

Family-Friendly Policies in Companies and Family Resource Management

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In 2004, the United Nations emphasized strengthening family support on the 10th anniversary of the International Year of the Family. Family support is closely related to both public institutions and company policies. This paper reviews family-friendly policies of companies from the viewpoint of family resource management. Data used in this paper was obtained from surveys of companies and employees that suggested the following. (1) Women tended to acquire child care leave frequently. (2) Men could not acquire maternity leave easily, and the acquisition rate was low. (3) Even in family-friendly companies, a corporate culture enabling men to use child care leave was not growing. In order for male employees to have consciousness as a citizen and to achieve work-life balance, it is necessary to utilize family-friendly policies from the viewpoint of family resource management.

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INTRODUCTION

In Japan, a review of long working hours of workers in enterprises and the division between men and women working at home has long been advocated. Since the enforcement of the Basic Law for a Gender-equal Society (1999), gender equality has been promoted in every area of society and at home. This paper attempts to verify the influence of family-friendly policies being introduced into the workplace on the gender relationship at home from the viewpoint of family resource management, by considering that the key for achieving gender equality lies at the junction of company and domestic life.

"Family-friendly policies" support a balance between workplace life and family/individual life (Rodosyo Joseikyoku 2001). More specifically, item four of the five basic philosophies in the Basic Law for a Gender-equal Society states "a balance between the activities in family life and other activities." The Basic Plan for Gender Equality mentions "Measures to Create Family-friendly Work Environment" as one of eleven important objectives. The Child-care and family-care Leave Law was enacted in 2001, and men and women employees become to be able to apply Child-care leave on the basis of the article 5 of this Law.*¹

Based on the decision by the Cabinet in "plans for measures to support the balance of work and child care" in July 2001, the Council for Gender Equality launched measures to support the balance of work and child care.

The "Plus One Proposal to End Low Birthrate," which were announced by the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare in 2002, contain the basic policy as a countermeasure against the declining birthrate in future generations, and they cited a "review of men working habits" as an item of concern. Based on the policy, the "Law for Measures to Support the Development of the Next-generation"*² was established and promulgated in July 2004. This law promotes the establishment of "Measures to Support the Development of the Next-generation" to provide an environment where children of the next generation are suitably born and raised. Article 5 of this law states that "employers should arrange the employ-

*¹ Revision of Child-care and family-care Leave Law (December 8, 2004, revision 1, Implemented on April 1, 2005) — About revision of Child-care Leave Law
① Application of Child-care Leave to part-time employees. ② Child-care Leave to maximum of one year and a half. ③ Up to five days per year of child nursing care leave.

ment environment so that a balance between the professional and family life of the workers is enabled and implements measures to enhance the correct growth of the next generation.”

Since 1999, the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare has promoted the balance of work and child care, and nursing care and is implementing a “Family-friendly companies commendation”^{*3} for those enterprises that have achieved good results in this field.^{*4}

Home economics researchers have conducted studies of the relationship between family and enterprise and have found that this dyad is actually a relationship between consumers and business. Studies of the Japanese HIBE (Home Economics in Business) as a vital link between consumers and business were conducted from the 1970s to the 1990s (Matsubaguchi et al. 1997). Interests in livelihood culture increased in the second half of the 1980s, which spawned a study to clarify the relationship between livelihood culture and corporate culture from the viewpoint of organizational culture theory (Saito and Ito 1996).

Needless to say, enterprise and home economy are inseparable. Today, in the 21st century, it is vital for home economics to clarify the relationship between

family-friendly policies and family life from the viewpoint of family resource management.

The United Nations General Assembly Resolution 54/24 proclaimed 2004 as the 10th Anniversary of the International Year of the Family (IYF). A draft resolution of the UN Commission for Social Development (CSD) on Preparations for the Observance of the 10th Anniversary of the IYF was adopted on 21 Feb. 2002.

