Literature Review

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# Abstract

The gender pay gap is a daunting challenge that women face as they try to earn their living. The causes of gender are very many including discrimination, stereotyping, variation in qualification and education, and family responsibilities. There is an urgent need to solve the issue of gender pay disparity to enable women to compete favorably with male counterparts. If this problem is not solved, women will continue to lag behind despite their increased educational qualification and experiences (Gillespie, 2014). Men tend to benefit at the expense of the female counterparts by having many hours of work to sell to various employers who even stereotypically prefer male to female. There existing literature point out that there the gender pay disparity has been narrowed. The reason given for the narrowed pay gap is the realization by women to proceed to colleges and Universities, engagement in traditionally male professions such as engineering, medicine and law that pay higher as well as increased educational qualification and experiences. Women have also devoted more time by shifting from their traditionally preferred better work-life balance jobs. It is recommended that women should continue to take up the traditionally male professions, employers to stop stereotyping, as well as males to become responsible for family matters without leaving it for female counterparts.

**Introduction**

According to the American Association of University Women (AAUW), pay equity and equal opportunity remain a matter of simple fairness. The AAUW has engaged in effective efforts as a leader in the struggle to end the wage discrimination alongside open doors for female workers in the workplace.

Both job creation and economic opportunity remain key issues for women who are still struggling with the daunting economic insecurity alongside wage discrimination. Even with the existence of the civil right laws and advancements in female’s economic status, the workplace female discriminations remain a challenge among women. Averagely, female workers earn around 79 cents for each dollar a full-time male employee receives.

The entire estimated amount of cash that female workers earn over a lifetime (47 years) compared to men is $700,000 for a high school graduate while the college graduate and professional school graduate figures are $1.2 million and $2 million respectively. There is, therefore, a need to narrow the pay gap between men and women by ensuring better treatment for both women and men in equal measures.

This essay investigates and undertakes a critical review of five scholarly articles that have sought to address the problem of gender pay disparity to present the true position of women and men in terms of earnings and pay (Gillespie, 2014). The paper will be summed up by recommending effective measures to narrow and vanish the gender pay gap to eliminate the sufferings that women have been subjected to for many years.

# Literature Review

**Haas, S. (2006). Economic development and the gender wage gap.** [**https://www.google.com/search?q=scholarly+articles+on+Pay+Disparity+among+women+and+men&ie=utf-8&oe=utf-8**](https://www.google.com/search?q=scholarly+articles+on+Pay+Disparity+among+women+and+men&ie=utf-8&oe=utf-8)

The article indicates that gender pay disparity is because of the variations in the educational and professional choices that women make. The wage gap is easily explained by the differences in these professional and occupation. The author, however, content that a considerable amount of the cause of the gap is yet to be explained (Haas, 2006).

To answer the question why women earn less than men, this article adopts two distinct reasons. These factors relate to the socioeconomic alterations over the past few decades. Particularly, the increased influx of female workers into the workforce as well as the remarkable progress the women made in educational attainment.

It is, however, surprising that women still earn less in the face of these progress compared to fellow men. The average hourly wage of women working full-time remained 87% that of men in Canada for instance. The article identifies four different hypothesis to explain why women earn less than men even with same qualifications.

One of the hypothesis touches on the fact that women are overrepresented in occupations that are ranked lowest in the pay scale. This makes it impossible to feel the impacts of higher influx of women in both professionals and educational courses.

The other hypothesis that can explain lower pay among the women relates to the fact that women place a higher value on non-pecuniary elements of a job. This makes it difficult for them to have more time to engage in income generating work and hence men will always earn more than women (Haas, 2006). The third hypothesis fronted to explain the reason for the pay gap is that fact women engage deeply in greater family responsibilities. This triggers women to opt for jobs that provide a better work-life balance to cater for their children. Men will, therefore, earn more by concentrating less on family responsibilities (Haas, 2006). The last hypothesis that explains why the women get less paid compared to men is the existence of stereotypes in various workplace organizational practices that tend to better value male patterns of employment.

**Gillespie, K. M. (2014). Unequal Pay: The Role of Gender.**

[**https://scholar.google.com/scholar?oe=utf-8&um=1&ie=UTF 8&lr&q=related:aEQkdwaxJIRvBM:scholar.google.com/**](https://scholar.google.com/scholar?oe=utf-8&um=1&ie=UTF%208&lr&q=related:aEQkdwaxJIRvBM:scholar.google.com/)

According Gillespie (2014), the role of gender in the workforce accounts for the unequal pay. The gender pay gap is a heated debated in the American society workplace. The gender gap according to other people is a fallacy. They think that there is no gender gap since the enactment of the Equal Pay Act in 1963. On the contrary others believe in the existence of the gender disparity in terms of pay and hold that it negatively impact on women based on the amount they receive in comparison to male colleagues (Gillespie, 2014).

