

# 613 reading note

Tian Chen

January 26, 2022

## 1 Introduction

In this paper, the authors explain the gender difference in a representative of the high-skilled profession, the legal profession. Using the data from After the JD, a longitudinal survey of lawyers in the US, the regression analysis shows that the gender difference exists in the legal profession in the US. Specifically, *ceteris paribus*, the male lawyers outperform the female lawyers in the hours billed and new client revenue. To explain the results, the authors propose that such difference can be attributed to the female's responsibility of children caring and difference in aspiration. In general, the paper finds that gender difference exists even in high-skill professions where people should have similar skills and the performance measures are transparent.

## 2 Body

Inspired by the previous research on gender differences and the fact that women and men should have similar characteristics, skills, and training, the paper tries to show that gender differences significantly affect lawyers' performance.

The data source of this article is from After the JD, a nationally representative sample of American lawyers. The authors choose two variables to measure the lawyer's performance in their industry. The first one is the hours billed, and the second performance measure is the new client revenue. The authors adopt OLS regression to estimate how gender affects the lawyer's performance in the empirical section. The authors also control for demographic differences such as the number of children and the ethnic group, the firm's information, educational difference, and areas of law. The regression also controls the regional fixed effects to avoid the omitted variable bias.

In the extension, the authors propose a mechanism to explain the results. Primarily, they find that child care responsibility and aspiration play significant roles in the gender difference. In particular, the regression results show that female lawyers with young children have lower income, indicating that they take more share of child care responsibility than the male. Moreover, a female's career aspiration formed at the early stage of life also affects her performance.

### 3 Conclusion

In conclusion, this paper complemented the research regarding gender differences in industries. The paper also shows that even in the industry with similar training and skills, gender difference still plays a vital role in a career performance. Many factors contribute to the difference in performance, some from household responsibility, and some are formed even at the people's early ages.

One concern of this paper is its identification strategy. Even though gender is an exogenous variable and the regression control for many individual differences, omitted variable bias is still a problem. For example, the model does not control the year-fixed effects, so the time-variable omitted variables may bias the estimates. Moreover, previous research on human capital already shows that early-age human capital investments and conditions are correlated with children's future work performance. The difference in performance may also be attributed to the characteristics, such as parents' pregnant conditions and education at the early childhood, which are predetermined at the early stage of life.