
The Family in Human Resource Management

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The purpose of this study is to discuss the types of family policy traditionally adopted by Japanese companies and the family problems they entail. First of all, I examined issues such as the payment requirements of family allowance and the method of selecting employees for transfer. The results suggest that companies assumed the normal model to be a male worker in a household with a full-time housewife, and undertook personnel management on that basis. Companies expected their employees' wives to ease their husbands' stress when it spilled over from work into the home, but forbade their employees from bringing stress from family and home life into their work (the unidirectional stress spillover hypothesis).

Next, I examined two problems in the family being paid attention to in recent years—namely, work-family conflicts and a decline in wives' marital satisfaction. These are caused by long working hours and led to mental health disorders among employees and their families. Companies were having to cope with employees suffering from depression and taking time off work. In reality, therefore, the boundary between work and family or home life was extremely fluid, and a bi-directional impact arose.

In recent years, work life balance has been advocated. This is a rationale and policy to the effect that work and family or home life should be balanced, and is premised on the bi-directional hypothesis of work and family. In future, human resource management will need to be steered in this kind of direction.

I. Introduction

Work and family, workplace life and home life are important components of an employee's life. Though both of these give life worth and color, they can also cause stress.

In general, boundaries between work and family are extremely fluid.¹ The two mutually affect each other, in both a good and a bad sense, but in recent years, attention has been paid to the spillover of stress between the two. As well as life events such as unemployment and compulsory retirement, daily stress caused by long working hours, overwork, and discordant human relations in the workplace can also spill over into home life and affect the family. Conversely, problems and worries arising in the family and home life also affect employees' execution of their work and their workplace lives. More and more employees are having to quit their jobs in order to look after a parent (Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications [MIC], Employment Status Survey [2007]), while problems of children's upbringing, quarrels with the spouse, and excessive burdens of housework and childcare by dual earner housewives are a cause of declining work motivation among employees.

¹ On the spillover of stress between work and family, see Eckenrode and Gore (1990) and Kanai (2002).

When considering these causal relationships, two ways could be considered for the measures adopted by companies to the family, by way of enhancing their employees' work motivation. The first would involve highlighting the latter of these causal relationships and making the family the direct object of human resource management—in other words, a family policy. The second would be a method premised on bi-directional impact. Stress arising from work and workplace life produces a negative effect on family and home life, and in turn, that impact is thought to circulate to the employee's work motivation and behavior. If that is the case, companies need to undertake human resource management to minimize spillover of stress to family and home life.

Japanese companies have traditionally adopted the former position. For they have expected the family (particularly the wife) not only to take on all housework and childcare, but also to support their husbands both physically and mentally, and to cooperate so that the husband can devote his whole time and energy to his work. To this end, companies have provided the necessary resources for home life, and sent messages and information to families. Specific examples include the payment of family allowance and housing allowance, provision of company housing, and issue of company newsletters and so on (Ouchi 2002).

The purpose of this paper is to discuss the types of family policy adopted by Japanese companies in order to achieve their goals, and the family problems they entail. Family allowance and personnel transfers will first be taken up, companies' methods of dealing with the family will be studied, and the corporate view of "the family" emerging from that will be clarified. Next, work-family conflicts ("WFC") and wives' marital satisfaction will be cited as problems in the family being paid attention to in recent years. As one conceivable cause of these problems, companies have ignored the fact that stress spills over bi-directionally between work and workplace life, on the one hand, and family and home life, on the other. The work life balance ("WLB") advocated in recent years is a rationale and policy focusing on this relationship. Finally, WLB will be briefly touched upon, and proposals will be made for how companies should deal with the family in future.

II. How Companies Have Traditionally Dealt with the Family

At the core of human resource management by Japanese companies lies the rationale of "familistic management" (Hazama 1978). Conceived around the time of the First World War, familistic management was designed such that the relationship between company and employee would reflect that of parent and child in the family system so deeply ingrained in the Japanese at the time. Specifically, the company as the parent would guarantee the life of the employee as the child, along with his family, for the whole of his life. In return, the company would expect the employee to devote all of his resources, i.e. "time," "energy" and "space" to his work. As for the family, the father as head of household would earn the means to support his wife and children. In return, the family (particularly the wife) was expected to support her husband, the employee, so that he could dedicate his whole being to

the company. In this chapter, the current status of the family allowance and procedures for personnel transfer will be discussed, and the attitude of companies to the family (in other view, their perception of the family) will be clarified.

1. Family Allowance

(1) Definition and Purpose of Introduction

The family allowance is “a wage supplement paid as an allowance to employees who support a family, to assist with the living costs of the dependant family” (Kawano 1966, 87). Although this example of payment started before the war, it was only after 1946 that it spread in earnest. At the time, companies were short of wage resources, and were unable to pay their employees a sufficient basic wage for them to support their families. Therefore, in order to partly subsidize their living costs, various living allowances including family allowance, area allowance and housing allowance were paid (Kawano 1966). In other words, family allowance was paid at the discretion of each company as part of the wages paid to their employees, with the purpose of subsidizing their living costs.

