

The Perception of Cost for Work-Life Balance (WLB)
Practice Use and Employee Outcomes

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要約

近年、経営組織における両立支援施策の導入及び浸透についての関心が人的資源管理の観点から高まっているものの、実用的な示唆に向けての関心が高いあまり、理論的考察と議論が十分に蓄積されていない。本稿は、仕事と育児を両立する女性正社員が両立支援施策を利用するにあたって負うとされるキャリア上のコスト認識に焦点を当て雇用継続及び両立満足への影響を検証した。キャリア上のコスト認識は主要な二つの従属変数に負の有意な影響を与えていた。また、その負の影響は、WLB 文脈において導出された心理的契約の履行(psychological contract fulfillment)によって調節された。

Abstract

Recently, a social and legal foundation has been laid in Japan to support work-life balance(WLB). However, the situation of female regular employees' early retirement for reasons of birth and childcare has not improved, and childcare remains a significant barrier to Japanese companies' employment of human resources. This study examines the cost of WLB practice use, including the career consequences such as downsizing the work autonomy, lowering performance expectation, and its direct impact on employees' outcomes (desire to stay-long, perceived WLB, degree of relational terms in psychological contracts). And also I explored fulfillment of psychological contract in WLB version in Japan and test its moderate effect between "cost of WLB practice use" and employee outcomes. The analysis results show that 1) cost of WLB practice use has a negative effect to all employee outcome variables, and 2) their relationship is moderated by a degree to whether psychological contracts in WLB version were fulfilled.

Numerous theoretical and empirical studies have clarified the relationship between work–life balance (WLB) practices and employee outcomes. Human Resource (HR) practices that promote harmony between employees’ work and private lives reduce absenteeism and turnover, increase job satisfaction, organizational commitment, OCB and organizational financial performance (Grover and Crooker, 1995; Konrad and Mangel, 2000; Lobel and Kossek, 1996; Greenhaus and Parasuraman, 1999; Scandura and Lankau, 1997; Lambert, 2000 Perry-Smith and Blum, 2000).

Scandura and Lankau (1997) used a framework of psychological contract to explain the relationship between flexible time and employee outcomes from the perspective of HR practices as a communication tool to modulate contents of a psychological contract (Grzzo and Noonan, 1994; Rousseau, 1995). According to these arguments, WLB practices such as flexible time arrangement are embodied in the psychological contract and offering liberal working schedules shows respect toward employee freedom and is equivalent to accepting greater employee discretion, thereby conveying trust in the employee’s performance capability. That is why WLB practices can foster endearment toward the company and represent the desirable outcomes.

Though WLB practice is only a part of Human Resource Management (HRM) technically, the consequences from using those practices contain the broader functions of HRM such as employee appraisal and development of human resource. That is why previous researches paid attention to the importance of practice implementation and its operational aspect as “good management” (Berg, Kelleberg, and Appelbaum, 2003; Bloom, Kretschmer and Reene, 2006), and it includes organizations’ initiative to enhance employees’ commitment as possible as they can (Osterman, 1995, Ollier-Malaterre, 2010). But, we don’t know a lot what kind of

perception an employee who experience “good/bad” management have, and how it lead to a desirable attitudes/behaviors to organization, not if we re-construct the traditional wisdoms in WLB contexts.

This paper examine the direct and effect of “cost of WLB practice use” to employee outcomes(desire to stay-long, perceived WLB, degree of relational terms in psychological contract) under controls of labor-economical and pure effect from WLB practice introduction and usage itself. And then, we observe the moderate effect of psychological contract fulfillment in WLB version in Japan between original direct-effect models.

Many previous studies assume a causal relationship between WLB practices and female employees remaining with the company with high motivation. However, few studies offer a theoretical or empirical discussion of mechanisms focusing on employees’ perspectives of those practices. This study uses the framework of a psychological contract to capture the operation of those practices in the human resource management strategy. In addition, by considering the consequences attendant to WLB practices and the health of employment relationship, this study transcends the short description “the company introduce WLB practices, the employee takes advantage of them and is satisfied.” On the other hand, this study suggests the possible existence of the mechanism “when WLB practices are part of the corporate strategy and there is positive intervention by the company, WLB practices and their operation will lead to employees’ continued employment. Employee who experience HRM in WLB contexts, they can evaluate their own obligation and employer’s too.” Such an attempt is a twofold contribution to the scholarly literature: (1) It captures the relationship between WLB practice and employee reactions to them as more strategically, and (2) it suggests the viability of a unified framework, which is necessary to explain the relationship between WLB practices and women choosing to

remain employed.