The existence of gender gap is attributed to the fact that women with the same education as males are still getting less pay. For example, a man and a woman in the same first year out of college where they should each earn equally since they have similar responsibilities, young as well as childless and thus same endowment of experiences still have men being paid more (Gillespie, 2014). Many women are convinced that they are earning less due to the high level of discriminations leveled against them since it becomes hard for them to balance family and career. This factor leads to the glass ceiling aspect in pay gap between men and women. This is the unseen, however, unbreakable obstacle that confines women from rising the executive positions of the corporate ladder irrespective of the experience and qualifications.

There are more evidence to prove the existence of the existence and therefore, the author has focused on the wage disparity in American world. This is effective in helping him undertake a comprehensive look into the pay gap facing women currently working in the United States (Gillespie, 2014). The author concludes that there is enough evidence to support the existence of a wage gap between men and women in the American World. It is evident through both data gathered personally and studies of other investigators that glass ceiling exits and that it is a real challenge in contemporary business.

**Blau, F. D., & Kahn, L. M. (2007). The gender pay gap have women gone as far as they can?. *The Academy of Management Perspectives*, *21*(1), 7-23.** [**http://amp.aom.org/content/21/1/7.full.pdf+html**](http://amp.aom.org/content/21/1/7.full.pdf%2Bhtml)

According to Blau & Kahn (2007), the trends in the gender pay disparity in the US displays a somewhat mixed image. There is has been a half a century of stability in the earnings in female workers relative to the males counterparts. However, women’s relative earnings have on one end increased substantially in terms of earnings right from 1970s.

This is a dramatic development which is attributable to the recent alterations compared with the relative stability of the previous years. Conversely, the gender pay gap has persisted despite this significant development in women inclusion in the workplaces (Blau & Kahn, 2007, 64). The female workers have continue to be paid considerably less than male colleagues on average despite the beginning of the convergence in the late 1970s that slowed in the 1990s.

The authors sought to deeply at whether the pay gap has converged as far as it can be to denote the plight of women in workplaces. According to the economist, the gender pay gap explanation can be attached to the qualification and discrimination. The lower earnings among women can be understood comprehensively through “gender-specific” factors (Blau & Kahn, 2007, 97). This is because the variation relates directly to the differences between men and women in terns of qualifications and treatment. Regarding qualification, the human capital model remains significant in demonstrating the potential role education and experience play in creating the gender gap pay.

In the United States, however, the variation in educational attainment showed triggered less pay disparity. The main factor that has fueled the gender pay gap in the US is the fact that even if women were more likely to graduate from the high school compared to male high school graduates, only a few of women proceeded to college or graduate education (Blau & Kahn, 2007, 48). Men, however, put more concentration in career-oriented sectors including engineering, business, medicine as well as laws attached to high earnings. In the modern US, these variations have slightly diminished, particularly at the college levels in which female student population surpass that of their male counterparts.

The women population has also increased in terms of their representation in the traditionally-male professional fields. The author hold that the gender differences in the levels of education have failed to explicate the huge portion of the entire gender pay disparity whereby there is evident that the gender gap in schooling periods are advantageous to the women (Blau & Kahn, 2007, 45). Qualifications, however, has proven very essential in work experiences since traditionally female shifted in and out of the labor market depending on the family considerations.

**Blau, F. D., & Kahn, L. M. (2000). *Gender differences in pay* (No. w7732). National bureau of economic research.** [**http://econ2.econ.iastate.edu/classes/econ321/orazem/blau\_wages.pdf**](http://econ2.econ.iastate.edu/classes/econ321/orazem/blau_wages.pdf)

According to this article, gender gap pay gap has narrowed over the past 25 years dramatically. Women have increasingly occupied most of the traditional male occupations. The general observation, however, is that predominantly, female occupation pay less. The authors sought to describe the important gains in narrowing the gender pay gap (Blau & Kahn, 2000, 54). They also analyzed the sources of these gains as well as pointed out particular important untouched gender differences. The article fully assessed the position of the American women relative their counterparts in other nations. They offered a promising conclusion based on the thoughts of future prospects for the gender pay disparity.

According the facts about the gender earnings in the US, there has been a dramatic decrease in pay disparity. They outcomes of the study show that there is a considerable amount of recent convergence. From the analysis of the trends in the female-male earnings ratio drawn from the yearly earnings of both full-time and weekly workers. The results of the existence of a narrowed gap is attached to the adjusting for the fact that women as a cohort tend to sell their labor for only for fewer weeks yearly compared to male counterparts (Blau & Kahn, 2000, 43). The data gathered by these researchers revealed that gender ratio remained fairly constant at around 60 through to 1980.

There has been a substantial convergence between 1978b and 1999 whereby there was an increase in the weekly earnings for women to 76.5% from the 61% of men’s earnings. Nonetheless, the authors contend that the ration appeared to have escalated in the mid-1990s. The authors attached the 1990s’ scenario to the entry of new groups into the labor market whereby each entry was better prepared and possibly witnessing less segregation already encountered previously (Blau & Kahn, 2000, 45). They also attached the narrowed gap to the upward progression over time in the gender ratio within the groups and sometimes, a merger of the two possibilities.

