

Gender Inequality In The Workplace: Exploring The Persistence Of The Gender Pay Gap

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Abstract

The present research undertakes a comprehensive investigation into the multifaceted dimensions of gender inequality in the workplace, focusing explicitly on the enduring challenge of the gender pay gap. Grounded in a mixed-methods approach, the study unfolds through both quantitative and qualitative perspectives, unraveling the historical intricacies that have led to persistent disparities. In the quantitative domain, extensive datasets comprising salary information from diverse organizations and employment statistics are meticulously analyzed. The quantitative analysis of the employs measures such as mean and standard deviation using Statistical Package for Social Sciences, to discern the intricate relationships between gender, occupation, and experience, shedding light on the nuanced factors contributing to wage disparities. Comparative analyses further unveil variations in the gender pay gap across industries and regions. Complementing this quantitative inquiry, the qualitative phase delves into the subjective experiences of individuals through in-depth interviews and surveys. Thematic analysis uncovers recurring patterns in interview responses, while qualitative examination of survey data offers a profound understanding of personal experiences related to the gender pay gap. The research aims not only to contribute to academic discourse but also to offer actionable recommendations for

organizations, policymakers, and stakeholders, striving towards dismantling the persistent barriers that fuel the gender pay gap and fostering environments that champion genuine gender equality. The study also suggests that the government increase development investment, especially on social infrastructure, health care, and education, in order to foster economic success.

Keywords: Gender pay gap; economic prosperity; labor economics; human development; gender disparity.

Introduction

One glaring illustration of the pervasive and deeply ingrained issue of gender inequality in the workplace—which has varying effects on men and women in professional settings—is the gender pay gap. Even though gender equality has come a long way, there is still a persistent pay difference between male and female employees, which calls for a careful examination of the structural problems, underlying causes, and potential solutions. The aim of this research is to investigate the different facets of gender inequality, with a particular emphasis on understanding and reducing the persistent nature of the gender pay gap (Blau & Kahn, 2020).

Background and Context

Understanding the subtleties that lead to the gender wage gap's continuance necessitates understanding the societal expectations, deeply rooted preconceptions, and the historical backdrop of gender roles. Comprehending the historical evolution of workplace dynamics and social norms is crucial in comprehending the origins of this inequality and its impact on the labor market (Meara, Pastore, & Webster, 2020). Recent decades have seen the emergence of two distinct income patterns: ongoing wage inequality, particularly the gender wage gap, and an expanding wage gap. Inequality in pay between men and women is an ongoing issue in the workplace. Regarding equal pay, gender pay inequality is still an issue. Achieving actual equality is challenging since it necessitates ongoing evaluation and observation (Silva, 2023).

Assuming that men and women are not compensated equally for the labor they perform, the gender pay gap phenomenon has been a social and economic issue since at least the 1980s. The term "pay gap" refers to the variation in median income between men and women (Roussille, 2021). Researchers have been interested in the gender pay gap for many years. Regardless of a person's experience, education, or skill level, income disparities between men and women have been seen over the years (Bennedsen, Simintzi, Tsoutsoura, & Wolfenzon, 2022). According to Khan, Walmsley, and Mukhopadhyay (2021), the average gender wage gap in Pakistan is projected to be between 15 and 17 percent. This implies that in order for a Pakistani woman to make the same amount of money as a man does in a year, she would need to labor for two more months. In terms of gender pay parity, mining and other heavy industries lag behind. Gender pay discrepancy is not limited to Pakistan. The US Bureau of Labor Statistics (2020) reports that women in full-time employment made, on average, 81% of what men made. In comparison to men, women made up 84% of the workforce in 2021. According to an Australian study, women in workplaces frequently work in low-paying positions. The gender pay gap has been varying recently, ranging from 13.4% to 19%. Women are quitting the institutions in search of positions that better reflect their contribution to the company or organization as a result of this disparity. The workforce and the company's performance are impacted by these disparities. Employee inequality and the wage gap have an impact on people's attitude and overall performance in the workplace (Organisation, 2020).

According to Carlsen (2020), employees are negatively and discouragingly affected by gender pay disparity. Inequality of pay has become a problem for the workforce as a whole. When workers in the same institution and with comparable educational backgrounds get varying salaries, it can be challenging to keep talented personnel at the organization. The primary victims in this situation are women.