(2) Proportion of Companies Paying

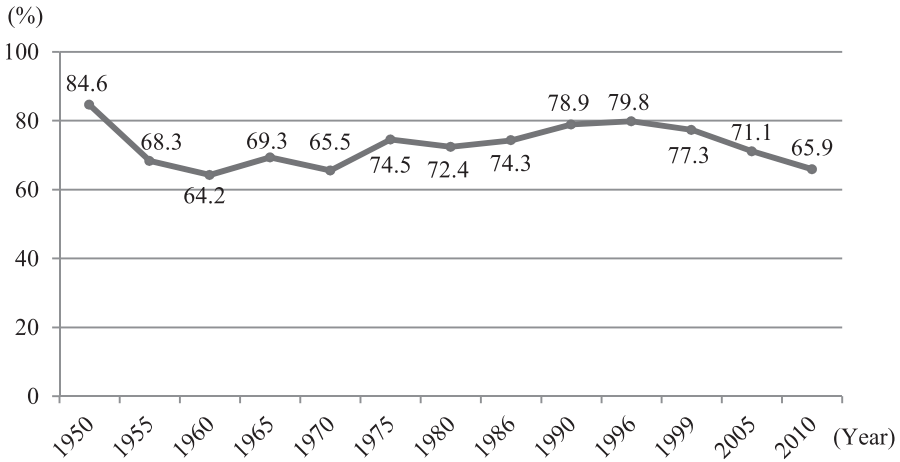
Figure 1 shows the proportion of companies paying family allowance. In 1950, 85% of companies paid it. The proportion has hovered around 70% since then, and stood at 66% in the most recent survey. When we see the ratio of family allowance to the scheduled wage (Figure 2), a conspicuously decreasing trend is revealed. In 1949 it accounted for about 10%. Over the next 60 years it decreased significantly, however, and was only in the 1% range in the latest survey.

(3) Targeted Recipients and Limits on Eligibility

In terms of the recipients of family allowance, the wife was the primary dependant and was paid the largest amount by 70–80% of offices. Next came children and parents, in that order. There was a limit on the wife’s eligibility, however. Half of the companies paying this allowance limited payments to wives whose annual income was within the range of exemption under income tax law. In other words, payments were limited to full-time housewives or wives earning incomes close to this in part-time labor.

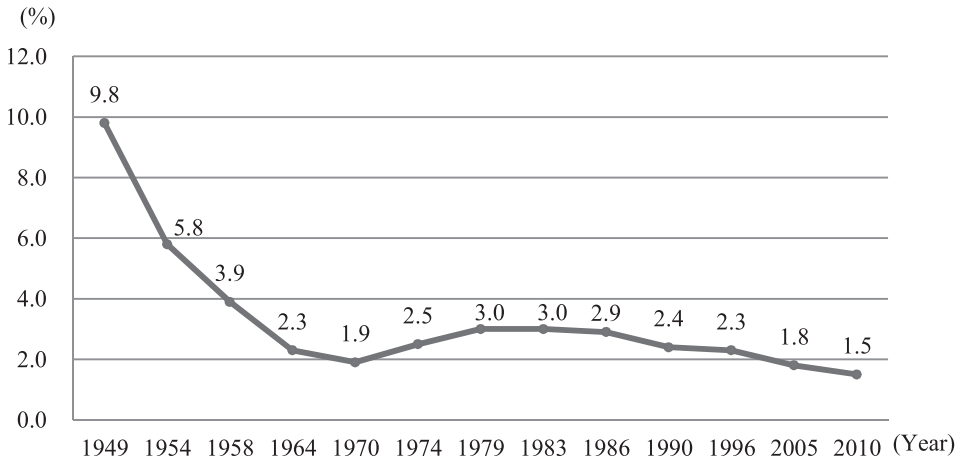
Family allowance was targeted at dependant families, and there were limits to companies’ wage resources. It could therefore be considered natural that companies would set limits on the targeted recipients. However, income limits were set by around 70% of large corporations and 50% of small and medium-sized enterprises. In other words, limits tended to be set more by large corporations, which could be expected to have had abundant wage resources (Ministry of Labour [MOL], “General Survey on Wages and Working Hours System. [1968, 1997]).

Incidentally, since full-time housewives spend more time on housework and childcare than dual-earner housewives, the husband’s burden of housework and childcare must be



Sources: 1949–1965: Ministry of Labour (MOL), *Summarized Results of Wage Structure Survey*; 1966–2002: MOL / Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (MHLW), *General Survey on Wages and Working Hours System*; 2003–2010: MHLW, *General Survey on Working Conditions*.