THEORY AND HYPOTHESIS

WLB policy in Japan and Cost of WLB Practice Use

WLB policy is primarily company practices relating to employees' work-childcare balance. Since the enactment of the Equal Employment Opportunity Act of 1986, concerns regarding women employment and policies supporting work-childcare balance in Japan have been increasing yearly. The Childcare Leave Law enacted in 1992 and the Basic Law for a Gender-Equal Society enacted in 1999 sought to promote women's participation in the labor force. In consideration of Japan's aging population, the Law for Measures to Support the Development of the Next Generation was enacted in 2003, and the policies for establishing and expanding work-childcare balance have come to the forefront in Japanese companies. Along with establishing social and legal support mechanisms, more than 90% of Japanese companies have introduced childcare leave and about 50% have introduced part-time work schedules. In addition, flextime(14%), work-at-home(4%), on-site daycare(2.5%)¹.

There are some obstacles that business organizations have to take for providing WLB practices in spite of its important roles for managing diverse needs and customers. Scandura and Lankau (1997) and OECD (2003) proposed that the advantage of practice supporting WLB is in achieving desired employee outcomes. They also itemized the difficulties faced by companies in introducing and implementing these policies: "Increased cost, problems with scheduling and work coordination, difficulties supervising all employees on flexible schedules and changes in

¹ Ministry of Health, Labor, and Welfare, 2010. From random sample of Japanese company hiring more than 100 full-time employees.

organizational culture” (Scandura and Lankau, 1997: 378).

However, almost no scholarly literature addresses the consequences to employees who take advantage of WLB practices and how those consequences shape employees’ perceptions and attitudes. Among these consequences, OECD (2002) includes reduced income, forfeited opportunities to upgrade work skills, and career difficulties (ibid, pp.181). Although the types of WLB practices and their prevalence vary country to country, the consequences to employees are similar.

In Japan, even though such practices have been introduced widely, in actuality, many employees quit working because of childbirth and childcare². Japan’s 21 Century Vocational Foundation (2008) explains this phenomenon:

“In a Human Resource Management that assumes long-term continuous employment and fulltime work, there are disadvantages for those who use WLB practices, and as a result, the treatment of men and women is different. This can make people hesitant to take leave. In some companies, if there are many users, then it is difficult to allocate work and find people to replace those who are on leave. Thus, there is a drop in productivity and a resulting burden on the co-workers, or the treatment of the users is unclear, and due to insufficient understanding of the superiors and co-workers, there are companies that might feel the worker does not have a desire to work or have enough skills. Many different problems are seen (ibid, pp.102).”

It says that given these characteristics of Japanese human resource management, employees who take advantage of practices supporting WLB may face job adjustments, reductions in work hours, and lower performance appraisals. In addition, they might decline job

² National Social Security and Demographic problem Lab.(2004)

transfers because of childcare demands, limiting the location where they can work. This may be a severe career consequence for employees who participate in WLB practice. As participating family obligation often lead to lower job involvement, one who using WLB practice feel that they are hampering workplace's teamwork. In fact, 70% of Japanese fulltime worker having a child think they can choose not quitting the employment because of "understanding and generous treatment" in workplace(Nihon Keizai Shinbushya, 7th April, 2009).

In this paper, all these actual consequences and concerns about one's career in long-term employment because of using WLB practice is called "cost of WLB practice use". For more detail, we should look into Japanese long-term employment for core worker and their psychological contract. Hypotheses are followed.

Relational Attributes in Psychological Contract in Japanese Company

A psychological contract (PC) is an "individual's perception of the employment relationship between the organization and the employees"(Rousseau, 1995). Arsyris (1960) coined the term "psychological work contract" to highlight the informal and implicit aspects of employment relationship, and Rousseau (1989, 1995) emphasized an individual as the subject of a PC. Since then, many studies have attempted to refine the role of a psychological contract in relation to organizational behavior and human resource management. Mackneil (1985) stressed social aspects in contract and contrasting economic exchange relationship in classifying transactional and relationship contracts, which are the axes of the content and range of a psychological contract. A transactional contract describes an employee's expectation of securing employment with reasonable compensation in a safe environment for a defined period in exchange for fulfilling specific responsibilities of a defined job. In contrast, a relational contract

is concerned with the generality and ambiguity of an individual's organizational roles and responsibilities, as well as employees' expectations for improving their career and expertise through training and long-term employment (Rousseau and McLean Parks, 1993; Millward and Hopkins, 1998; Rousseau, 1990).

