

# 적극행정 인센티브 방안 연구

- 적극행정 성과평가 및 인센티브 등 제도 발전방안 -

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심정환

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## 1. 국외훈련 개요

1. 훈련국 : 영국
2. 훈련기관명 : 요크대학교 (University of York)
3. 훈련분야 : 공공행정
4. 훈련기간 : 2022.9.17 ~ 2024.7.16

## 2. 훈련기관 개요

### 1. 기관명 : University of York



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### 2. 과정명 : PAPP (Master of Public of Administration with Professional Placement)

- 본 과정은 한국의 인사혁신처에서 요크대학교와 MOU를 체결한 과정이다. 요크대학교 정치대학원(Department of Politics)에서 운영한다. 정치와 경제, 행정에 관한 다양한 이론과 사례를 학습한다.
- 1년차 학위과정 : 2022년에는 가을, 봄, 여름 등 3학기 운영하였다. 가을과 봄 학기에는 6과목, 120학점을 이수하고 여름학기에는 논문을 작성(60학점)하여 총 180학점을 이수한다. 2023년부터는 1, 2학기제로 과정을 변경했다.
- 2년차 직무과정 : 직무과정은 정부기관 등에 배치하거나 학교에서 제공하는 교육을 이수하는 방식으로 이루어진다. 학교에서는 세미나와 강의를 통해 영국 등 해외의 다양한 공공행정 사례를 경험하는 프로그램을 운영한다.

### 3. 기관 소개

#### 1) 연혁

- 요크대학교는 1617년 제임스 1세에게 처음으로 대학 설립을 청원한 것이 그 시작이었다. 이후 300여년 만인 1903년 F.J.먼비(F.J.Munby)와 요크셔 철학회원 등이 빅토리아 요크셔대학교 설립을 청원했다.
- 1960년 4월 영국정부는 York 대학 설립을 승인했고, 1963년에 첫 번째 학생들이 입학하였다. 당시 학부생은 216명, 대학원생은 14명으로 시작하였다.
- 설립 당시 경제학, 교육학, 영문학, 역사학, 수학, 정치학 등 6개 학부가 있었으며, 이듬해 Heslington을 중심으로 본격적으로 캠퍼스를 조성하였다.
- 이후 요크대학교는 빠르게 발전하였다. Derwent, Lanwith College(1965)를 시작으로 Alcuin, Vanbrugh College(1967), Goodriche College(1968), Wentworth College(1972)가 개교했다.
- 1990년대 이후 James College(1992), Halifax College(2003), Constantine College(2014) 개교로 2023년 현재 총 9개의 College로 구성되어 있으며, 30개 이상의 학과가 개설되어 있다.

- 1990년대에 요크대학교는 급성장했다. 요크대는 높은 입학 기준을 유지하면서도 학생 수는 8,500명으로 증가하는 등 발전을 계속했다. 2012년 3월 영국의 연구 중심 대학 협의체인 ‘러셀 그룹(Russel Group)’에 소속되었다.

## 2) 평가

- Guardian (2021) 평가에 따르면, Social Policy & Administration 분야에서 25위, Business, management & marketing 분야에서는 14위, Law 분야에서는 17위를 기록한 바 있다.
- 2021년 전국 학생 조사에 포함된 Russell Group 대학 중 7개 과목이 '전반적인 만족도'에서 1위를 차지했다.
- QS 세계 대학 순위는 2022년에 151위로 QS World University Rankings 2021의 상위 100개 과목 중 9개를 기록하는 성과를 창출하고 있다.

### **3. 훈련결과 보고서**

## **Research of Proactive Administration Incentive system**

- Performance evaluation and system development plan for proactive administration (incentives, etc.) -**

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## **Abstract**

This paper analyzes the impact of the 'proactive administration' policy implemented by the South Korean government since 2019 on the productivity and performance of public servants. Based on previous studies, this paper examines how proactive administration has affected the productivity of public officials in Korean COVID-19 response in terms of work autonomy, work ambiguity, and Lipsky's street-level bureaucrats (1976). Then, the paper conducts an evaluation of the policy success of McConnell (2010). As a result, proactive administration played a positive role in increasing job autonomy and reducing job ambiguity and helped to improve the working conditions of street-level bureaucrats. In addition, using McConnell's (2010) criteria for policy success, proactive administration has proven to be a relatively successful policy. Therefore, the paper suggests that the South Korean government needs to continue to promote and develop proactive administration to increase the productivity of public employees and reform administration. The report offers many ideas for further development of the proactive administration policy. The paper will also propose specific incentives for proactive administration.

# 1. Introduction

Today, governments and officials around the world are trying to find solutions to complex and diverse public issues and administrative challenges. Social problems are becoming increasingly complex and ambiguous, and governments must work hard to find and implement new ways to solve them (Kim and Kwon, 2021).

Fewer and fewer social problems can be solved by governments and public officials with uniform regulations and guidelines, and more and more social problems require governments and officials to exercise discretion (Kim, Kim, Oh, and Park, 2020). Even under these circumstances, public organizations in South Korea were slower to change than private organizations, and public officials lacked innovative thinking and behavior (Park and Park, 2021).

In February 2019, South Korean President Moon Jae-in ordered government employees to proactive administration, saying that "proactive administration should be the new culture of Korea government work" (Lee, 2019). When it comes to regulation, the president urged public officials not to work solely according to laws and regulations, but to be more flexible and proactive in addressing situations and problems on the ground (ibid).

In March 2019, the South Korean government made and announced the "Proactive Administration Promotion Plan" (OPM, 2019). On 6 August 2019, the government enacted the "Regulations on the Operation of Proactive Administration," and

as a result, proactive administration became a legally binding system (Lee, 2020). Since 2019, the government has conducted trainings, briefings, evaluations, and selection of best practices related to proactive administration to promote it internally and externally.

As the government's policy efforts accelerated, experts began to conduct academic research on proactive administration (Choi and Cho, 2022). Thanks to the government's swift efforts, the institutional arrangements for proactive administration were largely finalized in 2019, and government officials were able to utilize proactive administration from that time.

On 20 January 2020, the first case of COVID-19 was reported in South Korea, and on 23 February 2020, the South Korean government raised the level of prevention measures to the highest level to alert citizens of the COVID-19 crisis (Kwon, 2023). South Korean prime minister 'Jung, Seo-kyun' emphasized the need for proactive administration to overcome the COVID-19 crisis and instructed government officials to use proactive administration systems (Shin, 2020). And then, South Korean government officials have used proactive administration to respond to the COVID-19 crisis, which began in 2020.

As of 2023, it has been four years since the South Korean government implemented proactive administration. And on 1 June 2023, the South Korean government downgraded the COVID-19 pandemic level from severe to alert. Therefore, it is meaningful to evaluate the role of proactive administration in South Korea's COVID-19 response. It is time to examine whether the Korean government's proactive administration has

increased productivity and improved administrative services by enhancing the way public employees work and their working conditions. And it is important for the government to decide whether to continue promoting proactive administration based on these results and in what direction to develop proactive administration.

This paper analyzes how proactive administration has impacted the COVID-19 response. The paper studies autonomy, ambiguity, and Lipsky's framework of street-level bureaucracy in relation to civil servants' productivity, and McConnell's (2010) framework of policy success in relation to the success of proactive administration. And then the paper concludes with policy suggestions related to the Korean government's proactive administration.

## **2. Methodology**

### **2-1. Relationship between 'proactive administration' and 'COVID-19'**

The paper chose the COVID-19 response case to evaluate the performance of proactive administration because it was so timely, and proactive administration was heavily utilized in the COVID-19 situation by government officers. In 2019, the South Korean government accelerated the implementation of specific measures for proactive administration, preparing public servants to use proactive administration systems. And with the outbreak of COVID-19 in South Korea in February 2020, the

government and its officials used proactive administration in many parts of the pandemic. In other words, public officials actively used many of the new proactive administration's measures (launched in 2019) during the COVID-19 outbreak in 2020. Therefore, COVID-19 can be a meaningful case to judge the effectiveness of proactive administration.

In the COVID-19 crisis, top leaders such as the president, prime minister, and auditor general emphasized proactive administration, and there were many examples of proactive administration related to the COVID-19 response. Even if proactive administration is a good system, if it lacks the attention of top leaders or is not used by government employees, its performance can not be properly measured. Fortunately, in the case of COVID-19, there are relatively more examples of top leaders' attention and public officials' usage.

So, while proactive administration is not a policy that has been around for a long time, it is worthwhile to evaluate its performance in the COVID-19 response. Therefore, this paper decided that examining proactive administration of public officials in the COVID-19 response process would be an appropriate case to evaluate the achievements and shortcomings of proactive administration.

## **2-2. Framework and direction of theoretical analysis**

The paper discusses theories and issues from three analytical frameworks. First, the paper looks at the impact of proactive administration on civil servants' productivity. Previous studies on Korean public organizations have studied the effects of work autonomy and work ambiguity on the productivity of

public organization members. And Lipsky (1976) argued that the characteristics of street-level bureaucracy affect the success of policy implementation. Therefore, the paper analyzes the impact of proactive administration on work autonomy, work ambiguity, and policy implementation on street-level bureaucrats. By doing so, the paper explains whether proactive administration has had a positive impact on the innovative behavior and performance of public servants in the COVID-19 response.

