

Professional Construction of Diversity Management in Korea

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This study uses a representative sample of 1,535 workplaces in Korea to examine the presence of a set of policy statements for diversity management. Hypotheses from neo-institutionalism are developed to predict the presence of a set of policy statements for diversity management across workplaces in Korea. A logistic regression model is used to test the hypotheses. The findings suggest that neo-institutional theory explains the presence of a set of policy statements for diversity management in Korea. In particular, employment laws in Korea are ambiguous, and the organizational connection to HR professionals strongly affects the presence of a set of policy statements for diversity management in Korea. This institutionalization process in Korea is similar to the US case.

Keywords: diversity management, institutional theory, employment laws, Korea

Introduction

Many workplaces in Korea¹ have put great emphasis on workforce diversity. The Korean Workplace Panel Survey (KWPS) of 1,535 Korean workplaces surveyed in 2013 shows that 43% of the sampled workplaces have a set of policy statements for diversity management. It is surprising that many workplaces in Korea have sought to manage workforce diversity, because the workforce in that country has been still male-dominant, ethnically homogeneous, and exclusive of the disabled.

The expression “workforce diversity” refers to the differences among employees in a given workplace in terms of race, gender, age, ethnicity, nationality, language, physical abilities, disabilities, religion, cultural background, lifestyle, sexual orientation, tenure, and other variables that create socially meaningful distinctions among workers (Kossek and Lobel 1996). Diversity management refers to a variety of human resource (HR) strategies to recruit and retain employees with such diverse backgrounds (Magoshi and Chang 2009). Typical diversity management practices include diversity training, diversity taskforces, affinity networks, and mentoring programs for particular minority groups within a workplace. These diversity management practices and policies are usually designed to improve the inclusion of all employees into informal social networks and formal organizational programs (Jackson 1992; Kossek and Lobel 1996; Gilbert, Stead, Ivancevich 1999; DiTomaso, Post, and Parks-Yancy 2007).

Since workforce diversity has recently attracted public attention in Korea, there is only a slight amount of literature on it. Only a few studies ask what the outcomes of diversity management practices are (Lim 2010; Lee and Ko 2012; Lee et al. 2013; Min, Oh, and Park 2015). As many workplaces in the US have underscored workforce diversity and adopted various diversity management practices to manage a diverse workforce impartially and attract qualified employees with ‘diverse’ backgrounds (Kelly and Dobbin 1998; Dobbin, Kim, and Kalev 2012), studies regarding workforce diversity mainly rely on samples from the US. Building on the studies conducted in the US, I use the KWPS of 2011 and 2013 to examine factors related to whether or not workplaces in Korea have adopted a set of policy statements for diversity management.

In particular, this paper extends the literature on employment law and

¹ Korea refers to South Korea (Republic of Korea).

organizations into the Korean legal context. An important line of studies about employment law and organizations have mainly investigated the US cases, and these studies find how organizations introduce new employment practices in response to broad anti-discrimination law in Title VII of the Civil Right Act of 1964 in the US (Edelman 1990; Edelman 1992; Kelly and Dobbin 1999; Edelman, Uggen, and Erlanger 1999). These studies underscored that the legal uncertainty originating from the legal text in the common law system encouraged various social actors to participate in constructing practical meanings of the law and designing compliance programs.

In contrast to the US case, the Korean legal system emulates the modern European civil law system, in particular the German system (Yang 1989). The main principle of that civil law tradition is to depend on written collections of the law so that there is no room for professionals to participate in constructing a practical meaning of laws (Glenn 2007). In other words, statutes are expected to be much less ambiguous than those in US laws. This suggests that HR and legal professionals may not be associated with the construction of the practical meaning of a law as has been the cases in the US (Baek and Kelly 2014).

However, previous studies suggest that there may be openings for legal ambiguity even in a civil law system like Korea's. Indeed, professionals may affect the construction of the practical meaning of a law, as legal complexity has increased and the value of precedents and judicial discretion has been recognized in countries with a civil law tradition (Dainow 1966; Merryman 1981; Del Duca 2006). This present study provides an example of how legal uncertainty encourages HR professionals to promote the adoption of new organizational policies even in a civil law system like Korea's. This study builds on an institutional perspective, developed through research in US contexts, and seeks to answer why workplaces have pursued workforce diversity as their managerial goal in the Korean context. Along with the neo-institutional perspective, I also explore the roles of slack resources, workforce demographic composition, organizational culture, and public scrutiny to test the validity of the institutional account.

Research Background

The Emergence of Workforce Diversity in the Korean Context

Korea has been recognized as highly male-dominated and homogeneous with respect to ethnic background in all aspects of social life (Magoshi and Chang 2009). Also, Korea has been considered as highly exclusive to the disabled in social life (Lee and Park 2008). However, workforce diversity has become particularly salient since an aging population and low fertility rate have raised serious concerns about the future of the Korean labor force (Lim, Yang, and Kang 2008). Korea's aging index² increased rapidly from 19.1% in 1995 to 88.7% in 2014. According to such demographics, Korea is entering into an aged society in 2018 and will become a super-aged society³ in 2026. In addition, Korea's fertility rate⁴ decreased rapidly from 6.0 in the 1960s to 1.19 in 2013; its current fertility rate is the lowest in the world (Statistic Korea 2016; OECD Data 2016). Due to this rapid population aging and low fertility rate, the population growth rate is predicted to fall below zero in 2018 (Statistics Korea 2016).

