

THE 2008 ROSABETH MOSS KANTER AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN WORK-FAMILY RESEARCH

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ANNOUNCING THE 2008 KANTER AWARD WINNER: GETTING A JOB: IS THERE A MOTHERHOOD PENALTY?

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Over the last decade or so, several studies have identified a “motherhood penalty” in the growth of women’s wages over time. The ‘mommy gap’ in wages (i.e., between mothers and childless women) is larger than the gender gap between men and women, at least for women younger than 35 (Crittenden, 2001). In fact, much of the gender gap may be explained by disproportionately low wages of mothers (Glass, 2004). Some studies also suggest that employed mothers are seen as less competent (Cuddy, Fiske, & Glick, 2004).

This project included 2 separate experiments using ‘fake’ resumes. The goal was to measure the chances that mothers (so identified by their resumes) would be called for an interview or recommended for hire, compared to childless women, fathers, and childless men. In the first study, raters were asked to evaluate two job applications that were similar except for gender and parental status.

- Evaluators consistently rated mothers as less competent and less committed to paid work than nonmothers.
- In contrast, fathers were rated MORE positively than nonfathers.

Thus, in the first study, raters discriminated against mothers when making hiring decisions.

In the second study, the researchers submitted ‘fake’ resumes in response to 638 job ads over an 18 month period. Callbacks to request interviews were tracked via a computerized voice mail system.

- Childless women received 2.1 times as many callbacks as mothers with similar credentials. There were no differences between father and childless men.

The researchers concluded that **the ‘motherhood penalty’ is alive and well**, even when examined with highly controlled experimental methods in both laboratory and ‘real life’ settings.

AUTHOR INTERVIEW



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How did you get interested in this topic of the motherhood penalty?

In my previous work on gender inequality in the workplace it was becoming increasingly clear to me that mothers were experiencing disadvantages that seemed unique. For example, the pay gap between mothers and childless women is actually larger than the pay gap between women and men. I began to wonder how it was that these disadvantages emerged and if discrimination was a contributing factor.

Were you surprised by the findings?

I was not surprised to find that mothers were discriminated against, but I was very surprised by the magnitude of the discrimination. With gender or race, we often talk about the subtle ways that stereotypes are disadvantaging. With mothers, the effects were huge, such as being about 100% less likely to be recommended for hire than childless women and being offered much lower starting salaries.

What do you think are the most important implications of your findings for women? For human resource practitioners?

I think the study documented a phenomenon that many working mothers suspected was going on. As one woman told me, “You confirmed my worst fear.” However, establishing that bias against mothers is a broad social pattern helps raise awareness of the issue. And raising awareness can help human resource practitioners be on alert to potential biases against mothers, which can help reduce the occurrence of bias.

TOP 10 TAKEAWAYS FROM KANTER AWARD FINALISTS...

1. Think now is the time to retreat from work-life efforts?

- a. When organizations foster positive family relationships, changes in **employee satisfaction and commitment** make such investments **worth their cost** (Ford, et al.). Now, more than ever, we need to reinforce our employees' commitment and dedication.
- b. The most successful work-life interventions **address more than one source of stress--** such as overwork, workload, and work-family conflict (Ford, et al.). Employees are enduring a period of unprecedented stress due to the current economy, and employer interventions can go a long way to alleviate some of that stress and increase worker productivity.

2. Does the sheer number of women in management make a difference in reducing gender inequities?

Inroads by women into upper-status managerial positions “lift all boats,” even for women who do not attain greater status. However, **women managers must have real managerial authority and not just a title-change** (Cohen & Huffman).

3. Can mothers give up the guilt?

In general, the **cognitive development of young children is unimpaired** by their mothers' participation in the workforce. In fact, reading scores for children of low-income moms who work are better than for those who do not work (Burchinal & Clarke-Stewart).

4. Do single employees resent “family-friendly” policies?

Married employees perceive greater organizational equity than do singles. Thus, **work-life policies** should be referred to as “work-life” not “family-friendly” and they **should be need-blind** (Casper, et al.).