Second, the paper examines whether proactive administration has been successful as a policy. This paper analyzes the success and failure of proactive administration by using McConnell (2010) and Marsh & McConnell (2010)'s framework of policy success, which is commonly used for policy evaluation. Since proactive administration started in 2019, this paper is based on data released by the Korean government, research institutes, and the media from 2019 to June 2023. If proactive administration is a successful policy, the Korean government need to continue to implement it strongly to increase the productivity of Korean public servants and improve public administration.

Third, this paper suggests policies for the Korean government to further develop proactive administration. And the paper describes specific policies that the Korean government can implement based on the theoretical analysis of work autonomy, work ambiguity and the characteristics of street-level bureaucracy proposed by Lipsky.

## **3. Proactive Administration**

### **3-1. Backgrounds**

These days, innovation in government is not a choice, it's a necessity. Governments and public organizations are facing much stronger competition than in the past (Kim and Kang, 2019). Public servants are expected to perform their official roles with integrity, but they are also expected to engage in extra-role behavior - innovative behavior (Janssen, 2000; Katz and Kahn, 1978). Public officers shall perform their duties in the public interest with creativity and professionalism beyond that normally required (Kim, Yoo, Lee and Park, 2022).

However, public servants in South Korea are required to work according to laws and regulations, and if they violate them, they could be audited and held accountable. Due to the heavy burden of audits, public employees are more focused on complying with laws and regulations than solving problems, which hinders proactive administration (OPM, 2019). Due to the burden of audits that focus solely on laws and regulations, government officials find it advantageous to simply perform mechanical work rather than take on challenging tasks. That's why the Korean government has created proactive administration that focus on how public servants can be challenging and innovative without worrying about being audited, and how they can flexibly interpret laws and regulations to address problems.



### 3-2. Meaning

Before 2019, when the government began to push proactive administration in earnest, there were many different opinions about what proactive administration meant (Choi and Cho, 2022). Proactive administration is more of an administrative request than an academic concept (Choi and Jung, 2020).

In August 2019, the Korean government defined the concept of proactive administration in a decree, the "Regulations for the Operation of Proactive Administration," and confirmed its official meaning. According to Article 2, paragraph 1 of South Korea's "Regulations for the Operation of proactive Administration,"

*"Proactive administration means that public officials actively take on tasks based on creativity and expertise for the public good, such as improving unreasonable regulations." (KLIC, n.d).*

This regulation explains proactive administration as the active and creative work behavior of public officials in the course of their work, and it is interpreted as the actual proactivity of an individual manifested in behavior (Cho, Kim, and Park, 2020). Civil servants basically perform their normal duties according to their supervisor's instructions and division of duties based on the relationship of superiority and subordination, but they should not only perform routine duties, but also discover problems in their duties and make efforts to create alternatives to them (Lee, 2020). Proactive administration is a measure implemented to actively solve various problems in the field in an environment where it is difficult to solve social problems using only standard operating procedures in a diverse

society (Kim, Kim, Oh, and Park, 2020)

Proactive administration is like 'innovative behavior'. Innovative behavior is the process of coming up with new ideas to solve problems and working to achieve them (Carmeli, Meiter and Weisberg, 2006). In other words, it is a critical behavior for public servants to perform well when responding to rapid environmental change and needing new strategies and creative solutions (Yuan and Woodman, 2010). Similar to innovative behavior, proactive administration focuses on the individual work of public servants (Lee, 2020) and encourages public servants to actively propose ideas and solutions.

The concept of proactive administration can be understood differently in Europe and the U.S. (Lee, 2016). In Europe, 'positive Action' may be interpreted differently, as an action taken by an organization to ensure that minorities are not disadvantaged by bias in hiring or promotion (Stratigaki, M., 2005). And in the United States, 'affirmative action' is understood as a measure to protect social diversity and remedy discrimination by providing hiring, compensation, promotion, training, and other benefits to discriminated against groups (Lee, 2016). Proactive administration is also understood as a result of psychological safety, which enables an organization's culture of communication (Kang and Park, 2019).

On the other hand, proactive administration in Korea is different from other countries because it is not related to discrimination but focuses on changing the behavior of public servants and increasing their productivity. Proactive administration is more than introducing new systems or policies, it is about changing the thoughts, behaviors, and

culture of public officials (Lee, 2020). Proactive administration is a change from the old way of thinking, where officials just follow the manual, and nothing goes wrong. It's about creating a culture where government officials can take on new challenges and not be held accountable if they get it wrong. This requires considerable effort and energy because it involves changing old practices and habits from the past (Jung, 2022).

### **3-3. Main Content**

Proactive administration is not driven by a few specific factors, but rather by the level of capability across the organization (Jung, 2022). Therefore, the Korean government is comprehensively implementing various systems of proactive administration from a macro perspective, establishing the legal basis for realizing proactive administration and specifying systems for it. The 'proactive administration promotion plan' is a comprehensive measure that encompasses the establishment of a promotion system, support for public officials' decision-making, and easing the burden on public servants.

For this reason, the 'proactive administration promotion plan' (2019) recognizes that proactive administration is not a single ministry, but several ministries participated in planning their roles, and the Prime Minister's Office (Office for Government Policy Coordination and Prime Minister's Secretariat) manage the whole process.

According to the 'proactive administration promotion plan' (2019), the main strategies are being implemented in four directions.

- ① The government has imposed a strong obligation on 'agency heads' to promote proactive administration in their organizations. This is because agency heads can be key influencers for proactive administration because they have a variety of incentive powers, such as organizational promotion. Each year, every agency head must make and implement their own proactive administration action plan. The agency head should provide training on proactive administration to government employees and support them in their proactive administration. Depending on the agency head's attention and efforts, the results of the organization's proactive administration can change.
  
- ② All agencies consist of and operate their own 'proactive administration committee' for proactive administration. These committees are composed of both government officials and civilians, and can have up to 45 members. The committee has two important roles. The committee selects agencies' best practices for proactive administration. The committee provides formal opinions on cases where officials ask for advice. If government officials follow the committee's official opinion, they may be immune from future audits.
  
- ③ The government has implemented an immunity system for public servants for proactive administration. Immunity means that public servants who handle their tasks diligently and actively to promote the national or public interest will not be subjected to disadvantageous dispositions under the Audit Act. The proactive

administration immunity system is a system that exempts or reduces audit when the active and public interest behavior of public officials is recognized in the process of incurring losses due to proactive administration (Cho, Kim, Park, and Yoon, 2020). BAI (The Board of Audit and Inspection of Korea) and the audit departments of ministries check strongly whether government officials work in accordance with laws and regulations. This puts a lot of pressure on government employees, so they prefer to make stable decisions that are in line with laws and regulations rather than making aggressive decisions (OPM, 2019). While this behavior is meaningful in terms of ensuring that officials adhere to the rule of law, it can hinder the ability to implement flexible solutions for different situations. This has been an issue during crises in South Korea, such as the 2008 economic crisis and the 2020 COVID-19 response. To solve this problem, the government operates a system that allows public officials to receive immunity in advance, namely the 'pre-consultation system' and the 'advisory system of the proactive administration Committee'. These are both included in the system of proactive administration. The 'pre-consultation system' is a support system in which the audit department provides consultation and suggests solutions in advance to reduce the tendency of public officials to act passively in fear of being audited when performing important tasks (Lee, 2020). 'Advisory system of the proactive administration Committee' means a system in which the proactive administration Committee gives an opinion based on an application by a public official. If a public official finds it difficult to actively

carry out their tasks due to laws or rules in the course of performing their duties, the Committee can provide recommendations on how to deal with the task (ibid). If a government official receives a pre-consultation opinion from the audit department, or is advised by the committee, and works in compliance with the opinion, they cannot be penalized if an audit later finds fault. These benefits are specified by law and regulation. However, there is no immunity for corruption.

- ④ The government periodically recognizes the best practices of proactive administration and provides incentives for the best cases. Incentives for proactive administration include promotions, raises, performance bonuses, and training opportunities, and the head of an agency may award a certificate to honor the public servant. Other incentives can be agency-specific, such as vacation time. Performance appraisals are usually conducted twice a year, although some agencies conduct them quarterly.

## **4. Literacy and Case analysis**

### **4-1. Work Autonomy**

#### **1) Literacy**

Work autonomy has become an important concept under the work characteristics theory (Kim and Gang, 2019).

According to Hackman and Oldham (1976), work characteristics theory states that five core work characteristics change the internal psychological state of work performers, which in turn affects work performance outcomes such as motivation, satisfaction, work performance, productivity, absenteeism, and turnover. The five key work characteristics are skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, and feedback. They defined work autonomy as the degree of freedom, independence, and discretion a public servant has in planning and organizing work. Breugh (1985) proposed the following measures of work autonomy: the degree of choice over work methods and procedures, the extent of control over work scheduling, and the ability to modify and select performance evaluation criteria.

