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Program Evaluation for Part-Time Work, Flex-Time Work and At-Home Work in Korea

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to develop the program evaluation plan for three kinds of "Flex-Working" programs such as "Part-Time Work", "Flex-Time Work" and "At-Home Work" program of the Central Government of Korea. More specifically, this study discusses description of the flex-working programs in terms of program context, purpose, outcome in order to draw out the flex-working program theory model. In addition, the program participants and stakeholders, program contextual factors, primary users of the evaluation and stakeholder involvement with regards to the programs are all discussed in this paper.

Keywords: Part-Time Work, Flex-Time Work, At-Home Work, Program Evaluation

INTRODUCTION

This study aims to develop the evaluation plan for three kinds of "Flex-Working" programs such as "Part-Time Work", "Flex-Time Work" and "At-Home Work" program of the Central Government of Korea. The first step in the evaluation plan describes the contexts, purposes and expected outcomes of the programs. As a second step, it then focuses on the evaluation purposes and identification of users. All of the discussion with limitations of this study and conclusion is as follows.

DESCRIPTION OF PROGRAM

The "Flex-Working" program includes nine types of programs varying by work place (e.g., "At-home work" and "Telework"), time (e.g., "Flex-time work", "Alternative work schedule", "Compressed work" and "Discretionary work"), way (e.g., "Core-time work"), dress (e.g., "Free-dress code"), and type (e.g., "Part-time work"). Among those programs, the scope of this evaluation plan focuses on three representative programs in the Central Government of Korea- 1) "Part-time work", 2) "Flex-time work" and 3) "At-home work" program. The three programs were initiated and implemented by two departments of the Central Government of Korea- 1) The Ministry of Public Administration and Security (MOPAS) and 2) The Ministry of Employment and Labor (MOEL) as the pilot program in 2005 with following purposes- 1) the work-home (or life) balance, 2) enhancement of organizational performance, commitment, job satisfaction of government employees, 3) improvement of responsiveness for civil complaints and needs, 4) construction of family-friendly organizational culture in public sectors and so on. After many trials and errors, three types of "flex-working" programs such as "Part-time work", "Flex-time

work" and "At-home work" have been implemented and applied to the Central Government of Korea on the whole since 2010 (MOPAS & MOEL, 2012).

PROGRAM CONTEXTS, PURPOSES & OUTCOMES

Part-Time Work Program

The program requires part-time employees to work under 40 hours (5 days and 8 hours per working day) of full time employees. In other words, government employees who apply to the "part-time work" program only need to work between 15 and 35 hours every week with working at least 3 hours per day (MOPAS & MOEL, 2012).

The main purpose and necessity of the "part-time work" program is to create and provide part-time working opportunities to married government employees who need to spend more time in child care. In other words, the program is able to contribute to maintain the balance between work and family as a family-friendly workforce policy. Furthermore, the program can be an important tool for the flexibility of labor market through creating jobs for potential job seekers who need new jobs after retirement or need to manage both work and classes. Finally, the program is able to enhance the responsiveness for civil complaints and needs, and expand the provision of public services by arranging part-time government employees before and after full-time employees' working hours (MOPAS & MOEL, 2012).

The potential and expected outcomes of the "part-time work" program are followings- 1) creation of jobs for potential employees who need part-time work schedule due to child care, class, health status, retirement and so on, 2) improvement of responsiveness for civil needs and complaints, 3) expansion of public service opportunities beyond the regular working hours (09:00 am ~ 06:00 pm), 4) provision of continued working opportunities for government employees after child birth, 5) promotion of government employees' leisure time and self-development activities, and 6) maintain the balance between work and family (MOPAS & MOEL, 2012).

Flex-Time Work Program

The program guarantees government employees' flexibility to choose the time to start and close his/ her work. In other words, government employees who apply to the "flex-time work" program are able to choose the time to start working of the three time ranges (at 8, 9 or 10:00 am) by maintaining 8 hours work per day and 40 hours every week. In order to minimize civil inconveniences and maintain cooperation with other departments or institutions, the "flex-time work" program requires that all employees work at the core time (10:00 am ~ 04:00 pm) (MOPAS & MOEL, 2012).

The main purpose and necessity of the "flex-time work" program is to enhance the quality of public services, organizational performance and employees' job satisfaction and commitment through the selection of flex-time work schedule according to their own needs and preferences. Furthermore, the program also contributes to decrease the commuting time, costs and traffic congestion during the rush hour as well as minimize employees' stresses and inconvenience related to commuting. In the same vein of the "part-time work" program, employees who apply to the "flex-time work" program are able to spend time in doing self-development activities for classes, language learning and certification for career development early in the morning or late

afternoon. Finally, the program is also able to contribute the balance between work and family (MOPAS & MOEL, 2012).

The potential and expected outcomes of the "flex-time work" program are followings- 1) improvement of government employees' leisure time and self-development activities, 2) reduction of time, costs, stresses due to traffic congestion during the commuting time, 3) improvement of responsiveness for civil needs and complaints, 4) expansion of public service opportunities beyond the regular working hours (09:00 am ~ 06:00 pm), 5) enhancement of employees' performance, job satisfaction, commitment and reduction of turnover intention, and 6) decrease the double burden of childcare and full-time work as well as maintain the balance between work and family (MOPAS & MOEL, 2012).

