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A Cross National Comparison of Family Friendly Work Policies: The Potential Influence of
Cultural Values

A Thesis
Presented to
The Faculty and the Honors Program
Of the University of San Diego

By
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Business Administration

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Abstract

Around the world people must work for a living, but also must raise their families. To balance these obligations, parents need high levels of support. But the existence of family friendly work policies, defined as paid parental leave and affordable, high-quality childcare, vary significantly across nations, making it difficult for many to obtain the necessary support. Research indicates that countries providing supportive family friendly policies see economic benefits, increases in profitability, and stronger overall youth development. Even though research reveals strong positive outcomes, there is a deficiency of exploration into why more countries still lack comprehensive policies that support working parents, specifically women. Most existing research focuses on how economic barriers, like high financial costs, impact mandating national family friendly work policies. This study is unique in that it instead explores the relation between national cultural values, defined by the Hofstede model of national culture, and the presence of family friendly policies across nations. The study examines the relationship between individualism and the amount of federal paid leave provided to mothers and fathers, and the relationship between masculinity and the amount of federal paid leave provided to mothers and fathers. The study hypothesizes that countries with higher individualism scores will provide less paid leave to parents, and countries with higher masculinity scores will provide less paid leave to parents. These will be tested using a Pearson correlation. The results of the study will help identify whether cultural values may play a role in the existence of family friendly policies globally.

Introduction

Balancing the obligations of life has proven difficult over generations as people must not only work for a living, but also find the time and resources to raise their families. Supportive family friendly policies, such as paid parental leave and affordable, high-quality childcare services, are crucial to ensure parents have the resources, time, and opportunity to raise their children. These services provide the necessary care to allow parents to succeed in the workforce and the education and safety that benefits future populations to come. Such a fundamentally important service should theoretically rank in the highest level of urgency for support funds and policies, but there is a major and consistent lack of support globally, and more specifically the United States of America. This is particularly perplexing in an economy where the majority of the workforce is women, namely 50.04% (Law, 2020), and in which many women contribute their salaries to dual income households. Although the global population knows and acknowledges this crisis, the lack of family friendly policies across nations, exists and has attempted to take action to improve the situation, minimal progress has been made. This study examines potential reasons why this issue persists.

Statement of the Problem

The lack of family friendly policies is a fundamental global issue spanning across countries of different cultures, income levels, and resources. Although a world-wide issue of this stature may not be solved with a single solution, it still must be recognized as something that impacts the economic and societal growth potential of the entire world, not just specific countries.

At a basic level, this crisis leaves millions of children and families without sufficient support, causing intense stress and restriction on whomever must fill the role of the caregiver,

most commonly the women of the family (Samman & Lombardi, 2019). As these caregivers assume the fulltime job of attending to the children in their lives, they miss out on opportunities to work, bring in income, learn new skills, and contribute to the economy and progress of their countries. The current COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated this issue providing fewer affordable childcare options and forcing a large number of women out of the workforce leaving them without the income they need to support themselves and their families. In September 2020 alone, over one million Americans dropped out of the workforce, 80% of whom were women (Scott, 2020). With the growing severity of the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on jobs, childcare availability, and government shut-downs for many businesses, the childcare crisis becomes even more aggravated.

The problem becomes understanding why this crisis persists. This study will attempt to uncover whether cultural values influence the adoption of family friendly work policies at the national level.

Background of the Problem

Law and policy are of course at the forefront of any restrictions to creating legal change, but traditional cultural values and societal norms are direct influencers to the laws a particular country enforces. To understand the relationship between these factors, it is important to break down each by their definition. Culture is the most basic level and includes symbols, language, beliefs, values, and artifacts that are part of any society. From culture comes values. Cultural values come from judgements of what is good or bad and desirable or undesirable, varying widely across countries. Cultural values shape a culture's norms which are the standards or expectations for behaving among a society. Finally, from these cultural norms, laws are created, obeyed, broken, or changed ("The Elements of Culture," 2010). Cultural norms are immensely

powerful in driving policy, law, and change in a society. Even so, cultural norms shift slowly over time which adds to the difficulty many countries face in making change to policy or law. This relationship between cultural values, cultural norms, and law is key in understanding this study. By addressing the first factor, cultural values, greater understanding of potential effects on law and policy may be attained.