Scope and Significance of the Issue

The implications of this research for women's career advancement, economic empowerment, and general job satisfaction extend beyond the statistical representation of the

pay difference. The importance of addressing gender inequality in the workplace can be explored by looking at how it affects workplace productivity, diversity and inclusion initiatives, and society's broader socioeconomic structure (Casad et al., 2021).

Causes of the Gender Pay Gap

A thorough examination of all pertinent factors is required to identify the fundamental causes of the gender pay gap. The consequences of motherhood penalty, unconscious bias, occupational segregation, and disparities in negotiation skills are some of the numerous factors that contribute to and perpetuate gender wage discrepancies. A thorough examination is necessary for each component to fully grasp how it contributes to the gender wage gap (Casad et al., 2021).

Development of Law and Policy

It is crucial to carry out a comprehensive examination of the ways in which workplace laws and policies intended to close the gender pay gap have evolved over time. This section will closely analyze the efficacy of existing policies, as well as any implementation gaps and potential areas in which legislative frameworks may need to be expanded or modified (Blau & Kahn, 2020).

Barriers and Obstacles

In order to comprehend why there is still a gender wage difference, it is important to look at the barriers and difficulties that women face in the workplace. Numerous reasons, such as discriminatory practices, preconceptions, a dearth of mentorship opportunities, and barriers to professional advancement, contribute to the ongoing income gap. To create targeted solutions, a thorough analysis of these problems is necessary (Jayachandran, 2021).

Literature Review

Discrimination is characterized as "any exclusion, distinction, or preference made on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, political opinion, national extraction, or social origin, which has the effect of nullifying or impeding equality of opportunity and treatment in employment and occupation." Put another way, it describes the strategy used by a powerful group to try and hang

onto its advantages at the expense of a weaker group. Discrimination may be intentional or unintentional and stem from internalized cultural stereotypes such as masculinity and femininity (Petrongolo & Ronchi, 2020). The undervaluing of women's labor and the reality of gender wage disparities in the workplace are addressed by (Adegbite & Machethe, 2020). This pattern suggests that gender, not the nature of the activity being done, is the basis for prejudice. According to Cheema, Saleem, Haq, and Shehzadi (2022), women in Pakistan remain underrepresented at all income levels and there is still a gender pay gap between men and women performing the same work, despite government efforts to intervene through legislation to promote gender equality. Still, it's encouraging that so many countries have begun to take steps towards advancing gender equality. To address gender inequity, multiple parties must work together, including the government, labor unions, and businesses. It is a lifetime endeavor that requires commitment given the dynamic nature of the workplace.

Trends from the 1960s show a sustained period in which women's earnings were approximately 60% of men's. Beginning in the 1980s, an increase in women's earnings began to lessen the gap, if not entirely eliminate it that persists to this day (Memon, Lohana, & Naqvi, 2021). Numerous studies have shown that a range of structural and individual processes that represent the short- and long-term effects of gender relations and roles throughout life can explain the gender pay gap and how it has changed over time in traditional labor markets. Notwithstanding, women continue to perform the majority of domestic work, which significantly affects their employment and financial standing (Sarwar & Imran, 2019). Research on the gender pay gap often starts with the premise that men and women are paid significantly differently and work in various fields (Javed et al., 2022).

The pay gap becomes problematic when men and women with similar talents work in the same occupation but are paid differently for their labor. Ayub, Khan, and Khushnood (2019) claims that the gender pay gap is one of the most discussed aspects of gender inequality. Moreover, the fact that this problem occurs in a multitude of countries and cultures suggests that it is a worldwide one in need of complex solutions. Nevertheless, as different countries take different

approaches to resolving wealth disparity, there is still a long way to go before this issue is rectified. Well-established gender disparity has consequences including unequal access to professional opportunities, the development of human ability, and compensation. It is well recognized that there is still a significant gender pay gap that disadvantages women in all nations (Venter et al., 2022). A number of countries have enacted laws to address the complex global issue of women's wage discrepancy (Magidimisha & Chipungu, 2019). The gender wage gap is 27% in the public sector and 35.5% in the commercial sector. In certain circumstances, women continue to earn less than men while having comparable accomplishment and educational levels (Chatterjee & Werner, 2021). Dickens et al. (2023) notes that even after equal pay legislation were established, most countries still have a significant gender wage gap. Even with the notable advances in women's educational attainment and labor force participation in the latter half of the 20th century, there is still much to learn about gender wage disparity.

