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Soonhee Kim

Grand Valley State University

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Administering Family Leave Benefits and New Challenges for Public Personnel Management

The New York State Experience

Soonhee Kim
Grand Valley State University

The importance of family-related benefits is often emphasized to promote the recruitment, productivity, and retention of capable employees in the public and private sectors. This article explores the administration of family-related benefits and family leave benefits for public employees in New York State agencies. The study found that in administering family leave benefits under the Family and Medical Leave Act in 1993, personnel administrators were highly involved in coordinating procedures between supervisors and employees. In addition, personnel administrators did not perceive a positive impact of family leave benefits on the objectives of their organizations. The article suggests that organizational leaders' and management's awareness of administering family leave benefits should be emphasized in relation to the available resources of personnel offices, including records management systems and training programs.

Several studies have emphasized the importance of family-related benefits in the recruitment and retention of capable employees (Cayer, 1997; Crampton & Mishra, 1995; Shafritz, Riccucci, Rosenbloom & Hyde, 1992; Golembiewski, 1995). Furthermore, the National Performance Review (1993) has stressed the importance of balancing work and family responsibilities for improving productivity in federal agencies. Social change and shifting demographic patterns in particular have an impact on both families and their work. Several family-related benefits, such as flexible work schedules, on-site child care and flexible leave policies have been provided by many public organizations.

The efforts to resolve employees' conflicts between work and family responsibilities in organizations are reflected in the 1993 Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA). The major provision of the act requires public and private employers to allow up to twelve weeks of unpaid leave per year to all employees. Employees can request a leave based on one of three reasons: (a) the birth or adoption of a child; (b) a medical condition; and, (c) a need to care for a child, spouse, or parent who has a serious health condition¹ (Public Law 103-03, 1993; Allred, 1995; Crampton & Mishra, 1995). The FMLA also contains a provision for the maintenance of health benefits during leave. Generally, the FMLA

applies to employees with one year of service, who work 1,250 hours during the year and are employed by establishments with 50 or more workers. Virtually all full-time state and local government employees are eligible for unpaid family and medical leave under the FMLA.

Powell (1987) argues that implementation research on family support programs is important because it can provide effective strategies for future benefit programs. Several researchers, however, point out that little has been written about the implementation process and evaluation of family leave policy (National Research Council, 1991; Powell, 1987; Makuen, 1988; Raabe, 1990). The issues of policy administrators' commitment and capacity have been emphasized in policy implementation research (Goggin, Bowman, Lester & O'Toole, 1990; Scheirer, 1994; Thompson, 1982).

Several researchers have also emphasized the new role of personnel departments to maximize the utilization of their organizations' human resources in response to the employees' needs and demands (Ban & Riccucci, 1997; Ingraham & Romzek, 1995; Shafritz, Riccucci, Rosenbloom & Hyde, 1992). Indeed, employees' conflict between work and family responsibilities has been one of the most challenging issues in human resource management in both the private and public sectors. This article addresses family-related benefit programs, the administration of family leave benefits, and the role of personnel administrators in the implementation of family leave benefits in New York State (NYS) government.

Specifically, the article explores the following questions:

1. What are some of the family-related benefits for public employees?
2. How does NYS administer family leave

benefits [NYS had paternity leave and family sick leave policies prior to the introduction of the FMLA]?

3. What are the new challenges for public personnel management as a result of family leave benefits provided under the FMLA?

The article begins with an overview of the literature related to the FMLA and family-related benefits in the public sector. This section also examines family leave policy and specific family-related benefit programs for NYS employees. This is followed by a brief discussion of research methods and data collection procedures. Next, the study analyzes the administration of the FMLA and the role of personnel administrators in the process. It also discusses personnel administrators' perceptions of the impact of family leave benefits on agencies and employees. Finally, the study emphasizes the importance of benefit information for employees, supervisors, and managers to facilitate the administration of family-related benefits in the public sector. The implications of the findings for public personnel management are also discussed.

The FMLA and Family-Related Benefits in the Public Sector

The objectives of the FMLA² reflect value changes in human resources management, such as supporting employees' needs around family responsibilities, improving productivity, and preserving family integrity by providing family leave benefits. Before the FMLA, only a few states had leave without pay for either parents; the majority of states allowed leave only for the mother. Makuen (1988) found that twenty-seven states had benefits with paid sick leave, and twenty-three states had some form of job protection stated in their personnel policies.