The coming increase in the aging population and low fertility predict a potential economic catastrophe for the country. These demographic changes predict that the Korean government will have to spend an enormous additional amount of the financial budget to support welfare programs for the aged and that fewer workers than before will have to support the elderly and sustain the economy. The aging population and low fertility also have a negative impact on businesses by decreasing labor productivity as well as increasing labor costs (McDonald and Kippen 2001).

To tackle these population concerns, the Korean government is seeking to increase the employment rate of females, foreign workers, and the disabled. This is because Korean policymakers surmise that an increase in labor force participation of these diverse minority groups will significantly help to increase labor productivity and eventually relieve the financial burden

² The aging index is calculated as the number of people aged 60 or above per hundred people under the age of 15 (United Nations Statistics Divisions 2016).

³ Aged society and super-aged society refer to a society where the elderly population (people aged over 65) accounts for 14% through 19% and over 20% of total population, respectively (United Nations Statistics Divisions 2016).

⁴ The fertility rate (or total fertility rate) is the number of children that are expected to be born to women of child-bearing age (OECD Data 2016).

of the government (Lim et al. 2008; Moon et al. 2013). Although the participation of the minority groups in the labor force has recently increased, the current rate in Korea is still low compared to other OECD countries (OCED Data 2016). The rate of female employment in Korea has arisen to 48.8% by 2013. In addition, the employment rates of foreign workers and disabled employees have increased to 67.5% and 36%, respectively.⁵ However, the percentage of female workers, foreign workers, and the disabled in the total number of employed in Korea has only remained 43%, 3.2%, and 2.4% as of 2013, respectively (Statistics Korea 2016; Korea Employment Agency for the Disabled 2016). Thus, policymakers are actively seeking to attract qualified employees with diverse backgrounds by improving working conditions to prevent discrimination against employees on the basis of demographic characteristics and by seeking eventually to create integrated workplaces (Jang et al. 2004; Koo 2009; Baek, Kelly, and Jang 2012).

Theory and Hypotheses

Neo-Institutionalism

The central claim of neo-institutionalism is that organizations embedded within a given organizational field face similar social realities and are likely to be exposed to similar institutional pressures, which results in a surprising conformity of structures and behavioral patterns across diverse organizations within the organizational field. Three types of institutional pressures—coercive, normative, mimetic—have been identified, and many studies have shown how organizations change their structures and behaviors in accordance with institutional pressures (Meyer and Rowan 1977; Tolbert and Zucker 1983; DiMaggio and Powell 1983; Scott 2008).

There is a large literature of empirical studies in the US context regarding organizational responsiveness to “coercive pressures.” Scholars of law and organizations have argued that the practical meaning of a law does is not restricted to the original legal text itself, but evolves through interactions among legal institutions, regulated employers, and legal and HR professionals in an iterative way (Kelly and Dobbin 1999; Kelly 2003; Edelman et al. 2011).

⁵ Employment rate is a measure of extent to which available labor resources are being used. This is calculated as the ratio of the employed to the working age population. The working age population refers to people aged 15 to 64 (OECD Data 2016).

This line of research has documented the diffusion of equal opportunity policies, grievance procedures, designated equal opportunity officers, specialized HR departments, sexual harassment policies, and diversity management policies in the US (Edelman 1990; Dobbin et al. 1993; Sutton et al. 1994; Sutton and Dobbin 1996; Edelman et al. 1999; Dobbin and Kelly 2007; Dobbin 2009).

By contrast, there is a lack of studies concerning how legal pressures are constructed and how such constructed legal pressures lead to changes of organizational behaviors in Korea (except Baek and Kelly 2014). The Korean legal system is modeled upon the modern European civil law system where statutes in laws are much less ambiguous than those in the common law system such as the US. (Yang 1989). This suggests that such laws are so clear that there is no room for professionals to participate in constructing a practical meaning of laws. However, previous studies suggest that there may be openings for legal ambiguities even in a civil law system like Korea's; and thus professionals may become involved in the construction of the practical meaning of a law, as legal complexity has increased and the value of precedents and judicial discretion has been recognized in countries with a civil law tradition (Dainow 1966; Merryman 1981; Del Duca 2006). Below, I describe in detail how the legal ambiguity in Korea encourages HR professionals who are attuned to a shifting legal environment to promote the introduction of policies for diversity management.

Legal Environment for the Development of Workforce Diversity in Korea

The Korean government has established and reformed a number of laws—Equal Employment Opportunity Act⁶ (EEOA), Labor Standard Act (LSA), Act on Employment of Foreign Workers (AEFW), Act on Employment of Disabled Persons (AEDP), and Anti-Discrimination against and Remedies for Persons with Disabilities Act (ADRPDA)—to provide equal opportunities and treatment in the employment of female, foreigners, and disabled workers across Korean workplaces (Jang et al. 2004 ; Lim et al. 2008; Baek and Kelly 2014).

The Korean government established EEOA in 1987 and required employers to provide equal opportunity and treatment in employment between male and female employees and eventually create a gender-neutral

⁶ The name of “Equal Employment Opportunity Act” was changed to “Equal Employment Opportunity and Work Family Balance Assistance Act” in 2007.

workplace culture (Baek and Kelly 2014). The EEOA in Korea particularly prohibited employment discrimination based on an employee's gender and marital status.⁷

As the interaction of people across the world intensifies in the process of globalization, the number of foreign workers in Korea has gradually increased over time to around 760,000 by 2013⁸ (Statistics Korea 2016). To attract qualified foreign workers, the Korean government has sought to improve the working environments for foreign workers. This desire was manifested in the establishment of the LSA in 1997 and AEFW in 2004. Both LSA and AEFW prohibit employment discrimination against employees on the basis of nationality⁹ and aim to create integrated workplaces (Kim 2005).

