

'M'의 재앙: 사회·문화적 관점에서 본 일과 삶의 균형과 정책 방향

Curse of 'M': Work-Life Balance and Essential Development of Policies in Social and Cultural Aspects

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요약

웰빙(well-being)은 이제 전 세계적으로 국가의 중요 정책이 되고 있다. 대표적 국제기구들 중 하나인 OECD는 GDP가 더 이상 국민들의 행복을 반영하지 못한다는 사실을 인지하고 그 대체지수로서 더 나은 삶 지표(Better Life Index)를 고안하여 세계 각국에 권고하고 있다. 그 지표들 중 하나인 일과 삶의 균형(work-life balance)은 부양가족을 지닌 근로자들의 행복을 위한 매우 중요한 지표들로 간주하여 11개의 지표 중 하나로 선정되었다. 그러나 한국의 경우 일과 삶의 균형 지표는 다른 지표와 비교했을 때 공동체 지표와 함께 최하위권에 머물고 있다. 본 논문에서는 한국인의 일과 삶의 균형에서 당면한 문제와 이를 해소하기 위한 정책적 방안들을 탐구하고자 한다. 연구 과제는 첫째, 일과 삶의 균형의 개념은 무엇인가, 둘째, 한국 근로자들이 처해있는 한국사회 고유의 특성과 일과 삶의 균형에 관련된 정책은 어떠한가, 셋째, 기존의 관련 정책을 한국 사회의 특성에 맞춰 어떻게 변화 또는 발전시켜야 하는가이다. 논의의 결과는 다음과 같다. 우선 정부 차원에서의 문화적 접근이 부족했다. 즉 적극적 캠페인을 통해 전통적 성 역할에 대한 인식을 전환시키려는 실질적인 노력이 없었다. 회사 차원에서는 권위적인 조직 문화를 역이용하여 근로자들의 일과 삶의 균형에 적극 활용할 필요가 있다. 다시 말해 근로시간의 준수, 출산 및 육아휴직의 사용을 회사차원에서 적극적으로 권고하는 것을 제도화 할 필요가 있다. 일하는 여성이 직장인과 엄마 역할 사이에서 갈등하는 상황을 남편 및 가족의 이해와 지지로 극복할 수 있도록 도와주는 가족지원책이 필요한 것이다.

■ 중심어 : | 일과 삶의 균형 | 더 나은 삶 지표 | 성 불평등 | 장시간 노동 | 권위주의적 조직 문화 |

Abstract

Along with the mood of 'Beyond GDP', it is necessary to explore how these subjective concepts such as happiness and well-being are quantified to be compared among many countries. The concept of 'Work-life balance (WLB)' is likely to be located on the boundary between the subjective and objective areas. Thus, this article aims to examine the policies related to WLB and how to change or develop those policies considering the concept of WLB and the circumstantial particularity of Korea. There are several suggestions on certain developments in the existing policies interfering WLB at three levels. First the government needs to conduct campaigns to transform traditional gender roles through active advertisement. Second, the company needs to use the long-lasting 'hierarchical organisation culture' for employee's work-life balance for regulating working hours and exhausting paid holidays and maternity or paternity leave. Finally, families should understand and support their wives' current circumstances facing the struggle between a mother and economic worker.

■ keyword : | Work-life Balance | OECD Better Life Index | Gender Inequality | Overwork | Hierarchical Organisation Culture |

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I. Introduction

Korea is ranked in the top group that reported the longest working time among the OECD countries. It is demonstrable that the working time has been reduced from 2,351 hours in 2005 to 2,090 in 2011. However, Koreans tend to work 325 hours (about 7 hours per week) more than the workers of the other OECD countries annually. Although statistically the working time of those in the US is much shorter than that of Koreans, American workers work longer than their counterparts in Germany or France[1]. This trend has not changed at all since Schor's book was published in 1991 and it represented that the working hours of American employees were 320 hours longer than German and French workers[2].

In general it is represented that the issue of overwork is closely related to 'work-life balance' as well as 'family'. It tends to be regarded as reasonable that work-life balance problems are derived from overwork. In fact the problem of work-life balance arose as an issue following the Second World War. Since an increased population of married women rapidly flowed into the labour market and, accordingly, their concerns revolved around adjusting the balance between their two roles as both a mother and an industrial employee[3]. About 70 years later, contemporary society is still surrounded by the same issue of balancing women's two roles. While dual-earner households have increased along with women's higher level of education, longer working hours are likely to intensify gender inequality in the labour market. In other words, if either one of the husband or wife consistently works for long hours, the likelihood of them quitting the job for the other was significantly increased. After all the overwork has brought about re-introducing the traditional roles of gender in households which are men as

breadwinners and women as homemakers[4].