According to Macneil(1985), "all contract is relational" (ibid, pp. 497) , so under same contract (e.g. fulltime core worker in Japan), they share similar relational term among each other and each employee embed in different degree of their relational contract also. In short, whether an employee are transactional or relational toward their employer is up to which degree to relational terms added to basic transactional terms.

Especially in Japan, the core features of a psychological contract in Japanese companies include "the guarantee of long-term employment, company training, promotion based on seniority, and internal transfers for nurturing special corporate skills" (Koike, 1988, Morishima, 1995). Therefore the organization and its employees often share responsibilities in forming the relational contract (Morishima, 1996).

On the HRM context in Japan, the cost of WLB practice use can be severe, because the consequences are not limited only cutback of wage, lost workload, but risk of losing social network or opportunity of promotion in internal labor market. Therefore, the relational terms in psychological contract can be lower when cost of WLB practice is higher.

Hypothesis 1: Cost of WLB Practice Use has a negative effect to the degree of relational terms in psychological contract.

Perceive Work-Life Balance

Experiences at work and at home mutually affect each other (spillover; Staines, 1980). Employees' workplace experience affects the quality of their lives in general. On one hand, it affects their psychological state and welfare, while on the other hand, it affects their judgment of abilities in relation to family roles such as childcare (Greenhouse and Beutell, 1985; Edwards and Rothbard, 2000; Rothbard, 2001). Also, the satisfaction from work can predict the satisfaction of life overall (e.g. Kavanagh and Halpern, 1977). Therefore, when one has greater anxious and risk perception of career life may lead less perceived WLB.

Hypothesis 2: Cost of WLB Practice Use has a negative effect the perceived WLB.

Desire to Stay-long in same organization

The whole HRM experience from using WLB practice, such as job arrangement, appraisal, performance feedback and other social contextual responses from co-worker or organizational culture, can make cost of WLB practice use high according above argument. And high cost perception of WLB practice use may lead reform one's attitudes toward organization (e.g. loyalty, Ollier-Malaterre, 2010). Because, all implement factor can be perceived as the organizational message to one's life-stage transformation. Once an employee make evaluation where she/he stand and organizational response, it last a while when she/he have to judge until the situation (life-stage) is changed. Therefore, Cost of WLB practice use may act as important reference point (Folger and Cropanzano, 1998). Cost of WLB practice use high, means employee fail to see future career positively as she/he could before family responsible was low, in her/his organization. And there are some barriers from higher status or more opportunities for skill development. It may employees have lose their interest in long-term employment, or desire to

stay-long until retirement as their colleagues do.

Hypothesis 3: Cost of WLB Practice Use has a negative effect to employees' interest in long-term employment.

The Moderate Effect of Psychological Contract Fulfillment

Regardless of the division between relational and transactional contracts, subsequent research into psychological contract (PC) typically seeks the relationship between PC and employee outcomes by examining what employee-centric obligations the company must fulfill and employee's perceptions about meeting these obligation, PC violation or PC fulfillment (Morrison and Robinson, 1997; Robison, 1996; Robinson and Morrison, 2000; Turney and Feldman, 2000). According to employment relationship argument, if organization commit to employee more, employee reciprocate back more (Tsui, Pearce, Porter and Tripoli, 1997). And if employee perceives that organizational obligation fulfilled, not violated, employee values it and leads more desirable outcomes in organization.

As I assumed cost of WLB practice use has a negative effect to important employee outcomes, the relationship maybe moderated by organizational obligation fulfillment or employee obligation fulfillment which is embedded in WLB context. On the one hand, employee struggling to balance their work load and family responsibility are already aware that their choice can leads negative career consequences and yet be disappointed emotionally. But, organizational obligation for employees' Work-life balance are fulfilled more, the negative emotions can be moderated at least. On the other hand, one understands the choice that engages more to family responsibility can lead negative effect to their career prospects rationally. But in the situation that ones' obligation for fulltime employees' are fulfilled more, the negative perception can be

moderated at least.