Figure 1. Proportion of Companies Paying Family Allowance



Sources: 1949–1965: MOL, *Summarized Results of Wage Structure Survey*; 1966–2002: MOL/MHLW, *General Survey on Wages and Working Hours System*; 2003–2010: MHLW, *General Survey on Working Conditions*.

Figure 2. Ratio of Family Allowance to the Scheduled Wage

reduced and his contribution to the company therefore higher. In other words, the support provided by the full-time housewife has large merits, and it is seen as natural that the family allowance should be paid in reward for this. Nevertheless, the husband’s actual time spent on housework and childcare per day was negligible, irrespective of the wife’s employment

Table 1. Housework and Childcare Time by Dual-Earning Households /
Households with a Full-Time Housewife (Per Day)

	Husband			Wife		
	1991	2001	2011	1991	2001	2011
Dual-earning households	19 mins.	26 mins.	39 mins.	4 hrs. 39 mins.	4 hrs. 37 mins.	4 hrs. 53 mins.
Households with full-time housewife	25 mins.	35 mins.	46 mins.	7 hrs. 42 mins.	7 hrs. 34 mins.	7 hrs. 43 mins.

Source: Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, *Survey on Time Use and Leisure Activities* (2011).

status (Table 1), and no data can be found to show any difference in the husband's contribution to the company. As such, companies' response with emphasis on full-time housewives seems to reflect the social climate or management beliefs that take gender-based role division for granted, rather than any actual advantage.

(4) Problems with Family Allowance and Future Trends

From the time of its launch, there were already calls from the GHQ (General Headquarters of the Allied Forces) advisory investigation team and others for family allowance to be scrapped as an undesirable allowance (Kawano 1966). In the 1980s, moreover, many companies introduced ability-based grade systems, followed by performance-based systems at the end of the 1990s. With this, the weight of labor remuneration elements (job performance ability, results, job content) increased as wage components, while that of personal attribute elements (age, gender, education, family size) decreased. In recent years, meanwhile, family formats have become more diverse, and there are more dual-earning households and unmarried persons who cannot benefit from family allowance. In fact, the amounts of family allowance are extremely meager; its significance in supplementing living costs now exists in name only, and some researchers are calling for it to be scrapped (Kawano 1966, 102). Nevertheless, family allowance is still the most common living allowance paid by companies.

2. Personnel Transfers and Lone Assignments (*Tanshin-Funin*)

Employee transfers are commonplace in Japanese companies. The purpose of these may be human resource training, making effective use of human resources, or workplace reform. It may also be necessitated by the establishment of new business sites due to business expansion, or by corporate consolidation. As larger corporations tend to have more business offices or factories, transfers account for a larger proportion there. Such transfers are undertaken every year by 90% of companies with 1,000 or more employees and by just under 70–80% of those with 300–1,000 employees (MOL, General Survey on Wage and

Working Hours System [1998]; Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare [MHLW], General Survey on Working Conditions [2004]).

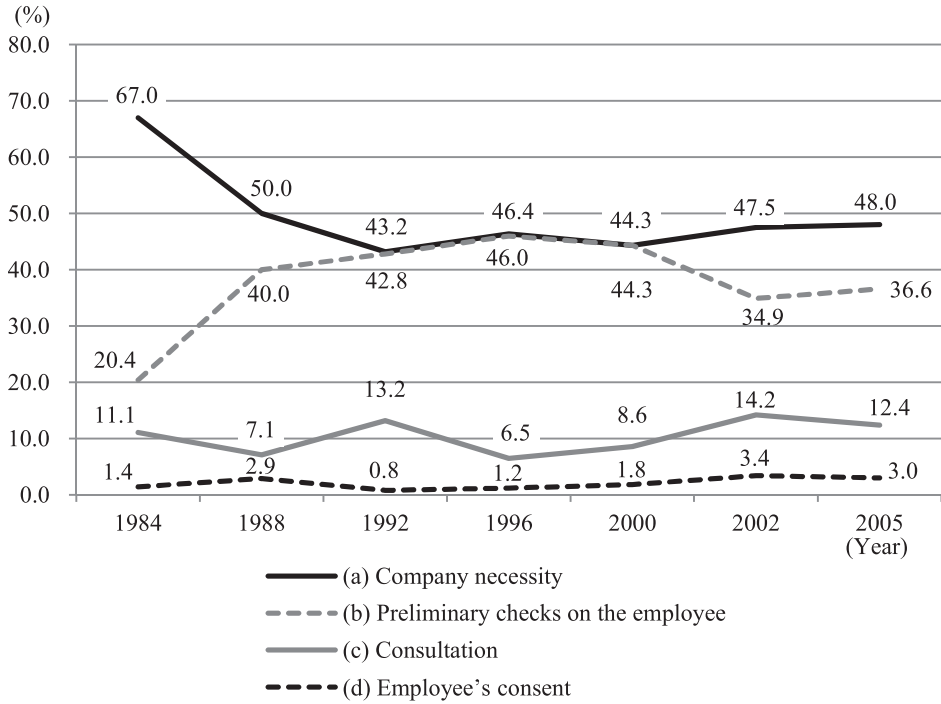
Here, the convenience of the company and the wishes of the employees or their families clash in terms both of the selection of transferees and of the choice of assignment format. Survey results reveal how the circumstances and wishes of employees and their families are taken into account when making such decisions, and, when an employee has chosen a lone assignment (i.e. a transfer away from the family), whether this gives a bad influence to the mental health of employees or their families.