The objectives of the IYF include increasing awareness of family issues among governments and the private sector; encouraging national institutions to formulate, implement, and monitor family policies; stimulating responses to problems affecting and affected by the situations of families; enhancing the effectiveness of local, regional and national programs for families; and strengthening the existing support.

The Japan Society of Home Economics (JSHE) was commended by the United Nations at the IYF in 1994 (JSHE International Exchange Committee 1995) and in 2004, the 10th Anniversary of IYF. The 20th World Congress of International Federation for Home Economics (IFHE) was organized in Kyoto and an open symposium commemorating the 10th Anniversary of IYF was held.

At the IFHE 2004 Post-congress, the Division for Family Resource Management of JSHE organized a seminar commemorating the 10th Anniversary of the IYF. The reports by Gertraud Pichler and Ki-Young Lee presented at that seminar emphasized the need to enhance support to families globally, consistent with the ideas of the IYF.

In view of these processes, and also from a larger perspective of Gender Equality and nurturing the next generation, it is very important for the Japanese business culture to have family-friendly policies from the viewpoint of family resource management.

In this paper, the following issues are discussed from the viewpoint of family-resource management, (1) What are family-friendly policies of enterprises? (2) How are men and women enterprise workers implementing beneficial family-friendly policies? (3) What are the present problems and improvement measures for family-friendly policies?

We adopted the method of distributing surveys to enterprises implementing family-friendly policies and their employees.

EXAMINATION METHOD

For this study, the surveys of enterprises and their employees were conducted at workplaces that received the Family-friendly companies' commendation

^{*2} “Law for Measures to Support the Development of the Next-generation” obliged those establishments that have 301 or more employees to establish a “common employer action plan,” which incorporates measures to facilitate the taking of child-care leave, reduction of overtime work during the period of childcare, and correction of the enterprise culture that gives the first priority to work.

^{*3} “Family-friendly companies” means those enterprises that have a system to enable a balance between work and child-care, nursing care and take measures to allow workers to select diversified ways of working. The criteria for “Family-friendly companies commendation” comprise four pillars: “the Law on child-care and nursing care leave and the use exceeding the level specified in the law,” “a system to enable flexible ways of working considering the balance between work and family and its use,” “other systems to enable a balance between work and family and their use,” and “corporate culture to facilitate a balance between work and family.”

^{*4} In the field of labor economy, with regard to these trends, the following studies have been reported: Wakisaka (2000, 2002a, b, c, 2004), in sociology, Sato (2000, 2001a, b, c, 2002), Kanbayashi (2001), Morita (2002a, b), in the business economics field, Maeda (2001a, b, 2002), Hamu (2001, 2002).

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Table 1. The questionnaire to companies

Period	2004.02.28-03.12	The main investigation items
Method	Mailing, E-mail	1 Employees situation (The number of full-time employees, The number of part-time employees, Employment situation, Classified by age and length of service, Use situation of Child-care and Family care Leave). 2 Chance of implementing family-friendly policies. 3 Company benefits from receiving the commendation. 4 Employee benefits from receiving the commendation. 5 Application of Child-care and Family-care Leave to part-time employees. 6 Introduction of nursing care leave for children. 7 Expectations for public institutes concerning promotion of work-child-care balance. 8 Expectations for public institutes concerning promotion of work-family-care balance.
Distribution	170 companies* that received the family-friendly enterprise commendation	
The number of recovery companies The number of effective recovery companies	27 companies (Response rate 15.9%)	

* The number enterprises of that address was confirmed on the homepage, from the 193 enterprises that received the family-friendly enterprise commendation during the fiscal period 1999 to 2003.

Table 2. Data collection through interviews to employees

Period	2004.7.13-09.10	The main investigation items
Method	Interview	1 Have you ever used child care and family care leave? How long was the period of use? 2 Trend of using child-care leave and background factors. 3 Influences of family-friendly policies on families. 4 Family-friendly policies that should be promoted further. 5 Exemption of social insurance premiums during child-care leave. 6 Payment during nursing care leave is 40% of ordinary salary. 7 Child-care leave of the father during the 8 weeks following the birth. 8 Nursing care leave for children.
Candidate	Three employees of two enterprises that received the family-friendly enterprise commendation. Three employees of one enterprises that has never received the family-friendly enterprise commendation.	

from among the enterprises implementing family-friendly policies. We focused on "model companies" that are adopting corporate measures that enable men and women employees to fulfill their family responsibilities. We then applied Family Resource Management theory^{*5} to them to discern the true sense of being family friendly.