In addition, the Korean government established AEDP and ADRPDA in 1991 and 2009, respectively to prohibit discrimination against the disabled and encourage the workplaces to employ the people with disabilities. In particular, AEDP mandates workplaces in Korea to fill at least 2% of their positions with the disabled.¹⁰ Along with this quota system of the disabled, this law also seeks to minimize employment discrimination against the disabled (Kim and Fox 2011). Furthermore, ADRPDA comprehensively prohibits discrimination against the disabled in all aspects of life and seeks to safeguard the rights and interests of individuals discriminated against on the ground of disability.¹¹ The introduction and reforms of these laws reflects an attempt to protect diverse minority groups across Korean workplaces against

⁷ The 1st article in EEOA of 1988 prescribes that the purpose of this Act is to contribute to the improvement of the status of working women and the promotion of their welfare by securing equal opportunity and treatment between men and women in any employment in conformity with the ideal of equality in the Constitution, protecting maternity and developing their vocational ability. In addition, Korean organizations were required to provide limited maternity benefits such as maternity and parental leave. These maternity benefits have gradually been expanded over time (Baek et al. 2012; Jang et al. 2004).

⁸ This number does not include illegal foreign workers.

⁹ The 5th article in LSA of 1997 prescribes that an employer shall neither discriminate against workers by sex, nor take discriminatory treatment in relation to the working conditions on the ground of nationality, religion, and social status. Likewise, the 22nd article in AEFW prescribes that no employer shall give unfair discriminatory treatment to any person on the ground that s/he is a foreign worker.

¹⁰ The workplaces with over 300 employees have had to fill at least 2% of their vacancies with the disabled since 1991.

¹¹ The 1st of article in ADRPDA prescribes that the purpose of this Act is to prohibit discrimination on the basis of disability, thus enabling the disabled to fully participate in society and establish their right to equality which will ensure their human dignity and sense of value.

various types of discrimination.¹²

Against the backdrop of the population concerns mentioned above, the legal environment for equal opportunity and treatment of women, foreign workers, and the disabled has been gradually intensified in Korea. The Korean government has amended EEOA, LSA, AEFW, AEDP, and ADRPDA over time¹³ to strengthen equal opportunity and treatment of employees in minority groups, and also has implemented reformations in the workplaces. The reforms of these laws aim to create an employee-friendly and integrated workplace by 1) promoting female employment and leave benefits, 2) preventing employment discrimination against employees on the basis of demographic characteristics,¹⁴ 3) banning workplace violence and harassment, and 4) reinforcing legal penalties for non-compliance with these laws¹⁵ (Jang et al. 2004; Baek et al. 2012).

The intensifying legal pressures have exposed employers to increasing legal risks, and have stimulated them to search for compliant HR practices to protect them against the legal risks. However, these laws do not spell out what employers are supposed to do, thus creating uncertainty about how best to comply. For example, EEOA has included the definition of gender

¹² The establishment and reform of the five laws are associated with launches of various global conventions on the rights of women, labor migrants, and disabilities. For example, EEOA has been reformed to correspond to the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). LSA and AEFW have been reformed to correspond to The Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD). AEDP and ADRPDA have been reformed to correspond to The Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). In addition, social movement organizations that focus on women's rights, multiculturalism, and human rights play an important role in establishing and reforming the employment laws.

¹³ EEOA, LSA, AEFW, AEDP, and ADRPDA have been reformed 20 times, 19 times, 9 times, 24 times, and 5 times respectively until 2013.

¹⁴ In the course of the expansion of EEOA, Affirmative Action (AA) was legislated as part of its reform in 2006. The main purpose of AA was to promote female employment and to rectify gender-discriminatory employment practices (Cho, Kwon, and Ahn 2010). This provision requires workplaces with at least 1000 employees or 300 female employees to submit an initial report about their workforce demography by job and rank. The Korean government selects from the workplaces those employers failing to meet the requirement that female employment reach 60% of the industry average, and these workplaces are required to submit a management plan on how to increase female employment in subsequent years. These workplaces must then submit progress reports to evaluate the following year (Lim et al. 2008). The introduction of AA also attempts to create a female-friendly working environment, promote female employment, and eventually achieve gender equity within workplaces (Cho et al. 2010).

¹⁵ The penalties associated with noncompliance with EEOA and LSA were strengthened, although fines for discriminating against employees' gender, nationality, faith, and social status are fairly minimal, up to \$5,000. However, fines for discriminating against the disabled (noncompliance with ADRPDA) are fairly substantive, up to \$30,000.

discrimination,¹⁶ but the law has not specified what gender discrimination in hiring processes and working conditions is in detail.¹⁷ Likewise, the other four laws do not clearly express what constitutes discriminatory treatment in employment for foreigners and the disabled. LSA and AEFW stipulate that an employer shall not discriminate against employees on the grounds of nationality,¹⁸ but they do not clarify in detail what kinds of practices represent national-origin discrimination in employment. AEDP and ADRPDA also prescribe that an employer shall not discriminate employees on the grounds of disabilities,¹⁹ but they do not clarify what kinds of practices are classified as discrimination against the disabled in employment.

