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The Provision of Family-Friendly Work Practices in Lebanon: Challenges and Consequences for the Private Sector

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Summary

In light of growing concerns about the emergence of family-friendly work practices (FFWP) that create a better working environment for women to increase their labor force participation, there are still some countries far behind the adequate implementation of such policies. This paper provides a cost-benefit analysis of the provision of two central FFWP: parental leave and childcare entitlements in the Lebanese private sector. The argumentative framework presented in this paper focuses on the gender dimension of these policies and uses best practices from around the world to find an appropriate implementation scheme for such policies in Lebanon even in the absence of enforcing legislation. This paper acts as a guideline for policymakers to create more female-friendly workplaces, shown to have promising returns on multiple levels.

Keywords: Family-Friendly Work Practices Provision, Childcare, Parental Leave, Private Sector, Lebanon

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1. Introduction

The gender gap in the labor market is still one of the predominant contemporary issues despite the global increase in the participation of women and the efforts made to ensure their engagement in various labor market aspects. It is fair to say that the gender gap has been narrowed down significantly in developed countries over the past decade (Graf et al., 2018). However, the same achievement cannot be attributed to developing countries in general. Take the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, for instance; factors such as identity and traditions (Hayo and Caris, 2012), high fertility rates, and lack of education (Qudsi, 1998) are correlated with a decrease in female labor force participation. According to El Awady (2018), a significant factor pertaining to low female labor force participation in the MENA region is the lack of adequate family-friendly work practices/policies (FFWP for short). Specifically, the region suffers from fewer attempts to provide FFWP particularly in developing countries.

FFWP are generally defined as strategic business practices designed to alleviate the family-work conflict of working parents and employees with family responsibilities. As human resource management and policies, FFWP are typically concerned with improvements in the realm of childcare, work schedules, and parental leave policies (Albercht, 2003) and have important impacts on firm productivity (Bloom et al., 2011). The emergence of family-friendly work policies was largely correlated with the alterations in the demographic aspects of developed countries. Factors such as the increase in female employment called for the implementation of policies that can render working conditions and workplaces not only suitable for the presence and functioning of women but also capable of ensuring their retention (Strachan and Burgess, 1998). This has led to the introduction of maternity leave policies in Europe such as Sweden's 1955 maternity leave and Sweden's 1974 inclusion of paternity leave, in addition to the Employment Protection Act in the UK in the year 1975, among others.¹

In the MENA region, which has the lowest female employment rate worldwide,² there is

1. Looking into the history of some developed countries in addressing social issues, we notice that the introduction of FFWP contributed greatly to the confrontation of these prevailing issues. For instance, a policy brief published by UNICEF (2019) states that access to paid parental leave boosts wages and retention rates of mothers. In addition, the introduction of parental leave in developed countries has led to an increase in per capita growth as well as a decrease in the percentage of poverty among single mothers. (see <https://www.unicef.org/early-childhood-development/family-friendly-policies>).

2. See: <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2010/03/10/middle-east-and-north-africa-women-in-the-workforce>

a noticeable lack of workplace policies that support women.³ Clearly, there is a need for FFWP if the region seeks to increase women's labor force participation rates.⁴ Lebanon constitutes an interesting case in the MENA region. The country is characterized by having structural labor market problems, particularly for youth and women compared to other regional countries (Dibeh et al., 2019). According to Tutelian (2014), the ratio of men to women during the year 2012 in the labor market was approximately 3 to 1 even though in terms of education, Lebanese women attend university more than men. According to Yaacoub and Badre (2012), 53% of the total number of students in all universities were women and 47% were men. In this context, the provision of FFWP has important gender implications especially for working women in the private sector.

The purpose of this paper is therefore to examine the economic benefits of introducing progressive family-friendly work policies, particularly the provision of parental leave and childcare practices. We assess the costs and benefits of such labor policies that are of importance for different types of firms that indeed might not respond uniformly when it comes to labor regulations in the MENA region (Fakih and Ghazalian, 2015). This paper also seeks to draw on FFWP best practices in different countries, aiming to provide alternative options for policies and procedures that might be adopted by firms especially in the absence of FFWP labor law. Finally, the findings of this study will be of interest to policymakers seeking to reform the policies concerning the provision of parental leave and childcare in the private sector in Lebanon.

The paper is organized as follows. After examining the historical factors that forged the need for the application of FFWP in the introduction, we move to the Lebanese context in section 2 to focus on the existing setting, such as the structure of the labor market and the legislative background regarding the application of FFWP, in terms of the issues that hamper its effectiveness. In section 3, we move to analyze the economic benefits and costs associated with the adequate implementation of FFWP. Section 4 extends our discussion to the best practices applied worldwide concerning FFWP and the factors that have enhanced its efficacy in such countries. In section 5, we project lessons from these best practices on the Lebanese market in addition to the presentation and examination of the available alternatives in terms of the effectiveness and limitations of their application. We finally conclude with some remarks emphasizing the need for a prompt implementation of FFWP in the Lebanese private sector.

3. <https://www.oecd.org/mena/competitiveness/Brochure-WEEF-EN.pdf>

4. https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/documents/publication/wcms_563865.pdf



2. FFWP in Lebanon: Setting the Context

2.1. Recent Stylized Facts on Gender and Labor Market in Lebanon

In 2014, youth unemployment in Lebanon reached 37% with an expected upward trend, in addition to no more than 9,000 job opportunities being created yearly in a market where the minimum required is 35,000 for incoming youth and graduating students.⁵ Dibeh et al. (2016) stated that Lebanon requires the rate of jobs created to be six times as many as the present one to accommodate youth entering the market over the upcoming ten years. Moreover, the current economic and monetary crisis, coupled with the COVID-19 pandemic, left thousands unemployed throughout the country.

Diving into the gender issues facing female workers in Lebanon, Table 1 depicts gender-based participation in the Lebanese labor force using the recent Labour Force and Household Living Conditions Survey (LFHLCS) conducted by the Central Administration of Statistics (CAS) in conjunction with the International Labor Organization (ILO) during the years 2018 and 2019.⁶ The statistics indicate that only 18% of the sampled female Lebanese were employed. This is a much lower employment rate than that of the sampled male Lebanese which is 47%. Furthermore, this disparity in labor force participation is observed countrywide as well as at the individual governorate level, as shown in Table 1, highlighting the persistence of female exclusion in the workforce across the entire country. We also use the macroeconomic indicator of both female and male labor force participation rates and find similar patterns across the past three decades in the post-civil war era as is illustrated in Figure 1. It is worth noting that these massive disparities between men and women in terms of employment have been greater than 50% across all decades up until today.

Further analysis of the Lebanese female labor force conducted by the CAS in 2018 indicates a high concentration of Lebanese female workers in the younger age categories, as they found that women of ages 25 through 29 constitute around 18.4% of the total female labor force in Lebanon, while women in their early thirties (30-34) form an approximate 13.2%.⁷ These data reinforce the gender disproportionality observed in our analysis of gender-specific employment rates. Moreover, while a concentration of the Lebanese female labor force across younger age categories might be explained by recent increases in