Hypothesis 4a. The relationship between Cost of WLB practice Use and employee outcome, is moderated by the degree to whether employer's obligations fulfilled in WLB version.

Hypothesis 4b. The relationship between Cost of WLB practice Use and employee outcome, is moderated by the degree to whether employee's obligations fulfilled in WLB version.

Summary

This study investigates three hypotheses for direct effect of cost perception. First, the psychological contract (relational contract term) weakens after using WLB practice because of their own commitment to company gets lower. Second, Gaining perceived WLB is getting harder because of the pressures and anxious for their future career. Third, the high cost of WLB practice use, reduce full-time employees' interest in long-term employment. Based on original direct effect models, additional moderate effect also investigated. Moderate variables as PC fulfillment in WLB version, is considered.

METHOD

Sample and Procedures

The following two procedures were followed in adopting the psychological contract framework to explore the relationship between consequences of WLB practice use and employee outcomes. Qualitative and quantitative analysis are conducted.

First, the subjects chosen for the study were fulltime female employees who had taken parental leave within the past three years. They participated in interviews dealing with the

conditions under which they had taken the leave, the events preceding their participation, changes to their careers after returning from parental leave, their perceptions and feelings about these changes, and their present position in relation to their employment and the organization (N = 35; survey period: December 2008–February 2011; average length of interviews: 57 min; each person was interviewed approximately 1.2 times; and interviews were conducted at their workplace or near their residences.). I sent an introductory e-mail through a mailing list of MBA students at a national university in Tokyo for recruiting participants. One of students introduced her acquaintances, and they also introduce their own acquaintances and so on. The sample included 18 persons were made by MBA mailing list (none from actual MBA students at final). Seventeen participants were recruited from two large Japanese corporations (one from manufacture, one from service sector) that offered cooperation. Information from the interview was primarily collected to derive three variables: “cost of WLB practice use”, two “obligations in WLB version” (employee/employer). Details concerning creation of the variables appear in Appendix 1.

Next, to measure each variable, including exploratory variables, a survey was conducted targeting mothers employed fulltime at Japanese companies. The largest research company, Macromil, in Japan conducted the survey, gathering a sample of 618 responses during August 2011. An initial survey concerning policies relating to work–life balance and employee outcomes ordinarily would not ask about personal characteristics such as gender. However, the demands of job and family are substantial for working mothers (Lobel and Clair, 1992; Shelton and John, 1996; Erdwins, Buffardi, Casper and O’Brien, 2001), and Japanese human resource policies focus primarily on fulltime employees. Therefore, this study sought fulltime female employees to construct theories about the relationship between work–childcare policies as elements of the

psychological contract and employee outcomes. Finally, 537 response who answered that she used parental leave are analyzed, because this study focus to an impact of WLB use, particularly leave event. See Table 1 for more information of sample.

Measures

Costs of WLB practice Use:

Ten items with five -Likert scale were used to measure the consequences to employees who took advantage of WLB practices (1 = not at all, 5 = a very great extent). As parental leave and part-time arrangement for childcare have been the centerpieces of discussion, I guided that WLB practice included mainly parental leave and reduced working hours. Higher averages for each item indicate greater awareness of the consequences of partaking in WLB practices. The survey asked respondents to reflect on their first year after returning to work from parental leave and to examine the impact on salary, work responsibilities, and career. The specific items to be considered were as follows: (1) I returned to my original work responsibilities (R), (2) I was placed in charge of work I have never done, (3) I was placed in charge of work at a lower level, (4) My salary was greatly reduced, (5) I received an satisfactory performance appraisal for the first time (R), (6) For the first time, I was convinced with my performance appraisal (R), (7) Taking WLB practice impairs promotion possibilities, (8) Taking WLB practice hinders skill development, (9) WLB practice use narrows information exchange with other workers and the development of human networks, and (10) The longer the parental leave, the more adverse is the career impact (Cronbach's $\alpha = .774$).

Psychological Contract (Relational Attribute):

As for the relational attribute of a psychological contract, the items used by Millward and Hopkins(1998) and Rousseau (1990) were referenced. Seven items applicable to Japanese companies were selected from the relational and transactional contracts. Items to be used were chosen through discussions with two researchers knowledgeable about Japanese human resource management and with two personnel managers. The items included (1) I will be able to grow in this company; (2) The company appreciates it when I work overtime; (3) I feel I am part of the company; (4) I feel the company pays employees commensurate with their efforts; (5) There are future benefits to be received, so I am motivated; (6) I will have opportunities for promotion if I work diligently; and (7) I feel positive that my workplace is where I belong.

