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**Abstract**

Women are still being treated despairingly in the work place. Organizations have not adequately close the gap between women’s pay in comparison to that of men; the way women are treated interpersonally in the workplace; nor have they removed barriers often referred to as “glass ceilings,” that inhibit women from ascending to levels in the organization commiserate to their talent level. Organizations must develop and implement training strategies that will reduce the discrepancies between how men and women are treated in the workplace.

Organizations in America have historically treated women differently than from the way that they have treated men. There are many organizations that still have positions that women are not allowed to compete for. As recent as 2015, the United States Army, an organization that prides itself on diversity, allowed women for the first time to compete to be Army Rangers, a position that had been previously restricted from women. Despite past challenges, women are becoming a larger part of the workforce. Organizations that have historically had “glass ceilings,” in regards to how far women can advance are now forced to allow women to compete for positions that they were previously restricted from.Drawing upon the social and behavioral science literature, this paper will examine and recommend organizational training strategies for the following issues that women face in the work place: a) limitations due to the “glass ceiling; ”b) not receiving equal pay for equal work; and c) the interpersonal mistreatment of women in the work place.

*Women’s Issues in the Workplace and challenges as it relates to “Glass Ceilings”*

 Today a majority of American women are in the labor force. In 1965, 39% of women ages 16 and older were in the labor force. That share rose steadily and peaked at 60% in 1999. As of November 2014, 57% of women were in the labor force, only 12 percentage points lower than the share for men (69%). Women accounted for about half of the U.S. labor force (47% in November 2014)(aware@aware.org.sg).

The number of women working in managerial positions is steadily increasing. Even though the number of women in lower and mid-level management positions is greater than ever, the percentage of women holding top managerial positions is disproportionably low(Catrell & Cooper, 2010). A large number of women enter the workforce at similar levels as their male counterparts however; their careers progress more slowly than their male colleagues. Quite often they are more qualiﬁed than their male counterparts but are required to work harder and perform superior to their male counterparts in order to obtain top positions (Catrell & Cooper, 2010).

Women are not promoted to executive positions at the same rate as men due to the “glass ceiling” effect, which describes the invisible artiﬁcial barriers, created by systematic organizational prejudices, which block women from top executive positions(Michailisdisa & Morphitoub, 2014).Only 14 percent of the top five leadership positions at the companies in the [S&P 500](http://money.cnn.com/data/markets/sandp/?iid=EL) are held by women.Women currently hold 23 (4.6%) of Chief Executive Officer (CEO) positions at S&P 500 companies.Researchers have tried to identify barriers that have prevented women from advancing to a higher managerial positions (Michailisdisa & Morphitoub, 2014, p. 4233). Some of the barriers mentioned, were lack of self-conﬁdence, avoiding risk taking because of fear of failure and a reluctance to set goals. Another barrier that studies have found that prevent women from ascending to executive positions at the same rate as that of men, is termed the “maternal wall.”The “maternal wall”, refers to the barriers that women face when they get pregnant and male co-workers and managers assume that once they become a mother, they will become less committed to their careerand more committed to family issues (Michailisdisa & Morphitoub, 2014, p. 4233).

Many of the barriers that prevent women from ascending to managerial positons at the same rate as that of men, result from past discriminatory practices against women, in career fields that were traditionally dominated by male employees. Occupations that were traditionally dominated by male employees; i.e., law enforcement officer or firefighter, often use experience, as a part of the criteria needed to be promoted to a managerial positon. The number of women being hired in these professions has risen; however, women in these professions are often required tocompete with more experienced men for managerial positions(Blumminfield, 2011).