Hence it is represented that the four terms, ('overwork', 'gender inequality', 'work-life balance', and 'family'),-are correlated to one another in current society. Moreover these issues have been dealt with by the OECD and ILO for many years. First of all, the OECD has investigated the key factors which influence people's lives for more than ten years and resulting in OECD Better Life Initiative in 2011. It intends to develop statistics in terms of the quality and aspects of people's. The 'How is Life' reports and the 'Better Life Index' can be indicated as two main products of this initiative[5].

Secondly, 'Governing Body' which is regarded as ILO's executive body and meets three times a year, and ILO policy and the agenda of International Labour Conference are decided. It is represented that the fourth item on the agenda is work-life balance. This paper focuses on reviewing the scope of work-family tensions and gender inequality both in the workplace and at home. It is also expected that certain guidelines for the design of integrated work-family policies can be provided[6][7]. Thus it can be regarded that the problem of work-life balance related to the family is a quite important issue at the international level.

Whereas in Korea the policy to reduce working time was initially introduced in 2004 and completely implemented in 2011¹, those issues of long working

¹ The '40 Hour Work Week' is often called the 'Five Day Work Week'. This agenda had undergone a debate for about five years: the key issue was about reducing working time from 44 to 40 hours per week, and finally was passed into law by the National Assembly in August 2003. It was enforced in six phases [8]: PHASE 1, government, financial and insurance agencies and workplaces with more than 1,000 employees in July 2004 PHASE 2, workplaces with over 300 employees in July 2005 PHASE 3, workplaces with over 100 employees in July 2006 PHASE 4, workplaces with over 50 employees in July 2007 PHASE 5, workplaces with over 20 employees in July 2008 PHASE 6, workplaces with less than 20 employees will be include on a day to be determined by Presidential decree which will be no later than 2011.

hours, intensified workloads and job insecurity still remain unsolved. In fact concerns about the gap between the state policy and the policies in practice may be the main area for the academic researchers to investigate. This article attempts to explore the work-life balance in the OECD BLI index and ILO Governing Body, and how to modify or develop the existing policies in Korea which are related to the work-life balance. There are three research questions: First, what is the concept of work-life balance? For the first question a number of academic articles and papers from international organisations and the government reports and news articles related to work-life balance will be examined. Second, what is the particularity of Korean workers at the workplaces and at home? Despite the state policy to reduce working time, why do Koreans still work long hours? In addition what are the implications of the existing policies in Korea? Thus various circumstances surrounding them and the relevant policies in Korean society will be investigated in this part. Third, how can the existing policies in Korea related to the work-life balance be developed or changed, considering both the concept of WLB and the particularity of Korean society? Furthermore, it is expected that appropriate policies for Korean worker's well-being or happiness can be derived from those three research questions.

II. The Concept of Work-Life Balance

It was expected that the development of technology influence both the working hours as well as the workloads of employees in the workplaces. Along with reduced working time, they were expected to increase their leisure time or time to be spent with the family. However, their working hours have increased

and workloads have also intensified. Insecurity in the labour market and concerns about casual income in each household has increased at the same time. Women who have higher educational level have constantly flowed into the labour market and the tension of their family has increased[9].

Although it was obvious that the legal working time has decreased, it seems to be perceived that in contemporary society people feel that they lack time or that their time is increasingly being harried [10-12]. According to Wajcman the issue of work-life balance tends to reflect the pressure of time at present. To seek for well-being and happiness, it seems to be important to slow down the increasing tempo of life[12].

The factor of 'work-life balance' is particularly important for people's well-being which is concerned with their family lives, and it seems to be helpful for maintaining people's health and productivity that then enables the quantity of time for leisure, personal care and other non-work activities to be spent. Furthermore it seems to be recognised that people's interest in GDP has shifted into the Better Life Index, because it is likely to be difficult that the income itself is able to successfully describe the quality of life or well-being. Hence, the Better Life Index was derived from a series of social backgrounds newly developed such as the global financial crisis in 2007, weaken trust of people in institutions and government, the emergence of new forms of solidarity and civic participation, provision of well-being indicators for the policy makers dealing with people's lives, the issue of gender inequality and the rising issue of importance of quality jobs and well-being at the workplace[13].

In short, the concept of the work-life balance seems to imply various issues related to family matters which are combined with each other. In particular, the

gender inequality which is regarded as a relevant determinant of well-being may bring about a variety of problems such as male overwork, expulsion of the qualified female from the labour market, increased family tension in dual earner households and so on.