5. Is family-to-work conflict just a problem for the employee?

- a. Family-to-work conflict is a **safety hazard** - in that it is associated with decreased compliance with safety rules and less willingness to participate in safety training (Cullen & Hammer).
- b. High **workload** on any specific day, not just chronic high workload, affects employee mood and perception of work-family conflict (Ilies, et al.).
- c. These moods go home with employees at night such that employees are noticeably **disengaged** from family activities (according to their spouses) (Ilies, et al.). Organizations cannot optimize employee satisfaction without considering these non-work influences (Ford, et al.).

6. Are all flexible work arrangements equal?

Daily flexibility (having the option to come and go as necessary during the day, with short notice) is more effective in reducing work-family conflict than more fixed **flex time** (flexible start and ending times) (Allard, et al.).

7. Are policies enough to create a culture of work-life integration?

- a. Policies are necessary but not sufficient for reducing work-family conflict - in fact a “**positive work-family culture** along with family support may be more instrumental in helping employees balance work and home roles” (Premeaux, et al.).
- b. Organizational leaders interested in facilitating work-life initiatives should place a high priority on **increasing managers' awareness of work-life issues and training them to be supportive** of these programs (Wang & Walumbwa).

8. Should we work for longer parental leaves, or something else?

- a. Policies that provide **childcare support** or onsite daycare are more likely to **increase women's work involvement**, which in the long run, decreases women's chances of living in poverty later on (Misra, et al.). Long leaves of more than 3 months, on the other hand, have the opposite effect.
- b. Moreover, policies that actively encourage **father involvement** in childcare, such as leaves that only fathers can take, encourage more equal division of housework (Fuwa & Cohen; Misra, et al.).

9. Who is more likely to experience intimate partner violence?

- a. Shedding light on an old debate, Villarreal (2007) shows that **employed women are less likely to be at risk for family violence**.
- b. On the other hand, when employed women do experience spousal abuse, 21-60% lose their jobs. Authors encourage employers to **enact policies** that prohibit discharge or discipline for employees who take time off of work for reasons related to **domestic violence** (Rothman, et al.).

10. Are work-life issues the same across cultures?

- a. Anglo models for work-life are less effective in collectivist societies. Authors recommend that organizational leaders incorporate team-based interventions and **social networks** as possible alternatives to decreasing work-family conflict among these groups (Spector, et al.).
- b. Moreover, for work-life policies to have the greatest impact among employees of **different ethnicities**, companies should focus on reducing workload or strain which in turn reduces stress and increases job satisfaction (Spector, et al.).
- c. **Local implementation of work-life policies should reflect local needs** (Spector, et al.).
- d. Managers and supervisors who make a concerted effort toward improving the safety of their Latino employees, find that both worker health and **productivity** will benefit, as well as employee well-being at home (Gryzywacz et al.).

THE KANTER AWARD

Named in honor of Rosabeth Moss Kanter, who has been identified as the most influential contributor to modern literature on work and family, the Kanter Award is given for the best research paper(s) published during the year. The rigorous nomination process for award selection involves 35 scholarly reviewers from 11 countries who decide on the Kanter winners from among over 2500 articles published in more than 70 scholarly journals. This award raises awareness of excellent work-family research, fosters debate about standards of excellence, identifies the "best of the best" studies on which to base future research and outlines specific implications of the research for work-life and human resource professionals.

The Center for Families at Purdue University and the Boston College Center for Work & Family developed the Rosabeth Moss Kanter Award to raise the awareness of high quality work-family research among the scholar, consultant and practitioner communities. Through the generous sponsorship of the **Alliance for Work-Life Progress (AWLP)**, the standards of quality for work-family research will continue to rise, and actionable findings from the best studies will become more commonplace in business communities to inform policy and best people practices.