The ambiguous legal environment stimulates employers to search for compliant HR programs that would protect them against possible litigation (Edelman, Abraham, and Erlanger 1992; Edelman et al. 1999). In this context, HR professionals in Korea may exaggerate the legal risk faced by employers, and offer ready-made HR solutions called diversity management to employers (Dobbin et al. 1993; Dobbin and Sutton 1998).

HR research institutes and HR professionals in Korea have warned business sectors about the possible risk of intensifying legal scrutiny and informed them of diversity management as being an efficient and competitive HR solution to preempt the changes in the legal environment. The major HR research institutes such as the Samsung Economic Research Institute (SERI), the LG Research Institute, and the Pohang Iron and Steel Company (POSCO) Research Institute have reported that workforce diversity can be not only a source of legal security but also a source of organizational competitiveness²⁰ The SERI report “*CEO Information*” states that “As the extent to which diversity in the workforce has increased in Korea ... the possibility of litigation for employment discrimination (broadly speaking, legal risks) will

¹⁶ In 1988 EEOA didn't even provide a definition of gender discrimination. When the law was amended the following year a definition of gender discrimination was included.

¹⁷ Since 2001, EEOA in Korea prescribes that an employer shall not discriminate on grounds of gender in the recruitment and hiring of workers.

¹⁸ According to the 6th article of LSA of 1997 and the 22nd article of AEFW of 2004, an employer shall not discriminate against employees on the grounds of nationality.

¹⁹ According to the 4th article of AEDP of 1991 and 10th article of ADRPDA of 2008, an employer shall not discriminate against any worker on the grounds of disability in personnel management processes such as recruitment, promotion, education, or training.

²⁰ SERI, LG Research Institute, and POSCO Research Institute are top-tier private economic research institutes in Korea. They consult corporations on various topics related to HR, finance, accounting, etc. They also regularly publish policy reports on current economic and business-related topics.

be intensified"... "Workforce diversity may bring about litigation with regard to evaluation and reward and it may eventually hurt corporate reputations"... "Diversity management is able to minimize legal risks as well as maximize the possibility of creativeness of employees" (Lee, Yoon, and Seo 2011). Another report, *Weekly Focus* by the LG Research Institute, states that "Korean companies have complied with laws to prevent various employment discriminations, but they need strategic programs (e.g., workforce diversity management) to comply with laws as well as improve firm competency" (Shin 2009). The *POSRI Issue Report* by the POSCO Research Institute states that "Diversity management practices are efficient tools to mitigate legal risks as well as create integrate workplaces simultaneously" (Kim 2012).

HR professionals in Korea also suggest through HR conferences and magazines that firms should have diversity management as an efficient HR strategy. For example, Joins HR consulting firms, one of top HR consulting firms in Korea, has advertised diversity management as a business strategy to preempt legal risks and efficiently manage diverse workforces at the same time. In 2013 this consulting firm held a diversity management conference in Korea to share its ideas with other Korean firms (Joins HR 2016). As another example, Ki-Ryung Kim, a presentative director at Towers Watson in Korea, the Korean branch of a global HR consulting firm, published in 2013 an article entitled "The Roles and Tasks of HR for Successful Workforce Diversity Management" at *Wolgan Injae-Gyeongyeong (Monthly Management of Talented People)*, one of the most influential HR professional magazines in Korea. In the article, Kim states that "The first step of diversity management is to minimize legal risks originating from labor laws such as EEOA. All employees need to be educated to comply with laws and prevent various discriminations within workplaces.... Second step, a workplace needs to implement diversity management practices beyond only legal compliance to create cultural integration within the given workplace. ... Final step, a workplace needs to find that workforce diversity is a great source of firm competency." To sum, these HR research institutes and HR professionals in Korea have advertised that diversity management is helpful in reducing legal risk, generating creative ideas from employees with diverse backgrounds, and enhancing a firm's image and performance at the same time.

Innovative policies and practices are adopted only if they are considered to improve a firm's performance and contribute to its reputation. As noted above, HR research institutes and HR professionals in Korea offer HR solutions called "diversity management" to employers, highlighting the fact that such innovative programs are not only an efficient tool to manage and

attract workers with diverse backgrounds, but also are a shield that protects employers from possible legal risks.²¹ In theory, this legal environment creates pressures for businesses to be compliant, but in fact, many businesses are simply focused on their daily operations and as a result may not be paying close attention to legal matters (Baek and Kelly 2014). Those workplaces with more developed HR functions (i.e., separate departments) are more likely to attend to the legal environment in which they operate. Therefore, organizations employing HR professionals will be very responsive to changing legal pressures and novel HR programs, and they are more likely to quickly adopt new HR policies such as diversity management. In particular, workplaces with staff who keep abreast of regulations and brand-new HR programs would consistently collect and use information about changes in employment laws and HR innovations (Edelman 1990; Sutton et al. 1994; Osterman 1995; Kelly and Dobbin 1998). Accordingly, I hypothesize that:

Hypothesis 1: Workplaces with a separate HR department are more likely to have a set of policy statements for diversity management.