(1) Companies' Rationale on the Selection of Transferees

Company surveys on transfers and lone assignments started in the 1980s. A company's selection of transferees falls into one of four categories. These are (a) a decision based on the company's convenience and necessity, (b) the individual's circumstances are looked into, but the company makes the decision, (c) transfer is recommended in consultation with the individual, and (d) no transfer is made without the individual's consent. The closer the situation resembles (a), the less likely it is that the employee's wishes will be reflected; the closer to (d), the more they will be respected. Judging from Figure 3, more than 80% of companies fall under (a) or (b), the emphasis being on the company's convenience or necessity. In temporal terms, most companies gave no consideration to the employee's circumstances, falling under category (a) above, when surveys started in the 1980s. Thereafter, category (b), in which a preliminary check is made on the employee and this is taken into account when selecting, increased to the same level as category (a), but (b) has fallen back again recently. The background to this is thought to be that companies' power over their employees increases in times of economic recession. Meanwhile, companies that respect the wishes of employees and their families when selecting transferees, i.e. categories (c) and (d), are very few, and this trend has not changed over the last 30 years (Institute of Labour Administration 2005).

Reasons taken into consideration in personnel transfers, according to the companies, were "family illness or childbirth," "presence of elderly parents," "children's education," "housing problems" and "spouse's job." The order of these has not changed since the surveys started in 1988, but the number of companies citing the various reasons has increased considerably since around 2003. That is, in companies where the circumstances of employees and their families are taken into account, the number of factors taken into account must have increased (Tanaka 2002; Institute of Labour Administration 2003, 2005, 2007).

In their selection of transferees, 80–90% of companies replied that they consider "family illness or childbirth" and around 70% that they consider the "presence of elderly parents." However, these two most frequently cited reasons are not thought to arise in too many families, even though the situation itself demands a high level of urgency. Conversely, "children's education" is cited as the reason why many transferees choose lone assignments. Even so, only 40–50% of companies took this into account in personnel transfers. In other



Sources: Institute of Labour Administration (2005).

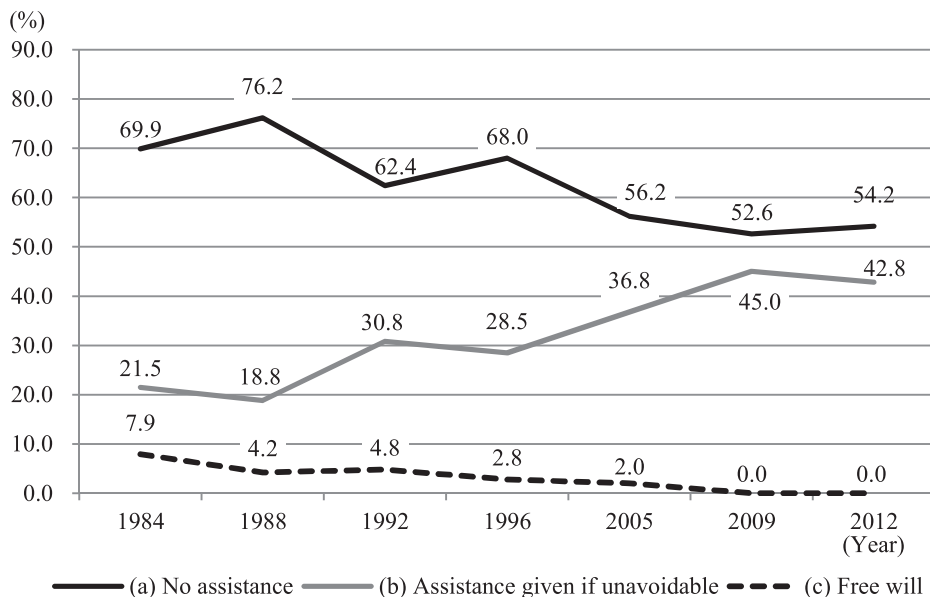
Figure 3. Reflection of Employees' Wishes in Selection of Transferees (Management Posts)

words, there was a gap between the companies' intentions and the employees' wishes. Since the reasons the family wants to be taken into account are those the company cannot take into account, there are not thought to be many cases where a transfer order is overturned on grounds of family circumstances.