Prior research argues that work autonomy affects an individual's psychological state, leading to behavioral change. Kim and Gang (2019) demonstrated that the more work autonomy public servants have, the more responsible they feel, the more they constantly think about ways to increase their work performance, and the more they engage in creative behavior. In addition, studies such as Lee and Kim (2008) and Choi (2019) have confirmed that work autonomy is a key variable that induces innovative behavior in organizational members. In addition, the relationship between work autonomy and creativity has been shown to increase creativity when employees perform work s with a high degree of work autonomy or have a choice in how they perform their jobs (Glassman, 1986; Zhou, 1998). Furthermore, because autonomy is a basic human desire, when public servants have work autonomy, they are more likely to engage in innovative actions because autonomous behavior is rewarded in and of itself, even

without external forces (Deci and Ryan, 2000).

More work autonomy has a positive impact on productivity among government employees. Public servants in South Korea have different levels of work autonomy depending on their position and tasks (Kang and Park, 2019). In general, government employees are more satisfied with their jobs when they are given more freedom to determine their own efforts and work schedules (Lee, 2020). Work autonomy refers to the independence and discretion of civil servants and is related to proactive administration because it affects the motivation and creative performance of public servants (ibid).

Government officials are subject to legal and bureaucratic responsibilities along with political and professional responsibilities, and strong adherence to laws and obedience to instructions has a significant impact on the success, failure, and survival of government workers (Romzek and Dubnick, 1987). Korean government employees also face a high audit burden (OPM, 2019), which contributes to lower work autonomy. If an organization becomes overly bound by rules and procedures, resists change and innovation, and reduces work autonomy, it can lead to increased employee turnover (Park, Oh, and Yoon, 2023)

## **2) Analyze the case**

Government employees make judgments and do their job according to laws and regulations. They create manuals and guidelines to establish specific ways of working. While this is necessary for the rule of law, it has a negative impact on the autonomy of government employees. It forces them to perform



their work mechanically even though they have autonomy. And if government employees do not follow laws, regulations, and manuals, they could be punished. These systems, behaviors, and cultures have created obstacles that hinder civil servants' ability to work proactively and with work autonomy.

However, proactive administration is a tool to increase the autonomy of public officials. A proactive administration immunity system allows government officials to interpret laws, regulations, and manuals comprehensively and to have work autonomy. With a proactive administration immunity system, public officials are not punished if they get into trouble with an audit. They are guaranteed safety and can be selected as a best practice of proactive administration based on their work performance. These are all good reasons for government officials to utilize a proactive administration immunity system.

In the South Korean government's case of proactive administration, the government employees were given autonomy to perform their duties through the proactive administration immunity during the COVID-19 response. For example, in 2020, it was critical for the government to secure COVID-19 vaccines as early and in large quantities as possible. However, with so much uncertainty about the success of the COVID-19 vaccine being developed by an international global pharmaceutical company, challenging decisions had to be made. South Korean officials exercised their work autonomy and signed a purchase agreement with the global pharmaceutical company in advance, despite the possibility of failure, resulting in vaccine availability starting in February 2021 (OPM, 2022a). South Korean public servants have a positive view of the proactive administration immunity system, which increases work autonomy. According to

a 2020 The Board of Audit and Inspection of Korea's survey, 67.9% of government employees are satisfied with the proactive administration immunity system and 91.2% of those who used the system said they would use it again in the future (BAI, 2020). Overall, it can be concluded that a proactive administration plays a positive role in increasing the autonomy of public officials.

## **4-2. Work Ambiguity**

### **1) Literacy**

Ambiguity means that something does not have a single clear meaning (Kim and Kim 2015), and organizational goal ambiguity is the degree to which an organization's goals allow for competing interpretations (Jeon, 2004). According to Chun and Rainey (2005), organizational goal ambiguity has four multidimensional attributes, which are detailed below.

- ① 'Mission comprehension ambiguity' refers to ambiguity in the communication process of understanding and explaining an organization's mission.
- ② 'Directive ambiguity' is recognized in the process of translating organizational goals into specific instructions for action.
- ③ 'Evaluative ambiguity' arises when there are competing interpretations of the criteria for evaluating performance.
- ④ 'Priority ambiguity' refers to ambiguity in priority setting due to multiple organizational goals.

According to Rainey and Jung (2015), work ambiguity is a characteristic of public organizations. They explain that external factors such as institutional and political authority, interest groups, etc. make the goals of public organizations vague and diverse and increase conflict. Public organizations are closely connected to the political situation, various laws, and institutions, and have more ambiguous objectives than private organizations that seek profit (Pandey and Rainey, 2006; Stazyk and Goerdel, 2011).

Even for the same policy, the goals, priorities, and assessment of its performance change with the political conditions (Park and Park, 2021). While private companies have a simple goal of pursuing profits in the marketplace, public organizations have unclear goals due to various external influences, and this feature is an important difference from private companies (Pandey and Rainey, 2006; Stazyk and Goerdel, 2011). Unlike private companies, public organizations do not have market signals and must respond to ambiguous and conflicting requirements from political negotiations (Kim and Kim, 2015).

Prior research on organizational ambiguity shows that it generally has a negative impact on performance. Daft (2012), Locke and Latham (2002), and Wright (2004) confirm the negative impact of goal ambiguity on work motivation. Song (2020) explains that vague and difficult-to-measure goals can affect a variety of areas, including organizational performance as well as organizational structure. For example, goal ambiguity can increase bureaucracy in public organizations, which can negatively impact employee commitment. Kim and Kim (2015)

argued that goal ambiguity negatively affects job satisfaction, organizational commitment, job involvement, and performance orientation, thereby reducing organizational effectiveness. Heo (2016) demonstrated a negative relationship between goal ambiguity and organizational commitment. Jung (2014) finds that goal ambiguity increases turnover intention, while job satisfaction has a negative effect.

Jeon (2004) shows that goal ambiguity increases bureaucratic culture (red tape, centralization). When organizational goals are vague, the clarity of the goals as perceived by executives is also weakened, leading to lower levels of delegation and increased regulation (Rainey and Jung, 2015). According to Oldham and Hackman (1981), the more centralized the structure of an organization, the less autonomy there is in the work. And goal ambiguity is a key factor influencing organizational centralization (Jeon, 2004). Park (2018) found a positive relationship between goal clarity and public service motivation. Yang and Cho (2019) showed that goal clarity positively affects organizational members' perceived work commitment and work performance.

Taken together, many studies have shown that public servants have to work in an environment of high ambiguity, and high ambiguity has a negative impact on productivity. Therefore, efforts to reduce ambiguity are necessary to increase productivity in organization.

## 2) Analyze the case

South Korean public servants have experienced ambiguity about two ways of working in response to COVID-19. One is that public officials should apply laws and regulations flexibly and solve problems in a bold way due to the urgency of the situation. The other is that public servants should not violate laws and regulations because they are supposed to work in accordance with them.

There have been cases where officials have acted boldly and quickly in urgent situations but were later criticized in audits. For example, South Korean media reported that Chung Eun-kyung (head of the Korean Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) was punished for taking aggressive action in the 2016 MERS (Middle East Respiratory Syndrome) response (Choi, 2020). The media also highlighted that her bold administrative actions in charge of the 2020 COVID-19 response received positive reviews (ibid).

As a result of these experiences, Many of Korean public officials are preparing for a later audit, and there is a risk that the effectiveness of COVID-19 prevention will be reduced if they work only in accordance with laws and regulations. However, this can cause many side effects. Complex issues that require the government to consider multiple interests, such as determining the level of control of COVID-19 and granting goodwill to citizens and the self-employed, are difficult to solve by the manual (Kim, Kim, Oh, and Park, 2020). Government employees are discouraged from taking challenging and proactive administration outside of the manual because they

face strict liability and penalties for failure to do things according to the manual. In situations where ambiguity exists, government officials are forced to rely on individual discretion, and it is important to have formal or informal norms in place to ensure that officials exercise their discretion in a positive way (Kim and Kim, 2015).

The government recognizes the challenges of ambiguity experienced by public servants in solving complex problems. That is why the president, prime minister, and auditor general have emphasized proactive administration in the COVID-19 response and have clearly directed public officials to focus on problem-solving in their work during the crisis. The top leaders have made it clear that proactive administrations will be granted immunity and good practices will be rewarded. The prime minister has given clear instructions to take proactive administration (Shin, 2020). The head of the BAI, which is responsible for auditing public officials, has also sent a document to all auditors, assuring them that they will not be punished by the audit for their actions in responding to COVID-19 and addressing the economic crisis if there is no personal corruption (BAI, 2020). In particular, the Prime Minister and the head of the BAI held a special meeting to promote proactive administration. They sent a message to public servants that if they do proactive administration, there will be no problem if they break some rules (OPM, 2020). The government continued to educate and promote the concept and practice of proactive administration. The government released best practices on its official website, and boldly incentivized good practices.