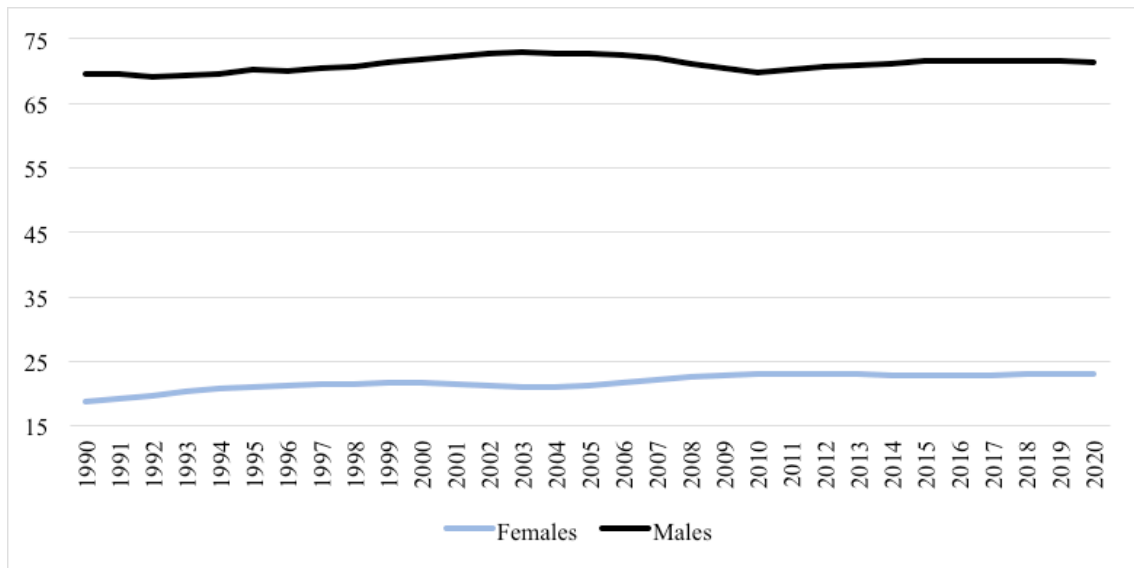
5. See <http://m.assafir.com/Article/1/336695>

6. <http://www.cas.gov.lb/index.php/component/content/article/79-english/221-labour-force-and-household-conditions-survey-lfhlc-2018-2019-microdata-files>

7. http://www.cas.gov.lb/images/Publications/LFHLCS2018-2019/LFHLCS_2018_2019_Labor%20force.xls

the Lebanese women’s educational attainment, the decline of female economic participation in older age categories can be attributed to marriage paired with the lack of adequate FFWP that cater to the well-being of working mothers, stripping them of the ability to balance their work-life and motherhood duties (Ahmad, 1997).

Figure 1: Labor Force Participation Rate for Males and Females in Lebanon (1990-2020)



Source: International Labor Organization, ILOSTAT database.

2.2 FFWP Legislation in Lebanon

This section sheds light on the legal context that governs FFWP in the Lebanese labor code. In an article published by ReliefWeb, the existing legislation and reforms concerning labor issues are described as trivial, having no noticeable effect on the issues that need to be addressed regarding the labor market.⁸

The Lebanese labor code does contribute, to a certain extent, to the mandatory implementation of some FFWP. For example, in terms of annual leave, which is a yearly vacation given to employees that vary across countries, Article 39 states that:

Full-time employees are entitled to 15 days paid vacation at the end of their first year of employment. Employees can accumulate two annual leaves. The employee should inform the employer when he wants to take his leave, but it is up to the employer to approve the request.

8. See <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/69776.pdf>



Also, regarding sick leave, Article 40 states that

After an employee has been employed for more than three months, he is entitled to a half-month sick leave on full pay. The entitlement changes according to the number of years in service. An employer has the right to request a doctor to examine an employee seeking extended medical leave. If the sick leave exceeds the entitlement, the employer may deduct the extra days from the employee's annual leave. When on leave, an employer is forbidden from issuing a warning or dismissal notice for the employee.

2.2.1 Laws Concerning Parental Leave

Despite the vital role of FFWP in shaping women's labor force participation, there are still around 830 million working women who do not have access to maternity benefits including maternity leave according to the ILO⁹. A significant percentage of working women in Lebanon can be included in this statistic. In fact, Saadé et al. (2010) mention that around 73% of female Lebanese workers are not satisfied with the duration of the maternity leave provided in the country. This is despite Lebanon's adherence to various international agreements that aim to provide security and protect the wellbeing of workers and their families, such as the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR),¹⁰ in addition to numerous ILO and Arab Labor Organization (ALO) agreements. For instance, by adhering to the ICESCR, Lebanon expresses its commitment to the articles and conventions proposed by the covenant, some of them stating the right for workers to benefit from family and security services provided in the workplace. However, some labor laws enforced by the Lebanese government are far from compatible with the aforementioned covenants, as much legislation remains unchanged even decades after Lebanon signed the international agreements.¹¹

Moreover, although Lebanon is not blind towards labor wellbeing, as Lebanese law has witnessed the ratification of 50 ILO conventions,¹² these conventions do not entail maternity protection in the country because Lebanon did not approve the Maternity Protec-

9. https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/documents/publication/wcms_242617.pdf

10. For more information about ICESCR, check <https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/cescr.aspx>

11. See: <https://www.lp.gov.lb/Resources/Files/79a46d0d-398c-4fe9-ba09-5f8be545183c.pdf>

12. See: https://www.ilo.org/beirut/countries/lebanon/WCMS_526989/lang--en/index.htm#:~:text=Lebanon%20has%20ratified%2050%20ILO,opportunity%20and%20treatment%20at%20work.

tion Convention.¹³ For example, the law does not uphold the international standard of maternity leave policies, granting only up to 10 weeks of paid leave, falling four weeks short of the minimum maternity leave duration recommended by the ILO. It also does not mandate the provision of break time for mothers during the nursing stage (Yassin et al., 2016). Moreover, even the aforementioned 10-week leave provision was not mandated until 2014, with the leave only covering mothers as there is no mandated paternity leave. While some organizations do offer new fathers up to three days, many others offer no paternity leave at all; both fall significantly short compared to the recommended minimum. Additionally, these policies do not extend to the private sector meaning that the private sector has the freedom of not abiding by the recommended practices.¹⁴ Indeed, the private sector has long exploited this flexibility in the law regarding FFWP, choosing not to provide the recommended parental leave time as there are no repercussions. For example, it was not until 2019 that the private firms in Lebanon, Zomato and Diageo (Table 2), implemented a six months parental leave policy for their workers.¹⁵

2.2.2 FFWP in the Lebanese Private Sector

Aiming to examine the factors perpetuating the neglect of family-friendly work practices in Lebanon in both the formal and informal sectors, we use the Employer-Employee Survey (2011) conducted by the World Bank.¹⁶ This survey covers a random and representative sample of workers and firms operating in the private sector. From this dataset, we sought to capture Lebanese employer sentiment regarding issues facing women in the Lebanese workforce, as employers play a significant role in setting the nature of the environment in which female workers function (Glass and Fujimoto, 1995). The analyzed questionnaire surveyed employers on their perception of the significance of three factors affecting women in the labor market. Moreover, each employer was asked to rank “Requirement to pay for maternity leave benefits”, “Regulations not permitting women to work”, and “Religion/culture restricts hiring of women in this field” on a 5-point scale

13. See: https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=1000:11200:0::NO:11200:P11200_COUNTRY_ID:103147

14. See <https://www.business-humanrights.org/en/latest-news/lebanon-companies-boost-equality-in-the-workplace/#:~:text=Lebanese%20law%20currently%20allows%20women,of%20the%20recommended%20six%20months.&text=Similarly%2C%20Zomato%20also%20now%20offers,to%20both%20men%20and%20women>

15. <https://www.the961.com/another-company-is-now-offering-paid-parental-leave-in-lebanon/>

16. <http://www.databank.com.lb/docs/WorldBank-Good%20Jobs%20March%202013.pdf>



of “not important”, “somewhat important”, “important”, “very important”, and “not applicable”.

The results of the analysis showcased in Table 3 provide discouraging indications about the views of Lebanese employers regarding women and work. While implementation of favorable parental leave policies is highly correlated with a decrease in the gender pay gap as well as the decision of pregnant women to remain in paid work, around 23% of employers viewed requirements to pay for maternity leave benefits as not important. According to El Awady (2018), recognizing the need for these policies can contribute to greater participation of women in the labor market, which is something that Lebanon desperately needs. Similarly, approximately 24% of employers were ignorant of regulations that prevent women from engaging in the workforce. These findings are unmistakable indicators not only of the lack of employer awareness of the significance of family-friendly work practices in enhancing a working mother’s quality of life but also of the reasons behind the lack of such practices.