Apart from the legal aspect, it is important to consider the impacts that the lack in family friendly policies has on the global workforce. Although there has been growth in many countries in the percentage of women in the workforce, the overall percentage is still far from equal in proportion to men. Around the world, women make up only 38.78% of the total labor force (World Bank, 2020), although they account for 49.58% of the world's total population (World Bank, 2019). Historically in most cultures, women have been expected to assume the role of the caretaker and homemaker. Undoubtedly many countries have shifted their cultural values to more equal understandings of gender roles, but there still remains large disparities in beliefs, treatment, and opportunities for women.

Although the percentage of women in the global labor force is just over 38%, there is a large sector of unpaid working women that is unaccounted for. Unpaid work by women is valued at over \$10 trillion per year, 13% of the global gross domestic product (GDP) (Samman & Lombardi, 2019). With these high numbers there is clear indication that having more women in the workforce would enhance economic growth and development for the world, and increase retention rates, employee and community relations, and productivity for companies (International Finance Corporation, 2017a). Even with these highly positive potentials, the lack of access to childcare and paid leave creates a substantial barrier for many women to enter the labor force (International Finance Corporation, 2017b).

These considerable barriers to women entering the workforce and lack of supportive policies perpetuate the childcare crisis. Not only are millions of children left without sufficient childcare when mothers must work to support their families financially, but millions of children are also at a developmental and educational disadvantage as many parents are unable to afford proper education for their children. This problem is especially prevalent in low-income countries (LICs) and middle-income countries (MICs). Increasing preschool enrollment to 50% in a year could increase a country's productivity by \$33 billion across those children's lifetimes, in 73 LICs and MICs (Samman & Lombardi, 2019). By investing in early childhood education and development, nations around the world would see large economic benefits and improvement in the quality of life for future generations to come.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to identify potential reasons this crisis persists. With considerable data and analysis already published on the issue, there is no doubt the childcare crisis has been and continues to be recognized. However, in this review the goal is to look at the crisis from a new perspective investigating potential connections between the existence or lack of supportive policies and deep-rooted cultural values.

Using data from a study conducted by UNICEF exploring the amount of paid leave provided to mothers and fathers across multiple nations and the cultural value scores from the Hofstede 6-dimensional cultural value model, a correlation analysis will be to determine whether a relationship exists between these two variables. The objective is to determine whether cultural values impact the presence of family friendly policies and gain more understanding of why, to this day, there is a persistent lack of supportive policy, despite the clear economic and social benefits these provide. there are not more supportive family friendly policies across all nations.

Research Questions & Hypotheses

Within this review two questions will be addressed:

- 1) Is there a correlative relationship between the cultural value of individualism and the amount of paid leave (in weeks) available to mothers and fathers?
- 2) Is there a correlative relationship between the cultural value of masculinity and the amount of paid leave (in weeks) available to mothers and fathers?

Four hypotheses will be tested with existing data from UNICEF and the Hofstede 6-dimensional cultural value model:

H1a: The higher level of individualism values, the lower the number of weeks of paid leave available to mothers.

H1b: The higher level of individualism values, the lower the number of weeks of paid leave reserved for fathers.

H2a: The higher level of masculinity values, the lower the number of weeks of paid leave available to mothers.

H2b: The higher level of masculinity values, the lower the number of weeks of paid leave reserved for fathers.

Significance of the Study

Although data reveals benefits to countries' economies, productivity, community and employee relations, and youth development when providing family friendly policies, many nations still lack adequate support for parents and children. The question remains as to why the crisis persists given these proven positive outcomes.

So much economic value is not being captured, as women are often forced to exit the workforce, are unable to enter the workforce, or are forced to leave their children without sufficient childcare if they must be a part of the workforce. A lack of subsidized childcare and education has the single biggest effect on women's employment in industrialized countries (Miller, 2019). Childcare costs are highly expensive, draining family budgets and creating this strong barrier to women who wish to enter the workforce.