At-Home Work Program

The program is to work at home by using information and communication technologies.
In other words, government employees who apply to the "at-home work" program are able to choose how many days or how much tasks to work at home without commuting between home and office. The following tasks are appropriate to apply for the program and work at home- 1) tasks which do not need face-to-face contact with citizens, 2) tasks which can be accomplished independently without any cooperation or network with other departments or institutions, and 3) tasks for which it is easier to measure its performances and manage outputs by supervisors (MOPAS & MOEL, 2012).

The main purpose and necessity of the "at-home work" program is to provide employees who have difficulties to commute everyday or need to maintain the double burden between childcare and full-time work by having opportunities to work at home. In doing so, the "at-home work" program is able to contribute to the flexibility of labor market and the balance between work and family (MOPAS & MOEL, 2012).

The potential and expected outcomes of the "at-home work" program are followings- 1) reduction of commuting time, expense and distance, 2) enhancement of employees' autonomy and abilities to be self-regulative in their works, 3) reduction of burden of childcare, 4) enhancement of employees' performance, job satisfaction, commitment and reduction of turnover intention, 5) reduction of organizational costs to maintain offices and relevant facilities, and 6) contribution of making the low carbon working environment (MOPAS & MOEL, 2012).

The "flex-working" program theory model below shows the causal relationships of each flex-working program (i.e., activity) with its corresponding outputs, short-term and long-term outcomes; (+) indicates positive while (–) indicates negative impact of each program on output, short-term or long-term outcome .

Table 1. "Flex-Working" Program Theory Model

Inputs	Activities	Outputs	Short-term Outcomes	Long-term Outcomes
Financial Support (e.g., consulting costs for program development, strategic planning management, information & communication technologies for at-home work, and costs for promoting specific contents of each flex-working program) Detailed guidelines on how to implement and apply each flex-working program Planning, evaluation and management system for the programs Promotion & Education to settle down the programs Human resource	"Part-time work"	+ Job creation + Improvement of responsiveness for civil needs + Expansion of public services + Job opportunities after child birth + Self-development & + Leisure activities + Work and family balance	+ Public mangers' behavioral and perceptional changes for the necessity of the flex-working programs + Employees' increased uses for three kinds of the flex-working programs + Construction of family-friendly and flexible environment in the public sectors + Increased financial support and fundraising for development and management of the flex-working programs	+ Work and family balance + Settlement for low birth rate & aging society + Improvement of quality of life
	"Flex-time work"	+ Self-development & leisure activities -Time, costs & stresses due to commuting + Expansion of public services + Enhancement of employees' performance, satisfaction and commitment - Turnover - Burden for childcare and work + Work and family balance		
	"At-home work"	+ Job creation -Time, costs & stresses due to commuting + Enhancement of employees' autonomy -Organizational costs + Contribution of low-carbon workplace + Enhancement of employees' performance, satisfaction & commitment -Turnover -Burden for childcare and work + Work and family balance		

PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS AND STAKEHOLDERS

1. Government employees who apply and use one of the three "flex-working" programs such as "Part-Time Work", "Flex-Time Work" or "At Home Work" Program
2. Government employees who need to spend more time in childcare as well as want to work based on flexible schedule of commuting time
3. Government employees who want to have more time for self-development activities such as foreign language learning, professional certification and classes early in the morning or late afternoon
4. Government employees who want to reduce the time, costs and stresses resulted from commuting and have tasks to be accomplished independently without major cooperation and face to face contact with other co-workers and departments
5. Job seekers who need opportunities to work after retirement or shoulder the double burden between work and childcare as potential stakeholders of the programs
6. The public served by agencies with employees who use one of the three "flex-working" programs

MAJOR PROGRAM CONTEXTUAL FACTORS

1. Public managers' weak support on the diffusion of "flex-working" programs in their departments and strong perceptions on the negative effects of the programs on organizational performance, cooperation and responsiveness for civil needs
2. The financial and administrative support to implement the whole evaluation process as planned
3. Unbiased and objective responsiveness of both the "flex-working" program participants and other government employees for evaluation survey questions and focus group interviews
4. Limitation of operationalizing variables to measure the outputs and outcomes of each "flex-working" program
5. Time constraint to measure organizational outcome variables such as performance, job satisfaction, turnover intention, commitment and other kinds of employees' perceptions on survey questionnaires exactly and objectively in five-year evaluation plan given

EVALUATION OVERVIEW

Evaluation Purposes

The Table above specifically shows the expected positive outputs of each "part-time work", "flex-time work" and "at-home work" program as well as describes the potential short-term and long-term outcomes of the overall "flex-working" programs. Nevertheless, only small percentage of government employees (2.28 %) in 2011 applied to and used one of the "flex-working" programs (MOPAS & MOEL, 2012) although many government employees agree with the necessity and positive outcomes of the programs. That is a key issue and problem to be addressed and also becomes a primary use of this program evaluation project.