(Cronbach $\alpha = .798$)

Psychological contract fulfillment(employer, employee):

The employees' perception of the obligations expected of the organization by fulltime employees specifically include (1) A range of WLB practices, (2) Career consultation before taking parental leave, (3) Early notification of the employee's assignment following parental leave, (4) Reinstatement in the original workplace, (5) Assessments focused on outcomes during the period of part-time arrangement, (6) Transfer to family-friendly workplaces, (7) Cultivation of awareness for improving communication within the workplace, (8) Elimination of occupational categories for men and women, (9) Appointment of women to management positions, (10) Cultivation of management's awareness in relation to employees in WLB practice use, (11) Review of administrative efficiency, and (12) Internal networks for promoting work-life balance.

The employees' perception of the obligations expected of the fulltime employees by the organization (employee obligations) specifically include (1) To perform the work assigned, (2)

To minimize discussion of childcare issues at work, (3) To return to work after parental leave, (4) To aim at becoming a manager, (5) Not to let childcare affect work, (6) To be appreciated to the company, (7) To use WLB practices to the minimal extent, (8) To be autonomous in designing one's career, (9) To be considerate of others, (10) To clearly express opinions, and (11) To be cheerful.

Obligations were measured according to each employee's perception of each item's importance on a five-Likert scale (1 = very least extent of obligation, 5 = a very important obligation). With this data, I conducted confirmative factor analysis (see Appendix 2). Also, a dummy variable was created to indicate whether the organization has fulfilled its obligation (0 = not fulfilled, 1 = fulfilled). The importance of each item was then multiplied by the results for each dummy variable, and the average of all items was calculated. Therefore, the "PC fulfillment-employer" variable shows the extent to which employees perceive that the organization has fulfilled the obligations they specified. "PC fulfillment-employee" variable was created for each item using the same procedure as for the organizational obligation. Each variable's alpha coefficients are .946 and .892 respectively for the scales are acceptable.

Perceived WLB:

A measure of perceived WLB was created using the following three items: (1) There is a good balance between work and childcare, (2) Work requirements make providing good childcare impossible (R), and (3) Childcare requirements make performing good work impossible (R) (Cronbach $\alpha = .757$). All items were measured on a five-Likert scale (1 = not at all, 5 = a very great extent).

Desire to Stay-long:

Desire to Stay-long was measured by the item "I want to work at the present company

until mandatory retirement.” Again, a five-Likert scale pertained (1 = not at all, 5 = a very great extent).

Control Variables:

See Table 1 for the list of control variables and their process.

RESULTS

Scale means, standard deviations, correlations are reported in Table 1.

Table 1. Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations(partial) among Variables