In fact, working people generally seek a balance between their work and life because they are not able to obtain sufficient income if their working hours are too short, while they can be in danger of damaging their health if their working hours are too long. It has a negative influence on their well-being as well as their family's because children's well-being is completely affected by their parents' ability to work and care for them. Thus the work-life balance is measured by the two indicators in the investigation of the OECD, namely 'the proportion of employees who usually work for pay for 50 hours per week or more', and 'the time devoted to leisure and personal care in a typical day by full-time employed workers'. As some difficulties to measure work-life balance are indicated, there are several considerations to measure it properly. Firstly personal needs and preferences, and cultural, social and policy contexts where people live, determine how to allocate their time. Thus, varieties and differences should be considered and reviewed when comparing these factors across the countries. Secondly, whilst the results from measuring the work-life balance can be useful to explore how people allocate their time it may be difficult to investigate personal enjoyment or perceived time stress because the quality of time out of work is not reflected. Thirdly, the Time Use Survey in most OECD countries is conducted every five or ten years and thus it is not easy to match up the time of the investigations which are undertaken in each country[13].

In conclusion, to measure the work-life balance it seems to be necessary to examine the quantity of

both the work and non-work time. The concept of work-life balance is based on how people make or maintain a balance between work and the rest. To consider this concept first of all, job opportunities to gain adequate income should be provided, which is the criterion to divide their lives into work and non-work. Indeed it is necessary that exploring the work-life balance focus should be placed mainly on people who have a family (e.g. that which consists of a husband, wife and children). There are, of course, many single households and their numbers have increased in contemporary society. Nevertheless the tendency is that people who have to support their family consider the work-life balance further because in the general time-use survey[14], the non-work time of waged working people includes leisure time, personal care, housework and so forth. Moreover, as the gender gap in well-being has been consistently mentioned, the role of each gender side within the household should be thoroughly considered in exploring the work-life balance.

Finally in the globalised world, for people who study social science, a comparative study seems to be essential to analyse social phenomena. Durkheim insisted more than a century ago that "Comparative sociology is not a particular branch of sociology; it is sociology itself, in so far as it ceases to be purely descriptive and aspires to account for facts." [15]. When comparative studies such as the OECD investigations are conducted or interpreted, considerations of any similarities and differences among countries and understanding the particularity of each country should not be disregarded[16].

III. The Particularity of Korean Workers at the Workplace and Home

According to OECD statistics, Korea recorded the

second longest working time among OECD countries in 2011[13]. Indeed it is represented that there are gender differences in the two indicators of jobs and earnings: employment rates (tertiary educated individuals) and wage gap between men and women. While 60% of women are employed, 89% of men are employed, – and male workers earn 38% more than their female counterparts. With reference to the number of hours dedicated to the household tasks (per week) as an indicator of work-life balance, men and women spend 17 and 31 hours respectively. In other words, women perform household tasks 14 hours longer than men each week[17].

Although the 40 hour workweek was implemented in 2004, most Korean workers are still working more than 40 hours per week. According to a recent study on workers who employed by a major Korean company, 90.3% of employees work for more than 8 hours per day. Whilst the proportion of employees who have over 10 days of paid holidays is 70.9%, in practice only 29.7% of them could spend 10 days or more. Furthermore there is the gender gap in working time, and the proportion of males (48.2%) who work more than 10 hours is greater than females (28.3%), which seem to be similar to OECD statistics concerning Korea. In particular the married group (50.8%) tends to prefer payment for extra working time in contrast to those unmarried (39.5%). As a result of the follow-up interview it demonstrates that the employees seem to understand that long working hours are a normal part of their working lives. They have to work for long hours to remain in their current jobs or to become a regular employee. They cannot leave their offices if the team leader or other seniors are still working. Indeed they are unable to exhaust a legal minimum leave entitlement because their workloads are so intensified. It is only possible to exhaust paid holidays if companies strictly enforce

and pressure their employees to use their legal entitlement. In general employees are not able to have long-term holidays (e.g. a week) because other team members have to make up for their absence during this time[18]. The results of the study lead to the questions of what the particularity of Korean workers is. It can be represented that two characteristics reflect this particularity which consists of the unique corporate culture of Korea and Korean attitudes toward work, especially institutional circumstance of sustaining long working hours.

1. Cultural Characteristics of Korea

In terms of cultural factors Korean society mainly seems to contain an organisational corporate culture and traditional gender roles.

1.1 Organisational Corporate Culture

Korean corporate culture seems to be influenced by Confucianism. Various Confucian values can be easily found in workplaces, values such as respect for the old, loyalty to superiors, harmonious relations and filial piety which affect personal relations and work culture. In fact, it is likely to be important that the corporate culture determines employees' work behaviour and consequently the company's financial performance. Thus, it is necessary to recognise the main influences of Confucianism on Korean corporate culture, namely 'paternalistic leadership', 'family-life working environment', 'hierarchical structure', 'gender inequality', and 'collectivism'. These characteristics of the corporate culture seem to influence determining features of their work behaviour which consists of self-discipline, diligence and team spirit[19].