With the contradicting factors of large economic potential but a persistent lack of family friendly policies, the paradox of the childcare crisis remains a prevalent issue. This is an incredibly important matter, as ensuring proper support to parents and children across nations will help drive the global economy, create opportunity for generations to come, and strengthen the development of nations across the world.

Review of the Literature

This literature review will look in-depth at family friendly policies, the financial barriers to childcare services, the developmental and economic impacts of providing supportive policies, previous goals for improvement set forth by the United Nations, and lastly provide insight into the Hofstede 6-Dimensional Model of National Culture.

Family Friendly Policies

Family friendly policies are set forth by national governments providing paid leave and subsidized childcare (Boerie & Van Ours, 2020). Paid leave allows parents to recover from giving birth, bond with their newborn, and stay involved in the workforce (Boerie & Van Ours, 2020). Subsidized childcare supports parents' decision to have a child and allows them to balance work and childrearing (Boerie & Van Ours, 2020). Financially it provides opportunity to low- and middle-income families who may not be able to afford private childcare.

There are distinct differences in terms referring to paid leave. These terms are defined below using definitions provided by UNICEF.

- **Maternity leave:** Job-protected leave of absence for employed women, typically starting just before the time of childbirth or adoption in some countries (Chzhen et al., 2019, p. 5).
- **Paid leave available to mothers:** A combination of maternity leave and paid parental leave that can be used by the mother and is not reserved for the father. Unpaid leave is not included (Chzhen et al., 2019, p. 5).
- **Paternity leave:** Job-protected leave for fathers at the time of childbirth or soon after (Chzhen et al., 2019, p. 5).
- **Paid leave reserved for fathers:** A combination of paternity leave and paid parental leave reserved exclusively for fathers. Unpaid leave is not included (Chzhen et al., 2019, p. 5).

Family friendly policies are so important because they yield economic, developmental, and financial benefits to countries and individuals. They allow women to remain in the work force, contributing to their country's economy, and give children the proper attention, care, and educational foundation they need to succeed. When countries invest in family friendly policies not only do they help their populations of the present, but the positive outcomes derived from these policies also benefit future generations to come.

Financial Barriers to Childcare Services

Cost stands at the forefront of limitations to childcare services across the globe. Only 45% of countries around the world, dropping to 15% for low-income countries (LICs), provide free pre-primary education (Milovantseva et al., 2018). Not only is there a lack of affordable pre-

primary education, but childcare is incredibly expensive in most countries around the world. In LICs, women spend about 17% of their average earnings on childcare, similar to the average 15% of income spent on childcare in wealthier countries (Howard, 2018). Even with these average percentages, costs vary greatly per country reaching as high as 37.3% in New Zealand or as low as 2.6% in the Czech Republic (Fleming, 2019). These high costs put parents under intense financial pressure. If they are unable to afford childcare or do not have family members or friends to watch their children, women are often forced out of the workforce and expected to care for the children. If not working is financially impossible for the family, women are forced to bring their children to work with them, potentially risking the children's health from exposure to unsafe working conditions (Samman & Lombardi, 2019). In many LICs the childcare crisis is aggravated by poverty due to the high costs and lack of resources in national governments, but even so the issue persists beyond LICs across the majority of nations around the world.

The United States undoubtedly has one of the most expensive childcare systems in the world, ranking the third most expensive globally. Assessed by the percentage of a couple's average earnings spent on childcare, the United States comes in at 33.2% of income spent for support services (Fleming, 2019). To put this statistic into perspective, included below is a table displaying the top ten countries with the most expensive childcare services from 2019.

Figure 1 (Fleming, 2019).

These countries have the most expensive childcare

Based on the percentage of a couple's average earnings, 2019

	Country	Percentage of pay for childcare
1	New Zealand	37.3
2	United Kingdom	35.7
3	United States	33.2
4	Australia	31.1
5	Ireland	27.8
6	Switzerland	27.7
7	Japan	26.8
8	Slovak Republic	26.1
9	Canada	22.9
10	Finland	21.5

Source: OECD

Not only is this number incredibly high, but for many families it is financially unfeasible. As the United States lacks subsidies to help with the costs of childcare, the expense is magnified.