Table 1. Unpaid Family Leave: Percent of Full-Time Employees by Duration of Benefits, State and Local Governments, 1994

Duration	All Employees	White Collar Employees, except teachers	Teachers	Blue Collar and Service Employees
No. with unpaid family leave (in thousands)	11,983	5,312	3,288	3,383
	<i>Percent</i>			
Total with unpaid family leave	100	100	100	100
Under 12 weeks	1	1	1	1
12 weeks	67	64	72	68
Over 12 but under 16 weeks	1	(¹)	1	1
16 weeks	1	1	1	(¹)
Over 16 but under 20 weeks	2	3	(¹)	3
20 weeks	(¹)	(¹)	(¹)	–
Over 20 but under 24 weeks	(¹)	(¹)	–	–
24 weeks	(¹)	1	(¹)	(¹)
Over 24 but under 28 weeks	5	7	1	4
Over 28 but under 32 weeks	2	4	(¹)	1
Over 32 but under 48 weeks	2	2	4	1
Over 48 but under 96 weeks	13	14	14	12
Over 96 weeks	5	4	5	7
Varies	6	6	6	5
	<i>Average</i>			
Average Weeks	27.9	27.2	25.4	31.4

Note. (¹) less than 0.5 percent. From *Employee benefits in state and local government*, Bureau of Labor Statistics, U. S. Department of Labor, 1994b, p.22.

While 19 states provided leave without pay for parenting by mothers, only 14 states allowed leave for either parent. A survey conducted by the Department of Labor (U.S. Department of Labor, 1992) prior to the enactment of the FMLA indicated that three-fifths of all full-time employees in governments had unpaid maternity leave available.

After the FMLA was passed, the federal government adopted the Federal Employees Family Friendly Leave Act in which employees could use sick leave to care for family members (Newman & Mathews, 1997; U.S. Office of Personnel, 1995). As a result of the FMLA, about one-third of covered employees in state and local governments were eligible for more than the mandated twelve weeks of family leave benefits; the maximum overall benefit averaged about six months (U.S. Department of Labor, 1994a). As illustrated in Table 1, paid family leave in state and local governments continued to be rare in 1994.

Another important family benefit for public employees is child care. According to the research of the Women's Bureau regarding working women's opinion about family benefits policies in America, 56 percent of women with children age five and under say "finding affordable child care" is a serious problem (U.S. Department of Labor, 1994b). In the federal government, the Triple Amendment of 1985 allows federal agencies to establish on-site child care centers for children of federal employees (Newman & Mathews, 1997). A survey of the Bureau of Statistics indicates that nine percent of full-time employees in state and local governments were eligible for child care benefits subsidized by their employer in 1994, about the same as in 1992 (see Table 2).

This benefit includes both on-site and

near-site child care facilities and reimbursement of employee child care expenses. The 1994 report of the Bureau of the Statistics also indicated that a more prevalent means of assisting employees with child care expenses was through increasingly common reimbursement accounts (also known as *flexible spending accounts*, or FSAs). Paid sick leave was available to about two-fifths of the part-time state and local government workers (U.S. Department of Labor, 1994a).

In addition to the FMLA and child care support, federal agencies have provided several family-friendly programs to assist employees' family concerns. Major programs provided by federal agencies include the federal flexible workplace program, telecommuting programs, part-time employment, job-sharing, dependent care counseling and referral services, leave sharing, and leave bank programs (Newman & Mathews, 1997). According to a survey of 2,613 cities and 892 counties conducted by the International City-County Management Association (Moulder & Hall, 1995), many local governments have also provided family-friendly benefits. The proportions reporting benefits for all employees in local government are as follows: pay for unused sick leave (49.6%), conversion of sick leave to vacation leave (13.3%), paid maternity (19%), paid paternity leave (less than 9%), cafeteria selection of benefits (33%), flexible spending accounts³ (23.8%), on-site (less than 1%) or subsidized day care (less than 1%), flexible work hours (30%), job-sharing (11%), and telecommuting (4%).

