



## Why Women Get Paid Less

The Truth  
Behind The  
Gender Pay Gap

*Part 2*

## Part 2:

In the first part of this 3-part series published in our last issue, we discussed three major factors that play a role in gender pay disparity between men and women. According to some of the research conducted on gender inequality, a few of the possible reasons point to gender, race and societal attitudes.

In contrast, others perceive the pay gap as related primarily to the decisions that women make pertaining to their line of work, level of education attained and hours worked in comparison to the choices of men. Angela Kennedy acknowledged a college professor working at Carnegie Mellon University who studied some aspects of the pay gap and discovered that there were many areas that women did not have the proper skill sets in order to move forward in the workforce. One of the major areas revealed were those pertaining to the negotiation skills of women and the lack of proper experience in obtaining appropriate terms for her salary.<sup>1</sup>

Further research done in 2002 by the National Bureau of Economic Research disclosed a total of women that reached a favorable outcome by salary negotiation was 16% and another group that never mentioned salary terms was 41%. Additionally, Warren Farrell, American educator, activist and author of *Why Men Earn More: The Startling Truth Behind the Pay Gap-And What Women Can Do About It* voices his opinions on the continuation of pay gap as being connected with the way of life that women choose to live. He goes on to claim that "some of them include a woman's choice not to work long hours, not to take hazardous or risky jobs, not to relocate..."

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<sup>1</sup>Angela Kennedy, Eiko Nagata, Brandy P. Mushenski and Danyelle L. Johnson, Wage Discrimination Based on Gender and Race. (Delta Kappa Gamma Bulletin, 2009).

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Youngjoo, Cha. and Kim A. Weeden, Overwork and the Slow Convergence in the Gender Gap in Wages. (*American Sociological Review*, 2014).

<sup>4</sup>Leanna Lawter, Tuvana Rua and Jeanine K. Andreassi, Ph.D, The Glass Cage: The Gender Pay Gap and Self-Employment in the United States. (New England Journal Of Entrepreneurship, 2016).

Lastly, he strongly believes that these are credible reasons responsible for the reality of the pay gap which continues to work firmly against women.<sup>2</sup>

In "Overwork and the Slow Convergence in the Gender Gap in Wages," corresponding authors Youngjoo Cha and Kim A. Weeden examine the trends of gender gap in wages through the overwork effect "...where long work hours are especially common and the norm of overwork is deeply embedded in organizational practices and occupational cultures." In most cases, overwork hours compensate more than regular full-time hours and so "The gender gap in overwork can lead to a further increase in the gender wage gap of hourly wages of over workers increase more than those of full-time workers."<sup>3</sup> Having said that, women rarely stick around working environments that demand unusually long hours leaving the men to work the longer hours and receive the higher pay.

According to the New England Journal of Entrepreneurship, the gender pay gap is significantly higher among self-employed women. Using data from a 1999 longitudinal study, evidence revealed a difference of 32 cents to the dollar.<sup>4</sup> So what is the explanation for gender, self-employment and the pay gap? Here, the author explores how the interlocking structures of gender, family and occupation affect the earnings of self-employed women. Once more, some of the major reasons for the gap point to the total number of hours that women work in comparison to men in which the pay differences are attributed to the fact that women with greater family responsibilities at

home trade earnings for taking care of children and other household obligations. With self-employed women working less than the average 35 hour work week to attend to outside business, their working characteristics and schedules vary significantly in that their combined efforts of non-working responsibilities and personal ambitions reflect the lowest pay gap.

One major theory made in “The Work of Feminists is Not Yet Done,” by Phyllis Tharenou is that “...disadvantage is cumulative. Women start in jobs with lower pay than comparable men, occupy less favorable “female” occupations and environments with lower pay, have few prospects for advancing into jobs with equivalent pay to men, may interrupt their employment for family reasons and reduce their work experience (so reducing their pay levels), and are given less training and other developmental experiences which results in lower pay.” Tharenou goes on to say that, “The gender pay gap and its contributing influences of gender discrimination and gender stereotyping are a reminder that agitation for equality of opportunity for women remains relevant today as it was in the early 1960s, at the time of the second wave of feminism.”<sup>5</sup> Overall, based on some hard facts and empirical studies, it appears as if our society supports the structure of patriarchal authority which in turn places men in positions of power and higher salaries and keeps women subordinate to men.

Another aspect of the gap can be attributed to performance pay. Professor of Labour Economics and leading author, Alan Manning covers this well, as does PhD student of Economics, Farzad Saidi in the essay “Understanding The Gender Pay Gap: What’s Competition Got To Do With It” which

discusses women possessing different outlooks and responding differently when placed in positions of competition which lead them to underperform and are also more likely not to choose jobs that implement performance pay structures. They go on to explain that “...performance pay” encompasses a wide range of incentive schemes, from piece-rates by which individual pay is related to an objective measure of individual output to merit pay based on subjective assessments of managers.<sup>6</sup>

Their theories as economists strive to present plausible reasons for the gender pay gap and propose that “...by the time men and women enter the labor market, their psychological attitudes differ with respect to the type of employment contracts they favor, which ultimately affect their on-the-job performance.”<sup>7</sup> It appears evident that targeting the root of the gender pay gap back to federal legislation would help to shed light on key factors that influence earnings.

In summary, some outcomes of the gap have been speculated to originate from the social construction of gender roles, differences in the ability and willingness of women to negotiate salaries and favorable work terms.

Other such examples explored were excessively long working hours, women’s personal career decisions and family-related obligations.

What do you think are some factors that attribute to the gender pay gap not mentioned in this article series?

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<sup>5</sup> Phyllis Tharenou (2013), *The Work of Feminists is Not Yet Done: The Gender Pay Gap-a Stubborn Anachronism*. (*Sex Roles*, 2013).

<sup>6</sup> Alan Manning and Saidi Farzad, *Understanding the Gender Pay Gap: What’s Competition Got to Do with it?*. (*ILR Review*, 2010).

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.