Table 4 presents the distribution of men and women in the Lebanese labor market in terms of their access to annual paid leave. Among the 29,994 workers consisting of 70.63% men and 29.37% women, the chance to have access to annual leave among female Lebanese workers is approximately half that of men (17.7% and 33.59% respectively). Other than the evident access difference between men and women, the total percentage of workers who actually have access to paid leave in Lebanon (51.29%) is much lower compared to other countries. For example, in the US, 66% of the salary-earning workers have access to annual leave, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics.¹⁷ Additionally, this low percentage (51.29%) prevails despite Article 39 in the labor code, which stipulates that every wage earner with one year of employment at any establishment is entitled to an annual leave amounting to fifteen days with full pay.¹⁸ However, many women and men with informal and/or part-time contracts are not authorized to take annual leave, meaning that any leave they take is at their own expense (ILO, 2014). This is noteworthy as approximately half of the workers in the Lebanese market were part of the informal sector, a sector in which working conditions are flexible and the employer usually possesses the bargaining power.¹⁹ Thus, a high percentage of workers in Lebanon have no access to a paid annual leave and

17. See: <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/leave.pdf>

18. <https://www.ilo.org/dyn/travail/docs/710/Labour%20Code%20of%2023%20September%201946%20as%20amended.Publication%202010.pdf>

19. <https://documents.worldbank.org/en/publication/documents-reports/documentdetail/414941609870680577/concept-stage-program-information-document-pid-senegal-jobs-economic-transformation-recovery-project-p174757>

the effectiveness and availability of the already existing laws regulating FFWP remain low.

We now move to construct an analysis examining the percentage of workers – men and women – that have access to different types of leave in their workplaces. The findings of the analysis, summarized in Table 5, show that while a promising 77% and 83% of surveyed workers have access to sick leave and official leave respectively, around 31% of the studied sample of workers noted that they did not have annual leave in the current jobs. The results also indicate that around 47% of surveyed employees do have access to parental leave, while another 36% are denied access to childcare services. These two aforementioned components of FFWP that constitute the focus of this paper, appear to be the least provided among the practices displayed in the table, further indicating the pressing need for policy adjustments in the Lebanese market.

In our aim to tackle the provision of childcare and parental leave as FFWP in Lebanon, it is important to illustrate the current context regarding these policies from both the employer and employee perspective. Accordingly, in terms of the employer profile, Table 6 displays the percentage of firms offering childcare and parental leave to their full-time and part-time workers. In both cases, and across both types of FFWP, less than two-thirds of the employers offer these benefits to their employees. Also, less than half of part-time workers seem to have access to the aforementioned policies.²⁰

Finally, in terms of employee profile, Tables 7 and 8 show the disparities in access to childcare across different age groups and salaries, respectively. It is evident in Table 7 that less than two-thirds of almost all age categories, except for the 30 to 34 age bracket, have access to both childcare and parental leave. It is also noticeable in Table 8 when looking at wage brackets that earn below one million LBP, that less than half of workers in almost every category have access to childcare and parental leave and that less than 60 percent of all of the workers in all of these categories get access to these policies. Workers in the wage brackets that earn above one million LBP clearly have better access to these benefits: more than 60 percent of workers in all categories have access.

3. Economic Insights on FFWP

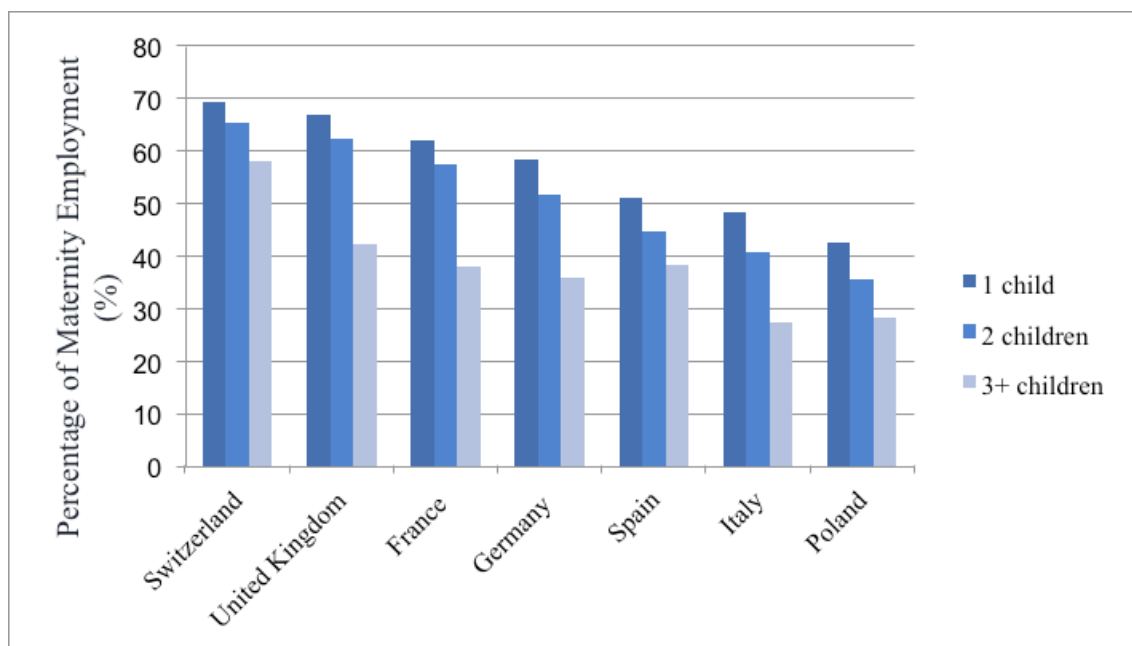
Family-friendly work practices are more frequently accessible in developed countries

20. Employer – Employee Survey for the Formal and Informal Sectors in Lebanon - The Consultation and Research Institute.



than in developing countries. There is a visible divergence in women’s participation rates when it comes to paid work among developed and developing countries. In developed countries, there is an upward trend in women’s labor force participation due to demographic changes and advancements in education and aspirations (OECD, 2011). In this regard, the provision of FFWP in both developed and developing countries reflect substantial importance on various levels. For instance, in developed nations, such practices are vital to retain women in the labor market and to reduce costly turnover and absenteeism rates (Dalton and Mesch, 1990). While women’s labor force participation rates have increased overall in developed countries, women with children still participate in paid work at lower numbers, despite increased prevalence of FFWP. Looking into Figure 2, which reflects maternity employment rates in some European countries during 2005, we can observe a declining pattern among working mothers as the number of children increases. This reveals that with every additional child, women tend to drop out from their occupations to allocate more time and effort for childcare and family responsibilities. Thus, having tailored childcare and parental leave policies should provide greater space for women to engage in paid labor activities. In fact, FFWP are effective in developing countries to help women and working mothers in balancing work-life duties and devoting more effort to increase their labor force participation which contributes to shrinking the gender gap (Baughman *et al.*, 2003; O’Brien, 2014).

