

Reading notes on "*Gender Gaps in Performance: Evidence from Young Lawyers*"

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This article conducts a research on gender gap in performance and its determinants based on the evidence from young lawyers. It takes the hours billed to clients and new client revenue raised as performance measures of the lawyers. The results reveal that male lawyers perform better in the both measures than female lawyers.

Two widely-accepted methods used to measure lawyers' performance are adopted by this article. The first one is known as billable hours. To be specific, billable hours method values legal service by the product of hourly fees and the number of hours devoted to a case. The billable hours are stipulated by most law firms and the time of devoting to the cases are accurately recorded, which makes the data easily available and let it clearly reflect the productivity of lawyers. The second method is new client revenue. Bringing more new clients shows the working ability, network ability, and reputation of a lawyer, hence a great measure of working performance.

The data of the empirical part is from After the JD, a representative survey of lawyers in the United States. The first performance indicator is billing hours, which is suggested by the total billing hours of lawyers in the year before the survey. For the second measure, the article take the part of revenue of firms that caused by bringing new clients by the lawyers in the year before the survey.

In the empirical part, the research concludes that gender gap in performance is significant in both measures of performance even when controlling some individual and firm characteristics. In particular, male lawyers bill more hours and bring more new clients than female lawyers on average. To further explore it, the author lists some potential explanations

for this gender gap- discrimination and child rearing as well as some additional hypotheses. As empirical research is conducted, discrimination is excluded but child rearing turns out can help to explain gender difference in hours billed but not client revenue. Also, the aspiration to become a partner can partly account for the gender gap.

Further, the author measures the role of performance in the earnings and performance. It suggests that the performance is crucial in these two parts.

As a conclusion, the article demonstrates that there is a large gender gap in working performance, which would greatly affect the earnings and promotion. For the explanation of this gap, the presence of children and career aspiration may play an important role.