KANTER TOP NOMINATED ARTICLES ARRANGED BY AWLP WORK-LIFE PILLARS

Caring for Dependents

- Burchinal, M.R., & Clarke-Stewart, K.A. (2007). Maternal employment and child cognitive outcomes: The importance of analytic approach. *Developmental Psychology*, 43, 1140-1155. burchinal@unc.edu
- Schoen, R., Landale, N.S., & Daniels, K. (2007). Family transitions in young adulthood. *Demography*, 44, 807-820. schoen@pop.psu.edu

Health and Wellness

- Cullen, J.C. & Hammer, L.B. (2007). Developing and testing a theoretical model linking work-family conflict to employee safety. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, 12, 266-278. culj235@lni.wa.gov
- Ford, M.T., Heinan, B.A., & Langkamer, K.L. (2007). Work and family satisfaction and conflict: A meta-analysis of cross-domain relations. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 92, 57-80. mford3@gmu.edu
- Gryzwacz, J.G., Arcury, T.A., Marín, A., Carrillo, L., Burke, B., Coates, M.L., & Quandt, S.A. (2007). Work-family conflict: Experiences and health implications among immigrant Latinos. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 92, 1119-1130. gryzwacz@wfubmc.edu
- Ilies, R., Schwind, M., Wagner, D. T., Johnson, M., DeRue, D.S., & Ilgen, D.R. (2007). When can employees have a family life? The effects of daily workload and affect on work-family conflict and social behaviors at home. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 92, 1368-1379. ilies@msu.edu
- Rothman, E.F., Hathaway, J., Stidsen, A., & de Vries, H.F. (2007). How employment helps female victims of intimate partner violence: A qualitative study. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, 12, 136-143. emfaith@aol.com
- Villarreal, A. (2007). Women's employment status, coercive control, and intimate partner violence in Mexico. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 69, 418-434. avilla@prc.utexas.edu

Workplace Flexibility

- Allard, K., Haas, L., & Hwang, C.P. (2007). Exploring the paradox: Experiences of flexible working arrangements and work-family conflict among managerial fathers in Sweden. *Community, Work and Family*, 10, 475-493. karin.allard@psu.gu.se
- Spector, P.E., Allen, T.D., Poelmans, S.A., Lapierre, L.M., Cooper, C.L., O'Driscoll, M., et al. (2007). Cross-national differences in relationships of work demands, job satisfaction, and turnover intentions with work-family conflict. *Personnel Psychology*, 60, 805-835. spector@shell.cas.usf.edu

Financial Support

- Cohen, P.N. & Huffman, M.L. (2007). Working for woman? Female managers and the gender wage gap. *American Sociological Review*, 72, 681-704. pnc@unc.edu
- Correll, S.J., Benard, S., & Piak, I. (2007). Getting a job: Is there a motherhood penalty? *American Journal of Sociology*, 112, 1297-1338. (Kanter Winning Article) scorrell@stanford.edu
- Kaushal, N., Gao, Q., & Waldfogel, J. (2007). Welfare reform and family expenditures: How are single mothers adapting to the new welfare and work regime? *Social Service Review* 81:3, 369-396.
- Misra, J., Moller, S., & Budig, M. (2007). Work-family policies and poverty for partnered and single women in Europe and North America. *Gender & Society*, 21, 804-827. misra@soc.umass.edu
- Song, Y. (2007). The working spouse penalty/premium and married women's labor supply. *Review of Economics of the Household*, 5, 279-304. songy@union.edu

Paid and Unpaid Time Off

- Amilon, A. (2007). On the sharing of temporary parental leave: the case of Sweden. *Review of Economics of the Household*, 5, 385-404. Anna.Meyer@nek.lu.se
- Fuwa, M., & Cohen, P.N. (2007). Housework and social policy. *Social Science Research*, 36, 512-530. mfuwa@uci.edu

Cultural Change Initiatives

- Casper, W.J., Weltman, D., & Kwesiga, E. (2007). Beyond family-friendly: The construct and measurement of singles-friendly work culture. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 70, 478-501. wjcasper@uta.edu
- Premeaux, S.F., Adkins, C. L., & Mossholder, K.W. (2007). Balancing work and family: A field study of multi-dimensional, multi-role work-family conflict. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 28, 705-727. sonya.permeaux@nicholls.edu
- Wang, P. & Walumbwa, F.O. (2007). Family-friendly programs, organizational commitment, and work withdrawal: The moderating role of transformational leadership. *Personnel Psychology*, 60, 397-427. wangp@muohio.edu

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