Additionally, the workplaces where personnel are involved in various HR activities such as attending HR conferences or subscribing to specialized HR magazines might also be very sensitive to the changing legal environment regardless of the presence or not of a separate HR department (Baek and Kelly 2014). Furthermore, I expect that workplaces where HR management is reported to be more influential will likely also be more attentive to changes in employment law. HR professionals tend to create bureaucratic remedies for problems due to anticipated social sanctions, but there are often competing professionals at work in the same organizations promoting alternative approaches. Competing professionals might argue, for example, that creating bureaucratic policy to respond to institutional norms is too expensive

²¹ One reviewer suggests that my theoretical stance would rather link to rationalist claim than to neo-institutional one because my claim is that the government's increasing concern on aging population and low fertility rates lead to the emergence of the diversity policy scheme and workplaces in Korea adopt diversity management policies to avoid the penalty. However, my central claim is that government's increasing concern on aging population and low fertility rates create 'legal uncertainty', and the 'legal ambiguity' stimulates employers to search for compliant HR programs that would protect them against possible litigation. The legal uncertainty originating from the legal text encourages various social actors (especially HR professionals) to participate in constructing practical meanings of the law and designing compliance programs. Undoubtedly, it is also possible that workplaces in Korea adopt diversity management policies to avoid public scrutiny. Therefore, I control for this possibility in the section of alternative theory below.

(Nelson and Nielsen 2000; Dobbin and Kelly 2007). If organizations have strongly influential HR professionals, they will expand HR policies to respond to institutional pressures (Baek and Kelly 2014). Accordingly, I suggest the following two hypotheses:

Hypothesis 2: Workplaces with more involvement in professional HR activities are more likely to have a set of policy statements for diversity management.

Hypothesis 3: Workplaces with a more influential HR profession are more likely to have a set of policy statements for diversity management.

Alternative Theories of the Presence of Diversity Management Policies

Four alternative theories also offer hypotheses about why certain workplaces in Korea have a set of policy statements for diversity management. Below I suggest the four theoretical perspectives—scale economies, functional need, organizational culture, and public scrutiny—and then derive hypotheses from each of them.

Scale Economies

Blau and Schoenherr (1971) claim that increase in organizational size leads to specialization within the organization. In particular, they find that personnel administration will be differentiated from general management as organizational size increases. Accordingly, larger workplaces are likely to have various HR policies. In addition, larger organizations are more likely to have various HR policies because they have a greater capacity and slack resources (Kalleberg and Van Buren 1996). Therefore, I suggest the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 4: Larger workplaces are more likely to have a set of policy statements for diversity management.

Functional Need

Previous studies have reported that Korean workplaces have historically been highly male dominant and very exclusive of foreigners and the disabled (Lim et al. 2008; Koo 2009; Baek et al. 2012). However, workforce diversity has recently become a significant managerial issue in Korea since an aging population has raised concerns about the future Korean labor force (Lim et

al. 2008). This change in the demographic reality in Korea suggests that many employers are forced to attract qualified employees with diverse backgrounds. This in turn means that employers need to adopt policies for diversity management to actively promote workforce diversity in their workplaces. Therefore, the presence of a set of policy statements for diversity management in Korean workplaces can be negatively linked to changes in three workforce demographics: the percentage of female employees, foreigner workers, and employees with disabilities. Previous studies report that workforce demographics affect the introduction of a variety of HR innovations such as diversity management practices (Dobbin et al. 2012), maternity leave (Kelly and Dobbin 1999), parental leave (Baek and Kelly 2014), child care services (Kelly 2003), and sexual harassment training (Dobbin and Kelly 2007). Accordingly, I suggest the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 5: Workplaces with a lower percentage of female employees are more likely to have a set of policy statements for diversity management.

Hypothesis 6: Workplaces with a lower percentage of foreign employees are more likely to have a set of policy statements for diversity management.

Hypothesis 7: Workplaces with a lower percentage of employees with disabilities are more likely to have a set of policy statements for diversity management.

Organizational Culture

Dobbin et al. (2012) suggest that a workplace culture favorable to HR innovations is positively associated with the presence of diversity management practices. They suggest that organizational culture is difficult to change, but that a workplace culture already responsive to HR innovations is more likely to adapt to newer HR innovation. The adoption of work-family policies by many Korean businesses is one example of HR innovations in a work culture which has traditionally been male-dominated (Baek and Kelly 2014). Baek et al. (2012) show that parental leave and paternity leave can be successfully adopted in the Korean workplace when a workplace culture is sensitive to HR innovations. Therefore, I expect workplaces with work-family policies to be likely to adopt other HR innovations such as diversity management practices. I suggest the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 8: A workplace culture of responsiveness to HR innovations, as measured by work-family policies, is positively associated with the presence

of a set of policy statements for diversity management.

Organizational scholars also suggest that transnational culture shapes organizational behaviors in various ways (Budhwar and Debrah 2009). Organizations where transnational culture is at work tend to promote human rights in the workplace and seek to have innovative HR policies. Therefore, I expect that organizations with transnational culture are likely to have a set of policy statements for diversity management. I suggest the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 9: A transnational workplace culture, as measured by foreign ownership of a corporation, is positively associated with the presence of a set of policy statements for diversity management.

Public Scrutiny

Workplaces in the public sector are more visible than those in the private sector and are often exposed to a high level of public scrutiny (Baek and Kelly 2014). Therefore, workplaces that belong to the public sector are more likely to adopt socially desirable organizational policies such as affirmative action, due process procedures and diversity policies to respond to that scrutiny (Baron, Dobbin, and Jennings 1986; Kelly and Dobbin 1998). Accordingly, I suggest the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 10: Workplaces in the public sector are more likely to have a set of policy statements for diversity management.

