Fatherhood Premium: A Comprehensive Review on Specialization Theory and Employer's Perception Perspective

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ABSTRACT

Fatherhood premium refers to the positive advantages in careers related to men who have children. The main explanations in the literature of fatherhood premium are the specialization perspective and employers' perceptions and discrimination perspective. This literature review aims to bring together information on the boundary conditions related to or might partly support the two explanations using relevant publications in scholarly journals.

1. INTRODUCTION

Researchers have generally suggested that fatherhood has a positive association with men's earnings and occupational outcomes such as hiring and promotion (Budig & England 2001; Millimet, 2000; Correll et al. 2007), called the fatherhood premium.

The dominant casual explanation of fatherhood premium in the literature is specialization (Becker, 1981). According to Becker's theory of gendered division of labor within families, fathers and mothers would take primary responsibilities in either domestic work such as childbearing or labor participation to increase efficiency (Weagley et al. 2007; Monna& Gauthier, 2008). The resulting hypothesis would be that after entry into parenthood, one partner would lower work effort for childcare and the other to reduce household production for work devotion. The identity theory by Stryker and Burke (Stryker & Burke, 2000) argues that males are traditionally featured as the usual household member acting as the provider role of the family. According to Ihinger-Tallman (1993), fathers' behaviors might essentially be the reflection of their perceptions of the ideal father figure, which includes what division of household labor they agree. Therefore, when fathers are embraced with the clear provider role and committed with the traditional division of household labor, they are highly likely to gain motivation that alters their behaviors in ways that would increase their work effort and wages (Fox & Bruce, 2001; Adamsons, 2010). This perspective is referred to the fatherhood playing as a motivator by Percheski and Wildeman (2008).

However, challenges exist to the specialization perspective. As specialization theory implies a marriage or fatherhood premium in male employees, it also means a marriage or motherhood penalty in females as they are expected to increase their time as caregivers rather than providers. Nevertheless, some researchers reported that mothers who continued to work after childbirth had no clear trend of wage declines (Lundberg & Rose, 2000; Millimet, 2000).

In addition, studies that focused on employed mothers and their marriage status showed evidence of marriage's positive impact on women's career outcomes (Budig & England, 2001). For example, Budig and England (2001) suggested that mothers who were in a stable marriage received bonus in hourly wages compared to unmarried mothers (b= 0.21, p= 0.04). Therefore, the specialization theory is hardly the only explanation of the parenthood effect on employees, since it would be difficult to explain the findings on marriage premium because married women who are likely to have more involvement in the household specialization are seen to receive minor motherhood penalties than unmarried women. Lastly, the specialization hypothesis might not fully operate on conditions such as men whose fatherhood occurs outside marriage, single-fathers, and dual-worker families since it is based on the labor division within partners as family members.

The second theoretical model that explains the association between parenthood and its effect on employees is employers' discrimination. According to this perspective, it is argued that employees may receive organizational rewards or penalties in their careers due to employer's discrimination on their parenthood status. Hodges and Budig (2010) suggest that fatherhood premium reflects workplace's nature as an institution that favors masculinity. According to Acker (1990), workplaces are not designed on gender-neutral premises but instead follow the gender-embedded structure where male workers who better exemplify characteristics such as rational authoritative leadership, heterosexual masculinity, and fatherhood status would receive greater organizational rewards such as employment and promotion. Under such context, the ideal type of employee might be an intensely competent figure who is emotionally stable, sexually attractive and holds authoritative leadership while having a family. (Acker 1990, 153). For instance, researchers have found that a fatherhood premium in wages remained significant even after controlling for factors related to devotion in work, such as time and commitment (Lundberg & Rose, 2002). Correll, Benard, and Paik (2007)

found that participants in laboratory studies showed inclination towards father applicants when rating fictitious resumes. The results of their experiment showed that fatherhood signals greater competency, ability, and commitment than nonfathers and especially mothers.

2. BOUNDARY CONDITIONS

2.1. Marital Status

Most studies reported that fathers in a stable marriage could receive a more significant fatherhood bonus compared to fathers outside marriage. Glauber (2008) applied data from NLSY in 1983-2004 to explore fathers' labor market outcomes and concluded that married fathers would receive a growth in their hourly wages whereas never-married fathers did not. He suggested that marriage combined with fatherhood would produce a larger premium. Hodges & Budig (2010) analyzed NLSY79 that included men born from 1957 to 1964. They found that the odds of residence in married households could contribute approximately half of the fatherhood premium, as controlling the marriage status would make a difference in the b-value from 11% to 6%.

