

## **Women in the Work Field**

Why do fewer women end up in senior positions than men? Is it due to the fact that they have fewer mentors or because they have less face time with managers? Is it due to outside factors that we must consider when looking at the numbers? Is it because they're mothers and they might possibly have to spend more time at home in some cases? Do you think women entering the workforce now are better off than women who started working even 10 years ago? What is still taking place that the majority of women are not advancing the same way men are? All these thoughts run through my head when I try to figure out why women are not in the same positions as men, as well as this "wage gap" we've been told about since we were kids. We see that in the business field there could be a possible bias against women but reading many articles we see that there are many factors that could be leading to these differences. The embedded bias against women in society is clearly evident in the treatment that women experience after producing the same quality results in a position and a man still advancing more. As simple as having a hobby, we see even that can be a basis on creating these judgments. The difference in gender pay gaps is extremely interesting as it is determined by statistics, but I think these problems are far too intricate to be based just on numbers. This research should allow young women to create their own idea of their worth in their working fields and not automatically believe that they are going to be getting paid less than a man would for the same job. Being a woman and minority, I hope to find out why these differences in treatment are occurring and hopefully try and find ways that I can get past those problems to be able to get to those higher positions that women have trouble getting into.

A Harvard Study: Gender Pay Gap Explained Entirely by Work Choices of Men and Women, investigates whether gender differences in outcomes with clients is driven by

differences in behavior between the 2 genders. The clients in hand were large multinational firms that had an underrepresentation of women in upper management. The methods used in hopes of determining a root to the differences in gender treatment was data collection from email communication and meeting schedule data for hundreds of employees in one office across all different levels of seniority (Gavett). Each employee received a sociometric badge which allowed them to track behavior and record communication. It was able to track the proximity to other badges, the volume and tone of the conversations, but they were not able to collect the actual content of each conversation. Since they could track the volume and tone, they could therefore determine who was in the dominant position in each conversation. Having this data and determining that men and women are in fact acting with the same amount of dominance and both behaving in the same appropriate manner, it sparks room for individual opinions. In my head I have questions forming, if they are acting the same then why do men end up in higher positions? If they are having equal amounts of meaningful conversations with upper management and they seem equally as qualified, then why do men have more upper management positions than women? According to Gavett, the article continues to go into the experiment, the controls in the experiment was the ability to determine gender, positions, and tenure in the office, this would help them come up with the most accurate result in their findings.

Gavett, similar to me, thinks about the similarities between men and women's conversations with senior executives, who both allocate the same amount of time into their roles, but women are simply not advancing in positions like men were. This different treatment is proven not to be due to their behavior, since men and women are behaving the same, logically they should be advancing the same. The fact that there were no perceptible differences in behavior, allows a conclusion to be made that involves gender bias. The result that the article

explains is this, “Our analysis suggests that the difference in promotion rates between men and women in this company was due not to their behavior but to how they were treated. This indicates that arguments about changing women’s behavior — to ‘lean-in,’ for example — might miss the bigger picture: Gender inequality is due to bias, not differences in behavior.” —*Stephen Turban (former data scientist, Humanyze), Laura Freeman (data analyst, Humanyze), and Ben Waber (Humanyze CEO, visiting scientist at the MIT Media Lab)* (Gavett). Women are many times told that they must change their behavior to look best in men's eyes to be treated equally which is in fact contradicting to these findings that clearly show us that despite women behaving the same as men, contributing the same, giving the same amount of dedication, they will still come up as less than men when it comes to advancing in upper management positions in big business. It was determined that this difference was not in their behavior but in the different ways they were being treated. They weren’t being viewed as credible, they produced the same quality results but did not receive the trust that men did, their knowledge was not being trusted. These differences are due to how people may perceive women, the way that their conversations were viewed changed the way they went up the corporate ladder. Higher ups had the idea that men would be the better option simply because they were men regardless of the intellectually equivalent conversations they had with women. This is why men were able to advance more than females. I think that women's behavior is equal to men but the bias of women such as what they choose to do after work and in their life affects the way others look at them including higher ups in the work field. Being a mother for example, can lead to the idea that they are not as dedicated as men. The idea that they might go out to have a drink can lead to the idea that they are unhinged and even unprofessional, an event that could easily be seen as relaxing and even needed for men.