As a result, there was less ambiguity about the role of public servants in the COVID-19 response. The goal of public officials in the COVID-19 situation was clear. Their goal was not simply to follow laws and rules, but to solve problems and overcome crises for citizens. Performance is important as an institutional tool that can motivate a proactive administration (Jung, 2022). And for public servants, the reduced work ambiguity helped them perform better.

### **4-3. Street-level bureaucracy (Lipsky)**

#### **1) Literacy**

For a policy to be successful, both planning and implementation are important. Public officials strive to implement policies to achieve desired goals and outcomes (J. Rabin, 2005). While policy implementation may seem like assembling and operating a machine, it is a challenging task that has the potential to fail due to a variety of circumstances and variables on the field (E. Bardach, 1977). Although the central government plans many policies, it is the local government that implements them, and local enforcement is crucial to the success of these policies (Butler and Allen, 2008).

Lipsky (1976) argues that street-level bureaucrats are important for successful policy implementation and analyses their characteristics and behaviors. According to Lipsky, street-level bureaucrats are discretionary government employees who work directly with citizens. For example, teachers, welfare workers, and police officers are street-level bureaucrats (ibid). He insists that street-level bureaucrats face four dimensions of

challenges, and that challenges on the ground change the behavior of public servants.

- ① Street-level bureaucrats lack resources such as time, information, technology, and budget.
- ② Street-level bureaucrats face safety threats in the course of their work. He says that field-level bureaucrats can experience physical and psychological threats, and the greater these threats, the lower their authority.
- ③ Citizens have ambiguous and conflicting expectations of street-level bureaucrats.
- ④ It is difficult to establish objective criteria and evaluate the performance of street-level bureaucrats.

Lipsky say that the working environment of enforcement can change the behavior of street-level bureaucrats. According to him, street-level bureaucrats work in a lean way to address the lack of resources and use avoidance strategies of minimal intervention to deal with threats. In addition, Street-level bureaucrats respond to their ambiguous and contradictory roles by shifting responsibility outward, reducing accountability and imposing financial burdens or long waits on citizens (ibid).

According to Lipsky (1976), the most important feature of street-level bureaucrats is that they have discretion. He believed that because of the many variables in the field, it is necessary to be flexible in dealing with situations rather than mechanical enforcement, and this helps street-level bureaucrats to take pride in their work. However, some are concerned



about the excessive discretion of street-level bureaucrats (Meyers and Vorsanger. 2002).

## **2) Analyze the case**

For successful policy objectives to be achieved, governments need to ensure that human and material resources are adequately provided, and the extent to which the implementing organization has these resources in place (Benner, 2007). The government should ensure that the bureaucrats on the ground, who have to work under specific conditions and circumstances, have a good understanding of the situation. Proactive administration has played a positive role in improving the working conditions of street-level bureaucrats, which Lipsky highlighted.

First, proactive administration has helped solve the problem of resource scarcity. The central government has the authority and ability to provide resources, so it plays an important role in solving the problem of lack of resources in the field. In the case of South Korea's COVID-19 response, communication between the central government and the local governments at the frontline of implementation took place daily. The Prime Minister communicated with the field via online video conferencing and quickly resolved problems related to resources requested by the field and local governments (Goo, 2023). The Prime Minister directed the use of proactive administration immunity system to expedite policy enforcement and shorten procedures and highlighted the achievements of policy enforcement (OPM, 2020).

Second, the government publicly promoted a proactive

administration to encourage citizens to cooperate, which helped ensure the safety of government officials in the course of their work. Although the government-imposed controls on citizens' movements and behavior to prevent the spread of COVID-19, citizens actively cooperated and supported the government's efforts. Government officials explained the dangers of COVID-19 in detail. Citizens actively participated in prevention measures such as wearing masks and keeping their distance, and the South Korean president thanked them for their cooperation (Lee, 2023).

Third, proactive administration focuses on performance, which helps to reduce ambiguity in the evaluation of civil servants. Traditional civil servant evaluations are conducted twice a year and are based on a combination of factors such as seniority and organizational contribution, rather than specific policy outcomes (Hwang and Shim, 2004). However, a proactive administration evaluation and incentives only evaluate and incentivize specific policies and behaviors of government officials. The criteria are simple and clear because they focus on the outcomes of policies.

Fourth, proactive administration helped to address Lipsky's problems of ambiguous expectations and conflicts for public servants. In the COVID-19 response, civil servants experienced the problem of ambiguous expectations about whether to simply follow regulations and manuals or to use flexible enforcement to solve problems. At this point, top leaders, including the president, prime minister, and auditor general of South Korea, emphasized flexible interpretation of laws and regulations and a focus on solving the problem of COVID-19. As a result, government officials were able to clarify that their goal was to

solve the COVID-19 problem first, which was a positive step in addressing the issue of ambiguous expectations.

Overall, it can be concluded that proactive administration has helped to improve the working conditions of street-level bureaucrats, which has played a positive role in increasing the probability of successful policy implementation.

## **5. Evaluation of Proactive Administration**

### **5-1. Evaluation Criteria**

In order to evaluate a policy, it is necessary to look at the various factors of the policy as a whole. Because public policy is so closely linked to politics, the same outcome can be defined differently as a policy success or failure depending on your political position (Stone, 2002; Fischer, 2003). It is virtually impossible to judge a government policy as a complete success because even after much scrutiny and evaluation, there are shortcomings and failures (McConnell, 2010).

McConnell (2010) proposed Process, Program and Politics as criteria for policy success to account for the diversity of policies. This paper utilizes McConnell's (2010) criteria for policy success, which evaluates policies in as many ways as possible.

- ① 'Process' assesses legitimacy by reviewing whether the policy was created and executed through the correct procedures and processes.

- ② 'Program' looks at whether the policy's goals were achieved through its implementation and outcomes. Program checks whether the policy's resources were used efficiently and analyzes whether the policy's beneficiaries received sufficient benefits. Based on these findings, the Program determines whether the policy achieved its intended goals.
- ③ 'Politics' evaluates whether the policy helped the government get re-elected. If a policy contributes to the government's credibility and helps generate positive public opinion, it is more likely to be judged as successful.

According to Marsh and McConnell (2010), categories of policy success can be distinguished into five spectrums.

- ① 'Program Success' is when a policy achieves its desired goals and outcomes, gains general support from citizens, and generates benefits for the policy target.
- ② 'Resilient Success' is when goals and outcomes are met, even though they are somewhat lacking, and there is more support than expected, even though there is more opposition. It is the next best alternative to opposition and penalties.
- ③ 'Conflicted Success' is when the performance of a policy is disputed, and the goal has been partially achieved. Politically, the pros and cons are similarly divided.

- ④ ‘Precarious Success’ is when a policy has had some success in achieving its goals but has faced unwanted criticism from the media and more opposition than support.
- ⑤ ‘Program Failure’ is when a policy fails to meet the criteria for achieving its goals and outcomes, and there is overwhelming political opposition.

As of 2023, the Korean government has been implementing proactive administration for four years, and since it is not a policy that has been around for a long time, there is still not enough research on proactive administration performance evaluation (Lee, 2020). Therefore, this paper mainly utilizes the results of the Korean government's best practices in proactive administration, the results of incentives, the results of utilizing the immunity system, the results of the public officer's perception survey, and the arguments of previous studies as indicators related to proactive administration.

And the paper evaluates the Program according to McConnell's (2010) criteria for proactive administration. Among McConnell's (2010) criteria for policy success, the one that proactive administration has increased the productivity of public servants is particularly relevant to the evaluation of the program. The paper analyzes the success of proactive administration by focusing mainly on the program aspect.

## 5-2. Evaluating a Case

### 1) Process Aspect

The process aspect focuses on whether the government has sufficient justification for its choice of policy alternatives (Marsh and McConnell, 2010). And justification is assessed as secured when the government follows through on the policy's procedures and gains sufficient support from stakeholders (Im and Joo, 2022).

Proactive administration began with a president's directive (February 2019), and the government established a plan (March 2019). Later, the government, with the cooperation of the National Assembly, enshrined a proactive administration in the law. The government emphasized proactive administration in the COVID-19 response, and there was no opposition or controversy from the National Assembly, the media, or stakeholders.

Government officials think positively about proactive administration. According to a survey of a total of 16,730 government employees in 2019, when proactive administration started in earnest, 60.4% of the respondents knew about proactive administration, 70% thought it was necessary to make efforts for proactive administration, and 63% thought that proactive administration would change the public service society positively in the future (Cho, Kim, and Park, 2020)

However, there are some shortcomings in the process. The government did not consult with public officials or citizens, or hold public hearings, as the measures were developed in a

short period of time. The government implemented the plan in a top-down manner within a month of the president's order. In the future, the government should listen to the opinions of public officials and citizens and apply a bottom-up approach to supplement proactive administration.

Therefore, proactive administration can be evaluated as 'Resilient Success' in relation to Marsh and McConnell's (2010) process dimension.

## **2) Program Aspect**

'Program' aspect evaluation should focus on whether the goals of the policy were achieved and whether the policy benefited the target population (Im and Joo, 2022).