Killewald (2013) concluded a more apparent pattern: fatherhood premium is only concentrated among married fathers but not unmarried fathers. The author used a sample of men in the NLSY79 and divided the fathers into four categories: single, cohabiting, divorced, and married fathers. He found that married residential fathers enjoy an approximately 3.7% increase in their earnings than married non-fathers. However, unmarried fathers only seem to receive a slight fatherhood premium, and the differences between single and divorced fathers are insignificant.

While it is generally supported that fatherhood premium is significantly larger among married fathers compared to unmarried fathers and the provider role for the former group is more critical (Cooksey & Fondell, 1996), some argue that unmarried fathers might reallocate

their time from education or leisure to paid work, which somehow consists of married fathers taking fewer caregiver roles (Astone et al., 2010). This is consistent with Becker's idea of specialization because both groups show patterns that they decrease the time in household production and increase the time devoted to labor markets as one of the consequences of fatherhood. Others suggest that marriage will put more social pressure on fathers to support their families financially through increasing their work effort (Waller, 2005). Noted by Percheski and Wildeman (2008), unmarried or nonresidential fathers might receive less organizational rewards in workplaces if these statuses imply characteristics of instability. Therefore, specialization might not fully contribute to the differences in fatherhood premium between married and unmarried fathers.

2.2. Working Hours

Many studies suggested that the extended working hours due to fatherhood contributes significantly to the fatherhood premium because increased working hours lead to increased pay. Using data in NSFH2, Kaufman et al. (2000) suggested that fathers tend to work 1.8 more hours per day compared to nonfathers. Furthermore, men with three or more children are willing to work slightly extra hours than men with one child. In addition, fathers with children below 5 work extra 1.3 hours per day than fathers with children above 5.

Fathers were found to increase their working hours by roughly one hour per week with each additional year after the arrival of first childbirth (Percheski & Wildeman, 2008). According to Lundberg and Rose (2000), the fatherhood of a white male worker's hours in paid work are associated with an increase of 82 hours per year in their study with families in PSID. Similar findings were reached by Astone et al. (2010) with an analysis on men's transition into fatherhood and work effort using the data from NLSY79. They found that a 10.9-hour increase in the work time per week could be found among men who welcomed the arrival of their first child before 25. A smaller growth can also be seen among men who experienced transition into

fatherhood at age 25 to 29. Moreover, the increase is minor among men who became fathers after 30.

The supporting evidence that fathers tend to extend their work hours is consistent with the specialization theory. In the meantime, researchers have also pointed out that the extra work effort due to fatherhood is associated with the commitment to the traditional view of parenting and the motivation theory. Kaufman et al. (2000) found that the increase in work hours per week associated with fatherhood is 2 hours less among fathers with a more egalitarian perspective than the traditional view. Percheski and Wildeman (2008) found that married fathers' hours worked were seen with no variety over the five years of observation. Meanwhile, fathers who are cohabiting or nonresidents had an average growth of two hours and four hours per week. Thus, the researchers argued that the model for working hours might stand in more consistency with fatherhood being a motivator than the specialization explanation.

However, some researchers argued that the fatherhood bonus might not be attributable to the extended working hours. Hodges, J., & Budig, J. (2010) hypothesized that controlling work hours should lead to a decrease in the fatherhood bonus if fathers increase their work effort after the first childbirth. However, there were no differences between the fatherhood coefficient from the new model that includes controls for annual working hours fatherhood and the previous one.

2.3. *Spouse Working Status*

Spouse working status might influence fatherhood premium indirectly through affecting male worker's working hours, consistent with the specialization theory. According to Lundberg and Rose's study (2000) with data in PSID, fathers with mothers who were perpetually attached to the labor market reduced their work hours by 50 hours per year, while those who were partnered with nonworking mothers were identified with an increase in their work hours by 118 hours annually after the first childbirth. For the former group, fathers

averagely earn less than non-fathers. The gap in earnings narrows in 4 years after the arrival of the first childbirth and then continues to widen.

Importantly, this pattern might lack generalizability across ethnic groups. For instance, Hodges, J., & Budig, J. (2010) suggested that the impact of fatherhood on Latino men's career varied with their spouses' working hours. Latino fathers who worked as the only breadwinners receive approximately a 30 percent increase in their wages, twice the earning bonus (14 percent) of the Latino fathers married to wives with full-time employment. In contrast, researchers did not find the variance in White and African American households.