The childcare system in the United States is best described as a “mixed economy system” as childcare providers may be privately operated, in the form of for-profits or nonprofits, or publicly operated at the local, state, or federal government level (Howard, 2018). While in theory this type of system may appeal to some as it gives diversity in programs, in actuality it creates large disparities across the nation in regard to accessing equal levels of childcare services. Program types vary greatly based on where someone lives, their socioeconomic status, or racial background. Wealthier families are often able to buy their way into much higher-quality childcare, whereas low- or middle-income families are priced out of the high-end market (Howard, 2018). This not only creates disparities in access to certain programs, but a large

imbalance in the level of education and opportunity children have starting at a very young age and progressing into adolescent life and adulthood.

Only 7% of companies offer any type of childcare relief to their employees (Bonello, 2019). This adds to the imbalance in access to childcare services to those who cannot financially afford it on their own, but also negatively impacts turnover, recruiting, absenteeism, and productivity rates. If companies were to offer subsidized childcare and paid leave to parents, turnover would be reduced by 35-60%, recruiting would improve by 80%, absenteeism would be reduced by 20-30%, and productivity would increase for 85% of parents (Bonello, 2019).

Developmental Impacts

A lack of childcare can not only be dangerous in regard to the safety of unsupervised children, but also detrimental to children's early development and growth. Over 45 million children under the age of five lack adult supervision for at least one hour per week, in 76 low- and middle-income countries (LICs and MICs) (Samman & Lombardi, 2019). 69% of children ages 3 to 5 did not attend an early childhood education program, in 67 LICs and MICs (Samman & Lombardi, 2019). Additionally, 43% of children under the age of five, around 250 million, risk hindered development because of poverty and stunting (Samman & Lombardi, 2019).

These drastic numbers speak to the severity of the crisis. These statistics are exemplified visually below in Figures 2 and 3. Figure 2 shows the shares of children under five from the richest and poorest countries without adult supervision. Figure 3 displays the dispersion of childcare arrangements, when they are existent, separated by poorest, richest, and average income countries.

Figure 2 (Samman et al., 2016).

Share of children under five on average and from the richest and poorest wealth quintiles who spend time without adult supervision (%), 2005-2013

Note: This is the share of children aged 0–59 months left alone or in the care of another child younger than ten years of age for more than one hour at least once in the week prior to being surveyed.

Source: Author elaboration of data from UNICEF global databases, 2014, based on DHS, MICS and other nationally representative surveys.

Figure 3 (Samman & Lombardi, 2019).

As seen in Figure 2, the mother herself or other female children or relatives assume the role of the caregiver to a much greater extent than husbands, other male children or relatives, or organized childcare. This data speaks to the disparities of gender present globally in relation to childcare and homecare, which feeds into economic limitations, addressed later in this work.

Developmentally, babies and young children need a combination of nature with nurture to thrive (Britto, 2017). Their brains develop most rapidly from conception to about five years of age than any other time in their life, as shown in Figure 4, so the early moments in a child's life influences their visual, auditory, and language abilities as well as their ability to plan, make decisions, and develop their personalities (Britto, 2017).

Figure 4 (International Finance Corporation, 2019).

The neural connections in children's brains are shaped in response to positive experiences, such as good nutrition and sensory and motor stimulation, and negative experiences, such as neglect, stress, violence, or exposure to unsafe or polluted conditions (Britto, 2017). When a child is raised in a negative environment, their development can be significantly hindered. The way children develop their physical, motor, cognitive, social, emotional, and linguistic skills set the foundation for their future health, learning, and well-being (Britto, 2017). By combating these negative experiences with subsidized childcare services, millions of children that would otherwise lack the stimulation and supervision they need can reach their full developmental potential, setting their futures up for success and place them in a stronger position to care for their future children in a nurturing, positive way.