Data and Methods

Data

Workplace-level data are used in this study because the unit of analysis consists of workplaces. These data come from the KWPS 2011 and KWPS 2013 collected by the Korea Labor Institute, a government-funded policy research organization²² in Korea. This panel survey design is modeled on the

²² The KWPS is funded by the National Research Council for Economics, Humanities and Social Science (approval number: 33603), and supported by the Ministry of Labor, Korea Employers Federation, the Korean Labor Economic Association, Korea Industrial Relations Association, Korean Sociological Association and Korean Academy of Management.

WERS (the Workplace Employee Relation Survey) of the UK and WES (Workplace Employee Survey) of Canada (Han and Koo 2010). Organizations were sampled in 2005 and are to be surveyed biannually for 9 years. The survey aims to understand contemporary workplace management in Korean business organizations and to evaluate the HR policies of workplaces in order to inform government policy. The sample workplaces were selected by the stratified sampling of all private and public sector workplaces with over 30 employees (Baek et al. 2012; Baek and Kelly 2014). Eligible organizations are private-sector workplaces, listed on the “Workplace Demographics Survey” issued by Statistics Korea, with 30 or more employees, as well as a sub-sample of public sector organizations including public institutions and local state-owned enterprises. The sample of 4,275 workplaces consisted of 359 public workplaces and 3,916 private workplaces. A total of 723 workplaces were excluded for various reasons. For the remaining 3,552, the survey was completed in 1,905 workplaces in 2005, the first wave survey year. The response rate was about 53.6%. Also, these surveys were conducted through face-to-face interviews with HR and industrial relation managers and worker representatives of the sample workplaces. In 2011, the fourth wave surveys (2011 KWPS) were completed in 1,737 workplaces. In 2013, the fifth wave surveys (2013 KWPS) were completed in 1,775 workplaces. I merge two surveys to create the dataset using common identification numbers. I dropped cases with missing information; my final sample includes 1,535 workplaces.

Measures

Dependent Variable

The dependent variable is formulated using a question about whether a workplace officially has a set of policy statements for diversity management. The set of policy statements for diversity management is an organizational-level document that prescribes how employers should fairly treat employees with diverse backgrounds. Respondents read the questionnaire and answered whether or not a set of policy statements for diversity management was adopted as an official written document.

The KWPS data do not allow me to fully clarify the causal relationship between variables of interest and the dependent variable because the data do not capture when the set of policies for diversity management is introduced to each workplace. In addition, the data do not provide consistent information about whether a workplace has a set of policies for diversity

TABLE 1
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

Variable	Observation	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Policy statement for Diversity Management	1535	0.43	0.50	0	1
HR Department	1535	0.28	0.45	0	1
Professional HR Activities	1535	1.86	1.67	0	5
HR Influence	1535	13.83	2.92	4	20
Workplace Size (Logged)	1535	5.04	1.25	1.79	9.47
% of Female Employee	1535	28.76	23.55	0	100
% of Foreign Workers	1535	1.21	5.42	0	89.74
% of Employee with Disabilities	1535	2.29	5.97	0	84
Work-Family Policies	1535	1.54	0.70	0	2
% of Foreign Ownership	1535	4.77	17.62	0	100
Public Sector	1535	0.07	0.26	0	1
Workplace Age (Logged)	1535	3.02	0.68	-2.30	4.84
Union	1535	0.38	0.49	0	1

management.²³ Such data limitations discourage using longitudinal analysis. Alternatively, cross-sectional analysis is used for this study. However, the nature of cross-sectional data would cripple the credibility of the causal arguments made here. To minimize this limitation, dependent variables are formulated using KWPS 2013 data and independent variables are formulated using KWPS 2011 data to establish a sequence of cause and effect. Logistic regression is employed to estimate the associations between dependent variables and independent variables. Statistical results are reported in Table 2.

Independent Variables

Table 1 reports descriptive statistics for all variables used in the analysis. A

²³ 874 workplaces have a set of policy statements for diversity management in KWPS 2007 data, but the number of workplaces with a set of policy statements for diversity management drops to 602 in KWPS 2009 data. The number of workplaces with a set of policy statements for diversity management increases to 822 in KWPS 2011 data. This fluctuating number of workplaces with a set of policy statements for diversity management prevents me from capturing a consistent pattern of adoption of policy statements for diversity management across workplaces.

workplace was coded 1 if it had a distinct HR department; otherwise 0. The indicator of professional HR activities is the sum of the responses to five questions about workplace involvement in professional HR activities. These questions included whether the workplace subscribes to more than one HR professional journal, whether staff responsible for HR regularly attend conferences with representatives from other workplaces, whether the organization receives information concerning HR professional associations and conferences, whether the workplace is benchmarking best HR practices from other successful organizations, and whether the workplace has worked with consulting firms (0-5).²⁴ The influence of HR management is the sum of responses to four questions asking about the extent of integration of HR management issues with business strategies, the extent of the contribution of HR management to business strategies, the extent of recognition of the HR department as a pioneer of change and as a major partner in the business, and the extent to which HR management appropriately supports the achievement of business goals.²⁵ These questions measuring the influence of HR management are answered on Likert scales ranging from 0, "Not at all," to 5 "Absolutely."²⁶

The workplace size is measured by the natural logarithm of the number of employees at the workplace. The percentages of employment of female, foreign workers, and the disabled within a workplace are used to measure the workforce demographics that indicate functional need for diversity management policies. As noted above, I expect workplaces with work-family policies to be receptive to other HR innovations such as diversity management. The sum of the responses to two questions asking about the presence of parental leave and paternity leave as official workplace policies is used to measure the presence of work-family policies. Organizations where

²⁴ The Cronbach α for this index is about .75.