^{*5} The whole theory of family support has thus developed in the field of Family Resource Management in "Home Economics"; *i.e.* time use, work-force management, and family budget studies from the viewpoint of family gender relations.

The survey methods are shown in Tables 1 and 2. Table 1 presents questionnaires submitted to companies, and Table 2, interview-style surveys given to employees. These two survey subjects are not related, so independent results could be obtained from each investigation (*cf.* Questionnaire results and Interview results).

RESULTS

We now discuss the results of questionnaires and interview-style surveying, which primarily focused on child-care leave.

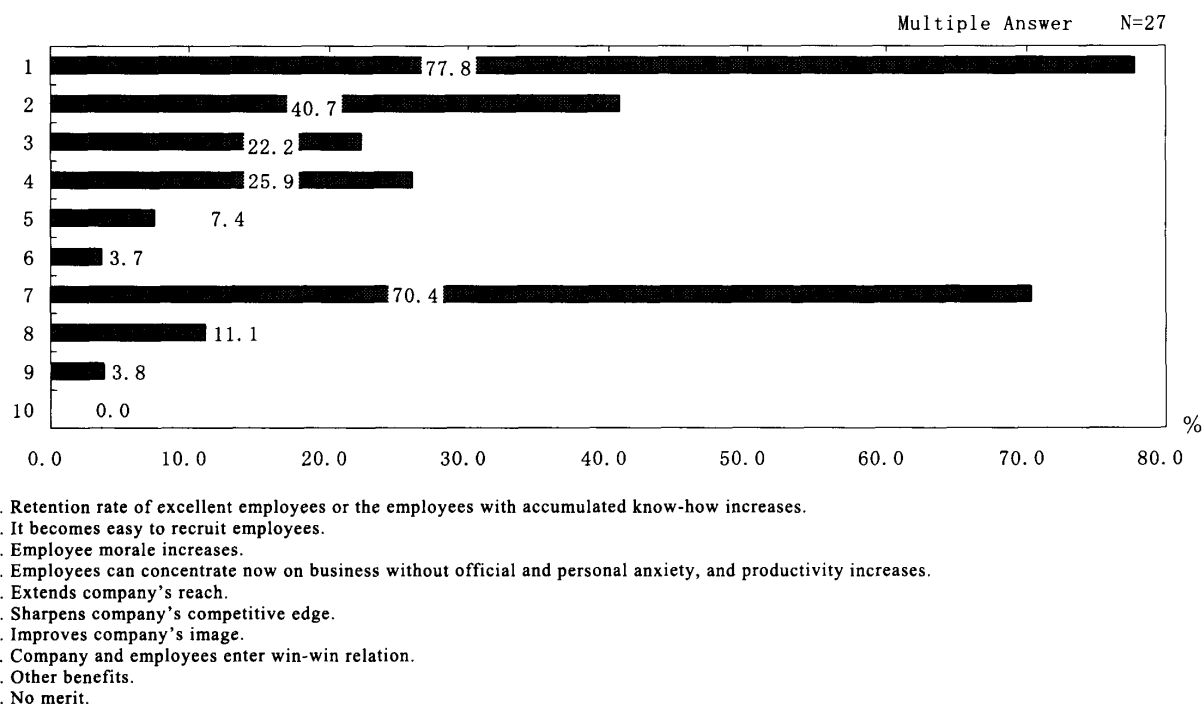


Fig. 1. Company's benefits from "family-friendly company award"

Questionnaire results

Initially, when looking at child-care leave trends, all women respondents answered that it was rather easy to acquire.