Figure 2: Maternity Employment by the Number of Children Under 15 years old (2005)



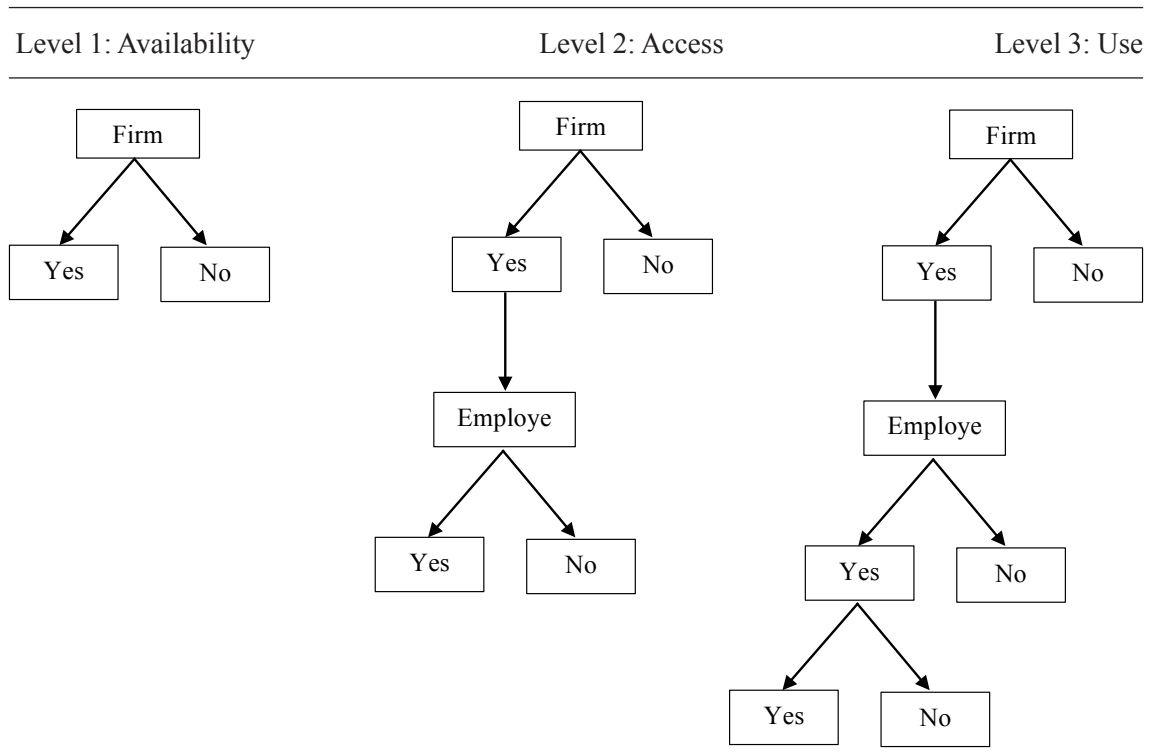
Source: Author’s calculations using the UK Office of National Statistics (2005 data), European Labour Force Survey (2005 data, except for Italy which concerns, 2003).

When assessing employers' incentives for implementing FFWP, Ireson et al. (2018) found that increasing the number of working women, including mothers, along with retaining female staff matter for the provision of FFWP. They found that the implementation of FFWP helps to improve the number of female clienteles, increase investment in employees, and achieve social responsibility. Also, this supports the idea that the greater the investment in work-life policies of an organization, the stronger the signal of corporate concern for gender equality (Van der Lippe et al., 2019).

When it comes to organizations in the private sector, it is important to differentiate between the availability, accessibility, and actual use of FFWP. While firms may or may not provide FFWP (e.g., Whitehouse and Zetlin, 1999; Gray and Tudball, 2003), when FFWP is offered, employees may or may not benefit from them. In addition, employees who do have access to FFWP either may or may not decide to use them or are not always informed of the accessibility of FFWP, as illustrated in Figure 3. In this matter, unions may play a vital role in spreading or implementing family-friendly practices such as parental leave and annual leave to narrow work-family conflicts in both public and private sectors (Dex and Smith, 2002). This can be achieved through spreading information and giving explanations to workers who have access to FFWP to expand its effective usage (Budd and Mumford, 2004). However, unions may not always play a positive role in spreading the previously mentioned practices. However, Budd and Mumford (2004) argue that sometimes, unions have been negatively associated with the availability of work-at-home arrangements and flexible working hours options.



Figure 3: Relationship between Availability, Access, and Usage of Family-Friendly Practices



Source: Author's illustration based on information from Budd and Brey (2003); Fakh (2014).

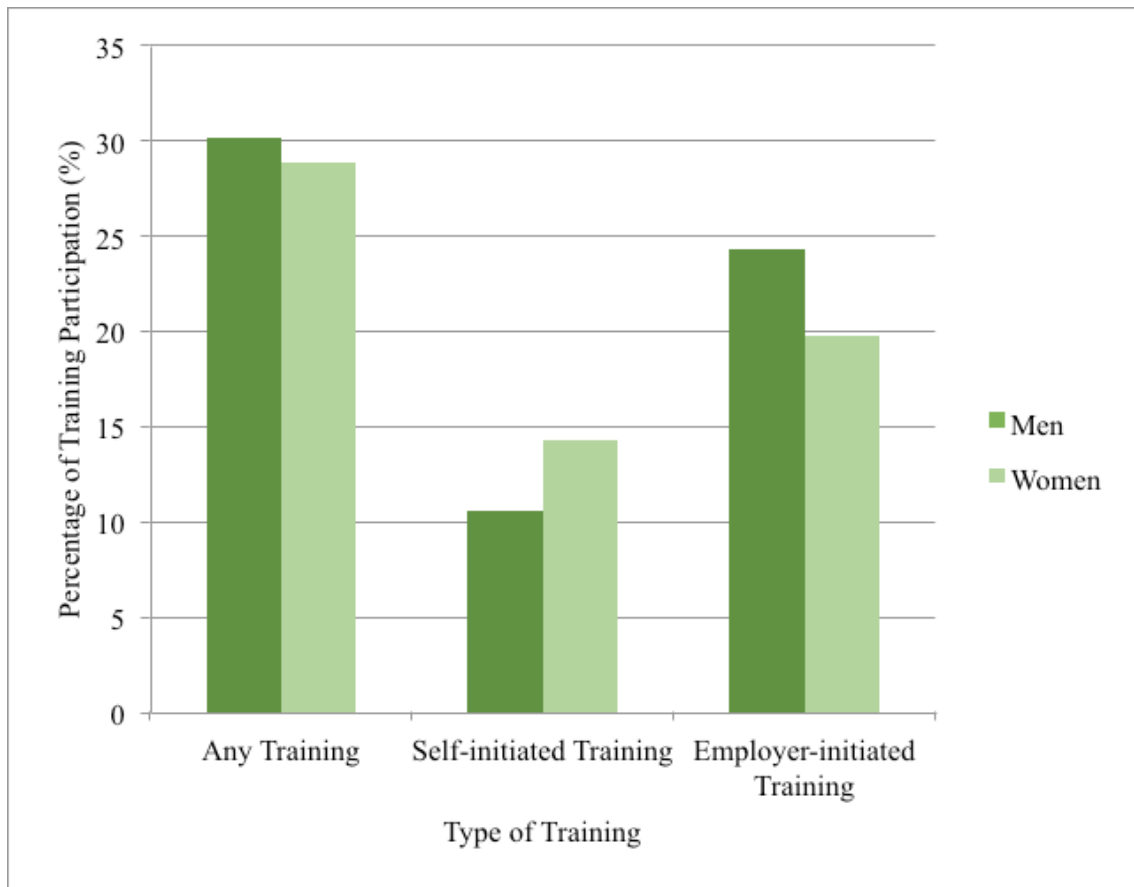
From an employer perspective, there exist several reasons that push firms to adopt FFWP. In the United States, Matos *et al.* (2017) examine the main drivers behind adopting these practices using the National Survey of Employers 2016 data²¹. They find that 39% of employers reported their willingness to implement workplace flexibility and provide caregiving leaves to retain talent, while 15% were concerned with lower turnover rates, and 9% wanted to increase productivity. In addition, 28% of them reported that the incurred costs of these policies were the major obstacle to their implementation. From an employee perspective, Fakh (2014) finds an association between human capital factors and the provision of FFWP. He shows that the greater the education gap between employees, the more an employee with higher education is expected to demand FFWP. Employees mainly demand the provision of family-friendly practices due to their impact on improving work-life balance through decreasing the stress from work/family conflicts and the time devoted to household activities (Salzstein *et al.*, 2001; Baughman *et al.*, 2003), thus leading to a significant reduction in the overall gender wage gap (Solberg and Laughlin, 1995).

21. The National Survey of Employers is conducted by the Families and Work Institute's seminal 1998 Business Work-Life Study (BWLS) and has been performed five additional times since the BWLS survey was completed (2005, 2008, 2012, 2014, and 2016), allowing comparisons over time.