	Mean	s.d	27	28	29	30
1. Industry dummy(1=manufacture)	0.270	0.444	.079	.148**	.002	.036
2. Education dummy (1=University)	0.500	0.500	.111**	-.005	-.070	.064
3. Tenure(years)	10.366	4.875	.103*	.108*	.161**	.003
4. Job dummy (1=professional, technical)	0.262	0.440	-.030	-.061	-.095*	.018
Control 1:						
5. Status dummy(1= manager, higher)	0.167	0.373	-.053	.026	-.025	.156**
basic controls						
for						
labor economics						
and home						
economics						
effect						
6. Age of youngest(month)	15.441	24.337	.024	.022	.077	-.025
7. Wage(log10)	2.566	0.145	.153**	.025	.083	.149**
8. Parent's employment dummy(1=fulltime)	0.172	0.377	.005	.106*	.007	.084*
9. Family support dummy (1=parant's stay at home)	0.138	0.345	-.085*	.012	.042	.024
10. Family Support (patner's help for child raring/rate)	2.248	1.331	-.024	.080	.080	.084*
11. Partner's wage(log10)	2.662	0.171	.172**	.066	.122**	.054
12. Organizational size dummy (1=more than 300 employees)	0.547	0.498	.163**	.024	.039	.105**
13. Fertility leave	0.989	0.105	-.027	-.092*	.004	-.020
Control 2:						
14. Care during pragnancy	0.480	0.500	-.001	.089*	.119**	.107**
additional						
controls for						
practice effect						
(is or not)						
15. Part-time arrangement for childcare	0.758	0.429	.099*	.071	.135**	.114**
16. Flex-time	0.093	0.291	-.103*	-.078	.032	.114**
17. Childcare in office	0.223	0.417	.046	.011	.097*	.044
18. Monetary support	0.104	0.306	.045	-.010	.125**	.042
19. Leave for child's sick	0.426	0.495	.031	.138**	.141**	.145**
additional						
controls for						
practice effect						
(I used/using or						
not)						
20. Fertility leave	0.980	0.142	-.033	-.059	-.001	-.021
21. Care during pragnancy	0.248	0.432	-.024	.077	.033	.112**
22. Part-time arrangement for childcare	0.447	0.498	.114**	.012	.038	.048
23. Flex-time	0.048	0.215	-.114**	-.046	.096*	.066
24. Childcare in office	0.127	0.333	.050	.020	.089*	.041
25. Monetary support	0.019	0.135	-.045	-.043	.083	.025
26. Leave for child's sick	0.134	0.341	.046	.068	.102*	.024
independent						
27. Cost of WLB practice use	2.911	0.675	1			
dependent						
28. Desire to stay-long	3.152	1.148	-.120**	1		
29. Perceieved WLB	3.426	0.763	-.243**	.272**	1	
30. Relational Contract(T2)	24.335	5.641	-.226**	.552**	.280**	1

* p < .05, ** p < .01

N=537

The results of hierarchical regressions are reported in Table 2. As shown in upper part of Table 2, H1, H2, H3 are supported ($\beta = -.234, p < .01$; $\beta = -.272, p < .01$; $\beta = -.148, p < .01$). Cost of WLB practice use has a negative and significant effect to employee outcomes. As shown in lower part of Table 2, H4a and H4b are partially supported. The result of moderate effect can be summarized three statements. First, there is no moderate effect on perceived WLB. Second, there

is strong moderate effect on between cost perception and relational contract. Third, there is the moderate effect of the employees' fulfillment on desire to stay-long.

Table 2
Hierarchical Regressions Predicting The Impact of Cost for Using WLB practice and fulfillment of psychological contract for WLB on Relational Contract, Perceived WLB, Desire to Stay-long

Variables	Relational contract(T2)			Perceived WLB			Desire to Stay-long		
	R ²	B	F	R2	B	F	R2	B	F
Model for direct effect									
control 1 ^a	0.037		2.954 ***	0.024		2.256 ***	0.067		3.607 ***
control 2 ^b	0.041		1.925 ***	0.022		1.654 **	0.102		2.334 ***
Cost for WLB practice Use	0.097	-0.234 ***	2.985 ***	0.122	-272 ***	3.57 ***	0.124	-0.148 ***	2.466 ***
Model for moderate effect ^c									
Cost for WLB practice Use		-0.102 **			-0.228 ***			-0.105 **	
PC fulfillment_employer		0.414 ***			0.102 **			0.119 **	
PC fulfillment_employee		0.096 **			0.143 ***			0.146 ***	
cost x employer		0.090 **			0.049			-0.009	
cost x employee		-0.118 ***			-0.044			-0.090 **	
	0.282 ^d		7.367 ***	0.156		4.004 ***	0.121		3.246 ***

** p < .05, *** p < .01

a. Control 1 include education_dummy(1= university and more), wage(1,000yen), partner's wage(1,000yen), family support_ parent_dummy(1=living with parent) family support_partner(%), age of youngest(month) working hour/week(hour), tenure(year), job_dummy(1=professionals, technician) industry_dummy1(1=manufacture), industry_dummy2(1=retail,service).

b. Control 2 include 7 WLB practice dummies(fertility leave, care during pregnancy, part-time arrangement for childcare, flextime, childcare in office, monetary support, leave for child's sick) and another 7 WLB practice use dummies whether or not a perceiver use those practices.

c. All controls included.

d. All R² are adjusted, and all beta are standardized.