(2) Companies' Rationale on the Selection of Assignment Format

When a transfer order is issued, the employee and family choose one of two assignment formats. One of these is accompanied assignment, in which the family accompanies the employee (*Taido-funin*); the other is lone assignment (*Tanshin-funin*), in which the employee goes to live alone in the assigned working location. Which choice is made should be within the free discretion of the employee and the family, but many companies seem not to have seen it that way.² A company's stance when deciding the assignment format takes one of three forms, namely (a) when a lone assignment is at the employee's own convenience, no kind of assistance is given, (b) when there are unavoidable circumstances, a lone

² On companies' involvement in transfers and choice of assignment format, see Okifuji (1986).



Sources: Institute of Labour Administration (2012).

Figure 4. Basis for Permitting Lone Assignment (*Tanshin-funin*)

assignment is permitted and various assistance is given, or (c) there is no particular rule, and the decision is left to the individual’s free will (Institute of Labour Administration 2012) (Figure 4). As a rule, accompanied assignment is the basic assumption in cases (a) or (b) (Institute of Labour Administration 2005, 7).

In case (a), companies apply a strong coercive force towards accompanied assignment, but hardly any company openly adopts this attitude today. In the 1980s, up to three-quarters of companies fell under case (b). From the 1990s, however, there was a sudden increase in case (c), i.e. companies leaving the choice of assignment format to their employees, almost reaching half of the total. In general, then, the choice of a family’s place of residence tends to be left to the family’s discretion. Even now, conversely, half of all companies only permit lone assignments to be chosen within a specific range of family circumstances.

The circumstances under which companies permit lone assignments vary somewhat, depending on the year. For example, “children’s education” has been cited by 98.1% of companies, “sickness or nursing of a family member” by 92.2%, “elderly parents’ difficulty in relocating” by 68%, “spouse’s work” by 54.4%, “spouse’s childbirth” by 53.4%, and “house purchase completed” by 48.5%. On the other hand, the reasons for employees choosing lone assignments, as ascertained by companies, were “children’s education” by 96.6%, “housing problems” by 60.3%, “family illness” by 40.9%, “problems with elderly parents” by 43.5%, and “wife’s job” by 37.6% (Institute of Labour Administration 2003, 2009).

The above would suggest that, compared to circumstances involving children and parents, fewer companies took account of the “wife’s job,” and few employees cited this as a reason for lone assignments. Spouses in cases of lone assignment were often in their 40s or 50s, and although the labor force participation rate of women in these age groups ranged from just under 60% to more than 70% at the time (Cabinet Office, White Paper on Gender Equality [2004]), less than 40% of employees cited “wife’s job” as a reason for lone assignment. Transfers are commonplace in large corporations, and, as mentioned above, large corporations preferred their employees’ wives not to be in employment. As a result, employees may have refrained from bringing their wives’ employment to the fore, responding instead with a reason permitted by the company (such as “children’s education”). Moreover, highly-educated women in Japan tend to have a low labor force participation rate if their husbands are high earners.³ In other words, there could be a large proportion of full-time housewives among the wives of management personnel in large corporations.

(3) Status of Lone Assignments⁴

One of the allowances paid during the war was the “relocation (evacuation) allowance,” suggesting that lone assignments already existed at that time. However, it was not until the 1980s that lone assignees increased and their situation began to attract attention (Tanaka 1991, 2). There were 175,300 lone assignees in 1986, but the number increased year by year, reaching 317,000 in 2004 (General Survey on Working Conditions). The proportion of married transferees who were lone assignees was 32.0% in 1992, 44.7% in 1996, 47.2% in 2000, and 49.1% in 2002 (Institute of Labour Administration 2003). Meanwhile, the age composition ratio of lone assignees was 35.7% in the 40s and 35.1% in the 50s, giving the 40s and 50s a 70% share of the total (Employment Status Survey). The most common reason for lone assignments was that the employees’ children were studying for exams to enter senior high school or university.

(4) Lone Assignees and Mental Health

The impact of lone assignment on the mental health of employees and their families will now be examined using the results of surveys comparing lone assignees with employees who cohabit with their families, and with accompanied assignees (Inaba 1991; Tanaka

³ In Japan, the labor force participation rate of highly educated and married women in age groups where there are many married women is lower than that of women graduating from senior high school. In particular, the participation rate is even lower among highly educated and married women whose husbands are high earners (Manabe 2004).

⁴ Fact-finding surveys on lone assignees are included in the Employment Status Survey (Management and Coordination Agency [1987, 1992, 1997] / MIC [2002, 2007]), the Survey on Employment Trends (MOL [1982–1985, 1990, 1995, 2000]), the General Survey on Wages and Working Hours System (MOL [1986, 1990, 1994, 1998]) and the General Survey on Working Conditions (MHLW [2004]), and are also conducted by the Institute of Labour Administration. In each case, the targeted company scale and survey scale are different.

1991, 2002; Tanaka, Nakazawa, and Nakazawa 1996; Tanaka and Nakazawa 2005; Awai and Seita 2004; Moriyama et al. 2012).