Yet, other scholars have found that FFWP may induce a larger gender wage gap. Groenlund and Magnusson (2016) argue that family-friendly practices may reinforce gender segregation and discrimination in some workplaces due to the trade-offs women are obliged to face upon choosing between work-family balance on the one side and their career or wages on the other. For instance, when employers provide on-the-job training, they offer them based on long-term employment relations; since women's careers may be interrupted due to maternity and childcare conditions, employers sometimes express a lower willingness to train them. When Burgard (2012) conducted a study on 11,000 households in Germany to check if there is a gender difference in training participation, he found out that indeed women receive less training than men. Figure 4 shows that the percentage of women who participated in self-initiated training (14.3 percent) is higher than that for men (10.6 percent); however, when it comes to employer-initiated training, the case is quite the opposite. Men participated in employer-initiated training more than women did, where the participation rate for men was 23.4 percent while that for women was 19.8 percent. One plausible explanation for this disparity is attributed to the fact that married men spend more time on the job market while women (married and single) dedicate more time to housework and childcare based on a time-use analysis. Hence, since participation in such training is considered to be an important element in attaining high-skilled jobs and positions, these gender differences are more likely to induce a larger wage gap among highly skilled men and women. This leaves women in a condition where they might sacrifice parental leave, childcare benefits, or other flexibility policies in order not to miss career-based opportunities that would make them seem less productive in the labor market (Groenlund and Magnusson, 2016; Winder, 2009).



Figure 4: Gender Difference in Training Participation Rates



Source: Author’s calculations using data and results from “Gender Differences in Further Training Participation—The Role of Individuals, Households, and Firms” by Burgard (2012).

From a gender perspective, the existing evidence shows that the provision of parental leave and childcare policies have short and long-run effects on female labor force participation (Baker et al., 2008; Lefebvre and Merrigan, 2008; Lefebvre et al., 2009). As for the aforementioned gender gap controversy, it is crucial to have further insights about the best practices for FFWP adopted around the world and their corresponding costs and benefits with a keen focus on parental leave and childcare arrangements. This will allow us to better assess the provision of such policies and evaluate their implications on different aspects related to employees and employers.

In the next section, we cover the best practices that are applied in various countries, in terms of their costs, benefits, and method of application. We investigate countries that were pioneers in the application of these policies to capture the evolution of FFWP in a prolonged timeframe and to get a clear projection on their potential effects in the Lebanese context. Moreover, we discuss these policies in less developed countries to have

insight into the appropriate implementation of FFWP in the developing world overall, which provides lessons learned to be considered in the Lebanese analysis.

4. FFWP Best Practices

When examining the costs and benefits of best practices concerning FFWP, it is important to focus on the outcomes for not only the employees and the beneficiaries from these policies, but also for the employers providing such practices. Additionally, when discussing the characteristics of parental leave and childcare, one cannot ignore the explicit costs that should be taken into account, in terms of the spillovers affecting parents when these policies are not available (Glynn and Corley, 2016). One should also take into account the implicit costs associated with the reduction in wages earned when the FFWP are available compared to jobs that do not offer these practices, implying that workers do pay for these benefits (Heywood et al., 2007).

Case of the United Kingdom

The UK was one of the early countries to apply and extend maternity leave and childcare-related policies. The country applies a statutory parental leave policy, meaning that the worker is entitled to the benefits accrued from the policy under the protection of legislative authorities. The law mandates 52 weeks of maternity leave²² and one to two weeks of paternity leave.²³ Concerning the payment during maternity leave, women receive compensation for 39 weeks, while the remaining 13 are not paid. In addition, it is only mandatory for women to take two weeks off but not the whole 52 weeks; however, the employer must offer the aforementioned duration.²⁴ Additionally, the policy offers women the option of transferring up to 50 weeks of the provided leave to the father, providing some flexibility in extending the benefits to both parents, which can be divided based on the need of the family. It should be noted that the provision of these practices and the benefits accrued by the employee are not completely at the expense of the employers. Employers are indirectly reimbursed for 92% of the total cost if they are large firms, and 103% (surplus) if they are small firms via a tax reduction scheme.²⁵ In this

22. For more information, see: <https://www.gov.uk/maternity-pay-leave/print>

23. For more information, see: <https://www.gov.uk/employers-paternity-pay-leave/print>

24. For more information, see: https://www.cipd.co.uk/Images/labour-market-outlook-focus-on-working-parents_tcm18-17048.pdf

25. https://www.leavenetwork.org/fileadmin/user_upload/k_leavenetwork/country_notes/2018/FINAL.UK2018.pdf



way, employers are more encouraged to provide these entitlements since they are partially reimbursed if they are large firms and fully reimbursed with some additional benefits if they are small-sized firms.²⁶

Although one could argue that, at the end of the day, someone is paying the expenses resulting from the provision of these benefits – and that statement is true – some outcomes associated with the existence of these policies act as offsetting factors to the price paid. For instance, Stearns (2018) notes that other than the direct effect of these practices on family welfare, the provision of parental leave boosts the retention rate of female employees, post-childbirth as well as significantly increases the employment of mothers. The provision of maternity leave has also been found to be linked with better mental health in the long term (Avendano *et al.*, 2015).

In terms of childcare policies in the UK, the provision of free universal childcare to kids between 3 and 4 years of age in 2017 was doubled from 15 to 30 hours weekly for 38 weeks. Additionally, the contribution of employers and the government to the reduction in childcare expenses is reflected in employer-provided weekly childcare vouchers and a tax-free childcare policy funded by the government.²⁷ Similar to parental leave, many factors contribute to offsetting the costs and expenses associated with childcare services. Other than the educational impact on children, which is alone a significant aspect to consider, the provision of these benefits contributes to narrowing the gap between men and women in terms of employment (De Henau, 2015).

Case of Australia

Evidence from an Australian financial services firm (AMP) suggests that work and family programs had a significant influence on the return to job rate after maternity leave; just 52 percent of workers returned after maternity leave in 1992, however, 90 percent returned in 1997, after the implementation of more extensive FFWP (Hein, 2005). To retain its employees, the organization has implemented a comprehensive program that includes paid parental leave for six weeks, flexible work schedules, personal emergency leave, and an employee keep-in-touch program during parental leave. More importantly, major efforts have been made to ensure that workers are aware of such policies and that firms encourage their employees to use the available FFWP (Hein, 2005).

Generally, the Fair Work Act 2009 in Australia provides each working parent meeting

26. Medium and large enterprises can claim back 92 per cent from the Exchequer and small enterprises can claim back 103 per cent.

27. https://www.cipd.co.uk/Images/labour-market-outlook-focus-on-working-parents_tcm18-17048.pdf

the eligibility requirements with an entitlement to 12 months of unpaid parental leave with job protection. However, this entitlement cannot be taken simultaneously by both parents.²⁸ As for paid parental leave, the Paid Parental Leave Act 2010 offers 18 weeks of Parental Leave Pay, but this duration concerns payment only and does not extend leave duration; in other words, the worker receives entitlements equal to the minimum wage along the 18 weeks and can extend the parental leave period up to 12 weeks, but the additional 12 weeks are not paid. Parental Leave Pay is charged at a rate based on the national minimum wage to qualifying mothers. The payment is financed from general government taxes, with most mothers (or nominated primary caregivers) receiving it from their employer and others receiving it directly from the government.²⁹ Prior to the government extension of FFWP, many workers already had access to employer-provided paid leave. For instance, The Australian Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA), which tracks the provision of ‘Primary Carer’ and ‘Secondary Carer’ paid parental leave by private sector entities of 100 or more workers, recorded that in 2019, 49.4 percent of these organizations supported women and men with paid primary carer’s leave for an average period of 10.6 weeks. However, 82.3 percent (the majority) offered a full pay scheme in addition to the governmentscheme.³⁰

Case of Iceland

Iceland has one of the best parental leave privileges so far among developed countries in terms of time and economic recompense (Einarsdóttir and Pétursdóttir, 2007). In 2000, the Icelandic government launched a program for a total of nine months paid after birth leave to be taken in the first 18 months and divided the period into three parts: Three months for each of the parents and three additional months which could be transferred between parents as they choose as well as 13 weeks of unpaid leave each year for each parent (O’Brien and Moss, 2010). This parental leave model has improved fathers’ participation in childrearing in a short period. By 2006, over 90 percent of Icelandic fathers were taking parental leave (O’Brien and Moss, 2010). Gíslason (2007) notes that “probably, there have never been more Icelandic fathers active in caring for their children than there are today”.