Family Leave Policy and Family-Related Programs in NYS Government

New York State currently provides paid or unpaid leave benefits that can be used for many of the same purposes for which FMLA is available. NYS family-related leave poli-

Table 2. Percent of Full-Time Employees Participating in Selected Employee Benefit Programs, State and Local Governments, 1994

Employee Benefit Program	All Employees	White Collar Employees (except teachers)	Teachers	Blue Collar and Service Employees
<i>Paid Time Off</i>				
Holidays	73	86	33	91
Vacations	66	84	9	91
Personal leave	38	30	58	31
Funeral leave	62	59	58	70
Jury duty leave	94	94	94	94
Military leave	75	80	61	82
Sick leave	94	93	96	94
Family leave	4	4	3	6
<i>Unpaid Time Off</i>				
Family leave	93	93	96	90
<i>Other Benefits</i>				
Child Care	9	11	5	9
Flexible benefits plans	5	5	7	3
Reimbursement accounts	64	68	59	61

Note. Adopted from *Employee benefits in state and local government*, Bureau of Labor Statistics, U. S. Department of Labor, 1994h.

cies for state employees (in effect before the FMLA) are: (1) maternity leave and child-rearing leave for a new-born baby and for adoption (seven months and up to two years with supervisors' discretion, without pay); (2) family sick leave: death or illness in the employee's immediate family (against accrued sick leave credits up to a maximum of 15 days in any one calendar year, with pay).

The FMLA provides new entitlements for state employees in three areas (NYS Department of Civil Service, 1994): (1) leave for foster care placement; (2) health insurance coverage, where costs are shared with employees, during periods of FMLA leave without pay; and, (3) mandatory leave for certain absences in connection with family illness.

In NYS, benefit programs and leave policies of state employees have been important for labor and management. There are two main programs provided by unions and labor-management committees: NYS Labor-Management Child Care and Voluntary Reduction in Work-Schedule. In 1981, NYS and the public unions established the NYS Labor-Management Child Care Advisory Committee. It was intended to respond to the realities of the changing workplace and the needs of working parents and employees. Now, 51 licensed child care centers are operating, providing affordable care for approximately 2,800 children of state employees each year. Also, it provides a variety of dependent care assistance options for state employees, including work-site child care on a sliding fee

scale basis, a pre-tax flexible spending account for dependent care, enhanced child care resources and referral services, summer camp programs for school-aged children, child care mildly ill children, parenting seminars, and parent resource areas at the workplace (Governor's Office of Employees' Relations, 1996).

Voluntary Reduction in Work Schedule (VRWS) is a program that allows employees to voluntarily trade income for time off (Governor's Office of Employees' Relations, 1996). It has been available to eligible annual-salaried employees in two employee classifications: professional, scientific and technical service unit, and management/confidential (M/C), both of which are white collar. The voluntary reduction in work schedule program permits employees to reduce their work schedules to reflect personal needs and interests (Governor's Office of Employees' Relations, 1996). The program can be used by employees needing flexible scheduling in order to meet their family responsibilities.

Research Method

In order to explore the administration of family leave benefits, a mail survey and in-depth interviews of personnel administrators were conducted. Based on state employees' family and medical leave use data which were provided by the Department of Civil Service in NYS, this study surveyed the personnel administrators of 24 agencies where more than ten employees took advantage of leave under the FMLA between 1993 and 1997. This is a purposive sampling for exploratory research of the administration of family leave benefits. A total of seventeen personnel administrators from twelve agencies responded to the survey research⁴. After the survey, follow-up interviews of personnel administrators who

responded to the survey were conducted. Seven personnel administrators from five agencies participated in the in-depth follow-up interviews.

The survey was designed to analyze several aspects of the administration of family leave benefits. The main components of the questionnaire in the survey of personnel administrators were as follows: (a) the difficulties surrounding the administration of family leave benefits⁵; (b) the communication process between personnel administrators and employees regarding family leave benefits; (c) perceived impacts of family leave benefits on employees and organizations; and (d) demographic descriptors. The interview data were analyzed using qualitative analysis techniques. The data analysis was focused on data reduction and interpretation occurring simultaneously with the collection of in-depth interview data. Pattern-matching techniques were used to analyze the interviews of five agencies (Yin, 1993).