Moreover, similar cases of corporate culture can be found in other studies. According to Cheon and Han's study in terms of 'examining the effects of job involvement, job stress and organizational culture on

work-life harmonization of Korean employees', the higher positions tended to be more job-oriented and this factor may be inclined to bring about ineffective overwork by their employees as well as increased job stress. In other words, it can be recognised that employees' working time can be determined by whether their seniors work till late or not. Breen's book, 'Koreans: Who They Are, What They Want, Where Their Future Lies (1990)' is also referenced in this study. He argues that Korean identity can be job positions, and the employees tend to be called 'section chief Kim' and 'deputy Park' even outside their workplaces. In addition it is described that Korean employees have to loaf around because they need to work further until their seniors go home[20]. Hence it can be identified that Korean corporate culture is characterised as hierarchically organised.

Family-friendly management is recently represented as an alternative way to seek work-life balance. Under this organisational corporate culture, it is recognised that certain policies need to be implemented for the employee's family at the company level. It is suggested that the company provides employee-support systems, flexible working time, family-support systems, the childcare and educational support and so forth, to adjust the balance between employee's work and their lives. In addition, it is necessary to produce a family-friendly atmosphere within the organisation and to train managers to recognise this policy. In particular it is most important that the management and managers have attitudes in favour of understanding family-friendly management and support their employees[21]. It may be regarded that the attitude of the management toward family-friendly organisations is more essential than the company policy to support employees. The workers who recognise that their seniors provide higher emotional support tend to

experience work-family conflict at a lower level. When the workers are situated in a work-family conflict they have a tendency to feel stable psychologically if their seniors are considerate of their family affairs and offer support to perform tasks effectively[22].

1.2 Traditional Gender Role and the Effectiveness of Campaigns for Transforming the Norm

It is regarded that traditional gender roles can be part of the Korean particularity as well as a global common issue even among industrialised countries. In the age of agrarian society men engaged in agriculture more actively while women in the peasant household assumed childcare, housework and were also involved in men's work as assistants. As Schor indicated, women's work commitments seemed to be more continuous than men's working pattern[23]. Along with the emergence of a social class, the higher class had kept trying to stay away from work as far as possible while the lower class were required to perform labour constantly. The interesting point can be found in Veblen's remarks that the daily work for a living such as physical and factory labour is performed by the lower class which consists of slaves, people who rely upon others and most women[24]. In contemporary society women tend to do much more housework than men even though they belong to a dual-career household. While the employment rate of the female has continuously increased, they still work for fewer hours, earn less wage and are situated in lower status occupations than the male. Although the attitude toward gender roles seems to have become less traditional, there has been little impact on the distribution of domestic tasks [4].

Korean society had experienced similar circumstances surrounding traditional gender roles because the

Confucianism, which had ruled the society for a long time, included the idea of predominance of man over woman. In particular, domestic tasks were an important part of women's lives in the Joseon Dynasty (1392-1897) shortly before modernisation. It was not simple labour but the public life of the family and it was a field of life where complicated family relationships were interlaced. Here, women did economic activities as a labourer, bought some products as a main agent of the domestic economy and invested to solve economic difficulties of family as a new investor[25]. Women's domestic tasks seemed to be classified into simple domestic labour (which consisted of cooking, washing clothes and taking care of children), economic activity within a house (such as weaving), domestic labour outside a house (such as drawing water), washing clothes and delivering lunch to their husbands who were engaged in the farm work, and economic activity outside a house including production activity in agriculture and fishery, commercial activity and so on[26]. Thus, women have played a pivotal role in the domestic life and in the 21st century similar situations are proceeding. Although most people currently tend to consider working women as a norm, married women are still struggling with the conflict between the traditional gender roles and their social status as a worker.

The career discontinuity of working women seems to be derived mainly from this conflict. It is still required that women successfully manage both domestic and working life at the same time. In particular the phenomenon of women's career discontinuity persists because they have a strong sense of responsibility with regard childcare and housework. According to 'a study of the current state of working parents in Seoul', 43.8% of women experienced their career discontinuity which was

much greater than men (24%), and the main reason was that it was hard to manage both working and domestic life (45%) simultaneously. Indeed the proportion of female irregular workers was much greater than their male counterparts and the reason was the same as why the proportion of women's career discontinuity was much greater than men.

In the proportion of female workers by age group derived from the Economic Activity Census in 2010, 2011 and 2012, a typical 'M' curve can be clearly observed as shown in [Figure 2].

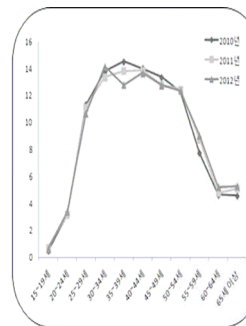


Figure 1. Economically active population for males

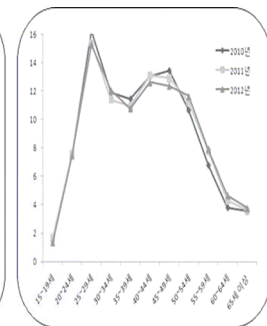


Figure 2. Economically active population for females

The proportion of the 25-29 years old female workers accounted for the largest share of 15.28%. The proportion decreases to 12.06% when the age reaches 30-34 years-old, and then further declines again to 10.78% in the age group of 35-39 years old. Thus it can be explained that this period is regarded as the age when the female workers get married, give birth to their first child and start full-scale childcare[27].