This aligns with previous literature where research has shown that fathers who use their

28. See <http://abs.gov.au>

29. https://www.dss.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/10_2019/d19-1139120-dss-annual-report-2018-19.pdf

30. See Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA), Data Explorer. Available at: http://data.wgea.gov.au/industries/1#carers_content



paternity leave seem to be more involved in family responsibilities, and work fewer hours to be engaged in child care and household work (Haas and Hwang, 1999). In addition, Huttunen (1996) finds that parents developed a closer relationship with their children. Brandth and Kvande (2002) established that both parents taking parental leave at the same time is key to more equitably arranging family duties and responsibilities. Greater engagement of fathers in early child rearing contribute to a higher level of women's labor participation.

Case of India

The private sector in India has its way to deal with the provision of FFWP. Firms offer flexible working hours, like the company Sapient India which gives Indian mothers the option to work less during the day, allowing them to concentrate on their families. Moreover, IBM India gives its employees the freedom to choose between four programs. The first one is a compressed workweek, in which employees will work intensively to finish their work in less than five working days a week. Their second option is to individualize their work schedule; in other words, they can organize their time as long as they finish the work. Moreover, they can choose to work on a part-time reduced schedule. Finally, workers at IBM India have the option to work from home (Caparas, 2013).

Case of Japan

Little research has been done on FFWP in the Japanese context, reflecting the country's low gender equality scores relative to other industrialized nations, (OECD, 2001a). Still, analyzing FFWP in Japan is important.

Following the lowest fertility rate in the country's history in 1989, the government of Japan launched a sequence of FFWP in the 1990s to encourage couples to have more children. Initially, the government sought to lengthen parental leave and enhance the public system of daycare. Then, in 1992, a new childcare leave act entitled women to a maternity leave of 14 weeks with a minimum of 60 percent rate of wage replacement. The act further encouraged the provision of an additional parental leave of 1 year with a 40 percent wage replacement rate by employers. Later revisions of these policies obligated employers to provide parental leave until the child is 18 months old in the case of public childcare unavailability. Additionally, these later revisions required that firms offer one of the following options up until the child is three years of age: flextime, a guarantee of no additional working hours, reduced working hours, flexible work schedules, or in-work childcare services. Currently, discriminatory actions against employees on leave are prohibited by the government (Briton and Mun, 2016). Additionally, a subsidy amounting to

8,500 U.S dollars is offered to firms as an incentive to provide childcare leave and give employees the chance to refuse working additional hours (Boling and Rosenbluth, 2007). By doing so, the Japanese government reduces employer liability, providing a greater incentive to provide parental leaves and childcare benefits. Responding to the efforts of the Japanese government, by 2007, around 60 percent of firms in Japan had implemented a childcare leave system (Atsumi, 2007). This percentage is significantly higher in firms with a minimum of 1000 workers (Takeishi, 2007).

However, according to Lee and Lee (2014), the increasing female participation rate in the Japanese labor force, paired with the inability of childcare facilities to accommodate all children of employed mothers, has resulted in the wait-listed children dilemma. Moreover, the inability of existing childcare centers to alleviate the family-work conflict of working mothers continues to discourage women from bearing children (Lee and Lee, 2014). In fact, despite the last two decades of FFWP promotion in Japan, approximately 60 percent of women still leave their jobs after giving birth (National Institute of Population and Social Security Research, 2012; Yashiro, 2011).

Nowadays, the issue remains that most FFWP in Japan are available strictly to full-time employees (Brinton and Mun, 2016). Additionally, women are disproportionately excluded from utilizing such benefits, as companies continue to favor hiring employees that prioritize work duties over family responsibilities, which due to traditional gendered expectations in Japanese society, leads to a higher male employee retention compared to females (Brinton and Mun, 2016).

Case of Jordan

At the regional level, Jordanian women working in the private sector often leave the labor market after marriage in higher frequencies than those working in the public sector (Abdo, 2019). Increasing the attractiveness of the private sector to women cannot be accomplished by reducing job standards and benefits in the public sector, but by ensuring that fair working conditions and security in the private sector are in line with public employment (Assaad and Krafft, 2016).

The development of labor law in Jordan was associated with economic expansion in the 1990s, and includes policies related to the minimum wage, childcare benefits, parental leave, and other practices for working women. The legislation indicates that an employer with at least 20 married female workers must have an appropriate place for the children of employees whose age is below four years. A survey of small organizations studied this policy and found that many employers were employing a maximum of 19 women



to avoid the obligation (Metcalf, 2007). When it comes to large organizations, workers enjoy paid maternity leave for ten weeks. After women return to work, they are granted a paid hour leave for breastfeeding purposes for one year and a year-long unpaid leave with the right to return to work (Abubaker and Bagley, 2016).

In 2007, the ILO proposed a new scheme to combat the discriminatory impact of employers on paid maternity leave because it creates a perception that women cost more than men. Although several countries' labor laws initially required employers to provide paid maternity leave, the ILO member states have made significant progress in providing working women with maternity cash benefits funded by social security contributions or public revenue from taxes or both. This scheme serves as a substitute for the problematic employer liability scheme that predominates in developing countries where employers often refuse to meet their full obligations and the law is not enforced. Moreover, the latter scheme does not place any further pressure on small enterprises that already struggle to survive even without FFWP costs. Instead, the provision of maternity cash benefits protects the employment of women, allows them time for childcare, provides a healthy recovery period after pregnancy, and ensures financial stability of the employer and the employee. At the time of ILO's new proposal, 43 ILO member countries applied the employer liability scheme while 26 countries adopted a mixed scheme (ILO, 2009).

Lessons learned

To sum up the major takeaways from the best practices, we can infer from previously implemented practices that every effort invested in providing parental leaves and childcare policies will pay for itself in the form of higher employee retention levels and narrower gender gaps when it comes to employment and wages. It is quite evident that the provision of such policies is less costly for firms in developed countries where the government covers almost all of the expenses as in the UK, Australia, Iceland, and Japan. However, hybrid schemes between governments and employers can be implemented in developing countries as in Jordan to share the liability between both parties and encourage more firms to start including FFWP in their internal bylaws. This section also points out the positive impact that flexible FFWP have on gender equality where evidence from Iceland indicates that fathers are now engaging more in childcare and family care responsibilities with the support of flexible work policies. We will further elaborate on the notion of flexibility and the attention it recently received in the next section. First, we will try to project lessons from these best practices onto the Lebanese market in addition to the presentation and examination of the available alternatives in terms of the effectiveness and limitation of their application.

5. Analysis of Best Practices within the Lebanese Context

After reviewing some of the best practices implemented around the world for the provision of FFWP, we notice that establishing an inclusive scheme that takes into account the concerns of both employers and employees needs government intervention. Whether through tax subsidies and exemptions, social security funds, direct financing, or even through the enforcement of parental leave and childcare legislation, the outcome is best when governments and legal bodies take prudent responsibility in providing a friendlier work environment for women.

It can also be inferred from previous evidence that firm size is a central characteristic in determining the provision of FFWP and their quality where the percentage of workers having access to childcare and parental leave is significantly higher in large firms (Takeishi, 2007; Metcalfe, 2007; Abubaker and Bagley, 2016). If we want to reflect this onto the Lebanese context, we would notice that around 95% of the firms in Lebanon are small to medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), which already suffer from barriers and constraints that threaten their sustainability (Matta, 2018). Hence, the projection of the best practices around the world on the Lebanese private sector must be evaluated critically.