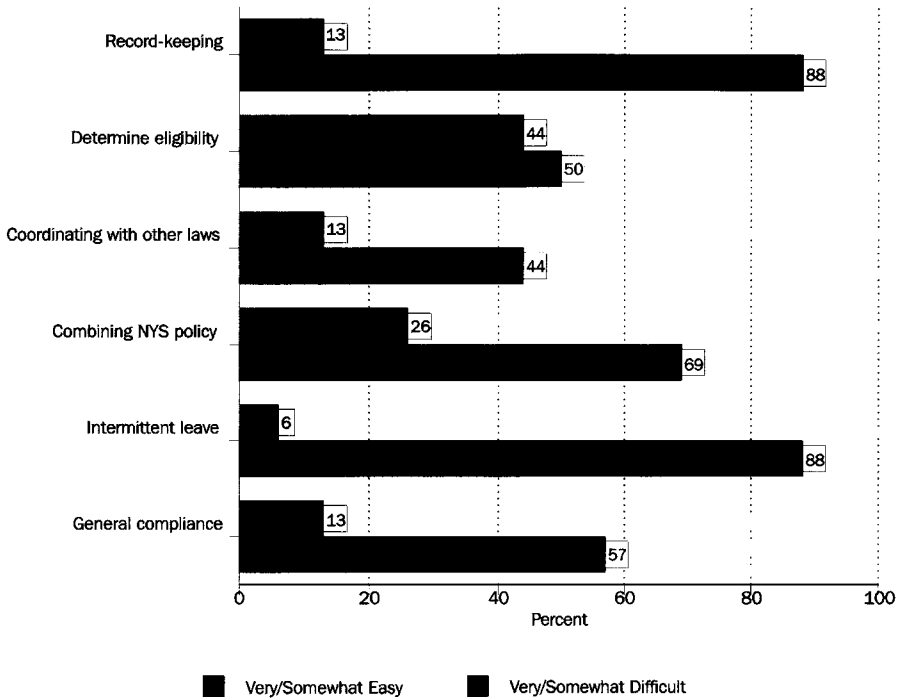
Findings and Discussion

Difficulties of Administering Family Leave Benefits

Between 1993 and 1997, 4,189 state employees took leave under the FMLA in NYS (Kim, forthcoming). Female employees were much more likely to take leave than male employees (80.1 percent and 19.9 percent, respectively). How do personnel offices administer family leave benefits? What are the difficulties encountered by NYS in terms of family leave given the overlap between the FMLA and NYS policies?

Figure 1 shows that 88 percent of the personnel administrator respondents find it "very difficult" or "somewhat difficult" to manage record-keeping after the FMLA was implemented. While 44 percent of respon-

Figure 1. Difficulties of the FMLA Administration

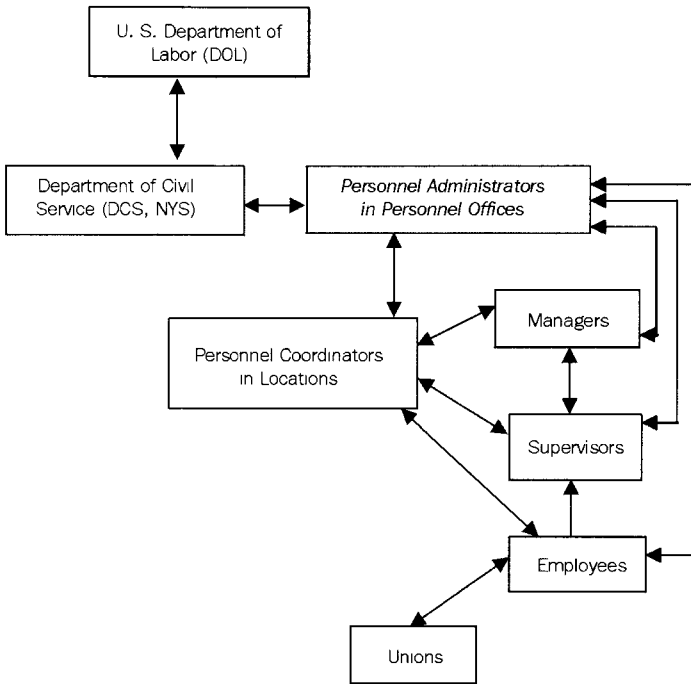


dents find it “very easy” or “somewhat easy” to determine employee eligibility, 50 percent of the personnel administrators report it “very difficult” or “somewhat difficult” (Figure 1). The survey finds that 44 percent of personnel administrators report that it is “somewhat difficult” to coordinate the FMLA with other laws. With respect to the overlap between the FMLA and the NYS policy, some personnel administrators (26%) reported that administering family-leave benefits is “somewhat easy” or “very easy,” while 69 percent of respondents find it “very difficult” or “somewhat difficult.” The results also indicate that 57 percent of personnel administrators report general compliance with the FMLA to be “very difficult” or “somewhat difficult.” The survey