As work-life balance is one of the main factors in determining the quality of life, it seemed to be clear that the circumstances surrounding married working women influence their quality of life negatively. According to 'Analysing constructional relationship among factors to determine the quality of married

working women' the characteristics of married working women can be summarised as self-esteem, stress from childcare, the support of family and job-satisfaction. As a result it is represented that the subjective quality of life has increased along with higher self-esteem and job satisfaction and here the marriage satisfaction is operating as a parameter. In other words the higher marriage satisfaction is derived from the higher self-esteem and the higher family support i.e. the husband more deeply understands and supports his wife's work and childcare, lowers the stress of his wife and after all it may well have an impact on marriage satisfaction and the subjective quality of life positively. Additionally, the conflict between the couple tends to strongly influence negatively both marriage satisfaction and the subjective quality of life. Heightened family support also decreases the conflict between husband and wife and this result increases marriage satisfaction and finally it leads to the development of the subjective quality of life[28]. Thus it can be summarised that how the married working women are understood and supported by their husbands or family seems to be very important for the development of their quality of life and it is likely to be necessary to suggest some actions to transform the recognition of the traditional gender roles. In fact, it seems unlikely to be able to transform the long-lasting ideas within a short period of time. Nevertheless, it seems to be essential to introduce such a campaign to lead to dads' involvement in childcare because it is expected that the career discontinuity of working women will be restrained and further the number of dual-earner households will be preserved or even increased. Indeed it may lead to an increase in the birth rate.

In terms of gender equality, there are no objections that Scandinavian countries- including Denmark and

Sweden- are located among the top countries in the world. According to Linda Haas who studied in the 1990s on how to transform views of gender, the reasons why their governments promoted gender equality refer to a labour shortage as well as ideology. These countries did not try to import workforces just like the US but intended to fill up the gap in the labour market with the mums. For example, Swedish government contributed to popularise the view that dads were able to be responsible for childcare and they had to, through intensive campaigns. In all of the organisations that were dealing with immunisations and childbirth, the posters describing a wrestling player who requested paternity leave and stood with a baby were presented. Thus this kind of picture was shown to all of the parents. The author of the book 'Overwhelmed' observed and interviewed Danish dads who were actively involved in housework and childcare to investigate why Danish mums were able to have much leisure time. In Sweden and Denmark it would not be uncommon for dads wearing a suit to push a pram. They use the subway, buses and bicycles to take their children. It can be easily observed that a number of dads come to nearby playgrounds with their children. In the traffic signs presenting a pavement, there is a dad holding his child's hand, not a mum[24].

In Korea similar campaigns concerning dads' participation in childcare can be found. The campaign called 'Ma-the-ha-se-yo'² is conducted by the Ministry of Healthcare and Welfare aiming at building a society where all children can be happy. More specifically there are three slogans, namely getting off work on time, going home after work and spending

² 'Ma-the' is used as the abbreviation of 'Ma-eum-eul-the-ha-se-yo' and here 'Ma-eum' means 'heart' and 'the-ha-se-yo' means 'join together' and accordingly it refers to 'join your hearts together'. Moreover 'Ma-the' sounds very similar with the English word 'mother' so it can be a message for dads such as 'Try to be like a mother'.

the weekend with the family. Although several public advertisements have been produced and presented on TV and Youtube, they do not seem to be successful in affecting the majority strongly enough. However, it can be regarded as a good start especially for recognising gender equality in childcare. In fact, the policy of parental leave in Korea does not seem to be located in the lower group in comparison with other countries. According to the news article of the Guardian on 29 Nov 2013, from April 2015 British parents can share 12 months of leave after the birth of a child. The policy of other countries introduced in this article aims at helping women return to the workplaces while men have the chance to be involved in childcare. In the US there is no paid parental leave but a maximum of 12 weeks unpaid leave available. In Europe, except Scandinavian countries, mothers have between 14 and 22 weeks of maternity leave and fathers between two days (Greece) and three months (Spain) of paid leave. In much of Asia (Thailand, Pakistan, Malaysia and so forth), there is no paternity leave. Japan, however, offers a year's unpaid leave to each parent[29]. In the website of Employment Issuance it can be identified that Korea offers a maximum of a year of paid leave to each parent and the parental leave allowance of 40% of the average wage is paid (maximum about 850 US dollars, minimum about 430 US dollars a month). In detail the offered parental leave allowance of 85% is provided every month but the remaining 15% is offered after returning to the workplace and there is another condition that the parent must work for over six months after the end of parental leave. According to YTN news on 31 August 2013, the proportion of dads who use paternity leave occupied only 2 percent and the two reasons were represented as financial difficulty and anxiety about any disadvantages at the workplace. In fact, financial difficulties may well be