Harmful effects on mental health were found in ascending order in children, wives and the employees themselves. In other words, children suffered the smallest adverse impact. Compared to children in the accompanied group, those in the lone-assignment group had lower stress reaction (e.g. “Feel isolated”) and feelings of self-inadequacy (e.g. “Can’t do what I want to do”), but higher self-determination (e.g. “Have a clear image of my future”). Similarly, wives in the lone assignment group had a heightened “sense of solitude (e.g. “Feel lonely”)” and a lower “sense of elation (e.g. “Feel lively”).” When limited to mothers with young children, there was also a “sense of anxiety (e.g. “Have worries”).” In general, however, the mental health of wives in the lone assignment group did not deteriorate significantly. Indeed, a survey has produced the result that wives in the family cohabiting group had a greater sense of anxiety, irritation and inferiority complex.

It is the employees themselves who suffer the greatest adverse effect on their mental and physical health. Their jobs and workplaces are new, and they have to prepare their own clothing, food and accommodation, which would normally have been entrusted to their wives. On arriving home, there is no family member to help them unwind. In other words, lone assignees have to adapt to huge changes in their work, workplace life and home life. As a result, compared to the accompanied group and the family cohabiting group, the lone assignment group was exposed to greater stress in connection with family and work, their overall stress intensified, and their lifestyle-related illnesses and health checkup results also deteriorated. But what is interesting is that the lone assignment group had greater “work motivation” than the accompanied group. Therefore, considered in combination with the results of stress mentioned above, many employees in the lone assignment group were in the over-adaptive state of “heavy stress but strong motivation to work.”

As a reason why the mental health of wives and children in the lone assignment group did not deteriorate significantly, the fact that there was little change in their daily lives may be cited. Many children in the lone assignment group were in their latter years of junior high school. Particularly for teenagers, school life and relations with friends are very important, but in lone assignments, they do not need to change schools. Furthermore, in Japanese workers’ families, the husband and father works long hours, and daily life without him has become normal. In this sense, too, there was no great change in the daily lives of wives and children. Conversely, children in the accompanied group have to change schools, and lost their basis for daily life. Of course, this sense of loss decreased after a certain amount of time had passed.

Once a transfer had been decided, the couple or family talked it over, and the husband initiated the choice of lone assignments. In lone assignments, 90% of fathers returned home at least once a month, and 60% at least twice a month. However, wives who had a low sense of commitment to the company, had little physical or emotional support from those around them, and felt that negative life events were accumulating in their family, assessed the func-

tional adaptation of the family as deteriorating.

(5) Company Measures to Support Transfers

Because companies basically assume transfers to involve accompanied assignment, they support relocating families by assisting with educational costs associated with a change of school, managing homes left vacant by relocation, and so on. Meanwhile, measures to support lone assignments are also undertaken. In 80–90% of companies, financial support came in the form of separation allowance, payment of travel costs for temporary returns home, and so on. However, some companies imposed limits on the payment of separation allowance, depending on the age of children and the length of the lone assignment (Institute of Labour Administration 1986, 2009).

3. View of the Family Seen in “Japanese-Style” Management

Companies used to think that employees’ wives should devote much of their own personal time and energy to the family; they were assumed to be full-time housewives who would relocate together with their husbands if the latter were transferred. Companies saw employees with this kind of wife as the normal model, and managed their employees on this basis. Behind this lie the following assumptions by companies. The first was that they adopted the unidirectional hypothesis of impact between work and family. Employees would take the stress from their work and workplace life into their home life. The wives would then ease the stress, and support the husband so that he could return to the workplace in full vigor. Moreover, it was the wife’s role to deal with problems arising in the family and home life, and she was expected not to cause stress for the husband in the home. Meanwhile, companies also thought that employees should not bring problems from their family and home life to their work or workplaces, and that employees who did not do so were more capable. The second assumption was that employees and their families desired greater financial resources more than anything. And the third was that companies tried to find ways of cutting the costs necessary for family supports measures. They thought that the costs were aimed at the employees’ well-being and did not be their profits.

III. Problems in the Family Being Paid Attention to Today

In the foregoing, we have seen how companies encroached upon their employees’ families and home life, and attempted to direct the behavior of employees and their families. Turning to families and homes, however, negative events and problems occurred there. This chapter will discuss WFC and a decline in wives’ marital satisfaction.

At the bottom of these issues lies the problem of long working hours. Yamaguchi (2009) defined “overwork” as “actual working hours being in excess of desired working hours,” and surveyed the overwork rates of men and women aged 20 to 40. The results showed that, of those in full-time employment, 68.5% of married men and 62.3% of married

women are prone to overwork. In other words, 60–70% of both men and women were felt to “work too much.”

1. WFC and Mental Health Disorders

Companies traditionally regarded employees married to full-time housewives as the normal model, and took measures to restrict their wives’ employment. In reality, however, dual-earning couples have increased; in 1992, the number of dual-earning households exceeded that of households with a full-time housewife. In terms of personal time, even husbands in dual-earning households spent extremely little time on housework and childcare (Table 1). In other words, the dual-earning wife had to divide her time and energy between work and home, and was thought to suffer a conflict between demands from both sides.