First, proactive administration can be considered successful in achieving the goals of the policy because it has had a positive impact on the behavior of government employees. Even though proactive administration is in its infancy, many public servants agree with the need for proactive administration, and there are high expectations for changes in public servants' work innovation (Cho, Kim, and Park, 2020). The result of proactive administration is also manifold. Since 2019, the government has officially recognized a total of 6,400 civil servants for their proactive administration, and more than 50% of them have received strong incentives such as promotions, the highest grade of performance pays, and overseas training (OPM, 2022a). The number of cases in which public employees used a proactive administration immunity to proactively work with assurances of immunity increased from 1,267 (in 2019 year) to 1,974 (in 2021 year) (ibid).

In January 2020, the Korean Ministry of Government Legislation operated a statutory opinion suggestion system that allows officials to quickly provide opinions if there is a problem interpreting a law in the course of proactive administration (MOLGE, 2020). Government employees have used the statutory comment system for nearly two years, making 627 comments through December 2021 (OPM, 2022a). Public servants were quickly consulted by a specialized agency that interprets the law through a simple process, resulting in less ambiguity in the job tasks of public officials.

Second, proactive administration benefits the target of the policy. The target of proactive administration is the citizen. It is important for citizens to receive good administrative services from public officials. When officials utilize the proactive administration immunity system, they can flexibly interpret and apply laws and regulations from the perspective of citizens. This helps to ensure that policies reflect the realistic conditions that citizens and businesses are facing.

In some cases of proactive administration, governments have sought to provide monetary assistance to citizens quickly during the COVID-19 outbreak, and it is advantageous for citizens to be able to receive and use the assistance quickly, conveniently, and with as little administrative cost as possible. Government workers were paid in ready-to-use cash points linked to credit cards. This was the first policy of its kind, and it was implemented very quickly, with 98.2% of citizens receiving their payments within one month (OPM, 2022a). It also reduced administrative costs by about \$ 44 million (ibid).



In another case, a 'COVID-19 test kit' required about 80 days to be approved by the government. However, the government authorized the kits only 7 days in a special way, considering the emergency of COVID-19, which resulted in sufficient COVID-19 testing in the early days (OPM, 2022a). The company also exported the kits overseas after they proved their performance in South Korea (ibid). Since the best practices of proactive administration include improving administrative services, increasing the convenience of citizens, easing regulations, and improving procedures (Cho, 2023), proactive administration of public servants is mostly beneficial to citizens and companies.

However, when the Board of Audit and Inspection of Korea surveyed 8,623 South Korean public servants, 65% said they were familiar with the proactive administration immunity system, while 34.9% still did not know much about it (BAI, 2021). Therefore, the government should continue to educate and proactive administration for public officials.

Therefore, proactive administration has been successful in achieving policy goals and benefiting policy targets. It can be evaluated as a 'Resilient Success' because the level of understanding and utilization of proactive administration by government employees is not yet sufficient.

### **3) Politics Aspect**

Proactive administration has never been a political issue. It began under the president Moon Jae-in government in 2019 and continued under the new president Yoon Seok-yeol

administration in 2022. The Prime Minister continued to encourage outstanding public servants for proactive administration in 2023 (OPM, 2023). Because proactive administration is about changing the way government works to benefit citizens and businesses, it's not politically controversial and there has not been much opposition.

South Korean citizens are also positive about the government's response to COVID-19. South Korea experienced the MERS crisis (in 2016) and the COVID-19 crisis (in 2020). 2016 was before the implementation of the proactive administration and 2020 was after the implementation of the proactive administration. Cho (2021) investigates government trust in response to epidemic crises by comparing 2016 and 2020. According to Cho (2021), 61% of South Korean citizens reported that their trust in the government decreased during the MERS response, with 37% reporting no change. In contrast, 48% of South Koreans said their trust in the government increased during the COVID-19 response, 52% said there was no change, and 17% said it decreased (ibid).

Taken together, the paper can be rated as a 'Program Success' in terms of politics.

Based on the aforementioned three factors, a proactive administration can be judged to be generally successful based on McConnell's (2010) criteria for policy success.

## **6. Suggestions for how to improve the policy**

### **6-1. Direction of the Policy development**

This paper insist that South Korea's proactive administration has increased public servant work autonomy and reduced work ambiguity in the COVID-19 response. And proactive administration has improved conditions for the street-level bureaucrats that Lipsky said. As a result, proactive administration increased the productivity of government employees during the COVID-19 response, as evidenced by previous studies. In addition, based on the success criteria of McConnell (2010), it can be considered a relatively successful policy.

Therefore, the paper argues for two basic directions for 'proactive administration policy'. First, the Korean government needs to recognize the achievements of proactive administration and continue to promote proactive administration to reform administrations and increase the productivity of public servants. For example, the Korean government has developed a mid-to long-term plan, such as the 'Five-Year Plan for Proactive Administration', which sets out goals and action plans for each year. It would also be a good way to make such plans mandatory by setting them in law.

Second, the government acknowledges that proactive administration is a challenging goal to change the way government employees work and their culture, and sets the goal of the policy as long-term change rather than short-term results. Changing the behavior, culture, and ways of working of

large public organizations and civil servants is not easy to do in a short period of time. The values and reforms of senior officials and the improvement of organizational culture must be implemented comprehensively for proactive administration (Kim, 2020). Civil servants' proactive administration is influenced by the individual civil servant, the administrative culture and atmosphere, supervisors, colleagues, and citizens (Kim and Kwon, 2021). This is why governments need to be patient with the policy, even if it does not produce satisfactory results in the short term. In particular, the government should consider promoting proactive administration policy with a focus on the younger generation. As of 2020, 40% of the MZ generation of civil servants are aged 30 or younger, and this proportion will increase in the future. So, young civil servants are the main target of the government's proactive administration policy, and the policy should be developed according to their characteristics.

The essay suggests four different ways for the Korean government to develop proactive administration. The first is to increase job autonomy. The second is to reduce job ambiguity. The third is how to improve the working conditions of frontline bureaucrats in relation to Lipsky's theory. These three points are related to the overall development of active public administration. Finally, the paper proposes specific incentives for proactive administration based on the characteristics of the younger generation.

## **6-2. Measures to Develop a Positive Administration to Increase Work Autonomy**

Proactive administration immunity is an important tool for

promoting work autonomy. Thanks to proactive administration immunity, public officials have the flexibility to interpret laws and regulations and to make choices about the method and process of performing their tasks.

**1) Enhance education on proactive administration immunity for public officials : especially middle management.**

First, governments need to make sure that public officials know how to use proactive administration immunity systems and that they have confidence in its effectiveness. The government should continue to educate and promote the use of proactive administration immunity systems such as pre-consultation and proactive administration committees (Choi and Cho, 2022), and disseminate various cases of the immunity to public officials. Government officials still perceive that they are more likely to be criticized in an audit if they are proactive than if they are immune from liability for issues arising out of the proactive process (BAI, 2021), so the government should continue to make efforts to increase officials' confidence in the proactive administration immunity system.

Second, the government should strongly educate mid-level executives, such as managers and team leaders, about proactive administration immunity. And it should continue its efforts to encourage mid-level executives to utilize it. This is because government employees usually make decisions as part of a group. When they do things, they often consult their superiors and get their approval. It is important for mid-level executives, such as department heads, to have a good understanding of proactive administration immunity system so that they can propose policies to their subordinates and use it

effectively. In addition, if middle management is not aware of the proactive administration immunity system, they may reject meaningful proactive administration offers made by government officials.

## **2) Operate a specialized organization and staff for proactive administration immunity system.**

The government should create and staff a separate organization for proactive administration immunity system in each ministry. Currently, pre-consultation is carried out by the audit departments of each ministry in addition to BAI (OPM, 2019).

However, the audit departments do not have sufficient capacity, including the deployment of specialized experts and the establishment of a specialized team, to fully utilize proactive administration immunity system (Choi and Cho, 2022).

Therefore, it is important to establish a separate organization (specialized pre-consultation team) within the audit department to handle proactive administration immunity system, and to staff it with specialized experts. In addition, public servants should be able to ask questions about the process and procedures for using proactive administration immunity system at any time if they have any questions in the course of their work, and there should be a function to actively guide them through the process (BAI, 2021). So, it is necessary to provide information and guidance on proactive administration immunity system through a dedicated organization.

### **3) Organizations support proactive administration immunity system for public officials**

Proactive administration immunity system is not only about the individual government employee, but also about the organization responding together to keep government employees safe (Choi and Cho, 2022). If an official is criticized by an audit, the government official must personally prove that their work is proactive administration.

However, it is not easy for an individual government official to prove it, and it takes a lot of effort and time. Going forward, it is important for organizations to recognize the proactive administration of government employees and help them work safely. For example, if the proactive administration committee discusses the policy and finds it to be proactive administration, it can forward the proactive administration committee's formal opinion to the auditor and the audit department. Only then will they be able to trust the organization and be proactive.

### **4) Auditors and audit departments are changing the way they audit**

The role of the BAI (The Board of Audit and Inspection) of Korea is very important for proactive administration. The BAI recognizes this, which is why it has a separate organization within the BAI for proactive administration. However, many public officials think that the current audit methods are not conducive to proactive administration (BAI, 2021).