²⁵ The Cronbach α for this index is about .88.

²⁶ The correlation between HR department, the number of HR activities and the level of HR influence does not suggest a problem with multicollinearity nor does an examination of VIF statistics. The correlations between HR department and these other two HR measures are less than 0.31. Workplaces without a distinct HR department sometimes still report a high level of professional HR activities and strong influence of HR professionals. In these data, 50% of workplaces with an HR department have engaged in at least 3 professional HR activities listed in the survey, as compared to 22% of workplaces without a distinct HR department. Workplaces with a distinct HR department report higher influence of HR, on average, than workplaces without HR department but the means in both cases are between "somewhat influential" and "influential" (3.53 vs. 3.84). I conclude that HR departments are not necessary first steps for having active HR professionals on site, nor for reporting HR influence.

transnational culture is at work tend to promote human rights in the workplace and seek to have diversity management policies. The percentage of foreign ownership of a corporation that a workplace is associated with is used to measure the extent to which transnational culture is at work. To measure public sector status, I use the records of the KWPS 2011 sampling frame.

Control Variables

The statistical models in this study include additional variables to control for other plausible explanations. These variables include age of the workplace, the presence of a union, and industry dummies. The age of a workplace could have mixed effects on the presence of diversity management policies. On the one hand, such workplaces may be less likely to adopt those novel HR practices as part of a general inertia (Hannan and Freeman 1977). On the other hand, such workplaces might be more likely to adopt HR innovations because they have accumulated knowledge and experience to respond to market and institutional demands, and thus can easily convert their knowledge and experiences into such HR innovations (Cohen and Levinthal 1990). To calculate the age of a workplace, the workplace founding year is subtracted from the survey year (2011), and then natural logarithms are employed to accommodate the left-skewed distribution of the variable. For unionized workplaces, previous studies show that unionization has had mixed effects on HR innovation in the US; although unions push for better employment and working conditions, some workplaces adopt HR innovations as part of a union-avoidance strategy (Kochan, Katz, McKersie 1986). I apply this insight into the Korean context and expect similar mixed effects of unionization on the presence of diversity management policies in Korean workplaces. I also expect that the distribution of a set of policies for diversity management is variable across industries. I put all industry dummies into the statistical analysis to control for the industrial differences in the presence of a set of policy statements for diversity management across industries.

Results

Table 1 provides descriptive statistics for dependent and independent variables. Appendix 1 presents survey questions used to create dependent and independent variables. The descriptive statistics show that about 43% of the sample of 1,535 Korean workplaces has a set of policy statements for diversity

TABLE 2
STATISTICAL RESULTS OF THE PRESENCE OF A SET OF POLICY STATEMENTS FOR
DIVERSITY MANAGEMENT ACROSS WORKPLACES IN KOREA

Variables	A Set of Policy Statements for Diversity Management
HR Department	-0.077 (0.133)
Professional HR Activities	0.106** (0.038)
HR Influence	0.048* (0.021)
Workplace Size (Logged)	0.138* (0.057)
% of Female Employee	-0.005 (0.003)
% of Foreign Workers	-0.004 (0.010)
% of Employee with Disabilities	0.010 (0.009)
Work-Family Policies	0.098 (0.089)
% of Foreign Ownership	0.004 (0.003)
Public Sector	1.190*** (0.269)
Workplace Age (Logged)	-0.049 (0.090)
Union	0.288* (0.142)
Industry Dummies	Included
Constant	-2.072*** (0.445)
Observations	1,535

Standard errors in parentheses

*** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05

management in place. The logistic regression findings in Table 2 present the results of my statistical analyses, and indicate organizational differences in the presence of a set of policy statements for diversity management in Korean workplaces.

As far as neo-institutionalism is concerned, I find that institutional contexts impact on the presence of a set of policy statements for diversity management across Korean workplaces. The presence of a separate HR department fails to predict the presence of a set of policy statements for diversity management in contrast to my prediction. This evidence does not support Hypothesis 1. However, workplaces that are more involved in professional HR activities are more likely to have a set of policy statements for diversity management. This supports Hypothesis 2. The expected odds of having a set of policy statements for diversity management increase by 11% per additional HR activity. In addition, as a workplace is more involved in professional HR activities, a predicted probability that a workplace has a set of policy statements for diversity management increases. While the predicted probability of having a set of policy statements for diversity management for a workplace that is not involved in any HR professional activity is just 0.38, the predicted probability of having a set of policy statements for diversity management for a workplace that is involved in five HR professional activities increases up to 0.51. Workplaces where the influence of HR management is stronger are more likely to have a set of policy statements for diversity management. This also supports Hypothesis 3. The predicted probability of having a set of policy statements for diversity management in a workplace where the reported influence of HR management is minimal is just 0.32. Meanwhile, the predicted probability of having a set of policy statements for diversity management of a workplace where the reported influence of HR management is great increases to 0.50. These statistical results suggest that HR professionals who are involved in activities such as reading HR journals and attending professional meetings, and the influence from managers with HR responsibilities play a more significant role in introducing diversity management policies than having a designated HR department within a workplace.

