

March 2023

Gender and Financial Implications of Parental Leave Utilization at A Major US Academic Institution

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Recommended Citation

Lee, Maurgan; Word, Lucki; Shafique, Mayra; Crego, Julie; Robinson, Leah PhD; Aranha, Anil PhD; and Sood, Beena, "Gender and Financial Implications of Parental Leave Utilization at A Major US Academic Institution" (2023). *Medical Student Research Symposium*. 223.

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Gender and Financial Implications of Parental Leave Utilization at A Major US Academic Institution

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Background and Purpose: In the United States, women on average are paid \$0.83 for every dollar earned by male counterparts. Creating a family can promote heightened obligations for both parents, however, women tend to take on amplified responsibility associated with childrearing. Studies show females are more likely to utilize parental leave (PL) compared to men. Our study aims to evaluate the impact of PL usage on financial and earning potential based on gender.

Methods: Analysis of retrospective human resources data of WSU employees was conducted. Data parameters included: demographics, length, usage, and number of parental leaves. Data was analyzed using SPSS, significance was established at $p < .05$.

Results: Data included a total of 5,484 employees, over a 10-year period (January 2011 to December 2020); of these, 349 (6.4%) took parental leave. Participants had mean incomes of \$68,500. Men had higher incomes, compared to women, with highest incomes seen in men who never utilized parental leave for the birth of a child.

Conclusion: Our study shows that on average, men employed at the academic institution had higher incomes than females and utilization of PL negatively affected male earnings. Such findings can decrease male PL usage and thus may have negative family bonding and financial implications, due to diminished time spent with the developing child and reduced earnings.