Historically, auditing in South Korea has been based on the

rule of law and emphasized finding instances where government officials violated laws and regulations rather than resolving problems. As a result, many government officials interpreted and applied laws and regulations in a passive way so that they would not get in trouble if they were audited.

To solve this problem, the paper suggests two solutions. First, a collaborative relationship should be established between the administration and the BAI. Because the role of the BAI is to find fault with the work of the administration, they are not used to collaborating with the government. However, in order to advance proactive administration policy, the administration and the BAI need to collaborate. One way to do this is to create meetings and opportunities for collaboration between the Office of the President and the Office of the Prime Minister. The BAI could also organize collaborative meetings and invite the administration to participate. And they should exchange various policy information and collaborate for the policy development.

Next, the BAI should change the way it audits. A research report published by the BAI suggests that the audit system should be operated as a device to induce proactive administration by public officials, and that they should realize that proactive administration immunity is a key policy to create a proactive administration culture beyond the idea that it is simply a means to induce proactive administration (BAI, 2021). The BAI general needs to conduct audits in a way that rewards proactive administrations, giving them immunity when necessary for minor violations of the law, but punishing them severely when they fail to address the problem. In addition, the BAI must not only change the way they audit, but also lead the administration to change the way it audits itself. To do that, it



is necessary to utilize research institutes and educational institutions operated by the BAI to educate audit officials working in the administration and local governments on various cases of proactive administration and to spread audit methods for proactive administration.

### **6-3. Measures to Develop Positive Administration to reduce Work Ambiguity**

#### **1) Clearly define the type of proactive administration**

First, governments should create various types of proactive administration to make them easier for public officials to understand and benchmark. Currently, the government categorizes the types of proactive administrations, but they are abstract and not easy for public servants to apply in their real work. From 2019 to 2022, the South Korean government has selected about 6,400 best practices in proactive administration (OPM, 2022a). And now, all agencies have their own examples of proactive administration, and based on them, they should specifically determine and disclose the types of proactive administration that fit the characteristics of their work. It is important to note that as the administrative environment and public problems change, the type of proactive administration that an organization defines for itself may also change. Therefore, establishing the type of proactive administration is a task that should not be done once, but should be repeated regularly. Governments should recognize that even the same government employee may understand proactive behavior differently depending on their position and organization (Kang and Park, 2019). Therefore, when creating a type of proactive administration, it is necessary to create a standard of proactive

administration that can be understood and accepted by public servants through communication and participation with them.

Second, the government should publish examples and set criteria for proactive administration immunity system, which is the most important aspect of proactive administration. Public servants should be encouraged to be flexible in the performance of their duties and to work hard so that they do not have to worry about being audited and penalized later (Lee, 2020). Public officials in charge of positive administration immunity would also like to see specific improvements in the criteria for determining immunity system (BAI, 2021). There are currently differences in interpretation of the immunity standard between and within agencies, and these differences can undermine the fairness of proactive administration immunity (ibid). In addition, the government should provide information and expand training for public officials to improve their understanding of proactive administration immunity and apply it to their work, including examples of work-related immunity.

Third, the government should improve access to information so that public servants can easily find types and examples of proactive administration. Currently, only best practices are promoted to citizens through the proactive administration website ([www.mpm.go.kr/proactivePublicService](http://www.mpm.go.kr/proactivePublicService)). In the future, it is necessary to disclose a wide range of specific information such as types, guidelines, and cases of immunity, such as court cases. For example, it is important to make it easy for public servants to find examples from the past, other ministries, and local governments as they work. This will make it easier for them to apply practices of proactive administration to their work.

## **2) Reduce ambiguity by revising laws and rules related to proactive administration immunity cases**

Because the administrative environment is always changing, fixed laws and rules are not perfect for solving real-world problems. Therefore, governments are constantly adapting their laws and rules to the real world. And officials use proactive administration immunity to flexibly interpret and apply laws and rules. If a government official uses proactive administration immunity, it is likely that the law and rules are not exactly in line with reality. Therefore, the government needs to collect cases that have used proactive administration immunity and revise the laws and rules accordingly. Because similar issues can always arise again in other cases, changing the laws and rules to reflect reality will reduce ambiguity for other government officials in the future.

The Prime Minister's Office analyzed the cases where proactive administration immunity was granted and revised the laws and regulations to meet the actual situation (OPM, 2022b). This should not be a one-time event, and in the future, all ministries and local governments should continue to revise laws and rules on proactive administration immunity cases to reduce work ambiguity.

## **3) Set clear organizational goals**

Organizational goals are not only the reason and purpose for an organization's existence, but they also influence the attitudes and behaviors of its members (Yang and Cho, 2019).

Goal Clarity is the opposite of goal ambiguity (Park, 2018), Clarity of organizational goals refers to how specific the organization's goals are to individuals (Rainey and Jung, 2015). For public servants to innovate, organizations need to be clear about their goals and provide consistent and specific objectives for government employees (Park and Park, 2021). Top leaders, such as the president, prime minister, and auditor general, should consistently express their interest in proactive administration and deliver messages emphasizing proactive administration to citizens and government employees. South Korea's civil service has the characteristics of a bureaucracy, which means that the thoughts and will of the top leaders can have a lot of influence on many civil service organizations. If an organization's leaders clearly state that the organization's goal is to solve a social problem and that they expect officials to try a variety of proactive administrations, including flexible interpretations of laws and regulations, then officials can clearly understand and act on the organization's goals.

#### **4) Proactive administration leadership from managers**

The government needs to strengthen the leadership of managers in proactive administration. Leadership is an important asset for an organization, and the appropriate leadership for an organization is essential to its performance (Lee, 2020).

Organizational leaders need to engage in specific practices of transformational leadership, such as giving clear work instructions, explaining the meaning of work, providing new perspectives, checking in with subordinates to see how they are

thinking about their work, and taking an interest in the individual, in order to foster more proactive administration in government employees (Lim and Eun, 2022). The government should have a proactive administration leadership program for each level, and mandate that managers review organizational goals and provide clear feedback. And since the success of proactive administration is more important to be experienced by citizens than by government officials, leadership training should be designed to meet the interests of citizens (Kim, 2020).

Communication between managers and officials is also important. When employees do not feel a human connection with their bosses and do not have fun at work, their performance decreases and the energy of the organization is negatively impacted (Kim, 2022). Public servants can be more effective in their jobs when they are well communicated vertically and horizontally within the organization (Jung, 2022). To further generate proactive administration, there needs to be a change in the way of communication, and organizations need to improve their communication capabilities (ibid). In particular, since various generations work together in public organizations, special efforts are needed to overcome emotional and cultural differences between generations and to understand each other. Korean government organizations are no longer able to achieve results through one-way direction and obedience as in the past.

#### **6-4. Improve working conditions for Street-level bureaucracy.**

##### **1) Secure a budget for a proactive administration**

Governments should also take steps to ensure that the resources and conditions are in place to enable civil servants

to be proactive administration on the frontline.

If the required salaries and performance bonuses are not attractive, it may be difficult to retain talented workers and enhance competitiveness (Hwang and Shim, 2004). Low pay is the top reason young South Korean public servants quit their jobs (Seo and Kang, 2022). The government needs to dramatically increase the number of proactive administration awards and performance bonuses, but the problem is funding. Since the funds are taxes, it is difficult to secure them as easily as private companies. The government, in consultation with the National Assembly, should try to find sufficient funding for proactive administration. When government officials lack the manpower and budget for proactive administration, it is also necessary for the organization to support them quickly. Proactive administration often requires more manpower and budget, and if this is not supported in time, the efforts of government officials may not be effective.

## **2) Establish a professional organization for a proactive administration**

Proactive administration is a policy that involves many ministries and requires them to work together. Regarding positive administration, 'the Ministry of Personnel Management' is responsible for central government employees, and 'the Ministry of the Interior and Safety' is in charge of local government employees. 'The Ministry of Education' is in responsible for employees of educational institutions, and 'the Ministry of Economy and Finance' oversees employees of public institutions. 'The Board of Audit and Inspection of Korea' is in responsibility for pre-consultation and the Ministry of

Government Legislation was in charge of interpreting laws and regulations. This decentralized promotion system has certain limitations due to the lack of comprehensive and systematic promotion and the lack of a ministry with final responsibility (Cho, 2023). Therefore, for effective implementation, a higher-level organization is needed to manage all information related to a proactive administration and to comprehensively coordinate and operate policies.

Governments should establish an organization that leads proactive administration, ideally within the Office of the President or the Office of the Prime Minister, which has authority over ministries. This ensures that the government has a strong commitment to proactive administration and that resources and information are shared seamlessly. Government employees can trust and rely on the government's commitment to proactive administration.

At the same time, governments should recognize that proactive administration is a long-term approach to changing culture and behavior. Governments need to be persistent in their efforts with civil servants, even if they do not see the desired results in the short term. It is important for governments to keep track of the situation and conditions of government employees on the ground, and to focus on issues and information, and to provide quick remedies and feedback to improve them.

