

Involved dads are happier at work, experience less job-family conflict

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Credit: AI-generated image ([disclaimer](#))

The more time fathers spend with their children on a typical day, the greater job satisfaction and less conflict between work and family they experience, according to a new study by Northeastern University researchers.

They found that companies also stand to benefit from these positive work-related outcomes for involved [fathers](#)—the more time dads spend with their children, the more likely they are to experience work-family enrichment and the less likely they are to think about quitting their jobs.

The research was published in February in the journal *Academy of Management Perspectives* in a paper co-authored by associate professor Jamie Ladge and assistant professor Marla Baskerville Watkins in the D'Amore-McKim School of Business. Professors at the Boston College Center for Work and Family and the University of Massachusetts Lowell also co-authored the paper.

"One of the big takeaways here is that there's a real benefit to being an involved father," Ladge said. "By doing so, they'll be happier and more satisfied in their workplace, which leads to positive outcomes for their organizations."

The researchers conducted two studies, the first being a qualitative study in which they asked 31 fathers with young children to answer a series of questions about their careers and feelings on fatherhood. The results of the qualitative study revealed that while fathers consider themselves as less traditional, involved fathers, in reality they enact very traditional values due to both organizational constraints and as well as deeply entrenched gender and work norms.

Then they conducted a quantitative study, in which they surveyed nearly 1,000 fathers who were all married and working full time at four Fortune 500 companies.

The larger study further examined the fathering views expressed by participants in the first study, but it also sought to understand the impact of involved fathering on work-related outcomes.

Another notable finding was that more involved fathers were found to have a weakened career identity, suggesting that they may view their careers as less salient when they have fatherhood responsibilities. However, the researchers found that strong support from dads' managers within their companies can mitigate the negative relationship between involved fathering and career identity.

"This may offer some of the best evidence that the 'organization man' is a concept of the past and that men's involvement in parenting can diminish outdated gendered norms and ideal worker expectations," they wrote.

In conclusion, the researchers suggested that organizations recognize and appreciate that fathers should not be held to ideals that are based on these outdated gender norms and expectations, adding that many of today's fathers want to be more than the traditional "organization men." They noted that dads should strive to find a happy medium between doing meaningful work and living meaningful lives as they transition toward a broader definition of fatherhood that embraces work and [family](#).

Provided by Northeastern University

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