WFC refers to a situation where “the roles demanded in two domains of life that are important for people, namely work and home, are not mutually balanced.” This WFC works in two directions, namely “conflict from the work domain to the family domain” and “conflict from the family domain to the work domain.” This paper will deal with the former. In addition, WFC takes three forms. One is “conflict based on time,” arising when too much time is needed for work, and not enough time can be allocated to performing family roles (i.e. those of a husband or father). The second, “conflict based on strain,” arises when stress factors at work cause irritation and depression, as a result of which the family role cannot be adequately performed. Finally, “conflict based on behavior” arises when the behavior patterns and values expected at work are not balanced with what is expected of the family role (Yoshida 2001, 74).

Of these, conflicts based on time have most often been taken up in research recently. These conflicts are stronger when children are younger, and weaken as they grow older. This is because more time is spent directly looking after younger children. Also, no difference in conflicts based on time was observed between fathers and mothers in dual-earning households with infants or elementary school children; when limited to families with infants, there was no difference in conflicts based on time between fathers in dual-earning households and households with a full-time housewife. In other words, many young fathers were in a state of time-based conflict, irrespective of the wife’s employment status (Fukumaru 2003; Koizumi et al. 2003; Nishimura 2011). Again, comparing the three conflicts as a whole between fathers and mothers in dual-earning households with low school grade children, the conflicts were stronger in the fathers (Watai, Murashima, and Nishikido 2006).

Next, in dual-earning households, WFC was itself a cause of depression. Mothers and fathers with infants, mothers and fathers with low school grade children, mothers with 11-year-old children, and mothers with children aged between 1st grade of elementary school and age 22 showed symptoms of heavy depression when they felt a conflict between work and home (Fukumaru 2003; Koizumi et al. 2003; Matsuura et al. 2008; Nishimura 2011). Since role conflicts in the workplace and the home are themselves intensely negative experiences, it is probably only natural that depression is felt. Moreover, WFC led to new

causes of stress. According to Koizumi et al. (2003), for example, mothers who have strong conflicts based on time felt childcare to be a painful experience, and often disagreed with their husbands on household expenditure and leisure activity, etc. A buildup of these negative experiences is thought to have amplified the state of depression.

Here, “depression” refers to an aggregation of symptoms including a depressed mood (sad, melancholy, etc.), being easily tired, losing confidence, feeling remorse, etc. According to Watai, Murashima, and Nishikido (2006), 19.4% of fathers and 30.3% of mothers with low school grade children go beyond the cutoff point at which depression is clinically judged to be a problem. Since this figure was 15.2% in the normal group (Shima et al. 1985), the mental state of fathers and mothers in particular in dual-earning households (particular mothers) could by no means be called good.

In that case, is children’s mental health affected by WFC between parents in dual-earning households? There has been little research on this, but an impact is found via different routes for fathers and mothers. In the case of mothers, conflicts based on strain directly intensified children’s stress reaction. In the case of fathers, conversely, children’s stress reaction was indirectly impacted, via nurturing behavior towards the child. For example, in fathers with junior high school children, WFC affected nurturing behavior, and the children’s stress reaction was heightened via these. That is, if the father had a high level of WFC, there was less behavior such as accepting the child with affection and having a warm relationship, or taking an interest in the child’s friends and school life, while behavior such as suppressing the child’s self-determination increased. As a result, the child’s depression, anxiety, fatigue and others were intensified (Fujimoto et al. 2013).

As shown above, mothers and fathers in dual-earning households have strong WFC, as a result of which both their own and their children’s mental health deteriorated. And the main cause of WFC was long working hours (Fukumaru 2003; Koizumi et al. 2003; Watai, Murashima, and Nishikido 2006).

2. Tendency for Wife’s Marital Satisfaction to Decrease

When discussing family problems in Japan, the focus is not often on the marital relationship. In the media, of course, problematic phenomena in marital relationships are sometimes depicted as humorous oddities. For example, the condition known as *fugenbyo* (“husband-derived ailments”) has often appeared on TV and elsewhere recently. The term was coined by Ishikura (2012), and refers to the considerable stress suffered by wives due to their husband’s careless behavior, inducing symptoms like the menopausal disorder. Kurokawa (1993) asserts that a similar phenomenon was already occurring among wives 20 years ago, when the husband stayed at home following compulsory retirement, etc.

Behind these phenomena lie problems in the quality of the marital relationship. Marital satisfaction is an indicator for measuring this. In Japan, characteristic features are that the wife’s marital satisfaction decreases as years pass after marriage (Yamaguchi 2009; Nagai 2011) (Figure 5), and that the wife’s satisfaction is lower than the husband’s (Inaba



Sources: Nagai (2011).