### **3) Work-life balance**

Work-life balance is a very important value for young government employees and the younger generation. The demand for work-life balance shows that our society has entered the developed country (Lim and Eun, 2022). If work-life balance becomes incongruent, younger generations are likely to become dissatisfied, which can lead to turnover, disengagement, and organizational disengagement (ibid). Governments can no longer rely on emphasizing work ethic to motivate civil servants as they have in the past.

Therefore, governments should endeavor to design work systems that allow for work-life balance in line with the changing times. For example, they should avoid regularly holding internal meetings every Sunday, and reduce the practice of forcing employees to work unnecessary overtime. If governments must work weekends or overtime, they should provide working conditions that younger generations can understand, such as compensating them accordingly and giving them alternative days off. If the working environment and unreasonable culture are not understood by young government employees, it can have a negative impact on proactive administration.

### **6-5. Suggestions for proactive administration incentives**

#### **1) The meaning of incentives and the characteristics of the new generation (MZ) of government workers**

Public organizations accomplish their goals through the labor



of public employees and pay them in compensation for their work. In recent years, performance-based compensation has become increasingly important in public organizations, so it is difficult to change the behavior of public employees and achieve organizational goals with the same compensation method as in the past. Therefore, it tries to motivate officials by rewarding high performance with high rewards, which is called an incentive system (Hwang and Shim, 2004). Increasing the efficiency and productivity of public organizations is no longer as easy as it used to be, with government dictates and an emphasis on work ethic (ibid).

The purpose of incentives is to change the behavior of public servants. By changing their performance, they can better solve social problems and provide better administrative services to citizens. However, governments must recognize that this is not a simple or easy task. Changing the behavior of public servants and the culture of public organizations is not easily accomplished by a single action. Governments can expect to achieve behavior change when they improve organizational culture and ways of working through a combination of policies and offer incentives that civil servants agree with. Change can happen when governments are patient and committed to a combination of measures over a long period of time. Every generation has different work values and attitudes (Harber, 2011). Government employees under 30 years (Generation MZ) want to be well-informed in the workplace, and they want to be able to actively voice their opinions, allow dissent, and be recognized for their work (Gaidhani et al., 2019).

South Korea's Generation MZ public servants value fairness and tend to perceive that current promotions and evaluations

are not fair enough, which is linked to their passion for their work (Kim, 2021). According to the 2020 statistics, the MZ generation of public servants accounted for about 40% of all public servants, so effective organizational and human resource management measures for the MZ generation of public servants are required (ibid).

The phenomenon of young public servants leaving the public workplace is serious, as the number of retirements of new public servants under 5 years old in 2020 (9,258 people) doubled compared to the number of retirements in 2017 (5,181 people) (Choi, 2021).

The South Korean government has been studying the characteristics of younger civil servants through surveys of civil servants' perceptions. According to an analysis by the Korean Administrative Service (2022), younger civil servants have different characteristics from those in their 50s. Younger public servants are less likely to be interested in the organization and their colleagues, and less likely to be committed to the organization (ibid). In particular, in a survey related to innovative behavior, the percentage of positive responses did not exceed 50% for public servants in their 20s, 30s, and 40s, except for those in their 50s (ibid), and innovative behavior is closely related to proactive administration. Recently, it was reported in the media that a young employee of a private company in South Korea publicly demanded that the company's CEO disclose the criteria for performance pay (Son, 2021). In the public sector, performance appraisals are also an important element of fairness perception for MZ public servants (Kim, 2021). Therefore, it is important for the government to find ways to change the younger generation to improve

proactive administration policies.

## **2) Suggest proactive administration incentives**

### **(1) Financial incentives**

Traditionally, the compensation system for public servants in South Korea has been based on a wage system that emphasizes years of service and experience rather than individual ability or performance (Lee, 2010). However, since the late 20th century, the introduction of performance-oriented compensation systems has spread to increase the competitiveness and productivity of public employees (ibid). Public organizations need to improve the current pay system to increase meritocracy (Hwang and Shim, 2004), but the overall reorganization of the remuneration system should be done carefully to ensure the stable operation of the huge public service. Because public organizations are different from private companies, governments must consider many variables, including how they are funded, the nature of their work, and their organizational culture.

A typical incentive system that increases the financial gain and status of government employees is promotion. Korean civil servants perceive reputation to be more important than ability in determining general evaluations and promotions (Park, 2012). However, since proactive administration is judged based on the specific actions of public servants, it can be said that ability is prioritized differently from general evaluation. Governments should also be cautious about using promotions as an incentive. Extraordinary promotions may not be the realistic proactive administration incentive that many public servants want and expect. The South Korean civil service is highly

hierarchical, and extraordinary promotions can actually be a burden to civil servants. In addition, the government has strict regulations on the number of people at each level of the civil service, and there are many practical difficulties in promotion due to fierce competition for promotion. Therefore, rather than unconditional promotion, it is necessary to prepare a reasonable promotion plan by collecting opinions from members of the organization. Also, regulations on human resources need to be alleviated.

The current performance pay system has its limitations. According to a study by Lee (2010), performance bonus systems do not have a high impact on public servants' motivation. Public servants' awareness and satisfaction with the performance-based pay system is moderate, and they have a low opinion of its fairness (ibid). Lee (2016) also found that the share of performance pay has no significant moderating effect on motivation. Therefore, it cannot be said that modifying the current performance-based pay system will lead to effective motivation of public servants.

The paper presents three ideas for monetary incentives. The first is a bounty. Not just any bounty, but an extraordinary bounty. It is necessary to provide high rewards of more than 50% of the annual salary for excellent proactive administration performance to bring about a significant change in the behavior of public servants.

The second is to provide an accumulative proactive administration allowance. It is also a good idea to design the proactive administration allowance in such a way that the allowance gradually increases as the proactive administration is

repeated. For example, government employee 'A' received an proactive administration allowance of 100,000won per month for one year. The following year, if 'A' performs proactive administration again, the allowance will increase to 200,000 won. This can encourage repeated proactive administrative behavior.

The third is to provide benefits. For example, gift certificates and accommodation vouchers for traveling with family, or paying for medical examinations can be incentives.

Because monetary incentives are tied to the labor costs of government employees, it require a budget. The budget can only be secured with the consent of the National Assembly. The government must operate with a commitment to rewarding tangible performance in order to convince the public and the National Assembly that the budget is available. In addition, governments should not simply hand out monetary incentives on a regular basis, but should evaluate them fairly, focusing only on performance, with the principle of "incentives only when there is performance".

## **(2) Non-financial incentives**

Non-monetary incentives are an important factor in motivating government employees. This is because, in general, people who are motivated to do something more beneficial for society and the public good than those who work in the private sector often become public servants, and they tend to value intrinsic rewards, such as the reward and fulfillment of 'contributing to society' based on work performance and achievement, more than extrinsic rewards, such as allowances

and remuneration (Kim, 2003). As such, non-monetary incentives are important, and the report suggests three non-monetary incentives.

First, the government could make an proactive administration disciplinary mitigation system. Currently, government employees are entitled to relief from discipline if they receive certain levels of awards and recognition. If an official can receive a disciplinary reduction for winning an award for proactive administration, this can be an important proactive administration incentive. By reducing disciplinary action, an official may have more leeway to engage in challenging proactive administration in the future.

The second is an incentive that gives officials the opportunity to choose their next assignment. If they can choose what they want to do next based on their experience in proactive administration, this can be a good incentive. However, this is a challenging step. Public organizations may have difficulty giving employees the opportunity to choose their work because they have to manage the entire workforce. Therefore, a flexible method is needed that allows the employee to present multiple alternatives and the organization to consider their input and make a consensus choice for their next assignment.

The third is to raise the honor of public officials through educational programs. Civil servants have the opportunity to explain their experience in proactive administration to their colleagues in the organization. While this can be a burden for them, it can also be a source of honor. It can also be a good learning opportunity for the organization.

### **(3) Participate in developing organization-specific incentives**

First, each organization should participate and take into account the opinions of its members, including young civil servants, when designing incentives. The role of government employees varies across organizations and settings. Therefore, each government employee has different interests and different incentives. In order for governments to change their civil servants, they need to provide them with the necessary incentives. It is necessary to create a system that allows civil servants to present the incentives they usually want (Lim and Eun, 2022). Each ministry can survey and reflect the incentives that civil servants want whenever it develops an annual proactive administration promotion plan.

Second, each ministry should support the creation and frequent operation of internal proactive administration meetings and study groups. This takes into account the participatory nature of Generation MZ. Through voluntary study groups, ministries should allow them to freely express their opinions on the development of proactive administration and accept and implement important opinions into the proactive administration system. If civil servants propose various ways to increase autonomy in the process of handling their actual work and accept them as a system, proactive administration will be able to work a large role in securing autonomy.

### **(4) Operating a reasonable evaluation system**

Rewarding performance is important in public organizations, but the problem is that it's not easy to accurately measure the

performance of government employees when compared to private companies. Therefore, governments should strive to operate a reasonable evaluation system that measures performance. Proper evaluation of proactive administration is the starting point for changing public servants' behavior through incentives. To help achieve this, the paper proposes four ideas.