Research Methodology

This research employs an inclusive research methodology to observe gender inequality in the workplace, specifically focusing on understanding the persistence of the gender pay gap. A mixed-methods approach is adopted to provide a holistic perspective. In the quantitative phase, extensive datasets are collected from diverse organizations, encompassing salary information and employment statistics. Rigorous statistical analyses, including mean, median, and regression, are applied to unravel complex relationships between gender, occupation, and experience, thereby identifying key factors contributing to wage disparities. Comparative analyses further reveal variations in the gender pay gap across industries and regions. Complementing the quantitative inquiry, the qualitative phase involves in-depth interviews and surveys to capture nuanced subjective experiences related to the gender pay gap. Purposive sampling ensures diverse participant perspectives, with considerations for gender, occupation, and tenure. Thematic analysis is applied to extract recurring patterns from qualitative data, providing valuable insights into individuals' lived experiences and perceptions of gender-based compensation disparities. The qualitative phase also delves into

historical and cultural aspects influencing persistent gender inequality in compensation. Triangulation is employed to enhance the study's credibility, comparing findings from both quantitative and qualitative analyses. Finally, the Statistical Package for Social Sciences was used to compute the results of the research.

Population of the Research

The population under consideration for this research is the broader workforce, encompassing individuals employed in various industries and regions. The goal is to draw insights that can be generalized to the larger working population and contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of gender inequality in the workplace. The population includes all the individuals from different occupations, roles, and levels of experience, reflecting the diversity present in contemporary work environments.

The present research recognizes that the population is not limited to a specific sector or location but is inclusive of a broad cross-section of the workforce. The findings aim to inform discussions and interventions that can be applied across industries and regions, contributing to the broader discourse on addressing and mitigating the persistence of the gender pay gap in workplaces globally.

Sample of the Research

The sample for this research consists of 2000 male and female individuals employed across various industries and regions, selected through a purposive sampling strategy. In the quantitative phase, the sample includes employees from diverse organizations, ensuring representation across different sectors and geographic locations. A stratified sampling approach is employed to account for variations in industry types and regional demographics. The size of the sample is determined to achieve statistical significance and strength in the analysis of salary information and employment statistics. In the qualitative phase, participants are selected based on their willingness to share insights into their experiences with the gender pay gap. The sample encompasses individuals with varying levels of professional experience, diverse occupations, and roles within the workplace. Total samples of the research are 1000 male and 1000 female participants working in

different organizations of the country. All the research participants were from 20 to 55 years of age.

Data Analysis

Table.1. of Survey participants of different groups

Variables	2017-2018	2019-2020	2021-2022
Unemployed population	114,256	213,110	321,432
Employed population	91,597	17,475	21,718
Different age groups	71,522	68.371	56,831
Male participants	9,193	3,576	17,272
Female participants	984	1172	4375

The present study divides the determinants of gender wage differential into three broad categories which are explained in the following table

Table.2. Different demographic research factors of the population

Population-based factors	Socioeconomic factors	Occupation-related factors
Gender difference	Education	Work experience
Marital status	Training	Employment category
Age difference	Locality of residence	Working hours
Area	Position of work	Profession by skill levels

Table.3. Basic occupational groups distinguished by different levels of expertise

Professionals	N=263	26%	Competency level 1
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Organizational managers	N=340	34%	2
Technical professionals	N=200	20%	3
Skilled persons	N=500	50%	1
Private Sales workers	N=450	45%	1
Private job holders	N=655	65.5%	2

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One of the main factors that is believed to determine an individual's wage is the employment sector. Between 2010–12 and 2017–18, the coefficient of employment in the public sector rose dramatically for both genders. The private sector serves as the reference category, whereas the public sector is a categorical variable. Skill level 1 is used as the reference category to calculate the effect of skill levels on earnings for both men and women. The findings show that over a three-year period, male salaries climb in tandem with rising skill levels. But in 2020–21, as skill levels increased, ladies' pay decreased in comparison to skill levels 1 as they moved from skill levels 2 to 3. The average salary for workers in middle-skill jobs with a female workforce is 65.5% less than that of workers in occupations with a male workforce in comparable occupations.