CONCLUSION

Japanese companies have traditionally maintained a healthy employment relationship by upholding their obligation to provide long-term employment while expecting employees to make significant contributions to the organization (Aoki, 1984; Dore, 2000; Morishima, 1995). Many observers generally believe that, within the exchange of labor, the internal corporate market (economic benefits of the company assuring long-term employment) transcends other market principles (Williamson, 1975). Employees who have cultivated firm-specific abilities want to make significant contributions to their organization. Thus, they form strong connections with their organization and are unlikely to seek employment elsewhere (Cappelli, Bassi, Katz, Knoke, Osterman and Useem, 1997; Pfeffer and Cohen, 1984). Based on this premise, WLB practices indicate the company's wish to meet employees' life needs while maximizing their contributions to the company (Grover and Crooker, 1995; Osterman, 1995). As a result, the generous WLB

practices put the organization in employees' good graces, especially among women, who have the greatest need for them. In return, employees' heightened motivation increases the possibility that they will contribute more to company performance (Berg et al., 2003; Konrad and Mangel, 2000).

Implications and Limitations

By investigating how WLB practice affects each employee's perceptions and attitudes, this research reaches the practical conclusion that these policies are more than a tool. They are outcomes of the company's intent to construct and implement policies that enhance operations. With academic aspect, this paper estimate "good management" beyond HR practices itself. In the psychological contract (PC) frameworks, there are only limited arguments what is the extent of PC formed, and how PC can drifted. This paper has an attempt to show PC in WLB version and its impact on employee outcome.

Limitations

It is presumed in Japan that the fulltime employees like those who constitute subjects of this study will remain employed until the mandatory retirement age (Morishima, 1996). Many female subjects of this quantitative analysis have internalized this custom in their relationship contract. However, it is also true among Japanese companies that fulltime female employees have a shorter employment relationship with an organization than male employees. According to the Tokyo Women's Foundation (1999), the first job for more than half of female university graduates is a general clerical position. However, it is also reported that university graduates performing clerical work report the highest percentage of unemployment at 66.2% after quitting their jobs. General clerical positions seldom lead to continued employment. In other words, perhaps the psychological contracts of many female fulltime employees, compared to male

fulltime employees, do not have a relational description in the employment relationship with the organization.

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Appendix 1.

Qualitative data (Cost of WLB Practice Use)

Survey's statements	Examples of statements from interviewee
WLB practice use hinders skill development.	There wasn't my name in the list for skill improvement programs overseas. Nobody asked me.
WLB practice use impares promotion possibilities.	I have leaved workplace for 6 month, and I didn't change my status even though my workload is bigger.
The longer I use WLB practice, the more adverse is the career impact.	I wish I could leave more though, I decided not to because I needed to continue this job.
WLB practice use narrows informantion exchange with other workers and the development of human networks.	I used to meet various people in many status or jobs, but current job handles only back-officing work. I used to eager to know about other people's life, but now I couldn't pay attention to others.
My salary was greatly reduced because of WLB practice use.	I am reduced my wage 25% by hour, it is big.
I received an satisfactory performance appraisal(Reversed).	I received first appraisal by my boss, and the result changed by company in final adjustment because of parental leave record.
I agreed the result of performance appraisal(Reversed).	I understand the company show the point that it is unavoidable that I can get two rabbit.
I was placed in charge of work I never done.	I don't dislike my job, but I wished I had my profession with last job.
I returned to my original work responsibilities(Reversed).	I shared my original work responsibility with my sub-ordinate. It was dull.
I was placed in charge of work at a lower level.	I had to very clerical and basic work that can be done by contract worker.

Qualitative data (Psychological contract in WLB context -employer's obligation)

Survey's statements	Examples of statements from interviewee
A range of WLB practices	It is very helpful that company have various practices regarding to individual's diversified situation and needs.
Career consultation before WLB practice use	I had a meeting with a member of HRM department and my boss. It was very helpful.
Early notification of the employee's assignment following parental leave	There are lots of consideration regarding physical distance from work when you have a child. I got noticed only 2 weeks early
Reinstatement in the organizational workplace	I just finished giving a birth, and I start over all again ?
Assesments focused on outcomes during the period of part-time practice	I struggled to get in done my work in limited time. And other colleague get better appraisal and wage because of being late only
Transfer to family-friendly workplace	I was a researcher and I was only woman/mom there. I feel confortable in my new workplace, more woman, more moms.
Cultivation of awareness for imploving communication within the workplace	As my company has the culture that communicate openly, it is easier that I speak up my situation.
Elimination of occupational categories for men and women	Everyone says it is not, but it is.
Appointment of women to management positions	It is much better if female managers in the company, even if I don't think I could be her.
Cutivation of management's awareness in relation to employees in WLB practice use	Even though the company says suger-coating propaganda, majority of manager is male. And They don't take it seriously.
Review of administrative efficiency	If every worker would work on time, any cost of WLB practice use ever happened.
Internal networks fo promoting Work-Life balance	My company has formal network for female full-time worker. We had lunch together.