Economic Impacts

As stated before, family friendly policies have incredible impacts on the economy. When policies are lacking, many women are forced out of the workforce or are unable to enter the workforce in the first place. This creates enormous lost value that could be captured and fed back into the economy if women had a more supported opportunity to enter the labor force.

Even if women do participate in the workforce, if they decide to have children they face the difficult dilemma of finding care for their child and choosing whether to exit the workforce to raise their children. In 2019, 50% of full-time employed women never returned to work after giving birth to their first child due to the high costs of childcare and lack of support given to return to the workforce (Bonello, 2019). This leads to a lot of uncaptured value economically. Even if some women do re-enter the workforce, several still engage in unpaid work. This unpaid work by women is valued at over \$10 trillion per year, 13% of the global gross domestic product (GDP) (Samman & Lombardi, 2019). This is an immense number and portion of the GDP that is being lost due to these lacking policies.

In the United States specifically, the lack of family friendly policies has a substantial negative effect on the economy. Breakdowns in childcare, defined as nannies who don't follow through or daycares that fail quality inspections, cost the economy over \$4.4 billion in lost productivity (Uppaluru, 2019). Breakdowns in childcare are relatively frequent and prevent employees from fully committing to their professions, hinders employee retention rates, and leads to more missed workdays (Rose, 2018). Additionally, when parents have to drop out of the workforce to care for their children, they not only miss out on wages but also potential retirement benefits that are crucial to ensure financial security (Whitehurst, 2017). Specific to the United States, impacts of the lack of family friendly policies and lack of accessibility to the workforce

for women has become increasingly harmful. The participation of women in the labor force peaked in the year 2000 and has since continued to decline, even though other wealthy countries have continued to rise (Weissmann, 2019). This is problematic because the United States is continuing to fall behind economically as other countries gain traction with more women entering their workforces.

The lack of family friendly policies discriminates against women, but even more so discriminates against women of color. The average annual cost of \$18,000 for center-based childcare amounts to 42% of the median income for a typical African American family (Malik, 2016). This percentage soars far past the average 33.2% of income spent for the average family in the United States. There is additional financial pressure added to this as African Americans earn 40% less, on average, than non-Hispanic white families (Malik, 2016). This is especially problematic as demographic predictions for the future show that by the year 2044 more than half of all U.S.-Americans will be people of color (Malik, 2016).

Wage gaps across the nation also perpetuate the inequality in access to childcare services. Women overall earn only 80 cents for every dollar paid to men working full time (National Partnership for Women & Families, 2019), making it incredibly hard for women, especially single mothers, to support their children on their own. This wage gap becomes even worse for women of color. Black women are paid only 61 cents, Native American women are paid only 58 cents, and Latina women are paid only 53 cents for every dollar a white, non-Hispanic man earns (National Partnership for Women & Families, 2019). These economic discrepancies across race and ethnic backgrounds magnify inequality and discrimination that already exist and create large issues in sufficient childcare support and education for many families and children around the United States.

Previous Action and Goals

The most substantial goals to combat the childcare crisis and lack of primary education around the world have been set by the United Nations (UN) as the fourth sector in their Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for 2030. The UN has set seventeen goals as a universal call to action focusing on ending poverty, protecting the planet, and improving quality of life for populations across the globe (United Nations Sustainable Development, n.d.).

The most applicable goal to addressing the childcare crisis is the fifth universal goal set by the UN: Gender Equality (#5). The UN's goal of Gender Equality has seen progress over the last couple of decades in higher attendance of girls in school, fewer girls being forced into early marriage, more women in positions of leadership, parliament, and government, and law reforms toward gender equality. However, major disparities still remain with discriminatory laws against gender, persisting underrepresentation of women in political positions, high numbers of sexual violence (1 in 5 women and girls ages 15 to 49 reporting physical or sexual violence by an intimate partner within the last 12 months), and discriminatory social norms (United Nations Sustainable Development, n.d.). In 18 countries husbands obtain legal rights to prevent their wives from working, in 39 countries daughters and sons have unequal inheritance rights, and 49 countries lack protective laws for women against domestic violence (United Nations Sustainable Development, n.d.). This level of discriminatory opportunity prevents women from entering the workforce either by law or by lack of ability, as cultural norms and legal rights prevent them from pursuing careers and leave them taking care of the children and the home.