predictable because the maternity and paternity leave allowances are applied to only 40% of the respective parent's wages. With reference to the anxiety about the disadvantages at the workplace, the change of the organisational culture may be indicated as a solution. According to Professor Philip Hwang from Gothenburg University in Sweden, the higher management positions of whether they support exhausting the maternity or paternity leave can directly influence the staff[30]. Hence from this point of view the main problem is not whether the policy of parental leave exists or not but whether this policy is effectively carried out in practice. Accordingly, the increase of parental leave allowance and the improvement of the organisational culture toward maternity and paternity leave supported by effective campaigns at the same time would lead to a good chance of transforming the recognition of the traditional gender roles, at least in childcare.

2. Institutional Characteristics of Korea

Another fascinating particularity of Korean society can be represented by the Korean attitude toward work, in particular, the institutional circumstances of sustaining long working hours. In fact weekly working hour limits in Korea are legally regulated as 40 hours. This figure is similar to other developed countries namely Austria, Canada, Finland, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden and the US[31]. The problem is that a substantial gap exists between the legal working hour limits and the actual working hours at workplaces. According to statistical data of ILO, both values of working time and income tend to be correlated to each other and, in general, most high-income countries have a tendency to enjoy shorter working hours, however, there are exceptions to this pattern such as Singapore and Korea where

the workers have working hours of more than 48 hours a week[32].

As for the reason why the gap between official and actual working time exists, there are several views that can be summarised as follows. First of all, comparatively strong institutional inertia concerning long working time exists in the society. It does not seem that it will be changed easily and has structuralised the causes of the long working hours such as an input quantity-oriented production system, company strategies of using minimum human resources, low-waged systems, the social norm about working time and the employment system for male full-time employees providing a single household income. The factors sustaining long-working time refer to a comprehensive wage system, the shift system, the exemption system of working hours and non-strict acts of working time. In particular, the comprehensive wage system tends to be used as a tool where the white-collar workers are unable to request the additional pay for overtime work they deserve. In other words their annual income includes the overtime payment as well as their chances for promotions, hence overtime work is likely to be regarded as spontaneous but in fact is obviously forced. In addition, those factors mentioned above are broadly recognised as a set of practices for working and, as a result, the system of long working hours has been continuously reproduced and preserved till now. Hence this system leads to delayed industrial development, a low employment rate of females, conflicts between work and family, low quality of working life, restrictions on job creation, discrepancies life cycles and the under-development of leisure and culture within a community[33].

According to a research report on the workers of Hyundai motors who have been regarded as representative and symbolic industrial workers in

Korea, they seem to have ambivalent perspectives on working hours because the trade union insists on reduced working time while acquiescing amid long hours of work in violation of the Labour Standard Law (the limit of 52 working hours per week including 12 hours for overwork) at the same time. It is likely to be concluded that the workers at Hyundai choose to work for long hours by themselves because the duration is directly related to their incomes and the long working hours tend to be recognised as a financial benefit. They do not seem to be willing to concede shorter working time unless their wages are maintained. Their attitudes toward time have two kinds of tendencies contradictory to each other. That is, while they keep trying to work longer hours, at the same time they hope to have more leisure time and seek a balanced work and life. They also recognise that a workaholic company culture can be found easily in this company. Although the double shift has negatively affected the workers' health conditions, their concerns about health have only been raised while the length of working time has not decreased. This is, because it seems that income is the dominant factor in their minds and has a priority over health. The longer the time one stays at the workplace, the shorter the time one spends at home with the family. It does not seem to be possible that the workers are able to play their role within the family because of a lack of time at home. The roles have to be taken up by their wives and then it should be structuralised that while the male works at the workplace to earn income for the family, the female has to adopt all kinds of roles in the family without being paid. This kind of structure promotes gender inequality in the labour market and consequently the chances of the female taking paid work are reduced. Thus it is that the long working hours of male workers at Hyundai are possible only under the condition that their wives

have no paid-jobs and take on all responsibilities for both housework and childcare[34]. The workers, therefore, still record the longest working hours in the world even though internationally a reasonable legal working-time limit exists in Korea. The main issue is how to overcome the gap between legal and actual working hours. It is proposed that most people recognise long working hours as a part of working life and structuralised working system is already ingrained into many parts of the society. In particular the low-waged system tends to promote overworking for more earnings, while non-strict implementation of the relevant acts of working hours and the number of exemptions are indicated as causes of the long-working hours.