As far as scale economies, workplace size measured by the logged number of employees at the location predicts the presence of a set of policy statements for diversity management. This result supports Hypothesis 4 and suggests that slack resources play an important role in introducing diversity management policies into the workplace. As far as functional needs are concerned, none of three workforce demographics—the percentages of

female employees, foreign workers, and disabled employees—are associated with the presence of policy statements for diversity management. This fails to confirm Hypothesis 5, Hypothesis 6, and Hypothesis 7. These results indicate that diversity management policies in Korean workplaces may be ‘decoupled’ from their actual functions within the workplace (Meyer and Rowan 1977; DiMaggio and Powell 1983; Kelly 2010; Baek and Kelly 2014). These results strongly indicate that workplaces in Korea may have diversity management policies regardless of their actual necessity.

As far as organizational culture is concerned, the presence of work-family policies in the workplace and the percentage of foreign ownership of a corporation that a workplace is associated with do not predict the presence of a set of policy statements for diversity management. These results do not support Hypothesis 8 and Hypothesis 9. These results indicate that workplaces in Korea may have diversity management policies in place regardless of their cultural affinity with HR innovations. As far as public scrutiny is concerned, workplaces in the public sector are more likely to have a set of policy statements for diversity management than those in the private sector. This result supports Hypothesis 10. This result suggests that workplaces that belong to the public sector are more likely to adopt socially desirable organizational policies to respond to public scrutiny

Among the control variables, the age of a workplace fails to predict the presence of a set of policy statements for diversity management. The presence of a union, on the other hand, does predict the likelihood of the presence of a set of policy statements for diversity management. This result may imply that workplaces in Korea would rather adopt HR innovations such as diversity management policies as part of collective agreements than as part of union-avoidance strategies. Future study needs to clarify the association between the presence of union and the introduction of HR innovations in the Korean context.

Conclusion and Discussion

This study investigates what factors determine the likelihood of the presence of a set of policy statements for diversity management across workplaces in Korea. This study expands the understanding of diversity management across workplaces in Korea in two ways. First, and most obviously, this study shows that institutional contexts and organizational connection to the institutional context are important in explaining the presence of a set of policy statements

for diversity management, as has been shown to be the case in the US. Extending theoretical perspectives developed in the US to the Korean context, this present study finds that legal ambiguity in Korea encourages HR professionals who are attuned to a shifting legal environment to promote the introduction of new HR policies. HR research institutes and HR professionals in Korea often exaggerate legal risks faced by employers, and offer HR solutions called policies for diversity management to employers (Dobbin et al. 1993; Dobbin and Sutton 1998). In addition, HR research institutes and professionals emphasize that diversity management is an efficient tool to mitigate legal risks as well as boost organizational competitiveness. The statistical results in this study show that the organizational connection to HR professionals and their influence within a workplace strongly affect the likelihood of the presence of a set of policy statements for diversity management in Korea. This institutionalization process is similar to the US case.

Furthermore, this study shows that functional need and organizational culture do not play an important role in encouraging workplaces in Korea to implement diversity management policies. My statistical results fail to find any workforce demographic associated with the establishment of a set of policy statements for diversity management. In addition, I fail to find that the presence of work-family policies and the percentage of foreign ownership are associated with the presence of a set of policy statements for diversity management. These results indicate that workplaces in Korea are likely to have diversity management policies in place regardless of their necessity or cultural affinity with HR innovations. This suggests, therefore, that diversity management policies in Korean workplaces may be 'decoupled' from their actual functions within the workplace (Meyer and Rowan 1977; DiMaggio and Powell 1983; Kelly 2010; Baek and Kelly 2014).

(Submitted: January 30, 2017; Revised: April 3, 2017; Accepted: May 1, 2017)

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Appendix 1: Survey Questions Used to Create Variables

Variable	Question Items
Policy Statement for Diversity Management	Does your workplace have a set of official written documents that outlines policies for providing equitable opportunities to all workers and managing diversity among workers?
HR Department	Does your workplace have separate organizations to deal with personnel management and labor management?
Professional HR Activities	<p>Does your workplace subscribe to one or more professional periodicals on personnel and labor management?</p> <p>Does the person responsible for personnel management in your workplace regularly meet with personnel managers of other companies?</p> <p>In 2011, did your workplace ask employers' associations or groups for advice or information on personnel and labor management?</p> <p>Has your workplace benchmarked itself against either Korean or foreign workplaces with superior personnel and labor management approaches?</p> <p>Has your workplace received assistance on personnel and labor management issues from professional consultants?</p>
HR Influence	<p>Are personnel management issues closely integrated with the business strategy of your workplace?</p> <p>Is the personnel manager at your workplace a major contributor to your business strategy?</p> <p>Do persons in other divisions in your workplace recognize the personnel management division as the pioneer of change and a major partner in business?</p> <p>Does personnel management in your workplace appropriately support the achievement of business strategy objectives?</p>

Variable	Question Items
Workplace Size (Logged)	Workforce information in KWPS 2011
% of Female Employee	Workforce information in KWPS 2011
% of Foreign Workers	Workforce information in KWPS 2011
% of Employee with Disabilities	Workforce information in KWPS 2011
Work-Family Policies	Of the following maternity protection measures, which have been implemented through stipulations in rules of employment or collective agreements, or through company policies?
% of Foreign Ownership	On December 31, 2011 what was the foreign equity share of the corporation that your workplace belongs to?
Public Sector	What type of organization is your workplace?
Workplace Age (Logged)	In what year was your workplace established?
Union	Is there a union in your workplace? Responses should be current as of December 31, 2011.