The fact that the UN has focused so heavily on improving gender equality around the world speaks to the fact that the childcare crisis and gender inequality are not issues particular to certain countries, but a universal right embodied by international institutions like the UN. The

UN's commitment to these issues provides legitimacy for asking the question addressed in this thesis, exploring the reasons why family friendly policies remain unsupported and unprovided even though the UN has identified them as an expected international standard. The SDGs demonstrates universal value in meeting these objectives and expands their agenda for improving the world beyond just developing countries, focusing on all countries and their people, regardless of a country's culture, level of development, or economic status (Sustainable Development Goals Fund, 2016).

The Hofstede 6-Dimensional Model of National Cultural

Culture is one of the strongest influences on human behavior, shaping values, beliefs, assumptions, expectations, and perceptions (Khalil, 2011). One of the most respected and comprehensive theories on national culture is that of Geert Hofstede conducted between 1967 and 1973. He covered over 70 countries, adding even more countries as he continued to gather data from respondents in following years. The research now serves as a foundation for understanding how countries make decisions, engage, and communicate around the world.

From this extensive research, Hofstede created the 6-dimensional model of national culture. This model represents independent preferences for one state of affairs over another that distinguish countries from each other (Hofstede Insights, n.d.), and scores each country on the six dimensions. The six dimensions are as follows:

- 1) Power Distance Index (PDI)
- 2) Individualism versus Collectivism (IDV)
- 3) Masculinity versus Femininity (MAS)
- 4) Uncertainty Avoidance Index (UAI)
- 5) Long Term Orientation versus Short Term Normative Orientation (LTO)

6) Indulgence versus Restraint (IVR)

This study will look at two of these dimensions, IDV and MAS. Individualism is “defined as a preference for a loosely-knit social framework in which individuals are expected to take care of only themselves and their immediate families” (Hofstede Insights, n.d.). An individualist society embraces personal rewards and benefits, sets personal goals and objectives, and prefer strong levels of autonomy. Collectivism “represents a preference for a tightly-knit framework in society in which individuals can expect their relatives or members of a particular ingroup to look after them in exchange for unquestioning loyalty” (Hofstede Insights, n.d.). A collectivist society is motivated by group goals, places high importance on long-term relationships, and can easily sacrifice or prefers to avoid individual praise and instead honor the team.

Masculinity “represents a preference in society for achievement, heroism, assertiveness, and material rewards for success. Society at large is more competitive” (Hofstede Insights, n.d.). A masculine society has clearly defined gender roles in which men are to be assertive, tough, and focused on material success, whereas women are to be modest, tender, and focused on quality of life. Masculine societies embrace traditional family structures, prioritize economic growth, and place a high importance on reputation and ego. Femininity “stands for a preference for cooperation, modesty, caring for the weak and quality of life. Society at large is more consensus-oriented” (Hofstede Insights, n.d.). A feminine society has more fluid gender roles in which both men and women are to be modest, tender, and focused on quality of life. Feminine societies embrace non-traditional family structures and gender roles, prioritize quality of life, and place a high importance on relationships.

Methodology

This study examines the relationship between cultural values and the existence of a federally mandated policy of paid leave to parents using a correlation analysis. The independent variables are the national cultural values of individualism and masculinity, and the dependent variables are the amount of paid leave provided to mothers and the amount of paid leave provided to fathers.

The data used for the independent variables in this study come from the Hofstede 6-Dimensional Model on National Culture. The score of each country in the areas of individualism and masculinity are used as the values for the independent variables. The data used for the dependent variables in this study come from the UNICEF study “Are the world’s richest countries family friendly?” which includes data collected from 41 countries in 2016 investigating indicators of national family-friendly policies. This study uses the data on paid leave available to mothers (weeks, full-rate equivalent) and paid leave reserved for fathers (weeks, full-rate equivalent).

The sample includes 40 countries, all of which are listed in the UNICEF study and the Hofstede 6-Dimensional Model scores. Although 41 countries are provided in the UNICEF study, Hofstede scores are only available for 40 of the countries, excluding Cyprus.