*Equal Pay for Equal Work*

The Equal Pay Act of 1963is a[United States federal law](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_federal_law)amendingthe [Fair Labor Standards Act](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fair_Labor_Standards_Act)*,* aimed at abolishing [wage](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wage) disparity based on sex.It was signed into law on June 10, 1963, by President John F. Kennedy as part of his [New Frontier](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_Frontier) Program.In passing the [bill](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bill_%28proposed_law%29), [Congress](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/U.S._Congress) stated that [sex discrimination](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sex_discrimination):

* depresses wages and [living standards](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Living_standard) for [employees](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Employee) necessary for their health and efficiency;
* prevents the maximum utilization of the available [labor resources](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Labor_force);
* tends to cause labor disputes, thereby burdening, affecting, and obstructing [commerce](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Commerce);
* burdens commerce and the free flow of goods in commerce; and
* constitutes an unfair method of competition

The passage of the Equal Pay Act of 1963 was intended to minimize the practice of paying women less than men for doing equal work. In 2014, women earned 82.5 percent of men's salaries based on median weeklyearnings for full-time workers compared to 62.1 percent in 1979 (Bennett-Alexander & Hartman, 2012).

 Gender is not the sole factor for the discrepancy in pay between men and women. A study conducted by Michailisdisa and Morphitoub, 2014, relied on the use of a conceptual model to more accurately assess the factors that cause the pay gap between men and women. The conceptual model used in the study factored in the following: 1) Segregation of women in certain occupations; 2) Issues of human capital; 3) Organizational characteristics such as size of the organization and how far a position is from the agency’s chief executive;4) The cost of living from one place to another in the United States;5) The performance of employees and the race of the participants. The method used to conduct the study was data collection and sampling. The participants were 385 chief procurement officers who responded to an online survey that was composed of 36 questions that were designed to assess the aforementioned factors in a conceptual model (Michailisdisa & Morphitoub, 2014).

The study found that there was an $11,428 or a 14 percent salary diﬀerence that existed between male and female chief procurement oﬃcers.The study further found that the largest disparity between male and females in the areas that was assessed, was the stark difference in the number of people that the participants supervised and the amount of annual procurement volume that they managed. Male participants supervised an average of 27 subordinates and managed an annual procurement volume of $278 million. Female participants supervised an average of 13 subordinates managed an annual procurement volume of $112 million (Michailisdisa & Morphitoub, 2014).

The study also found that, gender aﬀects the salaries of women indirectly by inﬂuencing the amount of women’s authority and the direct eﬀect of that authority on one’s salary. While authority level drive salaries, gender drives authority level—thus playing an indirect role in predicting pay through authority variables Michailisdisa and Morphitoub, 2014, p. 748. This study further demonstrated that the indirect eﬀect on pay through the intervening authority variables was almost equal to the direct eﬀect of experience on pay. This makes the analysis of indirect effects imperative in future research on the role of gender in predicting pay diﬀerences between men and women (Michailisdisa & Morphitoub, 2014, p. 279).

*Interpersonal Mistreatment*

 Studies have been conducted that reliably shows interpersonal mistreatment of women in the workplace is commonplace and has harmful effects. According toMichailisdisa and Morphitoub, 2014 women experience interpersonal mistreatment in the workplace at the micro-level (i.e., individual), meso-level (i.e., organizational, group, and dyadic influences), and macro-level (i.e., societal)(Michailisdisa & Morphitoub, 2014).

*Macro-level factors*

 Macro-level factors operate at a societal level(Michailisdisa & Morphitoub, 2014). Some professions that society accepted as beingexclusively reserved for male employees in the past are now being integrated by female customers. The stigmatism of a female performing what society views as a “traditionally male profession” makes it difficult for female employees to adjust to those organizations. An example is the field of sport officiating in the United States. Cunningham et al., 2014 conducted a qualitative analysis of sports officials in the U.S. seeking to understand the experiences of women who had worked in this field but chose to leave.The former officials spoke of experiencing a lack of respect, the inequity of policies, a lack of role models, and gender abuse. These collective experiences negatively affected the sense of community—that is, their feelings of belonging— they felt with other officials, ultimately contributing to their decision to seek another profession(Cunningham et al., 2014, p. 2).

Meso-level factors

 Meso-level factors operate at an organizational level(Michailisdisa & Morphitoub, 2014). They represent systems that are in place, in an organization, that perpetuate the interpersonal mistreatment of women. Organizations that have systems that promote gender biases; i.e., females are expected to prepare the coffee or females have a dress code and males don’t, have a higher propensity to perpetuate the interpersonal mistreatment of women(Cunningham et al., 2014).