IV. Any Changes or Development of the Policy related to Work-Life Balance: Implications of Cultural Contents

As represented in the previous chapter, the cultural and institutional particularity of Korea seems to have been obstructed the work-life balance of the workers. The hierarchically organised culture dominates at the workplaces and organisations, and causes long working hours. Although there were several trials to introduce the family-friendly management at the workplaces, this hierarchical culture tended to interrupt for the seniors to deeply understand and support their staffs. In fact various studies have already indicated that the family friendly management regime influences on the work-family tension to be reduced. However to maintain those family-oriented policies effectively it needs to be stressed that not only the recognition but also the company by the management for the family-friendly climate within the workplaces is essential[35][36]. Additionally the

obsolete yet still dominant thinking of the traditional gender role results in putting female employees out from the labour market. They have been forced to be struggling with the conflict between work and the life. Until now, both the policy makers and the workers have struggled to overcome those obstructions and maintain the balance between work and life. As a result a number of policies concerning weekly working time limit, and maternity and paternity leave have been introduced to meet the international level. However the most important issue yet to be solved is how to activate those policies effectively at the workplaces satisfying the original intention. Hence, in this chapter investigations will be made focused on how to change and develop the existing policy related to the work-life balance.

First of all, in terms of the working time regulation, the 40 hours workweek seems to be a reasonable policy in accordance with the international level if the working time limit is more strongly and thoroughly regulated. Even though a number of countries are adopting this policy, it is indicated that there are so many exemptions in the working hour limit in Korea. On the 15th of September 2015, there was the tripartite agreement among the labour, management and the government where a strong regulation of weekly overtime limit as 12 hours was included. It is expected that many employees can have ‘a life of evening with family(저녁이 있는 삶)’ through this agreement. Thus for the work-life balance the provision of the working time limit should be strongly enforced first of all. It may be the first step that male workers spend evening time with their wife and children, which will also create essential circumstances for them to be interested in housework and childcare. Among the slogans of the campaign ‘Ma-the-ha-se-yo’ getting off work on time is presented as the first step because fathers should not

work overtime to fulfill the rest of the slogans which are going home after work and spending the weekend with the family. In other words it may reflect that how hierarchical and organisational culture has encouraged for the employees to work overtime on weekdays as well as at the weekend and to attend social meetings with colleagues at the workplaces. Thus it should be recognised that the inefficient working culture such as the long working hours, overwork and so on strongly influence negatively on the conflict between work and family relation[37] and a further study seems to be required to be carried out focusing on how the hierarchical and organisational culture can be dealt with to improve this inefficient working culture in more details .

Secondly, concerning maternity and paternity leave 'Equal Employment Opportunity and Work Family Balance Assistance Act' has been introduced and developed since 2007[38]. It refers to the entitlement of three months of paid leave for mothers and three days of paid leave for fathers after the childbirth, and one year of paid leave to take care of the child who is under 9 years old. Internationally the provisions implementing this policy seem to be located at the average level. However the proportional ratio of the male employees who apply for paternity leave still remains at a single digit. The fathers seem to be afraid of financial difficulty and disadvantages at the workplace such as elimination from promotion. The recognition of the traditional gender role is likely to have been reflected on the statistics for paternity leave. In other words men have to be a breadwinner in the household and women have more responsibilities for the housework and childcare. It can also be represented that fathers tend to recognise themselves as assistants in childcare and housework. It seems that many male workers have chosen overwork for more income for their family instead of

spending time with their family in the similar context. Hence it is necessary to use the hierarchical and organisational culture at the workplaces to promote exhausting the maternity as well as paternity leave. As indicated previously, in this organisational culture as in Korea the attitude of the higher management position can directly affect their staffs' behaviours. Additionally it is essential that the importance of employee's work-life balance should be continuously emphasised to the management by educational programmes or announcements. The benefit of this policy also needs to be expanded if the government intends to promote the childbirth, and the regulation on the maternity and paternity leave should be enforced further.

In fact the work-life balance seems to be correlated to various issues including overtime, gender inequality at the workplace and home, and family matters such as the increase of family tension and delay of marriage and childbirth. Here it seems to be necessary to change the way of thinking regarding what kind of negative effects will take place under the circumstances of a completely broken balance between work and life and the results can be expected as follow: firstly it is expected that the age at which women give birth to their first child will continue increasing. In a society dominated by gender inequality and with a working system of long hours, working women tend to delay marriage or childbirth because under the unchangeable circumstances, they will be still enforced to manage both economic and domestic work without any support. According to the country comparison data regarding birth rates in 2014, Korea is shown to have 8.1 births per 1,000 population and is ranked 220th among the 224 countries[39]. Moreover, the National Health Insurance Corporation announced that the rate of birth defects has increased by 2.4 times in seven years, and the phenomenon of