However, men did not concur. More than one third of respondents answered that it was difficult. Furthermore, when looking into the opportunities for acquiring child-care leave, 90% of women answered "high" and all men respondents, except those who gave no answer, answered "low."

Thus, in spite of the existing family-friendly policies that provide a system for work-life balance (Diversity Work Rule Kenkyukai 2002), the survey revealed that the system places emphasis on the use of leave by women, while many enterprises simply assume that men do not desire it. Since men do have a difficult time acquiring child-care leave, this may be the reason for their low child-care leave acquisition rate. Current corporate culture has not evolved to facilitate men's use of child-care leave, even in "Family-friendly" companies.

Therefore, what is the motive required to change the corporate culture so that men can use child-care leave and raise their child-care leave acquisition rate? The motive will be the enhancement of gender equality to replace life management of the "consumers" who provide labor to enterprises, because the policies of an enterprise should reflect the needs of its

employees.

Secondly, although the introduction of the system of nursing care leave for children is now regarded as a duty towards making enterprises family friendly, only about 60% of the 'commended' enterprises have already introduced it. Incidentally, 80% of the answers indicated that "it was sufficient to have annual leave with pay" as a reason for not introducing this system. Under these circumstances, it is highly probable that much of the annual paid leave accrued by women employees, who carry most of the burden of nursing care for children at home, will be consumed as nursing care leave for children. In regards to nursing care for children, men and women employees are clearly divided into two groups: one consists of men employees who do not use paid leave, and the other consists of women employees who use paid leave to perform nursing care for children at home. Thus, it can be seen that it is difficult to achieve gender equality in regards to paid leave.

This is a serious problem that will divide the genders into those that work outside the home and those that work in the home. It is also a problem from the perspective of family resource management, which involves the balance of household income and the distribution of leisure time; a problem that must be re-examined as a relationship between income (leave with pay) and leave (time).

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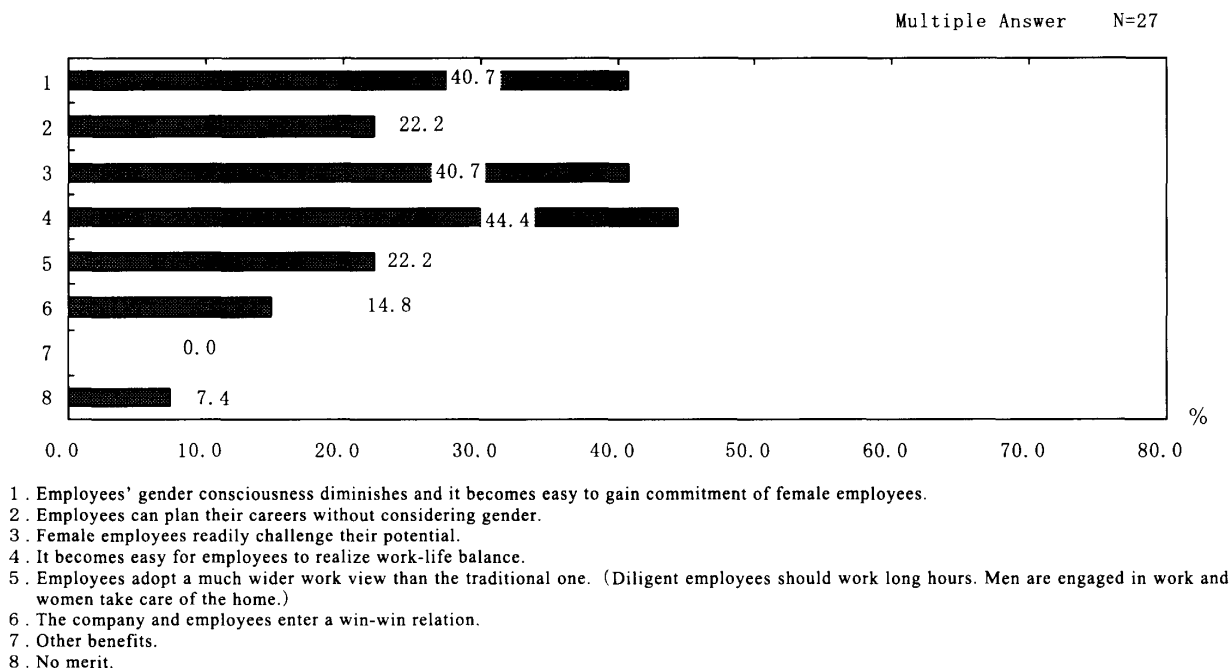