The first is to involve younger civil servants as members of the Proactive Administration Committee. Currently, the committee is mostly composed of senior civil servants at the executive level. In the future, MZ generation officials who are in charge of practical work should be involved so that the opinions of practical officials can be actively reflected in the process of developing the system of proactive administration and selecting best cases. This will provide Generation MZ with sufficient information about proactive administration and play a positive role in enhancing the fairness of proactive administration evaluation. The proactive administration committee could use a method that allows employees to make nominations when selecting proactive administration best practices.

Second, governments should provide opportunities for public servants to be selected for best practices in proactive administration, no matter what their job tasks, if they put in the effort. Currently, many best practices of proactive administration are selected among the priority projects of ministries, which may lead to the perception that only some public servants are capable of proactive administration (Choi and Cho, 2019). When looking at the government's best practices for proactive administration, there are many examples



of external performance, but not many examples of internal administrative efficiency, collaboration, or process improvement (Cho, 2023). In this case, departments that are not related to important projects or those in charge of general management are unlikely to be recognized as proactive administrators no matter how well they perform their tasks. Therefore, governments need to encourage a set of behaviors that improve inefficient processes and procedures to reduce the time it takes to get things done or reduce the amount of labor or money it takes to get things done (Choi, 2021).

Third, the government have to grant ministries more autonomy in evaluating a proactive administration. Each ministry should have the discretion to evaluate and provide incentives for proactive administration autonomously (Hwang and Shim, 2004). Governments should provide only broad guidelines and allow ministries to determine specifics in consultation with their own employees. And governments should share best practices so that other ministries can benchmark themselves. The government should provide policy guidelines and let agencies work out the details on their own. This could help agencies reflect the opinions of their civil servants and the unique nature of their work in their proactive administration planning and evaluation. And the government should share information about how it evaluates and incentives the best organizations so that other organizations can benchmark themselves.

#### **(5) Implement team and group-based incentives**

The Korean government is based on a bureaucracy and the organizational structure is hierarchical, meaning that most

decisions are made and implemented at the team and group level. Each government employee has their own job, but in most cases, they make decisions in consultation with their supervisor. The implementation of policies is often done in collaboration with their teams and other teams.

Therefore, it is often reasonable to consider the achievements of proactive administration as the work of teams and groups, as well as the efforts of a single official. Nevertheless, current proactive administration evaluation and rewards are focused on the individual public servant. As a result, reasonable evaluation and reward of colleagues and supervisors who work with and support proactive administration performance may be missed. If a public servant contributes to a colleague's proactive administration performance and is not recognised and rewarded, they may feel disappointed or unjustified. This can have a negative impact on the spread of proactive administration at an organization-wide level. For this reason, the government should introduce measures to evaluate and reward individuals as well as teams and groups based on proactive administration performance.

For example, if supervisors and colleagues have helped with proactive administration performance, agencies could consider evaluating and rewarding supervisors and colleagues as well, or creating a team or group evaluation and reward system. If supervisors and coworkers are evaluated and rewarded reasonably for their contributions to proactivity, it can have a positive impact on supervisor leadership and coworker collaboration. This can also help many government employees change their behavior by taking an interest in proactive administration and expecting meaningful results.

## **(6) Introducing and operating the 'Proactive administration assistance' system**

As mentioned above, proactive administration in the public workplace is often a collaborative effort between many individuals. Nevertheless, if incentives are given to only one public servant, their supervisors and coworkers could be disappointed, which could negatively affect the collaboration for the next proactive administration. Therefore, it is essential to create an incentive structure that allows public servants to cooperate and support each other's proactive administration.

Specifically, the report suggests an 'proactive administration assistant system'. The main targets of the 'Proactive administration assistant system' are organizational leaders, such as team leaders, department heads, and bureau chiefs, but in some cases, fellow employees who cooperate with them may also be eligible. If a supervisor or co-worker is recognized as providing clear assistance to a government employee in the course of their proactive administration, they should be recognized as a proactive administration assistant.

As a result, a manager can record multiple proactive administration assists if they help and support a large number of subordinates to be proactive administration. This can be a meaningful indicator of a manager's willingness, ability, and leadership to be proactive administration. Each agency could reflect managers' proactive administration assistance performance in their performance evaluation, or give proactive administration assistance awards on a regular basis. For example, ministries should consider recognizing the best

proactive administration assistants twice a year by agency heads, publicizing their specific achievements internally and externally, and providing appropriate incentives.

## **7. Conclusion**

In February 2019, proactive administration in South Korea emerged as a new paradigm for HR innovation in public organizations (Cho, Kim, and Park, 2020). In 2019, the government announced a plan to promote proactive administration and quickly completed the preparation of the proactive administration systems for public servants to use in their work. And in 2020, civil servants utilized the proactive administration systems in the COVID-19 response process.

Based on the literature, this paper examines how proactive administration affected the productivity of public servants in South Korea's COVID-19 response in terms of work autonomy, work ambiguity, and Lipsky's street-level bureaucrats. The results indicate that proactive administration increases work autonomy and reduces work ambiguity. It also improved the working conditions of street-level bureaucrats as defined by Lipsky. Therefore, the paper concludes that a proactive administration in Korea has played a positive role in increasing public employee productivity during the COVID-19 pandemic.

And the paper judged proactive administration based on McConnell's (2010) criteria for policy success. At the process level, it was found to have secured legitimacy but lacked opportunities for procedural consultation. At the program level,

the policy achieved some of its objectives and provided benefits to the policy targets. However, it is not yet possible to say that the way of working of many public servants has completely changed to proactive administration and provided better administrative services that most citizens have experienced. Finally, at the Politics level, the program secured citizen support and proceeded without political opposition or controversy. Overall, the paper concludes that proactive administration is a relatively successful policy.

The government should continue to promote proactive administration because it has a positive impact on increasing the capability and productivity of civil servants. Governments need to implement a variety of approaches, such as establishing a five-year plan for proactive administration. And since it's difficult to change the culture of government employees, it's important to take a long-term perspective.

The report makes specific recommendations for the development of the proactive administration system. The government should strengthen the proactive administration immunity system to increase job autonomy, and it should operate a dedicated organization and staff to do so. It also suggests that the current audit approach, which focuses on discipline and detection, should be changed to support proactive administration, and that the government and auditors need to work together.

To reduce work ambiguity, the government need to continue to spread examples of proactive administration and clarify its types. Organizational goals should be clarified and managerial leadership should be developed. To improve the working

conditions of front-line public servants, the government should secure sufficient budgets for proactive administration and expand communication with the field through the proactive administration general organization. In addition, efforts should be made to ensure work-life balance, reflecting the characteristics of the MZ generation.

The report also recommends a number of proactive administration incentives. Monetary incentives include extraordinary rewards and accumulative proactive administration allowances. However, monetary incentives are limited when compared to private companies because public organizations must be allocated a budget. Therefore, the government should clarify and operate a 'pay-for-performance' policy to convince the National Assembly and the public.

The report suggests using non-monetary incentives to reduce government discipline. Other incentive measures include allowing civil servants to choose their own jobs and participation in educational programs. Reflecting the characteristics of Generation MZ, the paper suggested various ways for employees to participate in the development of the agency's proactive administration incentives and to participate in the operation of a reasonable evaluation system. In addition, the report argued that team and group-level incentives are needed to take into account the way of working in the public sector, and proposed the introduction of a new system of 'proactive administration assistant'.

Meanwhile, governments should be cautious about simply benchmarking corporate or foreign incentive practices. Organizations have different goals, environments, and ways of

working. What's important is to find incentives that people in your organization want and that align with your goals, context, and culture. Only then will it help increase productivity. Since the Korean civil service has different characteristics in each agency, it is likely that incentives will work best if they are created internally, with communication between managers and employees.

For South Korea's public organizations, proactive administration is the ultimate administrative reform that should not be a one-time event (Kim, 2020). To meet the challenges of a rapidly changing administration, proactive administration should continue to be promoted. Governments already know that the one-size-fits-all approach of the past is not a sufficient solution, and they recognize the need for proactive administration to respond to situations of high uncertainty (Lee, 2020).

This paper is meaningful in that it analyzes the performance and success of proactive administration of the COVID-19 response from the perspective of work autonomy, work ambiguity, and local bureaucrats. Nevertheless, the paper has its limitations. First of all, the paper analyzed the impact of proactive administration based on publicly available data, but there were limitations such as confidentiality of internal data of administrative organizations and lack of public perception surveys. Also, since proactive administration only began in 2019, there is not yet enough research on its outcomes.

The report hopes that in the future, the government will conduct a survey on the perceptions of public officials related to proactive administration, conduct in-depth interviews, and

analyze their performance, and at the same time, experts will conduct meaningful further research. In addition, the paper looks forward to further research to develop proactive administration at the organizational level, as proactive administration is both an individual and an organizational issue. In particular, since proactive administration is both an individual issue and an organizational issue, it seems that research is needed to develop proactive administration at the organizational level.



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