finds that the greatest difficulty (88 percent) of FMLA administration is in the management of intermittent leave under the FMLA. Under the FMLA, employees can take intermittent leave for the qualified reasons.

The importance of communication processes in family leave administration was emphasized in the survey. One hundred percent of respondents think that the communication between supervisors and employees is very important in implementing the FMLA efficiently. Almost 53 percent of respondents indicated the difficulty of reallocation of work while employees are on leave. Overall, personnel administrators believe that they have difficulties in implementing the FMLA because of existing state

Figure 2. Communication Flow of the FMLA Administration in Agencies



policies. This was also strongly supported by the results of the interviews. Almost 59 percent of personnel administrator respondents believe that the FMLA increases administrative costs.

The interview results indicate that personnel administrators in two agencies raised the concern of family leave abuse. The other interviewees, however, think that it is rare to see employees abuse family leave benefits. Since there was no training program for personnel administrators in NYS, 76 percent of personnel administrator respondents think that they need training for administering family leave policy.

Records Management under the FMLA

Under the FMLA, employers must keep records of employees' family and medical leave. One of the findings of the survey was that 88 percent of the personnel administrator respondents report it "very difficult" or "somewhat difficult" to manage record-keeping after the implementation of the FMLA (Figure 1). At the national level, a survey of private and public employers on their administration of the FMLA found that only 24 percent of employers report difficulty in record-keeping (U.S. Commission on Family and Medical Leave, 1996).

How have agencies managed employee-leave records under the FMLA? Among

the agencies participating in this research, no one agency had a separate data system for employees' leave under the FMLA or family sick leave. In one agency, personnel administrators can rely on electronic payroll and time and attendance data systems to keep track of employees' leave and qualification. The personnel administrators, however, cannot enter data on the time records system because only time unit members can enter such data. Electronic time records systems have been used for the record keeping of some of the FMLA records in the Governor's Office of Employee Relations and Department of Motor Vehicles.

In two other agencies, there are electronic data systems for workers' compensation and time and attendance, but the personnel office does not use the system for the record-keeping required under the FMLA. The interviewees of the two agencies pointed out the importance of automated systems to help their personnel offices' workload. Without computerized data systems, personnel administrators have to check each employee's time cards to designate and keep the records of employee absences under the FMLA.

Personnel Administrators' Commitment: Communicators or Coordinators?

In the survey, every personnel administrator indicated the importance of communication and information flow in administering family leave benefits. How do personnel administrators communicate with employees and supervisors in work locations or units? Figure 2 contains the main communication flow in agencies related to FMLA administration. There were diverse stakeholders inside as well as outside. There are at least five stakeholders inside who are involved with the communication flow of

employees' family and medical leave: employees, managers, supervisors, personnel coordinators, and personnel administrators. In addition, there are three stakeholders outside the organization involved with the communication process of family and medical leave: unions, the time and attendance unit of the New York State Department of Civil Service, and the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL).

Figure 2 shows that personnel administrators are involved in the activities of almost all internal stakeholders affected by the administration of family leave benefits. How do personnel administrators view their relationships with the stakeholders of family and medical leave policy? Overall, personnel administrators think that they have good relations with managers, supervisors, and employees regarding family leave administration. Occasionally, personnel administrators have to make supervisors understand that family leave is an entitlement for employees. Almost every interviewee emphasized that some supervisors really do not understand family leave benefits, and are not aware of employees' family concerns. Almost every interviewee pointed out that the knowledge of supervisors regarding family-leave benefits is one of the most important issues in the administration of family leave in NYS. Nevertheless, there has rarely been a training program on family leave benefits for personnel administrators, managers and supervisors in agencies.