Fig. 2. Employees' benefits from "family-friendly company award"

Company's benefits and employees' benefits from receiving the commendation were showed Fig. 1 and Fig. 2 each other.

Interview results

Interview-style surveying was implemented with employees of enterprises that received the "Family-friendly company commendation" and those that had not (Table 3).

The present status of child-care leave acquisition from the standpoint of employees is shown in Table 3. From Table 3, the following facts can be seen regardless of whether the enterprise surveyed received the "Family-friendly company commendation" or not.

1. Generally, women obtained child-care leave easily, and their acquisition rate is high.
2. Men, on the other hand, have difficulty acquiring child-care leave and few actually have the desire to acquire it. Thus, their acquisition rate is low.

Some examples will further clarify the issue of disparity: A company that has a system of nursing care leave for children is Company A (Mr. A, Ms. B), where the length of leave is five days. Company B (Ms. C) and Company H (Ms. D, Ms. E, and Ms. F) have no system of nursing care leave for children. The opinions of employees on nursing care leave for children are listed in Table 4. From Table 4, it can be seen that employees earnestly desire nursing care leave for children regardless of whether the company has a system of nursing care leave for children or not.

With regard to the rights of fathers to acquire child-care leave during the 8 weeks following child-birth (see Table 5), it can be seen that women employees strongly desire that the father acquires child-care leave during this period. However, as Ms. F pointed out, the reform of a father's ideas concerning his family will be the essential key in acquiring child-care leave during this period.

The opinions of employees on ways to increase the number of men who obtain child-care leave are listed in Table 6, and the following is a summary:

1. It would be a good idea for the employee to submit a plan for acquiring child-care leave to the company during pregnancy (his wife in the case of a man employee) so that the company can make arrangements for his or her absence during child-care leave.
2. At least 60% to 70% of the employee's ordinary salary is required during the period of child-care leave.
3. Men are unfamiliar with the child-care leave system and few have the determination to take advantage of it. Therefore, a reform of men's awareness regarding family responsibility is required. However, since it is difficult for a single enterprise to achieve this, it is necessary that public institutions make efforts by recognizing it as a societal problem.

Personnel management can enable a work-life

Table 3. Actual states of child-care leave as viewed from interviews with employees

Interviewee	Sex	Age	Company	Contents of job	Object child	Period	Reason for acquisition/no acquisition	Trend of acquisition		Factors in the background of the trend of acquisition	
								Men	Women	Men	Women
Mr. A	Man	42	A	Sales	3rd child	6 weeks	Want to attend on the new born child. Want to acquire child-care leave if available.	Hard	Easy	Acquisition of child-care leave is difficult. If acquisition is desirable, it is difficult to request it.	When have no resistance against acquisition of child-care leave.
Ms. B	Woman	32		Job related to safe operation	1st child 2nd child	1 year and 5 months 1 year and 8 months	It is natural that women acquire child-care leave after bearing a child.	Hard	Easy	Child-care leave is not difficult to acquire, but do not intend to acquire tiring. (There is no will to acquire).	Most women acquire child-care leave without re-tiring. It is natural that women acquire child-care leave after bearing a child.
Ms. C	Woman	44	B	Secretary	3rd child	6 months	Want to raise the child with mother's milk.	Hard	Easy	Child-care leave is difficult to acquire.	Though it cannot be said that acquisition of child-care leave is natural, it can be acquired without hesitation.
Ms. D	Woman	31	H	Personnel affairs	1st child	1 year	What to devote myself to child care while child-care leave can be acquired.	Hard	Easy	Due to the common concept that child care is a task of women, it is difficult to acquire child-care leave.	Will acquire child-care leave and then return to workplace.
Ms. E	Woman	32		Personnel affairs	1st child	1 year	Because there is the system of child-care leave.	Hard	Easy	Not only it is difficult to acquire child-care leave, but also have little will to acquire it.	Acquiring child-care leave positively.
Ms. F	Woman	37		Personnel affairs		Not yet acquired	When the 2nd child was born, child-care leave had just been introduced, so there was no will to acquire it. Did not acquire it for the 3rd child either.	Hard	Easy	It is difficult to acquire child-care leave, so there is no will to acquire it.	Though I did not acquire child-care leave, the workplace understands the necessity of acquisition.