The type of correlation used in this study is a Pearson Correlation. This is used to measure the strength of a linear association between two quantitative variables, determined by the calculated correlation coefficient (r). The coefficient (r) determines whether there is a positive correlation, a negative correlation, or no correlation at all. The coefficient (r) ranges from -1 to +1. A coefficient (r) of -1 indicates a perfectly negative correlation, a coefficient (r) of +1 indicates a perfectly positive correlation, and a coefficient (r) of 0 indicates there is no

correlation at all. A positive correlation indicates that both variables increase or decrease together. A negative correlation indicates the opposite, as one variable increases the other decreases and vice versa. No correlation indicates that there is no linear relationship between the variables.

The coefficient (r) is used to calculate the p value (p), which is used to determine whether a significant statistic or relationship exists between the independent and dependent variables. If (p) is $<.05$, then there is a statistically significant relationship between the variables. If (p) is $>.05$, then there is no statistically significant relationship between the variables.

Research Findings

Hypotheses

Four hypotheses were tested in this study using a Pearson correlation. The hypotheses are listed below:

H1a: The higher level of individualism values, the lower the number of weeks of paid leave available to mothers.

H1b: The higher level of individualism values, the lower the number of weeks of paid leave reserved for fathers.

Understanding the national cultural value dimension of individualism, it is logical to hypothesize this relationship. As individualist countries prefer high levels of autonomy and supporting oneself and immediate family, it is rational to assume that countries with high levels of individualism would provide less support to parents in the form of paid leave.

H2a: The higher level of masculinity values, the lower the number of weeks of paid leave available to mothers.

H2b: The higher level of masculinity values, the lower the number of weeks of paid leave reserved for fathers.

Understanding the national cultural value dimension of masculinity, it is logical to hypothesize this relationship. As masculine countries have clearly defined traditional gender roles, in which the man is expected to work and prioritize material success and achievement and the woman is expected to care for the home and prioritize quality of life, it is rational to assume that countries with high levels of masculinity would provide less support to parents in the form of paid leave.

Results

H1a: Based on the findings of the research, statistical tests revealed no significant relationship between individualism and the number of weeks of paid leave available to mothers.

$$(r) = -0.20$$

$$(p) = 0.212$$

Therefore, H1a is rejected.

Figure 4 demonstrates these findings graphically.

Figure 5.

H1b: Based on the findings of the research, statistical tests revealed no significant relationship between individualism and the number of weeks of paid leave available to fathers.

$(r) = -0.24$

$(p) = .135$

Therefore, H1b is rejected.

Figure 5 demonstrates these findings graphically.

Figure 6.

H2a: Based on the findings of the research, statistical tests revealed no significant relationship between masculinity and the number of weeks of paid leave available to mothers.

(r) = -0.08

(p) = 0.609

Therefore, H2a is rejected.

Figure 6 demonstrates these findings graphically.

Figure 7.

H2b: Based on the findings of the research, statistical tests revealed no significant relationship between masculinity and the number of weeks of paid leave available to fathers.

(r) = -0.01

(p) = 0.962

Therefore, H2b is rejected.

Figure 7 demonstrates these findings graphically.

Figure 8.

Discussion, Limitations, and Suggestions for Future Research

Discussion

This research explored the relationship between the national cultural values of individualism and masculinity and the amount of paid leave provided to mothers and fathers across 40 different countries. The Pearson correlation test conducted on the four hypotheses revealed there is no statistically significant correlation between the independent and dependent variables. In other words, the correlation test shows that levels of individualism and masculinity does not influence the amount of paid leave provided to mothers and fathers in a correlative, consistent way across the 40 countries tested. Although the results of this study showed no significant results, there are a series of limitations that may explain factors that had an influence on the significance.

Limitations

A series of limitations exist in this study. The first is the sample size used in the correlation test. This study includes 40 countries, all of which had existing data on the amount of paid leave provided to mothers and fathers from UNICEF, as well as scores on individualism and masculinity from the Hofstede 6-Dimensional Model. If all 195 countries in the world were tested on these criteria, the study would have been more inclusive and potentially significant.

