recently adopted children, relatives, or domestic partners suffering from illnesses that

require hospitalization—a much broader range of coverage than the national FMLA.

Prior to the passage of the FMLA, in 1988, 27 state governments offered paid sick leave, 23 others included some form of job protection in their policies covering sick leave, 19 states provided leave without pay for parenting duties for mothers only, and 14 states allowed for parenting leave for either mothers or fathers (Makuen, 1988). According to a survey conducted by the United States Department of Labor (USDOL, 1994), three-fifths of all full-time female federal government employees were eligible for unpaid maternity leave. After the FMLA took effect, about one-third of all full-time state and local government employees were eligible for a minimum 12 weeks and maximum 6 months of unpaid family leave (U.S. Department of Labor, 1994). Paid family leave for government employees was very rare until passage of the Federal Employees Family Friendly Leave Act (FEFFLA) in 1994, which allowed federal employees to take up to 40 hours of paid sick leave per year to care for family members or for the bereavement of a deceased family member (US Office of Personnel Management, 1995; Newman & Mathews, 1999).

Child Care: According to the results of a survey conducted by the Women's Bureau of the USDOL (1994), 56 percent of female respondents with children age five or younger said that finding affordable childcare was a serious problem for them. The first attempt by the federal government to offer this benefit was the Triple Amendment, which gave permission to federal agencies to establish on-site childcare centers for the children of federal employees (Newman & Mathews, 1999). By 1994, 9 percent of all full-time employees in state and local governments were eligible for subsidized child care benefits—on-site, near-site, or reimbursement (Newman & Mathews, 1999). According to the same report, reimbursement was the most commonly offered benefit, funded through a system known as Flexible Spending Accounts (FSAs).

Telecommuting Program: According to a survey of telecommuting programs or telework in the federal government (US Office of Personnel Management [OPM], 2005), more than 70 federal agencies had telework policies in place. Section 359 of Public Law 106-346 defines telecommuting as “any arrangement in which an employee regularly performs officially assigned duties at home or other work sites geographically convenient to the residence of the employee,” and eligible employee as, “... any satisfactorily performing employee of the agency whose job may typically be performed at least one day per week at an alternative workplace” (US Office of Personnel Management, 2005). The utilization of telework continues to grow in the federal government. The survey data shows that there was a 37% increase in the number of teleworkers (102,921 to 140,694) from 2003 to 2004. Fifteen agencies reported that more than 50 percent of their workforce participated in telework during 2004 (see Table 6).

Other Family-Friendly Programs: Additional benefits now offered by federal

Table 6. 2004 Survey Agencies with Over 50% Utilization Rate in the U.S. Federal Government (Teleworking)

Department/Agency	# Number of Employees 2004	Total Number of Eligible Employees 2004	Total Number of Employees Teleworking 2004	% of Eligible Employees Teleworking 2004
Board of Governors, Federal Reserve	1,600	49	49	100.0%
Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board	95	3	3	100.0%
Executive Office of the President (Office of Science and Technology Policy)	40	1	1	100.0%
Federal Elections Commission	384	10	10	100.0%
Japan US Friendship Commission	4	3	3	100.0%
Office of Federal Housing Enterprise Oversight	195	181	181	100.0%
U.S. Nuclear Waste Technical Review Board	16	16	15	93.8%
Department of State	18,751	1,240	1,019	82.2%
Access Board	27	24	19	79.2%
Office of Personnel Management	3,594	2,803	1,910	68.1%
National Council on Disability	12	12	7	58.3%
Consumer Product Safety Commission	452	411	209	50.9%
Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service	274	238	120	50.4%
Department of Labor	15,649	15,649	7,845	50.1%
Marine Mammal Commission	11	10	5	50.0%

Source: Adopted from U.S. Office of Personnel Management (2005).

agencies include flexible workplace, part-time employment, job sharing, leave sharing, leave bank programs, and dependent care counseling and referral services (Newman & Mathews, 1999). According to a survey of family-friendly programs and benefits implemented in 8 large agencies and 11 small agencies in the federal government (US Office of Personnel Management, 2000), 64 percent of locations offer flexible work schedules to their employees. In addition, two-thirds of the offices or work cen-

Table 7. Availability of Work and Family Programs Reported at Federal Agencies/Locations (United States)

Work and family programs	Number of Agency locations reporting that programs have been implemented			Percent of Total
	Large agency	Small agency	Combined responses	
Part-time	38	11	49	70.3
Job sharing	19	3	22	31.4
Flexible work schedules	53	11	64	91.4
Compressed work schedules	55	11	66	94.3
Resource/referral for child and/or elder care	39	10	49	70.0
On-site child care available	25	5	30	42.9
Total Agency responses	59	11	70	100

Source: Adopted from U.S. Office of Personnel Management, Office of Merit System Oversight and Effectiveness (2000).

ters managed by those agencies reported having part-time employees and giving referrals for child/elder care. Childcare centers were available at 43 percent of the surveyed locations, and job sharing opportunities were available at approximately 31 percent. The federal government also provides several family-friendly programs through work/life and employee assistance programs, including child care, elder care, adoption benefits, parenting support, fatherhood, nursing mothers, on-site counseling, comprehensive web-based resources and referrals, and online self-assessment (U. S. Office of Personnel Management, 2006).