The following reasons and constraints are able to explain the government employees' low rate of interests and usages for the "flex-working" programs- 1) public mangers' negative perceptions on using the "flex-working" programs due to difficulties to manage and evaluate performances of their subordinates who use the programs, 2) concerns about citizens' inconveniences and complaints due to employees' absences, 3) constraints to cooperate with other departments or institutions, 4) the difficulties about job sharing and proper division of work to fill out the

employees' absences who use the programs, and 5) employees' concerns about any possible damages in terms of evaluation of their performance due to using the "flex-working" programs (MOPAS & MOEL, 2012).

In order to address these issues and uses mentioned above, the program evaluation project identifies the following objectives:

1. Needs Assessment- to assess and identify what government employees need from the "flex-working" programs in terms of maintaining the work and family balance, expanding self development opportunities, and improving the quality of life
2. Implementation Evaluation- to assess and verify if the "flex-working" programs serve the intended public government employees and fulfill their primary uses as well as identify the constraints and problems which cause the current low rate (2.28%) of using the "flex-working" programs
3. Operations/ Program Improvement Evaluation- to suggest appropriate comments and guidelines for the improvement of the current "flex-working" programs as well as enhance the uses of the programs and implement effectively and feasibly
4. Outcomes/ Merit and Worth Evaluation- to identify the extent to which each of the "flex-working" program achieves its anticipated and intended outputs & outcomes

Primary Users of The Evaluation

The Ministry of Public Administration and Security (MOPAS) and the Ministry of Employment and Labor (MOEL) need to address the constraints and limitations that cause the current low rate (2.28%) of using the "flex-working" programs in public sectors, in order to enhance positive perceptions of both managers and employees on the programs as well as increase government employees who apply and use the programs. Thus, the two departments are primary users of the evaluation project. In addition, the ministers and top decision-makers who directly manage the programs and evaluate employees' performances in all departments in the Central Government of Korea might be primary users of the evaluation project.

Stakeholder Involvement

In order to improve the credibility, feasibility and practicability of the results and implications from the program evaluation project, we focus on the meaningful ways to involve the stakeholders of the "flex-working" program described earlier. First of all, the evaluation committee consisting of program participants, public managers, potential stakeholders to be government employees, and experts for evaluation projects and "flex-working" programs is necessary at the first stage of the program evaluation project. And then, the project makes efforts to involve various kinds of stakeholders in each stage of the evaluation project- evaluation design, planning, data collection, analysis, interpretation, report and feedback process.

LIMITATIONS & CONCLUSION

The evaluation proposal has several limitations. First, the social desirability bias might significantly influence on the survey results and focus group interviews. When government employees perceive well regarding their managers or supervisors' negative perceptions in applying and using the "flex-working" programs, the responses from those employees might be significantly influenced by the social desirability issue. Thus, the results from both survey and focus group meetings might be biased- underestimated or overestimated. Second, attrition (due

to the participants to leave the programs during the five-year evaluation planning process) and history (due to maturation of the program participants) threats to the internal validity are still remaining in the evaluation design. Finally, the representativeness of the selected sample and the generalizability of the results and implications to apply for the other samples or population are still relevant with threats to the external validity even though the evaluation design will randomly select the sample to participate from the whole population.

In order to finalize the evaluation for flexible work arrangements programs, needs assessment, implementation evaluation, formative evaluation, and summative evaluation will be conducted in the follow-up research. The purposes, questions, and data source for the evaluations are specifically described as below.

Table 2. Evaluation Purposes, Designs and Data Source

Evaluation Purposes/ Questions	**Data Source & Evaluation Designs**
To assess and identify what government employees need from the "flex-working" programs in terms of maintaining the work and family balance, expanding self development opportunities, and improving the quality of life	Needs Assessment; Focus-group interviews for four focus groups- the "flex-working" program design board members, the ministers and top decision-makers in each department of the Central Government of Korea, government employees who have experiences to use the "flex-working" programs, and government employees who do not have experiences to use the "flex-working" programs
To assess and verify if the "flex-working" programs serve the intended public government employees and fulfill their primary uses as well as identify the constraints and problems which cause the current low rate (2.28%) of using the "flex-working" programs	Implementation Evaluation Design; Combination of qualitative and quantitative methodologies- Focus-group interviews and surveys for four focus groups identified above
To suggest appropriate comments and guidelines for the improvement of the current "flex-working" programs as well as enhance the uses of the programs and implement effectively and feasibly	Formative Evaluation Design; Combination of qualitative and quantitative methodologies- Focus-groups interviews and surveys for two groups including the ministers/ top decision-makers in each department and government employees who have experiences to use the "flex-working" programs
To identify the extent to which each of the "flex-working" program achieves its anticipated and intended outputs & outcomes	Summative Evaluation Design; Quantitative methodology- ordered probit regression analysis for two groups including the ministers/ top decision-makers in each department and government employees who have experiences to use the "flex-working" programs

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