Personnel Administrators' Perceptions on Impact of Family Leave Benefits

There are several objectives for the FMLA, including the enhancement of recruitment, retention, productivity, family integrity and stability, and the quality of work environment. Raabe (1990) points out that even though there have been several studies of

Table 3. Impact of Family Leave on Employees and Agencies (Perceptions of Personnel Administrators: Percentage)

FMLA and FSL contribute to:	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. Motivation	–	17.6	36.4	23.5	11.8
2. Satisfaction	–	23.5	47.1	17.6	11.8
3. Loyalty and commitment	–	11.8	29.4	47.1	11.8
4. Morale	–	23.5	52.9	23.5	–
5. Retention	–	11.8	70.6	17.6	–
6. Conflict among employees	5.9	41.2	23.5	23.5	5.9
7. Conflict between supervisors and employees	17.6	47.1	5.9	29.4	–
8. Reduce stress	5.9	35.3	41.2	17.6	–
9. Reduce absenteeism	–	5.9	17.6	41.2	35.3

work-family policy evaluation in the private sector, it is still very difficult to measure the impact of family leave policy in organizations. This research focused on personnel administrators' perceptions about the impact of family leave on employees and their agencies. During the interviews personnel administrators explained that family concerns negatively affect employees' performance in their workplace.

How do personnel administrators perceive the impact of family leave on employees and agencies? Table 3 indicates that personnel administrators usually did not perceive a positive impact of family leave policy on employees and agencies. For example, the mean of the measure "reduced absenteeism" was 4.06 (coding number was 4 and 5 for disagree and strongly disagree, respectively). Almost 77 percent of personnel administrators did not agree that the FMLA and family sick leave policies contribute to reduced absenteeism. On the other hand, almost 65 percent of respondents perceived that FMLA and family sick leave policies increase conflict between supervisors and employees. Also, 47.1 per-

cent of personnel administrators agreed that FMLA and family sick leave policies increased conflict among employees because of work reallocation while employees are on leave. They, however, perceive a relatively positive relation between reduced stress and the FMLA and family sick leave policy.

This study found that personnel administrators perceived the relation between employees' family concerns and their work performance or productivity negatively. On the one hand, they did not perceive a positive impact of the FMLA and family sick leave on reduced absenteeism, retention, motivation, and commitment. On the other hand, they perceived a relatively positive impact of the FMLA and family sick leave on employees' reduced work stress. Furthermore, personnel administrators found conflicts between supervisors and employees because of employees' leave in agencies.

Family Leave Benefits Information and the Equity Issue

What is the most important issue in admin-

istering family leave benefits in NYS? Almost every personnel administrator thinks that supervisors' lack of knowledge of family leave benefits is a barrier to promoting state employees' use of family leave benefits. Personnel administrators emphasized that training programs on family leave benefits for managers, supervisors, and employees could facilitate the administration of family leave benefits.

The personnel administrators of three agencies indicated that tracking employees' time records for the data record of the FMLA is the most important issue needing to be faced. Overall, personnel administrators explained that there is not enough benefit information to managers and supervisors in agencies. The personnel administrator of one agency emphasized the equity issue of family leave administration. As the interviewee put it: "The equity issue is most important. The issue is how do you make sure that you implement it in such a way that all employees are treated equally." The personnel administrator explained that the equity concern was the reason why the personnel office sent out the FMLA information to all employees in the agency.

Conclusion and Implications

This exploratory study examined family-related benefits for public employees and the administration of family leave benefits in NYS agencies. Not surprisingly, paid family leave was rare in the public sector. This article found several personnel management issues raised by the administration of family leave benefits. Overall, combining the FMLA and state benefit policies did have an impact on the roles of personnel administrators and personnel management (see Table 4).

How did the administration of family leave benefits affect the roles of personnel

administrators? The main findings are as follows:

1. Within the limited capacity of the personnel office, information technology for leave records management has been emphasized.
2. The roles of personnel administrators have been emphasized as coordinators or communicators among stakeholders, as a result of the administration of family leave benefits under the FMLA.

The major public personnel management issues raised by family leave benefits are as follows:

1. Considering policy equity, the information and knowledge of family leave benefits for all employees is an important factor to facilitate the administration of family leave benefits.
2. Active communication among supervisors, employees, and personnel administrators is a very important factor to facilitate the administration of family leave.
3. Supervisors' knowledge and roles are very important to comply with the family leave policy under the FMLA in terms of designation of employees' absence as family leave.

