

Reading Notes 1

There is a gender gap in performance among high-skilled people in the United States, and the reason is unclear. This paper analyzed reasons for the gender gap in the lawyer profession. After regression analysis for a variety of possible causes, authors found that gender differences in impact of young children and aspiration partly explained the differences in male and female lawyers' performance. In addition, this paper proposed that the gender performance gap will be enlarged in the future in the law profession.

This paper mainly used the method of linear regression to analyze the differences between male and female lawyers' professional performance. Based on previous studies, authors proposed some hypotheses that may influence the results. After that, some variables were defined according to these hypotheses. Finally, regression analysis was conducted to verify whether these assumptions had an impact on male and female performance differences. The article is based on interviews conducted in 2002 and 2007 by AJD, an organization that surveys lawyers. Lawyers who received the survey were employed by different institutions, so the data are highly representative. Lawyer performance is an abstract concept and cannot be directly reflected. The author selected the "hours billed" and "new client revenue", which are widely used in the lawyer industry, to reflect performance. It is worth mentioning that the performance indicators of other industries are often inconsistent so it is not conducive to horizontal comparison between companies, which is also one of the reasons why the author chooses the lawyer profession to study.

In the first half of this paper, performance was selected as the dependent variable. In the second half, income was chosen as the dependent variable. Moreover, two indicators of performance were added respectively into the regression of income as control variables. After determining the dependent variables, authors put forward some factors influencing the performance differences between male and female lawyers based on facts and previous studies, and thus identify some independent variables. We already know that there is a gender gap in lawyer profession performance. As long as the gender is no longer significant after adding an independent variable, this independent variable can explain the gender gap. Based on this logic, authors put forward some conclusions. These independent variables include "total hours worked", "specialty", "discrimination", "child rearing", "career aspirations", "overbilling", "networking" and "working on weekends". Authors found: (1) Total hours worked is not the cause of gender

performance gap; (2) The legal field explains only a small part of the gender performance difference; (3) Discrimination is not a good explanation for the gender gap; (4) Raising children helps to explain the gender gap in hours billed, but not new client earnings; (5) Career Aspirations can well explain the gender gap; (6) Overbilling can't explain gender gap; (7) Networking is not a good explanation for the gender gap; (8) Weekend work has an important positive effect on lawyers' performance, but it does not explain the gender gap well. In addition, authors demonstrated the importance of controlling differences in working performance and there is a correlation between job performance and income. Finally, authors suggested that performance indicators explain much of the gender gap in promotions.

In conclusion, this paper is based on the fact that there is a gender gap in high-skilled occupations, and explored the reason for this in the law profession. Among many hypotheses, career aspirations and child rearing can better explain the gender gap. In addition, authors demonstrated the effect of gender performance gaps on gender gaps in earnings and promotion. In my opinion, this is a successful econometric paper. By means of regression, several reasons for occupational gender differences are well verified. Moreover, these reasons are derived from other research, which increases the reliability and value of the research. But this paper also has limitations. First, reasons for the gap between men and women in the legal profession are not necessarily representative of other high-skilled professions. For example, lawyers and other high-skilled groups may have cognitive differences: lawyers are usually more rigorous and fair, while stock analysts tend to prioritize how to make money. Furthermore, the success of this article cannot be achieved without comprehensive data support. In other high-skilled occupations where the performance data are inconsistent, it seems that the causes of the gender gap are being examined in different ways. Finally, gender differences in effects of aspirations and child rearing remain to be explored.