Qualitative data (Psychological contract in WLB context -employee's obligation)

Survey's statements	Examples of statements from interviewee
To be cheerful	You have the gut to say sorry cheerfully, then you can get more help and understanding.
To clearly express opinions	Maybe, it is because of my persnality, I couldn't just say directly what I wanted.
To be considerate of others	It is not about the practice use. You should always be considerate other members in workplace.
To be autonomous in designing one's career	I've never taked serious about my career until I take parental leave. Now I always thinking about it.
To return to work after parental leave	If you don't return to work even though you take parental leave, it is very harmful to next person who want to take leave.
To perform the work assigned	Organization cannot meet every need that I get, so, I should accept what I am told.
To use WLB practices to the minimal extent	Company never tell that not to, but I can feel that way as a manager.
To minimize discussion of childcare issues at work	You have to separate your work and life basically.
To be appreciated to the company	There are many company that shows lower initiative in WLB. I cannot complain.
To aim at becoming a manager	It is obligation you commit more when your tenure longer. It is not exceptional to female full-time worker.
Not to let childcare affect work	Some people act like that they are mothers as well in workplace.

Appendix 2

Factor Analysis(Main factors are analyzed with varimax rotation.)

Cost of WLB Practice Use(parental leave)	Factors		
	Overall	Appraisal	Job
WLB practice use hinders skill development.	<u>.864</u>	.086	.141
WLB practice use impares promotion possibilities.	<u>.836</u>	.135	.124
The longer I use WLB practice, the more adverse is the career impact.	<u>.806</u>	.096	.011
WLB practice use narrows informantion exchange with other workers and the development of human networks.	<u>.787</u>	.004	.089
My salary was greatly reduced because of WLB practice use.	<u>.497</u>	.019	.415
I received an satisfactory performance appraisal(Reversed).	.103	<u>.955</u>	-.014
I agreed the result of performance appraisal(Reversed).	.102	<u>.954</u>	.004
I was placed in charge of work I never done.	.111	-.010	<u>.783</u>
I returned to my original work responsibilities(Reversed).	-.062	.058	<u>.756</u>
I was placed in charge of work at a lower level.	.345	-.089	<u>.630</u>

Psychological Contract in WLB version in Japan(PC fulfillment-Employer)	Factor	
	Individual	Oganizationa
A range of WLB practices	<u>.696</u>	.437
Career consultation before WLB practice use	<u>.747</u>	.401
Early notification of the employee's assignment following parental leave	<u>.833</u>	.313
Reinstatement in the organizational workplace	<u>.790</u>	.214
Assesments focused on outcomes during the period of part-time practice	<u>.778</u>	.361
Transfer to family-friendly workplace	<u>.750</u>	.358
Cultivation of awareness for imploving communication within the workplace	.499	<u>.669</u>
Elimination of occupational categories for men and women	.234	<u>.845</u>
Appointment of women to management positions	.281	<u>.811</u>
Cutivation of management's awareness in relation to employees in WLB practice use	.370	<u>.767</u>
Review of administrative efficiency	.377	<u>.759</u>
Internal networks fo promoting Work-Life balance	.414	<u>.733</u>

Psychological Contract in WLB version in Japan(PC fulfillment-Employee)	Factor	
	External	Internal
To be cheerful	<u>.880</u>	.158
To clearly express opinions	<u>.875</u>	.119
To be considerate of others	<u>.796</u>	.242
To be autonomous in designing one's career	<u>.561</u>	.530
To return to work after parental leave	<u>.462</u>	.416
To perform the work assigned	<u>.440</u>	<u>.385</u>
To use WLB practices to the minimal extent	.083	<u>.855</u>
To minimize discussion of childcare issues at work	.109	<u>.757</u>
To be appreciated to the company	.300	<u>.751</u>
To aim at becoming a manager	.363	<u>.698</u>
Not to let chaildcare affect work	.472	<u>.544</u>