If a tax reduction scheme were applied to Lebanese firms upon introducing parental leave for workers as in the United Kingdom, the costs incurred would be offset by tax subsidies and at the same time, the government wouldn't bear all the liability for supporting such practices through direct financing. Such mixed schemes between governments and employers would make the burden of introducing parental and childcare entitlements less severe for both parties. Lebanese firms would end up enjoying the underlying benefits ranging from female workers' retention, lower turnover rates, and higher performance levels (Dalton and Mesch, 1990). A strategy report was conducted by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in 2014 to guide Lebanese SMEs towards long-term sustainability and future growth prospects that will help them cross major hurdles. One of these strategies is to establish a women-friendly business environment in which SMEs enhance supporting policies and incentives along with specialized training to increase female labor force participation, especially in leadership positions.

We have seen earlier in Table 4 that 29.17 percent of employees do not have access to maternity leave and 35.17 percent do not have access to childcare services. However, what is staggering is the percentage of employers who find that granting employees maternity leave is not important (23.08 percent). This highlights the minimal awareness of Lebanese employers about the significance of FFWP and the necessity to provide them. This issue



may be addressed through the establishment of unions where previous findings suggest that women represented by unions in the U.S. are 17 percent more likely to take maternity leave than women who are not represented by a union. Another major role of unions is that they have an important impact on whether women exploit the advantages accessible to them or not (Timm, 2018). For a working woman to take her maternity leave, she must know that the leave exists; also, she must be sure that she has access to that leave and be guaranteed that she will not lose any bonuses or promotions in the long term. Hence, with increased advocacy in the presence of unions, more female workers will have the chance to not only access maternity leaves and childcare entitlements but also exploit them properly. On the one hand, this creates an external pressure on employers to start providing such policies, and on the other hand, employers will gain more awareness about the importance of FFWP not only to their workers but also to the organization. `

Flexibility and COVID-19 Pandemic

Another important aspect to be taken into consideration when implementing/improving FFWP in the Lebanese private sector is the flexibility in providing parental leave and childcare policies. This is especially important in current times, as according to Zamao *et al.* (2021), the COVID-19 pandemic shut down most schools and facilities for child care, leaving working parents at a disadvantage regarding increased work-family conflict. These negative effects were heightened by the decrease in grandparent-provided childcare due to enforced social distancing measures implemented globally (Del Boca *et al.*, 2020).

Additionally, as we have mentioned before, there is a wide disparity when it comes to employment rates among men and women in Lebanon, amounting to more than 50%. Hence, the Icelandic scheme provides greater support to working women when responsibilities are shared among both spouses. Firms and governments play a major role in this matter by providing flexibility in terms of usage of parental leave, giving the choice for parents to allocate their parental leave and childcare entitlements accordingly (O'Brien and Moss, 2010). By allocating leave for both mothers and fathers, on-the-job discrimination against women due to their dedication to family responsibilities should be lessened. Such a policy would mitigate the embedded costs for work-life balance practices on the wider gender wage gap driven by lower training opportunities for women and their refusal to have long term employment commitments due to motherhood obligations (Groenlund and Magnusson, 2016).

Another key application of flexibility would entail giving female workers the choice to

work from home, which gained vast consideration recently amid the COVID-19 pandemic. Many organizational benefits of work from home serve as incentives for the persistence of the trend post the pandemic, including, reduced rental costs, decreased spending on office supplies, and the ability to operate in emergency settings. Similarly, flexible work settings are classified as modifications to job-related factors, including time, location, work duties, benefits, and monetary compensations (McCarthy et al., 2010; Ryan and Kossek, 2008). After the COVID-19 pandemic induced transition to remote work, employers realized the immense organizational advantages of flexible work arrangements, such as increased organizational attractiveness to potential employees (Casper and Bufardi, 2004), enhanced employee productivity and job satisfaction (Beauregard and Henry, 2009), and increased employee retention (Halpern, 2005). Additionally, the current employer-employee labor market coordination in bearing the cost of the digital transition, paired with the increasing prices of urban housing have paved the way for a shift towards more flexible work arrangements post-pandemic (Gupta, 2020).

Moreover, workers are likely to prefer flexible work arrangements even beyond the pandemic after being exposed to remote work upon the outbreak of COVID-19. This is due to the enhanced work-family balance and time efficiency experienced by workers in work from home settings (Boland et al., 2020). Accordingly, it is essential to understand the significance of flexible work arrangements in improving working conditions, especially for women. According to Scandura *et al.* (1997), women employed at firms providing flexible working hours exhibited higher job satisfaction compared to those working under non-flexible work arrangements. In Lebanon, barriers hindering wide-scale improvements in working conditions are more cultural than legislative, as employers often fail to recognize the need for an employee-centered working environment where worker concerns are taken into serious consideration. Accordingly, Lebanese employers must adopt a humane view that recognizes the necessity of work arrangements that facilitate the employee's work-life balance (Hejase et al., 2013). INDEVCO serves as a leading example in flexible work arrangements in the Lebanese market, as the company offers flex-work schedules in addition to internal breastfeeding rooms for nursing mothers, resulting in a high retention rate of female employees in 2020.

However, while many Lebanese firms are not internally equipped to offer such progressive work arrangements, various flexible-working options exist for employers to select from, according to what best suits their organization, such as remote working arrangements, flex-working hours, and approaches that leverage adequate task completion over the number of working hours. Additionally, to combat management concerns over the



lack of supervision in flexible work settings, as well as the overlapping nature of work and life duties in remote working scenarios, employers must design effective communication protocols with employees and establish operational schemes that fit their unique business model. A successful example of such efforts in the Lebanese context is Liban-Post, which gradually introduced flexible work schedules, and accommodated employee areas of residence when allocating workers across different branches. Additionally, the company made big strides in increasing female employment by breaking gender stereotypes and hiring female carriers. Hence, Lebanese employers should follow suit by introducing incremental changes that are uniquely fitted to their model, as such improvements induce significant increases in employee retention and job satisfaction and can, in the long term, lead to bigger and more substantial improvements.

6. Concluding Remarks

As seen in the previous sections, existing evidence tends to endorse the conclusion that a lack of work-family policies is driving more women to leave the workforce to accommodate childcare and family-related responsibilities. Critics of practices that provide working families with comprehensive child care assistance or paid maternity leave focus on the costs of implementing these policies as new practices. While many of these criticisms are based on misinterpretations of the proposed practices or their funding mechanisms, every new government initiative indeed incurs new costs. Nevertheless, these critics often ignore an important feature: the costs of not having these policies in place. In other words, the costs of wages lost to the nation as a whole, due to lower women labor force participation rates, can exceed the provision costs of parental leaves and childcare benefits (Glynn, 2016). The same applies to the private sector where the costs incurred by the firm by providing FFWPs can be lower than that of having high absenteeism, high turnover rate, loss of talent, and other implications discussed in this paper. Moreover, according to the Center for American Progress (Glynn and Corley, 2016), being forced out of a job or leaving the workforce due to family responsibilities is linked to not only less income in the short term but also lower future salaries and less retirement security which are often underestimated in drafting public cost-benefit analyses.³¹

Indeed, while most policymakers are well aware of the direct costs of providing parental leave and childcare benefits, the hidden costs of lost wages are not always as apparent or as thoroughly discussed. More specifically, lost wages due to lower rates of female labor

31. See <http://interactives.americanprogress.org/childcarecosts/>

force participation and other implicit costs from weak or absent family-friendly work policies can cost the economy much more than FFWP implementation costs. A weaker economy resulting from substantial lost wages adversely affects the private sector and widens the already existing gender wage gap. Therefore, instead of focusing solely on the costs of implementing FFWP, policymakers whether in the public or private sectors must also consider the cost of negligence and inaction.