both late marriage and childbirth can go some way to explaining this. In fact, diabetes and hypertension during pregnancy tend to influence the rate of fetal deformities. The probability of women aged over 35 years old suffering from diabetes is seven times higher and the probability of suffering from hypertension is 40% higher for women in their early-20s[40]. As a result, the government may pay more for social security and health insurance. Secondly, the collapse of the family structure will be accelerated. As long as the obstruction factors of work-life balance exist, the male oriented employment system will be maintained. This employment system will maintain the long working-hours system which compensates the workers for overwork, female career discontinuity and the patriarchal family system where traditional gender roles strongly exist. Accordingly, the father's role in the household will only be recognised as a tool to earn money then, finally, this kind of recognition will lead to a collapse of the family as a consequence. Thus it can be confirmed here that work-life balance is very important in the pursuit of a better life and the related policies need to be continuously developed.

V. Conclusion

Throughout this paper, the concept of work-life balance and the measures on how to change and develop the related policy considering the circumstantial particularity of Korea has been reviewed. First of all, it can be said that work-life balance is a concept which includes a number of issues related to family such as gender inequality, male overwork, expulsion of the qualified female from the labour market and increased family tension. Moreover, for measuring work-life balance, the

quantity of both work and non-work time needs to be examined. Secondly the particularity of the environment surrounding Korean workers can be represented by two kinds of characteristics, namely cultural and institutional. As a cultural aspect, Korean corporate culture can be characterised as having on organisational culture and traditional gender roles having been strongly influenced by Confucian culture. The organisational culture tends to be very hierarchical. When people leave the offices of an evening is often determined by whether the seniors are still working or not. Furthermore, workers address each other by their job titles even outside of the workplace. Indeed, the family-friendly management policy can be effectively operated by senior's attitude toward actively accepting this policy. Traditional gender roles are regarded as not only the character of Korea but also of other Western countries. Women still do more housework than men even though they have paid jobs. They are continuously struggling to play their two roles at the same time, namely that of a mother and a worker. Many women have to choose career discontinuity in the early period of marriage, the first childbirth and a full-scale childcare when they are 30 to 39 years old on average. This is identified by the typical 'M' curve in terms of the female economically active population. The happiness of women is strongly influenced by their family and husbands' understanding and support, and it is essential that men's involvement in domestic work such as housework and childcare must be transformed.

As an institutional aspect, several factors which structure a Korean's working life are as follows. First of all, the long working day is recognised as a part of their working lives. Secondly the policy of the 40 hour workweek is not actually enforced even though it has existed since 2004. Thirdly the traditional

factory-production system has been sustained up to now. Thus it can be summarised that the background of the long working day is correlated to three levels: the level of the company, the social system and the personal level. In other words, at the level of company an attractive link between overwork and more earnings or any promotions at the job level is provided, and at the level of the social system the non-strict legal system about the working time limit has persisted. Finally at the personal level there is the long-lasting recognition and acceptance of long working hours which many workers understand as simply part of their working lives.

Happiness and well-being have risen as a main issue throughout the present-day world, which leads us to explore a 'better life'. However, investigating happiness and well-being is fraught with difficulty because they are very subjective concepts. In particular, international organisations which have conducted comparative research, encounter the challenge of transforming these subjective ideas into quantitative data, able to be compared. Hence a study of work-life balance can be an effective beginning for overcoming this challenge because it implies objective indicators (namely, quantitative time) which can lead to some expectations for people's quality of life.

In conclusion, it is essential to change the existing policies which interrupt the work-life balance at three kinds of levels: the level of government, company and the personal level. Firstly, at the level of government it is necessary to conduct campaigns to transform traditional gender roles. Especially these campaigns need to reach a large number of people through active advertisements. It is important to recognise that housework and childcare should be carried out by both men and women. In addition it is essential to encourage mums and dads to exhaust the paid leave for childbirth as well as childcare provided for as an

extension of the policies to promote childbirth. The companies which actively support their employees's holidays should be granted certain benefits from the government. Indeed, educational programmes to inform the importance and necessity of maternity and paternity leave should be provided continuously to the management and staffs of the companies. Secondly, it is suggested that hierarchically organisational culture for employees' work-life balance at the level of company is used. It is necessary to create new policies which help to regulate working hour and exhaust paid holidays and maternity or paternity leave. Indeed, this new policy needs to be characterised as hierarchical and organisational considering the particularity of Korea. It should be remembered that in the long-term the employee's happiness will impact positively on the company. Finally, on the personal level, husbands and families should understand and support their wives who face the struggle between their two roles. Moreover it should not be overlooked that reliable policies for childcare have to be provided if the government wishes to bring women into workplaces. In particular it is necessary to strengthen those regulations relevant to the nursery within the workplaces because the companies have chosen to pay the fine of two hundred million won every year rather than funding two billion won to build up the daycare centre[41].

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