The second limitation is the Hofstede 6-Dimensional Model itself. Over the last several years there has been substantial criticism toward the model. The Hofstede model is too broad and generalized to truly describe the cultural preferences of the countries investigated, as it excludes regional and individual differences as well as differences in preferences of diverse sub-groups (Blodgett et al., 2008). Some argue that six dimensions is not enough to determine a comprehensive view of country's cultural preferences, and that much of the data used to inform the model is outdated (Caudron et al., 2017).

Lastly, the variables and data sets used in this study certainly had large impacts on the results. If there were more comprehensive data sets analyzing culture and providing comprehensive data on family friendly policies around the world, the results may have been significant.

Suggestions for Future Research

Looking forward to future research, although no significant relationship was determined among the variables in this study, there are several other variables worth investigating. Family friendly policies around the world is a highly complex phenomenon with many facets and potential influences. Three particularly interesting areas to research are the impacts economic

urgency, financial incentives, and women in power may have an impact on the presence of family friendly policies.

An example of a country that has adopted family friendly policies due to an economic crisis is Japan. Japan's prime minister Shinzo Abe created a program named "womenomics" to address the economic urgency Japan has been facing in the last few years. As Japan was nearing an urgent pivot of an aging population and work environment that discouraged women to have children, the Japanese leaders set aside many of their long-held traditional values toward women and began to create a "society where women can shine" (Larmer, 2018). Upon the adoption of "womenomics," estimates predicted more than 7 million employees would be added to the workforce and that Japan's GDP would increase by almost 13% (Larmer, 2018). The correlative logic behind the "womenomics" program is clear: with more working women comes more growth; a more inclusive economy expands the talent pool, creating a more skilled work force, and puts money in the hands of women; ultimately it allows women to not be forced to make the choice between remaining single to pursue a career or have a family and give up a career (Larmer, 2018). Apart from Japan, "womenomics" could provide incredible benefits to the entire world, creating up to \$12 trillion in economic growth by 2025 (Larmer, 2018). The most powerful aspect of this example is that regardless of Japan's traditionally strongly male-dominated culture, with economic urgency and a shift in the norms of working culture, a program was able to be put in place to support the economic future of the country, and additionally the wellbeing of the women and children that were provided new supportive policies.

Financial incentives may provide a powerful correlation in the level of family friendly policies provided. Many European countries, including France, Germany, Ireland, the

Netherlands, and Sweden, provide universal child benefits, or child allowances, which gives a basic income to families with children (Matthews, 2016). This supports families financially to encourage their citizens to have children without the worry of being unable to afford it. These allowances are non-discriminatory, offering them to families regardless of the parents work status, race, ethnic background, or socioeconomic status, and does not put any restrictions on the way in which the citizens decide to spend the money. Tax credits and incentives are also provided in many of these countries to employers who supply childcare supportive services (Parker, 2016). Investigating the relationship between the presence of family friendly policies and financial incentive programs set forth by national governments could reveal a potentially significant result.

The top two rated countries for family friendly policies are Norway and Sweden, both of which have large percentages of women in positions of power within the government. Women hold 46% of parliament and 50% of the government's cabinet in Sweden (Bohlen, 2019). In Norway, women hold 41.1% of parliament (Statista, n.d.). With such high percentages of women in power positions, compared to many other similarly developed countries, it would be illuminating to explore the significance of the relationship between the number of women in power and the presence of family friendly policies, especially considering that these women would theoretically be the ones developing these policies or federally mandating them through governmental power.

Conclusion

This study analyzed whether there was a significant relationship between individualism and masculinity and the presence of family friendly policies. By testing four different hypotheses, this study determined that there was no significant linear relationship between the

variables. Even so, the question this study addresses still remains. By looking into various variables in future research, such as economic factors, financial incentives, and the number of women in power, a correlative factor may be revealed. The childcare crisis remains an incredibly crucial issue around the world that must be addressed. By determining factors influencing the presence of family friendly policies, a foundational platform can be determined from which a solution can be developed.

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