Finally, the study found that personnel administrators did not perceive that family leave benefits had a positive impact on their organizations' policy goals. Since there is no empirical research about the impacts of family leave benefits on employees in NYS, it is hard to compare these personnel administrators' perceptions to those of employees'. For future research, it would be important to obtain empirical data of employees' perceptions and behaviors to evaluate the impact of family leave on employees and organizations.

Table 4. Impact of the FMLA on Personnel Management in NYS

Issues	Before the FMLA	After the FMLA
Policy contents	NYS policies: Maternity leave, paternity leave, family sick leave and medical leave	Twelve weeks unpaid family and medical leave; run the FMLA with the NYS policies concurrently
Personnel management issues	Traditional personnel administrators' role focused on complying with the time and attendance rules under the NYS civil service system and family sick leave Focus on paper work instead of direct communication	More need of personnel administrators' commitment to family and medical leave benefits to designate employees' leave under the FMLA properly The importance of distribution of leave benefit information for equitable service delivery Emphasizing efficient communication among key actors to facilitate FMLA and NYS policies FMLA knowledge issue of managers, supervisors, and employees; training issue Importance of work units' and supervisors' support of employees' family responsibilities; organizational leadership
Leave data management	Manual data management	Need for electronic data management systems for leave records management

What are the implications of the findings of this study for public personnel management? Organizational leaders' and management's awareness of the administration of family leave benefits should be emphasized, in relation to the resources of personnel offices — including records management systems. In other words, executive leaders and management can organize several efforts to facilitate the administration of family leave benefits. For example, a newsletter or memorandum should emphasize executive leaders' support of employees' family concerns. These organizational concerns could promote a more fam-

ily-friendly organizational culture, thereby facilitating the implementation of family leave benefits. In addition, the distribution of a brochure could provide employees with family leave benefits information. Also, training programs for personnel administrators, personnel coordinators, managers, and supervisors could improve the communication process of administering family leave benefits. In conclusion, it is important for public organizations to be aware of the quality of life in the workplace, emphasizing both female and male employees' new needs related to balancing work and family responsibilities.

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Notes

¹In 1997 President Clinton urged Congress to expand the Family and Medical Leave Act to allow parents to take time off from work to attend parent-teacher conferences or take the child to dental or medical appointments (*Times Union*, 1997).

²The FMLA proposed several objectives (Public Law 103-03, 1993): (a) to balance the demands of the workplace with the needs of families; (b) to promote the stability and economic security of families; (c) to promote national interests in preserving family integrity; (d) to entitle employees to take reasonable leave for family and medical reasons; (e) recruitment, retention, and improved productivity of employees; and, (f) to foster a quality work environment.

³The ICMA defines the flexible spending accounts as pre-tax dollars that employees can set aside each year to cover out-of-pocket medical and/or child care expenses.

⁴Two or more personnel administrators replied to the survey from three agencies. A total of seventeen administrators responded to the survey. There were fourteen women (82%) and three men (18%) among the respondents in the survey. This figure is not surprising since the personnel field has traditionally been an area open to women in organizations (Ban, 1995). The largest age group among the respondents was for individuals between 35 and 49 years of age (75 percent). Thirty-eight percent of personnel administrators have B.A. degrees and 19 percent have master's degrees. Eight personnel administrators (47

percent) have been in their current agencies from one to five years. Six personnel administrators (36 percent) have been in their agencies more than 10 years. Among seven interviewees from five agencies, five personnel administrators were women, and they were often in leadership positions in their personnel departments. While three personnel administrators were from agencies where the employees are primarily female, three personnel administrators from agencies where the employees are primarily males provided in-depth interviews. One interviewee was from an agency in which the proportion of male and female employees was balanced. Since anonymity was promised during the interviews, this article did not include interviewees' positions and agency name. The purpose of the interviews was to examine the administration and implementation process of the FMLA generally. Therefore, instead of specifying the agency name, the agencies of the personnel administrators were categorized from agency one to agency five.

⁵The national survey of the FMLA (U.S. Commission on Family and Medical Leave, 1996) was adopted to develop the questions regarding perceived difficulties of FMLA administration. Several original questions related to the FMLA implementation were also developed for this study.

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