 Women who experience interpersonal mistreatment at the meso-level have a higher likelihood to experience a feeling of isolation in the workplace and they have a high rate of absenteeism (Cunningham et al., 2014, p. 3).

Micro-level factors

Micro-level factors operate at the individual level of analysis(Michailisdisa & Morphitoub, 2014). They represent the personal biases that individuals have against others due to their race, color, sexual orientation or religion. An individual’s upbringing, ethnicity, religion, past experiences, and personal beliefs all have the propensity to influence their personal biases.

Sexual harassment, workplace violence, quid pro quo, a hostile environment, and the display of inappropriate pictures or other forms of media are all examples of micro-level interpersonal mistreatment.

A study was conducted by the Association of Women for Action and Research (AWARE) to determine what percentage of women experienced some type of micro-level interpersonal mistreatment at their workplace. The participants were 500 women from 92 different companies in America. The method use to gather information was a survey. The study concluded that 54 percent of the respondents had experienced some type of interpersonal mistreatment at the micro-level(aware@aware.org.sg).

Interpersonal mistreatment of women in the workplace at every level can have a devastating effect on the recipient. Documented health effects of workplace interpersonal mistreatment range from mild to severe and include emotional, mental, and physical distress, lower overall health satisfaction, and death (Van De Griend & Hilfinger Messias, 2014).

Historical Sources

From its beginnings America has not treated women as equal citizens.“We hold these truths to be self-evident, all men are created equal” were the words eloquently written by Thomas Jefferson in the Declaration of Independence. The omission of women from America’s founding document was not an accident, it was written as the founding fathers intended to legislate, once the government of the new republic was formed in 1787.

The Constitution left it up to the states whether or not to disenfranchise women. In 1787, when the Constitution was adopted, every state except New Jersey disenfranchised women. Twenty years later in 1807, New Jersey also disenfranchised women. When the fourteenth amendment was passed in by congress in 1867, it defined citizens as male (Blumminfield, 2011).

The nineteenth amendment, which was ratified in 1907, was the first legislation passed that addressed women’s issues. It was the amendment that guaranteed women the right to vote.

There are other sources that contribute to the reason women face a disproportionate amount of issues in the workplace than men do. According to a study conducted byBlumminfield, 2011, the way a person is raised can factor into the way they treat people once they reach adulthood. Men that are raised by single mothers, who are the family provider, are less likely to harass women in the workplace than are men that were raised in a two parent homes with a stay at home mother(Blumminfield, 2011).

In some cases religious beliefs determine how men treat women. Some religions limit women’s roles in society. In some cases people allow their religious beliefs to determine how they interact with others(Blumminfield, 2011).

Recommended Training Strategies

 After carefully reviewing the social and behavioral science literature and examining the issues and challenges of women in the workplace the following training strategies are recommended to address these issues: 1)

Develop an organizational program that focuses on re-educating everyone in the organizations regardless of gender, on issues that create an environment that fosters mistreatment of anyone. The training should to be conducted during normal business hours preferably earlier in the day when the participants are more responsive and alert. The training needs to be an ongoing process and conducted at least quarterly. The training should address issues that are taking place at the work site as well as trends that have been uncovered doing research; 2) Develop systems in the workplace to ensure that everyone is being treated fairly and have the same opportunities to excel regardless of their race, color, religion, sexual preferences and gender. The management and human resource department should collaborate and develop clear cut genderless standards for evaluating the workforce. Supervisors should council their subordinates no less than quarterly on what they need to accomplish in order to be competitive for advancement. The standard for advancement should be published and available for every member of the workforce to review; 3) Conduct training with managers at least bi-annually to keep them abreast of trends in respect to workplace issues nationally. Use the issues that are uncovered through research and develop an awareness program that is designed ensure employees are kept current on issues and trends.

 *Conclusion*

 To conclude, women in the workplace face different issues and challenges than that of men. These challenges are not new and there is not a simple solution that can be used to overcome them. Organizations must be proactive in regards to their approach on how to mitigate the challenges that women face in the workplace. A continuous training program designed to reinforce prior training and incorporate new strategies is the best approach to limit the issues and challenges that women encounter within the workplace.

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