**Goldin, C. (2014). A grand gender convergence: Its last chapter. *The American Economic Review*, *104*(4), 1091-1119.**

[**http://scholar.harvard.edu/files/goldin/files/goldin\_aeapress\_2014\_1.pdf**](http://scholar.harvard.edu/files/goldin/files/goldin_aeapress_2014_1.pdf)

According Goldin (2014), there has been a grand gender convergence. Both women and men have converged in terms of roles amongst them. This convergence is the grandest advances in the society and the economy. The aspect of the grand gender convergence remains very figurative in the history of gender roles. The author contends that the problem of gender disparity can be solved even without government involvement (Goldin, 2014, 64). In the solution mechanism, Goldin also suggest that it does not mean that men should be held more responsible in the home.

However, there must be major changes in the labor market to narrow the gap. For example, the author holds that the manner in which jobs are structured must alter as well as remuneration to facilitate the temporal flexibility. For the gender gap in pay to diminish and even vanish, the author indicates that firms should not have an incentive that disproportionately rewards individuals who labored for longer durations or worked for certain hours. The authors urges the corporate, financial and legal labor market to imitate the alterations taking place in the various sectors including technology, science as well as health.

The narrowing in terms of the convergence of roles in the gender has ensured that women get increased engagement in the labor markets (Goldin, 2014, 56). The convergence has narrowed the gaps in terms of labor force experiences, occupations, college, and even paid hours of work. The convergence is also being witnessed in earnings where women have shown increased earnings resulting from the sale of labor hours.

The authors has also comprehensively discussed about the gender disparity in earning both over the Life Cycle and by occupation. Here, the author uses earnings as the degree to measure gender equality by employing the earning per unit time and wage. The relative wage denotes how workers are valued economically and socially and therefore, the author uses the earnings ratio between women and men to showcase the narrowed gender disparity.

# Conclusions

To sum this literature review article, I shall highlight key themes drawn from the entire five articles by highlighting the common themes. From the articles reviewed in this paper, it is worth concluding beyond any reasonable doubt the gender pay gap still exist (Blau & Kahn, 2000, 76). Across the entire article, the key theme was that women are segregated against at workplaces in terms of pay and treatment. They face challenges of limited time to engage in full-time jobs since they look for those jobs with better work-life balance to cater for their families. Men, therefore, inappropriately get more time to engage in well paid jobs on full-time basis since they remain irresponsible on family issues (Blau & Kahn, 2007, 65). The women are, therefore, shortchanged by being perceived as home owners even if they have same level of education, experiences and qualifications.

Another key theme that cut across the articles relates to the occupation and professional courses. Men tend to engage in particular course such as engineering and medicine that have higher wages compared to the low-rated courses that many women tend to study. This is the main reason why, despite the development in education, qualification and even experiences among women, they still end up receiving low earnings compared to male counterparts.

In my view, however, I believe that segregation plays a key role towards the creation and persistent of gender pay disparity. The first step in solving the gender pay gap is to get rid of the stereotypes that make some employers prefer male employees in the workplaces to women yet both gender has the capability of delivering in equal measures given the opportunity (Gillespie, 2014, 86).

By making it a mandatory for employers to stop practicing the skewed way of recruitment, promotion and pay, women have a chance to showcase their ability in leadership positions and hence, more pay. This will greatly increase the participation of females in the workplace and increase their earnings. They will also be able to pay for nannies to take care of their children and devote more time to income generating activities.

**Recommendations**

* The fist recommendation I will urge employers to reconsider is that both men and women have equal productivity. It is totally inappropriate to embrace the stereotypes and superstition that only harbor gender segregation among women. By walking away from such stereotypes, both men and women will be recruited based on what one knows and what one can deliver. The firms will gain greatly from this change of attitude since the productivity of an individual increased when he is appreciated and given a task he is best talented.
* The second recommendation relates to the government. There needs to be stringent measures through legislations for employers who would still want to maintain the old orders by preferring male employees to female. This will ensure that many women are absorbed in the workplaces as well a given equal opportunities of taking leadership positions. In so doing, the female workers will get more earnings that are commensurate to their efforts and thus reduce the gender pay disparity.
* Another recommendation goes to women in terms of choice of professional courses and occupation. I want to urge every female individual to get rid of the belief that there are some courses that are a preserve for men. Such ideologies have played key roles in shaping gender pay gap. They need to be enrolled in these course including medicine, laws and engineering so that they can match the male counterparts in terms of recruitment and pay. Doing so has a greater potentiality for women to earn more and thus reduce the gender pay disparity and curb the controversial situation that has proved exasperating. The women will, therefore, favorably compete with their male counterparts in executive positions, promotions, management which come with increased pay hence, a reduction in the gender pay disparity.
* The last recommendation is that there is a need for women to come up and for Trade Union that will advocate for their well-being in the workplace. In such a Trade Union, women will meet and discuss issues that affect them and present them to respective agencies both governmental and non-governmental organizations. This will help their challenges solved immediately since it is shall have a greater bargaining power compared to when they are pursuing them individually.

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