In terms of the Lebanese context, there is a dire need to increase the provision of parental leave and childcare entitlements in the private sector for that would push more women to enter the Lebanese workforce, bridging the gender gap expressed in terms of employment, wages, and access to career opportunities. For the most effective and impactful implementation of FFWP, first, there must be greater awareness among both employers and female workers in Lebanon about the importance of providing childcare and parental leave policies and their positive influence on firm performance on the one hand, and family-work balance on the other hand. Second, a mixed scheme in implementing FFWP, which fairly distributes the underlying expenses of policy implementation between the government and the employer, can be implemented in Lebanon using tax subsidies and exemptions. The latter would be meant to encourage more private companies to abide by international standards for parental leave and childcare policies and include them in their internal bylaws even in the absence of formal laws. Third, flexibility in implementing such policies or other forms of FFWP is crucial during and after the COVID-19 pandemic to reduce the underlying implicit and explicit costs of rigid work schemes. Another central component to be taken into account is the time dimension of implementing parental leave and childcare policies because the faster the pace of improving work conditions for female workers in Lebanon and the rest of the world, the lower the social and private costs incurred by current and future generations from inadequate work-life balance strategies.

Accordingly, the paper suggests a number of recommendations based on the discussed findings:

1. **Adopting a mixed scheme** when allocating the liability of FFWP provisions among employers and the government. This would help increase the portion of firms providing FFWP, specifically childcare entitlements and parental leave, because they will not bear the entire burden. In Lebanon's case, a tax reduction scheme would be appropriate.
2. **Promoting flexibility** in the workplace in terms of taking parental leave and opting for a working from home preference. This would enhance employee satis-



faction and their work-life balance which in turn will be reflected in better firm performance.

3. **Enforcing existing laws** about the provision of parental leave and childcare benefits to ensure that the majority of the private sector institutions effectively implement such policies. Moreover, ensuring that Lebanon complies with international conventions and treaties in this matter and monitoring the proper implementation of such policies in the private sector is particularly important.
4. **Raising awareness among private firms** about the importance of implementing work-life balance policies and their influence in increasing firm productivity to break the stereotype that fixates on the association of such policies with high costs.
5. **Better assessing the costs and benefits of providing FFWPs** to incorporate not only the direct prevalent costs but also the implicit costs of not having such policies on society at large and the firm in particular.
6. **Ensuring that maternity leave and childcare benefits are not just available for working women but also working women have access to those entitlements.** It is also significant to affirm the necessity that women can use such policies without any barriers preventing them from taking advantage of these policies. Unless these three elements (Availability, Access, and Usage) are present, FFWPs might not achieve their targeted objectives in terms of higher female labor force participation rates and a narrower gender gap.

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Tables

Table 1: Disparities in Employment Between Men and Women Across Governorates

	Women		Men	
	Not Working	Working	Not Working	Working
Beirut	3646 (4.75)	1313 (1.71)	2069 (2.85)	2185 (3.01)
Mount Lebanon	18506 (24.13)	5670 (7.39)	11398 (15.71)	11658 (16.07)
North Lebanon	11267 (14.69)	2267 (2.96)	6858 (9.45)	5927 (8.17)
Akkar	3989 (5.20)	425 (0.55)	2724 (3.75)	1731 (2.39)
Bekaa	5289 (6.89)	894 (1.16)	3313 (4.57)	2701 (3.72)
Baalbek-Hermel	5398 (7.04)	786 (1.03)	3313 (4.57)	2555 (3.52)
South Lebanon	7358 (9.59)	1395 (1.82)	4480 (6.17)	3595 (4.95)
Nabatieh	7336 (9.56)	1168 (1.52)	4528 (6.24)	3521 (4.85)
Total	62789 (81.86)	13918 (18.14)	38683 (53.31)	33873 (46.68)

Source: Labour Force and Household Living Conditions Survey (LFHLCS) in Lebanon 2018–2019

Table 2: Types of FFWP in the Lebanese Private Sector and their Organizational Benefit

Type of FFWP	Lebanese Firms Adopting this Policy	Organizational Benefits
Extended Paid Parental Leave	Diageo, American Community School, and Zomato	Reduced rate of employee turnover, enhanced productivity, increased talent retention, and diversity
Tuition Aid to Dependents	Lebanese American University, American Community School, and University of Saint Joseph	Enhanced public image and increased talent retention
Bereavement Leave	Lebanese American University and American Community School	Enhanced employee productivity and loyalty
Marriage Leave	American Community School	Increased employee satisfaction

Table 3: The View on Women's Condition in the Workplace

	Requirement to pay for maternity leave benefits	Regulations not permitting women to work	Religion/culture restricts hiring of women in this field
Not Important	23.08	24.23	39.61
Somewhat Important	11.54	5.38	10.38
Important	16.54	8.85	7.308
Very Important	21.15	8.46	11.54
Not Applicable	27.69	53.08	31.15
Total	100	100	100

Source: Employer – Employee Survey for the Formal and Informal Sectors in Lebanon dataset - The Consultation and Research Institute.

Table 4: Gender Distribution of Access to Paid Annual Leave

	Men	Women	Total
Access to Paid Annual Leave	10075 (33.59)	5308 (17.70)	15383 (51.29)
No Access to Paid Annual Leave	11123 (37.08)	3488 (11.63)	14611 (48.71)
Total	21198 (70.63)	8796 (29.37)	29994 (100)

Source: Labour Force and Household Living Conditions Survey (LFHLCS) in Lebanon 2018–2019
Note: All the percentages displayed in the parentheses represent a proportion of the total amount.

Table 5: Access to FFWP in Lebanon

	Access to Annual Leave	Access to Official Leaves	Access to Childcare	Access to Maternity Leaves	Access to Sick leaves
Yes	503 (66.18)	627 (82.61)	341 (44.75)	357 (46.91)	583 (76.81)
No	232 (30.53)	123 (16.21)	268 (35.17)	225 (29.57)	131 (17.26)
No Answer	25 (3.29)	9 (1.19)	153 (20.08)	179 (23.52)	45 (5.93)
Total	760 (100)	759 (100)	762 (100)	761 (100)	759 (100)
<i>N</i>	760	759	762	761	759

Source: Employer – Employee Survey for the Formal and Informal Sectors in Lebanon - The Consultation and Research Institute.

Table 6: Childcare and Parental Leave Offering to Full-time and Part-time Workers

	Offering Childcare	Offering Parental leave
Full-Time Workers		
Yes	63.67	58.33
No	36.33	41.67
Part-Time Workers		
Yes	44.90	45.83
No	55.10	54.17

Source: Employer – Employee Survey for the Formal and Informal Sectors in Lebanon - The Consultation and Research Institute.

Table7: Employee Profile (Age)

Age Bracket	Access to Childcare		Access to Parental Leave	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
[15-19]	41.17	58.82	20.00	80.00
[20-24]	62.31	37.69	52.94	47.06
[25-29]	60.84	39.16	67.47	32.53
[30-34]	66.67	33.33	77.78	22.22
[35-39]	50.88	49.12	62.96	37.04
[40-44]	45.10	54.90	49.02	50.98
[45-49]	41.03	58.97	65.79	34.21
[50-54]	50.00	50.00	55.17	44.83
[55-59]	42.86	57.14	76.19	23.81
[60-64]	33.33	66.67	46.15	53.85
[65-69]	66.67	33.33	33.33	66.67
[70-84]	-	100.00	-	100.00

Source: Employer – Employee Survey for the Formal and Informal Sectors in Lebanon - The Consultation and Research Institute



(Table 8: Employee Profile (Salary

Monthly Wage	Access to Childcare		Access to Parental Leave	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Less than 500,000 L.L	48.94	51.06	26.19	73.81
500,000 L.L to 750,000 L.L	46.09	53.91	44.44	55.56
751,000 L.L to 999,000 L.L	49.64	50.36	57.46	42.54
1 to 1.5 million L.L	66.85	33.15	73.26	26.74
1.5 to 2 million L.L	60.26	39.74	78.38	21.62
2 to 3 million L.L	69.23	30.77	72.00	28.00

Source: Employer – Employee Survey for the Formal and Informal Sectors in Lebanon - The Consultation and Research Institute



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