Table 4. Opinions of interviewees about nursing care leave for children

Interviewee	Opinion
Mr. A	When a child falls ill, it is desirable to acquire nursing care leave for children. However, is the 5 days leave enough?
Ms. B	If nursing care leave for children can be acquired, it is unnecessary to use all annual leave with pay for nursing children. Ten days of nursing care leave is desirable.
Ms. C	If nursing care leave for children can be acquired, one or two days of annual leave with pay can be used for myself. Such leave is desirable.
Ms. D	If nursing care leave for children is not available, all annual leave with pay will be used for children, so at least five days of leave is desirable.
Ms. E	Establishment of a system of nursing care leave for child is desirable.
Ms. F	Establishment of a system of nursing care leave for child within a certain period is desirable.

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Table 5. Right of fathers to acquire child-care leave during the 8 weeks following child birth

Interviewee	Opinion
Mr. A	From my experience of having six weeks of child-care leave, it would be splendid if both father and mother can acquire eight weeks of leave. Ideally, the acquisition of three years of leave for both father and mother is desirable. However, in practice, at least one year of leave is desirable, though it will be difficult to acquire from the perspective of income.
Ms. B	Eight weeks of child-care leave following child birth is a very good system. In the mother cannot go out of the home or no helper is available, help by the father is necessary, so I strongly desire that he acquires leave.
Ms. C	I strongly desire that the father acquires child-care leave during the first week following child birth. In the case of a nuclear family with no helper available, one month of child-care leave is necessary.
Ms. D	It is ideal for the father to participate in child-care. Though it is a common societal awareness that "child care is a woman's job," the children are born from both parents. I consider that both a husband and wife enjoying and worrying about the care of a newborn and watching him or her grow will lead to a harmonious family. I hope that fathers who acquire child-care leave will increase.
Ms. E	From the standpoint of the wife, it is very good if the husband can acquire child-care leave.
Ms. F	A system will have no meaning unless the father changes his attitude and helps with child care.

Table 6. Measures to increase the number of men who acquire child care leave

Interviewee	Opinion
Mr. A	When I reported the birth of a new child, I was told that a later notice is enough for men. I wanted to receive child-care leave in the same way as women. In the present circumstance where acquisition by a man is an exception, it is difficult to request child-care leave. It is necessary, regardless whether the employee is a man or women, to submit a plan of child-care leave to the company when pregnancy has been confirmed so that child-care leave can be arranged.
Ms. B	It is not that child-care leave is difficult to acquire; rather men do not intend to acquire child-care leave. Some men do not even know the system of child-care leave exists, so the existence of such a system must be publicized.
Ms. C	To raise men's acquisition rate of child-care leave, it is necessary to solve the problem of payment. Though we don't require 100% of our ordinary salary, at least 60% to 70% is required to raise men's acquisition rate of child-care leave.
Ms. D	It is necessary to create an atmosphere in which men are allowed to acquire child-care leave by the workplace or whole company to promote acquisition. Public institutions must also promote child-care leave by some means.
Ms. E	It is necessary to promote the system of child-care leave and notify each individual that it can be acquired. Public institutions are also required to publicize that it can be acquired.
Ms. F	Men have little will to acquire child-care leave on the company or individual level, so men's attitudes must be changed. However, it is difficult for a single enterprise to achieve this, so it is necessary that public institutions should endeavor to understand it as a common problem of society.