However, Lundberg and Rose's studies (2002) on fathers with continuously working mothers stand in contrast to the specialization theory. Researchers found that hours and wages were not positively associated after the first childbirth for both fathers and mothers. Mothers' working hours might decrease while the hourly wages did not; for fathers, the working time might decrease, whereas the hourly wages might grow. The differences in the impact of childbirth on fathers' and mothers' careers suggested that the fatherhood bonus might not be wholly attributable to the specialization in house division of labor but probably stand along with stigmatization in favor of fathers compared to non-fathers.

2.4. Race

Studies that focused on fathers' races have found that married African American men received less fatherhood premium than White and Latino fathers. Glauber (2008), in his research, found that Black fathers experienced a minor growth in their earnings per year compared to White and Latino fathers. He suggested that this might be explained by the change in hourly wages and work time. Married Black men received 2% less fatherhood bonus in their hourly wages compared to White men and Latinos. In addition, due to the institutionalized racial inequalities, the annual work hours of black males were not seen to increase following the childbirth. He concluded that these findings stand along with the hypothesis that employers

tend to provide less organizational rewards on fatherhood to Black male employees as they are perceived to take less breadwinners role, which might partly support the idea that fatherhood premium is somehow the reflection of employer's perception and discrimination.

Hodges and Budig (2010) reached the same result as Glauber (2008) using data from NLSY79. The authors found that average annual earnings for White fathers ($27672) are higher than Latinos ($24526) and Black fathers ($21974), controlling other variables. The authors believed that this variation across racial groups in fatherhood premium was consistent with Collin's (2006) theory that minority groups might be further marginalized due to employer's perceptions on how different group identities are associated with hegemonic masculinity. Winkle and Fasang (2020) examined the wage gap between fathers and non-fathers throughout their entire age range of Black, Hispanic, and White male workers using NLSY79 and NYSL97. They found that fatherhood bonus was primarily seen in early adulthood around age twenty regardless of men's races. In line with Glauber's findings, fatherhood premium is seen as most significant and extends longer in the careers of White men in comparison with Hispanic and Black men. However, only white men with two children received a fatherhood bonus around age twenty. No significant differences were seen after age twenty-four after adjusting for factors related to human capital such as education level and occupational positions.

2.5. Job Characteristics

There is increasing consensus that men might receive more significant organizational rewards due to fatherhood when workplaces institutionally favor their traits (Hodges & Budig, 2010). These traits consistent with masculinity included stable relationships such as marriage, the leadership shown by occupational positions, and job abilities such as technical skills and education. They found that white managers would receive a more significant fatherhood bonus than whites of lower occupational status, whereas the differences were not observed in minority fathers. This pattern could be attributable to hegemonic organizational masculinity: the race

that is institutionally advantaged would combine with higher job positions to result in the most apparent fatherhood premium. Fatherhood premium was also found to be more prominent among men with higher educational attainment and more cognitively demanding occupations. In addition, physical strength does not contribute to the fatherhood bonus, which is somehow consistent with the modern nature of workplaces that values intelligence the most.

Critics regarding study by Hodges and Budig (Cooke & Fullerc, 2018) argued that a lack of attention lies on the differences in fatherhood premium between different groups of occupational positions should be attributed mainly to the sorting to various organizations and establishments. Using surveys that focused on Canadian employees, they found that 37% of the fatherhood bonus in hourly wages is due to the sorting into high-income companies. It seemed that Canadian fathers with higher education attainment or professional positions received smaller fatherhood premiums; however, after controlling for the sorting procedure, they were found to receive most within-organization rewards, which is consistent with the organizational masculinity explanation. Conversely, less-skilled fathers usually attained their fatherhood bonus by sorting into companies that offered higher wages. If controlled for the job changes, they were found to receive little fatherhood bonus compared to highly-educated fathers within the same organization.

2.6. Perceived Commitment and Responsibility

In line with the employer's perception perspective, one reason why fathers do not experience the workplace disadvantages as mothers do could be the image of an ideal father that is usually compatible with the image of an ideal employee under the cultural background in the United States, concluded by Twonsend (2002) after interviewing fathers from the 1970s to unwrap the cultural enigma of fatherhood.

This theory was supported by Fuegen et al. (2004), conducting a laboratory experiment where each participant was asked to evaluate one fictitious applicant's resume for an attorney

position. They found that participants perceived father applicants as less committed, less available, and agentic than non-fathers. However, the time commitment and performance standards that father applicants were required to be successfully hired were significantly lower than the non-father applicant. In other words, parenthood did not become an obstacle in the way of males' job applications. Correll, Benard, and Paik (2007) extended further on Fuegen's experiment by offering the participants a pair of applicants' resumes whose only difference is parenthood status. The results showed that participants would view father applicants as holding higher level of work commitment; in addition, a higher starting salary was offered to father applicants than non-father applicants, given that the past work performances of the two showed equal qualifications.

