

Title: The Impact of Parents' Work Schedules on Time Spent with Children and Teenagers

I. Introduction

There is a large body of research on the benefits of schedule control and flexible work hours for work-family conflict, health and well-being. However, the merging of work and home through flexible work arrangements and the availability of working remotely may have negative consequences for family and health. This paper builds on the previous research by investigating the relationship between flexible work schedules for parents and the amount of time they spend with their children. Unlike analyses using self-reported work-family conflict, this paper directly analyzes the actual time available for children, which is related to the children's outcomes and parents' well-being. In addition to focusing on young children, this analysis also investigates the relationship between parents' work schedules and the time teenagers report spending with their parents.

II. Data

This paper uses data from the Current Population Survey (CPS) Work Schedules Supplement (WS) and the American Time Use Survey (ATUS), both collected by the Bureau of Labor Statistics. The CPS is a nationally representative household survey designed to measure monthly unemployment. The CPS work schedules supplement was given in 2004 to CPS respondents in the month of May. Following the CPS basic monthly survey, respondents in the labor force were asked a set of questions about start and stop times for their usual work day. They were also asked questions regarding flexible work schedules and work at home. The ATUS is a nationally representative time diary survey in which respondents report what activity they were doing, where they were doing the activity, and who they were with for a 24 hour period. The survey started in 2003, and is given to only one person in a household over the age of 14.

The CPS and the ATUS are related because the ATUS respondents are selected at random from the Current Population Survey outgoing rotation groups; thus, some CPS-WS supplement respondents are also ATUS respondents. These datasets are merged, creating a data set of households where one member of the family is an ATUS respondent and at least one member of the family was in the CPS-WS supplement. The data from the CPS-WS is used to indicate flexible work schedules and usual work start and stop time for the adult ATUS respondents, and the parents of the teenage ATUS respondents. Using the 'with who' records the ATUS time diaries, time spent with children is measured for the adults and time with adults is created for teenagers. There are almost 4,000 adults in the matched sample with children, and there are 390 teenagers.

III. Research Methods

The relationship between parents' flexible work schedule and time spent with children and teenagers will be analyzed using basic multivariate regression. Time spent with children, $Time_{ch}$, is a continuous dependent variable, which is estimated using Ordinary Least Squares, as almost all of the parents report spending time with children. The independent of interest is denoted by $Flex$, and indicates if the respondent indicates a flexible work schedule. Included in the regression are demographic and economic control variables for the respondent, denoted by the vector X . This vector includes marital status, age, age-squared, race, education level, usual hours worked and wage. Household control variables (H) are also included, and they are: family income, number of children, and age of children. Equation 1 is the specification used to estimate the relationships between having a flexible work schedule and spending time with children.

$$(1) Time_{ch} = \alpha + \beta_1 Flex + \beta_X X_i + \beta_H H_i + e$$

The coefficient on $Flex$ (β_1) estimates the difference in the amount of time a parent spends with children between parents with a job that has flexible work hours and those that do not, while controlling for observable individual characteristics. In addition to the analysis of with work time flexibility as the key independent variables, usual work start and stop times will be included, as well as an indicator of working from home. While time with children is the main variable of interest, time spent in primary and secondary childcare will also be analyzed using similar methods, with the addition of Tobit and Hurdle analyses because not all parents partake in childcare.

For the small sample of teenagers, time spent with parents will also be estimated using their own time diaries. The independent variables included are from the parents' CPS-WS supplement responses. Finally, additional methods will be explored to attempt to estimate a causal relationship between parents' work schedules and time spent with children and teenagers.

IV. Summary

This paper builds on the research related to flexible work schedules and the time available for family. Using population level time diary data, this analysis investigates the relationship between self-reported parental work schedules and the time parents report spending with their children and in childcare.