Moulder and Hall (1995) surveyed 2,613 municipal and 892 country governments regarding their family-friendly policies and benefits for the International City/County Management Association. The percentages of those governments reporting such benefits were as follows: pay for unused sick leave, 49.6%; cafeteria-style benefits selection process, 33%; flexible work hours, 30%; flexible spending accounts, 23.8%; paid maternity leave, 19%; conversion of sick leave to vacation leave, 13.3%; job-sharing, 11%; paid paternity leave, 9%; telecommuting, 4%; on-site daycare, under 1%; and subsidized daycare, under 1% (Moulder & Hall, 1995).

DISCUSSION AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

This study found that leaves of absence are the first types of family-friendly policy that reflect an acknowledgment on the part of government agencies in South Korea

and the United States that both men and women must face work/family conflicts in their lives. These policies are important first steps, considering the continued lack of a national mandate on family leave in South Korea, supporters of these policies can only hope that private firms will follow the lead of government agencies in this area. The South Korean government provides more generous leave policies than those of the American public sector. The paper also found that several family-friendly benefits provided by federal agencies in the United States, including flexible workplace and telecommuting programs, job sharing, leave sharing, leave bank programs, and dependent care counseling and referral services were rarely offered by the South Korean government. Federal agencies in the United States have been implementing flexible work schedules since 1978. South Korean government leaders can learn two other areas for possible reform from the United States: decreasing the number of work week hours and increasing the range of daily schedule and workplace options. Although the Civil Service Commission in South Korea (2006) plans to provide more employment opportunities for the reduced weekly work hours of 32, flexible work arrangements for public sector employees are limited in South Korea.

Flexible work arrangements include flexible work schedules (“flex-time”), off-site workplaces, and job sharing (Berman et al, 2001; Riccucci, 2002). For example, many government agencies in the states now allow their employees to work four ten-hour days per week instead of five eight-hour days, or to choose their own daily schedules, with the only requirement being that they fulfill their 8 hour/day or 40 hour/week work obligation. The word “flexiplace” describes the practice of employees taking advantage of computer networking capabilities to work in satellite offices or in their homes (a practice known as “telecommuting” in the US) (Jacobs & Van Sell, 1996; Riccucci, 2002). Jacobs and Van Sell (1996) have reported that off-site work environments enhance job satisfaction. Jacobs and Van Sell have specifically identified higher productivity, greater technical and emotional support from management, and greater organizational loyalty as benefits from allowing employees to work off-site.

Lord and King (1991) have reported that job sharing programs (that is, two employees splitting the responsibilities, hours, salary, and benefits of a full-time position) help employees balance family and work responsibilities. Doing so allows some employees to maintain their career tracks while also putting time into providing care for infants and toddlers. Berman et al. (2001) note that the success of job sharing programs depends on careful planning, supervisory training, and highly motivated workers. In 2006, the Civil Service Commission in South Korea (2006) plans to provide more employment opportunities for the reduced weekly work hours of 32.

In order to meet the goals of a family-friendly policy or benefit program, it would be necessary for an organization to conduct a systematic study of the process and out-

come evaluation of the practice. This study found that among 1086 parental leave takers in local government in South Korea, there were 989 female employees and 97 male employees (MOHAGA, 2005). Furthermore, according to a study of parental leave usage by employees working in 46 national government agencies and 16 provincial governments was conducted by the South Korean Ministry of Government Administration & Home Affairs [MOGAHA] shows that 1,188 public employees—412 national and 776 provincial—took parental leave in 2001 (Kim, 2002). Female employees constituted the vast majority (94.7%) of workers taking advantage of this benefit. From 1999 to 2001, the number of employees taking parental leave increased from 603 to 1,188, with the number of women taking parental leave increasing from 578 to 894 to 1,130 in 1999, 2000, and 2001, respectively. The comparable numbers of male leave-takers were 25, 50, and 58. According to a South Korean Department of Labor (2002) study, only 1,741 private sector employees (1,698 female and 43 male) took parental leave between November, 2001 and July, 2002.