3. COMPARISON GROUPS

The magnitude of the fatherhood premium might be different depending on the subject to which the premium is compared. In the following paragraphs, I summarize different empirical studies which compared fatherhood against different subjects (i.e., non-fathers, mothers, etc.).

3.1. Fathers vs. Non-fathers

Fathers and non-fathers differ in their attitudes towards marriage, children, and work. According to Bosoni's comparison between employed European fathers and non-fathers, fathers were generally married (90.5%) and rated the existence of children as more essential to the stability of marriage (67.7%), while non-fathers tended not to favor marriage (26.5%) and regarded children as a less important role in marriage (17.6%); fathers considered income as the most crucial factor regarding work (81.7%) and were relatively satisfied with their job (53.4%), non-fathers valued income less (78.6%) and had a lower level of job satisfaction

(45.2%); More non-fathers believed a woman doesn't need to have children for fulfilling herself (56%) than fathers (48.7%).

Baxter et al. (2015) examined changes in men's attitudes towards a gendered division of labor and motherhood after the first childbirth using the Australia HILD. The researchers suggested men tend to shift their attitudes on the domestic labor division towards a more traditional one after entering fatherhood by stating that dual-earner couples probably should not share domestic work equally and mothers should better focus on childcare unless financially necessary.

Dermott (2006) explored the differences in working time of male employees due to fatherhood in the United Kingdom using data sets BHPS and NCDS. Researchers argued that although fathers' average working time outweighed non-fathers working time significantly ($p<0.05$), the fatherhood status became an insignificant predictor of men's working time controlling for other variables such as economic activity, occupation, education, partner's working time, and age. Specifically, Dermott found that fathers' working time was positively related to their partner's working time but not associated with having dependent children.

In their cross-national analysis, Craig and Mullan (2010) found that the work time of fathers is slightly more on average compared to non-fathers; however, the gap was not significant. Fathers' time devoted to domestic work is almost the same as non-fathers' on weekdays in Denmark and France and is seen significantly less in Italy and United States.

3.2. Fathers vs. Mothers

Maume (2006) explored the work efforts for the purpose of supporting families of both fathers and mothers using the families from a U.S. national study on workforce conducted in 1992. The results suggested that mothers modify their work devotion according to the children's needs and characteristics. In contrast, fathers do not, which was consistent with Dermott's findings in the United Kingdom (2006). For instance, Maume found that mothers

increased the number of job trade-offs by approximately 33.8% with each additional child while the father's job trade-offs showed no association. Each extra work hours of mothers resulted in fathers 1.6% reductions in their work restrictions while mothers increased theirs by 1.3% for one more hour of their spouse's working time. Craig and Mullan (2010) reached the same conclusion that transitioning to motherhood would lead to mothers working 1.8 hours per day less than fathers.

Argyrous et al. (2016) found that parenthood had an apparent negative influence on females' devotion to work while the impact was insignificant for males. Using data from Australian families in Longitudinal Survey before and after their first childbirth, they found a father's working hours did not seem to change with only a slight increase of 0.3 hours in response to the childbirth. The only apparent variation existed for fathers whose work effort was once little and had higher working hours after birth. However, the mean change of mothers' working hours was a 14h decrease for those who continued to work after childbirth.

As for work effort and motivation of work, Kmec (2010) suggested that there were no significant differences in the subjective report of work efforts by mothers and fathers. Both parents in dual-earner families reported experiencing a similar work intensity and frequency level when they increased their work effort to support the families financially. Nevertheless, mothers reported a larger number of sleep disruptions due to conflicts between work and family. But this study was only restricted to employed sample using self-reported measures, and the researchers excluded self-employed, part-time workers. Additionally, no apparent association was made between the self-reported work intensity and work performances or outcomes.

Craig and Mullan (2010) found that universally motherhood has a more significant association with the time in childrearing compared to fathers. In other words, mothers shared a larger portion of the domestic labor than fathers regardless of the cultural background, even in dual-earners families.

3.3. Mothers vs. Non-mothers

Estes and Glass (1996) used samples from a longitudinal survey with 324 U.S. women employed at least 20 hours a week before the first-time pregnancy during 1991-1992 to explore the occupation changes when non-mothers become mothers. The researchers argued that new mothers with a higher level of occupational competence, education attainment, and experiences were less likely to make job changes; however, new mothers with lower human capital might be more willing to move to more inadequate compensation for accommodations such as maternity leave or reduce work hours. In addition, women with more traditional gender ideology were more willing to accept the trade-off.