Figure 5. Changes in Marital Satisfaction with Years of Marriage

2004; Kinoshita 2004). These tendencies had already been pointed out by Ushijima (1955), the first to research marital satisfaction in Japan.

The tendency for wives' satisfaction to decrease is thought partly due to their husbands' long working hours. Yamaguchi (2009, 135) comprehensively analyzed factors that reduce wives' satisfaction, identifying nine factors shared by dual-earners and full-time housewives. In descending order of strength, they were (1) the paucity of cherished activities as time spent with the husband (for example, meals on weekdays, housework and childcare on days off), (2) being married for too long, (3) birth of the first child, (4) not enough time spent in conversation on weekdays, (5) not enough time shared in activities on days off, (6) husband's unemployment, (7) husband's small share of childcare tasks, (8) low household savings and other assets, and (9) husband's low income. Of these, (1), (4), (5) and (7) require the husband's time, and so would be difficult to rectify with a husband who works long hours, devotes all his energy to his work and spends little time at home. Also, as factor (1) suggests, this was not merely a question of the length of time, but also included sharing pleasant moments with the husband, or in other words, the quality of the time.

The research by Ito, Sagara and Ikeda (2007) also produced similar results regarding husbands and wives. Specifically, as factors that determine the satisfaction of couples who have children in the childrearing phase and those who have college or university students in the middle-aged phase, they studied the amount of communication time and the amount of self-disclosure. Here, self-disclosure means "talking candidly," and indicates the quality of communication. As a result, marital satisfaction was higher in both groups when more time was spent and the couple often spoke candidly. In particular, both the quality and the amount of communication determined satisfaction more strongly in wives than in husbands.

From the above, both the amount and the quality of time would appear necessary in order to enhance marital satisfaction. That is, the time available to be shared by the couple should not only be long, but a relationship of trust is also needed, whereby the time spent together is cherished, the couple can speak candidly to each other, and they listen to each other.

Furthermore, marital satisfaction was a determinant of depression among couples in dual-earning households; even among full-time housewives, there was a correlation between satisfaction and depression. That is, a spouse who was dissatisfied with the marital relationship was more prone to suffer from depression. The exception to this was the husband in a household with a full-time housewife. Perhaps because, for a husband with a full-time housewife, the marital relationship is not a matter of great concern, there was no correlation between satisfaction and depression here (Fukumaru 2003).

IV. For Human Resource Management with Emphasis on WLB

Thus, long working hours tend to raise a couple's WFC and reduce marital satisfaction, and disturb the well-being of home life. In recent years, there has been an increase in "depression" among the prime working generation in their 30s to 50s (MHLW, Patient Survey [2011]). In the workplace, the number of workers taking leave or leaving their jobs because of "depression" is increasing (MHLW, Survey on State of Employees' Health [2012]), and companies say they are hard-pressed to cope. In other words, a bi-directional spillover of stress between work and family has arisen. Conventionally, companies have adopted measures to ensure that problems from family and home life are not brought into the workplace, for example, through systems of rewards or penalties towards employees and their families, persuasion, admonition and encouragement, and so on. But these measures can themselves cause stress. Instead, companies should improve their policies on human resource management to make it more difficult for a negative cycle of effects to start; they should ensure that there is a balance between work and workplace life, on the one hand, and family and home life on the other.

Furthermore, as the working population continues to shrink in future, companies will need to secure healthy, motivated and capable employees and have them work over the long term, irrespective of gender, nationality, age or other attributes. To achieve this, companies should aim to create workplaces where employees with diverse values, lifestyles and family circumstances will be able to coexist and work together.

In recent years, WLB has been advocated. This is the rationale and policy to the effect that an employee's "work and home life are balanced and neither is sacrificed for the other" (Yamaguchi 2009, 1), thus supporting diverse ways of working. Family and home life ease the work and workplace stresses suffered by male and female employees, and have the function of labor reproduction. At the same time, employees have family circumstances such as childcare and nursing care; they may wish to take part in lifelong learning and vol-

unteer activity. WLB policies support workers in choosing this way of working at certain times in their lives. In companies where this has been achieved, it has reportedly helped to improve employee motivation, secure human resources, and avoid reduced productivity and risks due to long working hours (Gakushuin University Research Institute for Economics and Management 2008).

Furthermore, to be able to implement a system in support of WLB, we will need to reform workplace culture where the diverse values and lifestyle are accepted and to materialize task management and ways of working where employees can work under “time constraints,” and so on. In other words, the aim of WLB is to reform not only human resource management but also business operation in general. As such, it can be a strategy for corporate growth (Sato and Takeishi 2010).

From the above, WLB is premised on a natural human image in which the flow of bi-directional impact between work and family is recognized. Although financial resources are important for employees and their families, these are merely means of maintaining and enhancing home life; resources of time and energy are also necessary. Depending on the method used, human resource management based on WLB will serve the long-term interests of companies.

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