When it comes to work experiences and workplace discrimination, there are large disparities between men and women in STEM. The experiment “Women in STEM See More Gender Disparities at Work, Especially Those in Computer Jobs, Majority-Male Workplaces” ran by Cary Funk and Kim Parker focuses on the statistics that women are more likely to say that they have experienced discrimination at work due to their gender and that they consider this discrimination to be a major reason as to why more women are not working in STEM. Specifically in areas where men outnumber women such as computer positions, the gender inequities are much more prominent (Funk). Although there is a higher share of women in STEM to say that they are experiencing one or more forms of discrimination, it also occurs in non-STEM jobs where women say they have also experienced sexual harassment. There seems to be a shared perspective on this topic between fields of working women. The experiment tells us the % of U.S. Adults who say it is either Extremely/Very, Somewhat, or Not too/not at all, important to have gender diversity in workplaces today. It is concluded that Americans are largely supportive of gender diversity and about 46% of people said that gender diversity is needed to provide other perspectives that contribute to the overall success of businesses. In order to grow out of this, the STEM field has to create a safe environment for women. A possible solution could be increasing the knowledge about what many women experience as well as providing an unbiased outlet of help for anyone who may not feel safe, more than a Human Resources department. A clear-cut set of rules and punishments that are taught through a set of trainings that occur every few months and not just when you are hired could be very effective. As well as raising awareness and showing the youth, especially young girls that they are capable of reaching their goals and that they are not alone in the STEM field. Such as fairs and even field trips to a workplace that has great gender diversity. A second experiment recorded the difference in men

and women respond to the question regarding the importance of gender diversity. We see that women think it is more important to increase gender diversity than men and we can trace this back to education according to the article. Many with advanced degrees, whether they work in STEM or non-STEM areas, favor gender diversity more. When it comes to gender diversity, we can see the importance of education and the differences in views between men and women. I believe that the key to this problem is finding a common ground, creating a connection where everyone understands what this problem truly means. Have you ever felt like the odd one out or the minority? How has that made you feel? Questions like these might spark some thought and possibly create some understanding to the problems that we see are going on here.

When we think of the “Gender Pay Gap” we think women are getting paid less than men and doing the same job. Phelan goes into detail to tell us that this is in fact not accurate. He tells us that the idea that a woman earns 80 cents for every dollar a man makes is derived from taking the annual earnings of men and dividing that by the number of male workers. They then did this with women, this resulted in being about 80 percent of the average man’s earnings, using this information is how you have the gender gap. After explaining this to us the article goes into detail telling us the different factors that could lead to this gap. One of the main factors in differences is that the men worked an average of 8.05 hours in a day compared to the average of 7.24 that women worked, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (Phelan). They explain to us that this could be due to the fact that women are more likely to be raising children, taking care of family, or doing housework, forcing them to have less hours in the day for paid employment. This is simple, the people who worked more were going to make more money, this is what the article proves to us, the pay gap is due to differences in working hours. The gap people think about is not that women make less than men, but it is due to other factors such as availability and

problems. Problems such as having to care for an elderly family member, having to care for their sick child, issues like these according to the article make women take more time off than men do. The ability that men have to take the overtime and not have to take time off from work is something that we see from the experiment that many women don't have. We see that women might not have to change what they're doing, and they are in fact not acting in incorrect ways. Even the types of jobs that women have such as childcare have a mean annual salary of \$23,760, whereas a job like logging, a job that is easier for men to work due to our physical differences, the mean annual salary was \$42,310. It's not that men and women are going to earn a different wage because they are different genders, it's simply that they are working different hours and working different paying jobs. Having this information, it allows women to create their own idea of their position in their work field, and not automatically think that they are going to make less money than men and put in the same amount of work.

The mistreatment of women including sexual harassment is definitely a problem that should be talked about in every workplace, trainings, rules and set punishments for these actions could be the actions that make a woman feel safe at work. Knowing that women are behaving the same way as men shows us that each situation in someone's work environment is going to depend on that company's seniority ladder. The environment that they create may need to be adapted to you or you must figure out if you want to continue to work for them if their morals are not in the right place. The ingrained gender bias in big business has created an environment where men and women are treated unequally. Raising awareness and spreading the information of the underrepresentation of women in the STEM field I strongly believe should be talked about in schools beginning even in elementary school which is a huge part in a child's development. Fairs, classes, celebrity visits, and even field trips to STEM related jobs can be that spark in a

little girl's head that tells her she can make it there. As well as knowing these inequities we've talked about, we learn that the gender gap is not as it has been understood by young women. This wage gap can make young women not have high expectations when in reality the statistics are simply not being interpreted correctly. Being a woman and minority researching this topic helps me develop an idea of what I have to do in order to reach the position I want to be in. I hope to climb the corporate ladder in a business where I am making a difference for the company as well as following my morals. I need to remember that I am not always making a mistake, sometimes the problem may not be in my hands. We as women have to keep high expectations and understand that we are not underperforming, there are women who are equally capable as men and still are not receiving the same treatment. We are not the problem.

## Works Cited

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