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Reading note 1

This article explored the relationship between the gender gap and the performance among high-skilled professionals. Specifically, it analyzed the differential impact across genders since male layer’s bill 10 percent more hours and bring in more than twice as much new client revenue as female layers. This article argues that the differences in performance between genders translates to the differences in salaries and the differences in chances of promotions which leads to higher future income. At the same time, this article also examines several assumptions that the difference in performance could been attributed to, e.g., gender bias from the employer, child rearing and career aspiration.

The article starts its proof by analyzing the data comes from a survey for a particular group of lawyers from 2002 and 2007 and using the linear regression model. In order to explain the difference in performance, the paper not only uses the annual number of hours billed by lawyers but also pays extra attention to how much revenue new clients the lawyer brought generated in one year. Firstly, the article proves the positive relation between the gender gap and the performance. Then the author considers target hours and ratios of hours as dependent variables and performs multi-variable linear regression based on gender. It concludes that there is no gender gap on target hours and there is gender gap not due to actual hours worked. Next comes to the most interesting part I believe——the paper tries to analyze why the gender gap can lead to the difference in performance. The first possible factor is lawyer’s specialty. The empirical output shows that the coefficient is small. This subsequently suggest that gender gap was only caused slightly by the areas of laws.

Empirically, there are another three hypothesizes about the gender gap: gender bias, child rearing and aspiration. First, the gender bias can come from not enough assignment hours and discounted wages per hour. By analyzing the data, the author finds that the discrimination can interfere the performance, but this is not crucial and claims that “there is no differential effect on gender bias for performance”. The child rearing hypothesis seems to be plausible since it decreases the hours billed for female lawyers. However, it is still not the key cause to the gender gap because child rearing has no effect on revenue brought by client. In addition to that, the article also analyzed factors such as occupational aspiration, which was then proven to be significant.

At the end, this article concludes that there is indeed a gender gap in performance. For the hypothesizes proposed earlier in the article, it concludes that, even though some of the hypothesizes does have lightly effects on the performance of a lawyer, none of these hypothesizes quite explains the big gender gap in earning. Therefore, this paper concludes that performance is the determining factor in earning. In another word, it is the gender gap in performance that causes the gender gap in earning for the labor market of the lawyers.

Nevertheless, in my own view, this paper contains at least two logical fallacies when doing its analysis. First, this paper assumes that the quality of the education received by a lawyer can be used to directly measure the ability of him/her. However, this not necessarily true and is usually a bad estimation. Second, some possible pre-conditions of the variables been considered are not fully analyzed. For example, big lawyer corporations tend to hire more male lawyers which makes the dataset already biased. Therefore, I think this paper needs to address these logical fallacies in order to convince its audience that the income gap between genders is indeed caused by the performance gap between genders.