Nevertheless, the researchers found that, in the aggregate, compensation and family accommodations were parallel in new mothers' jobs: an increase in schedule flexibility was frequently accompanied by an increase in wages, suggesting that new mothers would be financially unable to trade workplace compensation for family accommodations.

Evertsson (2013) examined the changes in subjective work commitment of women before and after the transition into motherhood in Sweden. By comparing those who had a child from 1999 to 2003 (approximately 30%) and those who did not, they found that new mothers showed a lower level of work commitment after controlling for education, employment, and career changes. After including women already with children in 1999, the additional analysis suggested that the gap in work commitment between employed mothers and non-mothers was widest when their latest child was around four.

Baxter et al. (2015) examined changes in attitudes towards a gendered division of labor and motherhood after the first childbirth in Australia. The researchers included fixed-effects models to exclude the influences due to individual heterogeneity. The results suggested that new mothers' attitudes generally inclined towards the traditional end significantly in response to childbirth. They averagely reported a higher level of resonance with the idea that women's

primary role should be motherhood, and they should better not put their children in childcare for a long time. Meanwhile, they tended to show less support on the idea that employed mothers put their work in higher priority than their families.

Schober and Scott (2012) examined the changes in women's gender role attitudes and their labor participation after experiencing transition to motherhood. The authors found a reciprocal relationship between new mothers' hours in paid work and their perceptions of gender roles. To elaborate, egalitarian gender role attitude before childbirth increased the women's paid working time after childbirth by 10 hours; prenatal work hours positively impact women's postnatal work hours (coefficient 0.3). In addition, no evidence was found that couples would adapt their attitudes to their partners.

4. DISCUSSION

In conclusion, specialization theory and employers' perception theory are partly supported by the literature. The fatherhood premium of the employees might be influenced by their marriage status, working hours, spouse's working status, race identity, job characteristics, and perceived commitment. However, this literature review has not covered many other influential factors of fatherhood premium. For example, according to Astone et al. (2010), the age of the men becoming fathers plays a role in determining the fatherhood premium. In addition, as working mothers and working fathers experience the same level of conflicts between the domestic sphere and occupations (Gutek, Searle and Klepa, 1991; Kmec 2010), working fathers are rated more negatively in their overall performance compared when experiencing interruptions from the family in workplaces. For example, fathers might experience penalties when experiencing work-family conflicts, especially family-to-work conflicts, compared to mothers. Based on the social role theory, the social expectation broadly encourages a gendered division of labor within households. As it is expected that men shall

take the primary breadwinner role rather than the childcaring provider, working fathers are usually considered to report fewer conflicts from the family in workplaces (FCW) compared with working mothers. However, according to Gutek, Searle, and Klepa (1991), men and women reported to experience almost identical intensity of the conflicts between family and work despite the fact that women indeed reported more hours in the family.

Butler and Skattebo (2004) designed an experiment where the researchers manipulated the employer (ratee)'s gender by displaying different names to investigate how family-to-work conflicts would impact participants' evaluation of their job performances. They have found that family-to-work conflicts would lead to a reduction in the general ratings on the applicants. Specifically, the association is moderated by ratee sex: men who experience FCW receive lower ratings on performance and less chance of rewards, while there is no difference between women who did or did not experience FCW. Therefore, it might suggest that as working mothers and working fathers experience the same level of family-to-work conflicts, working fathers are rated more negatively in their overall performance than working mothers when family-to-work conflicts occur.

As many researchers argued that a larger scale of labour participation and higher education level of women are challenging the traditional household specialization, the comparison studies of fathers, non-fathers, mothers, and non-mothers might show some opposite evidence. New fathers and mothers are usually witnessed with a shift towards more agreement on the specialization in response to childbirth (Baxter et al., 2015). Mothers were seen to experience more job trade-offs than fathers and reduced their work time (Maume 2006; Argyrous et al. 2016), although they reported a similar level of motivation to work for the sake of family (Kmec 2010). However, it does not imply that the pattern of fatherhood premium is not changing. For example, as the “new fatherhood” that prompts fathers to devote themselves more in the child care and domestic sphere is gaining more acceptance, it might result in fathers

sorting to lower-wage establishments as a trade-off for better work-life balance. Cooke and Fullerc (2018) had shown in their studies that a considerable portion of the highly educated Canadian fathers voluntarily sorted into organizations offering lower wages probably for more job flexibility, the similar pattern of which was seen in Norwegian fathers as well (Petersen et al., 2014). Therefore, a more thorough literature review covering more novel studies or following a time order is needed better to understand fatherhood premium and its change over time.

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