These data seem to indicate that both public and private sector employees have yet to accept the legitimacy of parental leaves of absence in South Korea. The numbers showing that women are much more likely than men to take parental leave supports the idea that women are still the primary caregivers in South Korean families—perhaps an indication that stereotypical gender-specific work and family responsibilities still exist there (Duxbury & Higgins, 1991). These findings are similar to those from studies of family-friendly policies in the United States (Kim, 1998a; Newman & Mathews, 1999; Vincola, 1998). Meanwhile, several federal government agencies in the states proactively support efforts to strengthen the role of fathers by encouraging them to take advantage of work/life programs, consult with work/life coordinators about options, and participate in parenting and child care seminars and support groups (U.S. Office of Personnel Management, 2006). The effort so called “fatherhood initiatives” has been implemented at the Department of State, Department of Education, Department of Health and Human Services, and Office of Personnel Management in the federal government. Work/life programs in these agencies can assist and support federal employees who are fathers to be more involved in the lives of their children. Specific work/life programs for fatherhood initiatives include family-friendly leave entitlements; child care resources; and workplace flexibilities including alternative work schedules and telework. In addition to, the Employee Assistance Program can offer personal counseling regarding fatherhood, parenting, and balancing work and life (U.S. Office of Personnel Management, 2006).

The generally low numbers of leave-takers may also indicate that employers believe they have insufficient resources for redistributing work assignments should an employee apply for an extended leave of absence. Furthermore, women’s organiza-

tions argue that the \$180/month stipend for parental leaves is much too small, and therefore acts as a major barrier to employees taking greater advantage of these benefits. However, little systematic research has been performed to determine the organizational factors that affect usage patterns in either country. Scholars also found that organizations experiencing difficulties in relocating their workforces and improving service productivity due to a lack of resources and capacity are less likely to implement family-friendly policies (Ezra & Deckman, 1996; Galinsky, 1988; Kim, 1998a). Kim (1998a), for example, reported that employees who feel concern over their co-workers' increased workloads may be reluctant to take advantage of family-friendly policies. Accordingly, organizational leaders can adopt teamwork or team-oriented quality management approaches that can help support the work-family concerns of workers. For example, teamwork management can encourage flex-time policies and promote family leave without hurting productivity.

An increasing number of researchers are arguing that executive leadership, supportive managers, supervisors, and workplace cultures are crucial to the successful implementation of family-friendly policies, and therefore should be considered important independent variables during policy assessment (Ezra & Deckman, 1996; Galinsky, 1988). Specially, executive leadership has been described as central to effective human resource management (Morrison, 1992; Perry, 1993; Senge, 1990); several researchers have specifically emphasized the importance of executive leadership for facilitating effective management of workforce diversity and family benefit policies (Conference Board, 1991; Morrison, 1992; Newman & Mathews, 1999; Riccucci, 2002). Organizational leaders must become vigilant about the ongoing organizational transition from traditional patterns of hierarchical structure, to a flexible organizational structure, emphasizing employees' quality of life at the workplace and home. In addition, organizational leaders should become aware of the importance of organizational culture, teamwork management, and various family-friendly policies enhancing employees' quality of life in public organizations.

To respond to new needs of employees and the environmental change of the organization, organizational leaders should consider several efforts to facilitate family-friendly programs in agencies. For example, the distribution of a newsletter or memorandum will provide employees with information on family-friendly policies. Also, training programs for managers and supervisors in work units could facilitate the implementation of various family-friendly programs. When organizational management respects human beings' self-development by balancing work and family, the goals of family-friendly programs and policies are achieved for both male and female employees.

According to these organizational factors, family-friendly policies do not serve as

an example of a linear relationship between policy decision-making and policy implementation. Instead, the framework emphasizes the importance of a dynamic perspective for analyzing the use and promotion of family-friendly policies.

CONCLUSION

This paper reviewed the status of South Korean women in public sector workforces and analyzed the family-friendly policies and benefits currently offered by the South Korean government and the American government. Although both countries have introduced several family-friendly policies and benefits for the public sector employees, the present study found that there is rare study regarding the effectiveness of family-friendly benefits practices. Organizational leaders can consider several research projects evaluating the impact of family-friendly policies on employee job satisfaction, health, performance, and organizational effectiveness. As mentioned earlier, diverse family-friendly benefits has been emphasized as an important factor in improving organizational performance and promoting job satisfaction.

In this paper, the importance of managerial leadership was emphasized in terms of facilitating family-friendly policies in public organizations. The major implication is that executive and organizational leaders need to remain aware of the relationship between their employees' quality of life issues and organizational performance, and need to encourage and support a general transition from traditional hierarchical to flexible organizational structures that acknowledge work/home conflicts and concerns.

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