balance for men and women employees, and it is said that "this stage of family awareness is necessary to change the working environment for men." Therefore, the accepted system of men employees working overly long hours must be improved. However, this involves the most intransigent

problems of labor policy and family awareness reform. Also, in order to increase the number of men who acquire child-care leave, the efforts of a combination of both the public sector and the private sector are required to take various measures, including the honoring of payments during the period of child-care

leave.

Under the present circumstances, those men who do acquire child-care leave are considered an exception, and it can be said that they also require courage to go against the accepted rule of absolute company loyalty to become loyal husbands and fathers. With the increase of men requesting child-care leave, the universally accepted idea of "child care being women's work and child-care leave should be acquired by women only" is expected to diminish.

DISCUSSION

From the survey results, the discussions on family-friendly policies from the viewpoint of family-resource management are as follows:

The trend where men encounter difficulty in acquiring child-care leave means that there is an increased burden of unpaid work on women during the period of child-care. Under the present circumstances, therefore, the improvement of gender relations at home by means of family friendly policies is difficult. Promoting the acquisition of child-care leave by men employees is problematic in that paid leave equals only 40% of the ordinary salary.

From the viewpoint of family resource management, it is necessary to implement family-friendly policies. Work-life balance with family-friendly policies is a concept that should be studied by incorporating it into family resource management.

Merits for employees of companies receiving family-friendly company commendation are numerous. For example, "employees find it easier to achieve work-life balance," "gender discrimination among employees diminishes, the work of women employees becomes easier," "women employees find it easier to realize their own potential," and "employees come to realize emancipation from the traditional sense of work as drudgery." These results can lead to a work-life balance for both men and women employees, and when viewed from the aspect of family life are extremely valuable.

It appears that family-friendly policies have taken root as the system for the work-life balance of employees. The efforts in supporting the child care of employees, including men, will not only change the trend of having only a few children, but will surely contribute to the creation of a society where working couple can bear and raise children while working (Sato and Takeishi 2004).

The previously described flows into "Plus One Proposal to End Low Birthrate" and the "Law for

Measures to Support the Development of the Next-generation" are significant in that they intend to change the ways of working of men as well. The orientation of placing importance on a work-life balance achieves a society with life-friendly elements (a review of the way of working in general) while maintaining conventional family-friendly elements (enrichment of nursing services, etc.) (Kashima 2003).

Elucidating the relationship between family-friendly policies and family life is essential for studies of gender in home economics. This is achieved by paying attention to the present status of the work-life balance of employees from the viewpoint of family-resource management. In Japan, the orientation of "the reinforcement of supports to families" by the United Nations on the 10th anniversary of the IYF mentioned at the beginning of this paper must be connected to these important social subjects.

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企業におけるファミリー・フレンドリー施策と生活経営

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2004 年, 国連は国際家族年 10 周年に当たり, 家族支援の強化を強調した。家族へのサポートは, 公の制度とともに企業の施策と深い関係がある。本論文の目的は, 生活経営学の視点から, 企業のファミリー・フレンドリー施策を検討することである。方法は, 企業と従業員との調査である。結果は, 次のとおりである。① 女性は育児休業を取得しやすい傾向にあり, その取得状況は高かった。② 男性は育児休業を取得しにくい傾向にあり, その取得状況は低かった。③ 「ファミリー・フレンドリー企業」においてさえも, 男性が育児休業を利用しやすい企業文化が育っていなかった。男性従業員が, 生活者としての意識を持ち, ワークライフ・バランスを取れるようにしていくために, ファミリー・フレンドリー施策を生活経営の視点から活用する必要がある。

キーワード: ファミリー・フレンドリー, 国際家族年, ワークライフ・バランス, 育児休業, 看護休暇, ジェンダー。