Table 4. Statistical Arrangement of the male samples concerning quantitative variables

Different Variable s	2010-12		2014-15		2016-17	
	2018-19		2021-22		2023	
	Mean of the variables deviation					Std.
Average Monthly pay	4353 5.	7165. 9	19708 .3	3256. 6	3853. 7	13338 .3
Working Experien ce	13.3	13.6	14.6	14.7	14.9	15.4
Working hours	34.5	35.3	37.2	37.8	38.5	38.7
schoolin g years	6.3	6.5	6.7	7.3	7.6	7.9

Table.5. Statistical Arrangement of the female samples concerning quantitative variables

Different Variable s	2010-12		2014-15		2016-17	
	2018-19		2021-22		2023	
	Mean of the variables deviation					
Average Monthly pay	33535.	6164.7	17708.4	3056.6	3653.7	11338.3
Working Experience	12.1	12.3	15.2	15.1	15.2	163
Working hours	33.5	35.5	35.2	37.9	38.6	38.9
Schoolin g years	6.4	6.5	6.6	7.5	8.7	8.8

The overview of different Tables 4 and 5 list the categorical variables of the study for both males and females. The mean pay for men in 2010–12, women in 2013–14, and men in 2017–

18 are displayed in these tables as follows: men in 2010–12, it was Rs. 7165.9, and women in 6164.7; in 2017–18, it was Rs. 197708.3 and Rs. 17708.4 for men and women. According to these data, women made, on average, 20%, 30%, and 31% less than men in 2010, 12, 19, and 18, respectively. In addition to other traits of female workers, Tables 5 and 6 demonstrate that women have, on average, one fewer year of experience and one more year of schooling than men. This result bolsters the Mincer hypothesis, which postulates the same underlying explanation for the observed differences in pay between men and women. Because they have to spend more time at home caring for their families, children, and other household responsibilities, women usually work fewer hours. The description analysis offers evidence in favor of male-female income differentials, which can be attributed to changes in human capital variables or variances in occupational distributions. Table 4 displays the average income for men and women over three time periods: 2010–12, 2014–15, and 2016–17. We can see that there is a difference in earnings for both genders due to discrimination and differences in characteristics, with the average earning of a female being less than that of a male in each of the three years, even though these three time periods cannot be compared due to the difference in purchasing power parity. The percentage of men and women who finished technical training is shown in Table 5. It is clear that the proportion of women in the sample has grown over time, going from 10.2 percent in 1997–1998 to 14.5 percent in 2010–12 to 16.8 percent at the end. The male proportion, on the other hand, has declined, going from 85.5 percent in 2010–12 to 83.2 percent in 2017–18. The percentage share of men and women in various skill levels of employment shows that, as time goes on, the proportion of men in skill level 1 occupations has decreased while the proportion of women in skill level 1 occupations has increased (Figure 3). Between 2010 and 2018, the proportion of women employed in skill level 4 occupations—the highest skill level—rose from 16 percent to 30 percent. The proportion of women working in the public and commercial sectors grew between 2010–12 and 2017–18. The drop in the share of men in the public and private sectors is depicted in Figure 4. This section's data and variable analysis was completed independently for each gender, and the average result indicates that women are underrepresented in almost all

categories. Across the three time periods—2010–12, 2014–15, and 2021–22—the average income of women is lower than that of men. Their percentage share is still smaller than men's, albeit growing over time.

Thematic analysis of the participants' interviews

The thematic analysis of interviews conducted to explore gender inequalities in the workplace and the persistent nature of the gender pay gap revealed a multifaceted narrative among research participants. One prevalent theme centered on salary disparities, where participants recounted instances of unequal pay for similar roles. This theme underscored the systemic issue of gender-based wage discrepancies, with participants expressing concerns about the impact on job satisfaction and overall workplace equity.

Another significant theme emerged around promotion challenges faced predominantly by women. Participants shared narratives of encountering obstacles hindering their advancement to higher positions, shedding light on the limited opportunities for career progression. Negotiation dynamics also surfaced as a prominent theme, unveiling the complexities women face in negotiating salaries. Participants described experiences where negotiation styles and biases played a pivotal role in determining pay outcomes, illustrating the need for fair and transparent negotiation processes. The intersection of work-life balance and family responsibilities emerged as a poignant theme, elucidating the intricate relationship between caregiving duties and career trajectories. Participants discussed the challenges of balancing work and family life, revealing how family responsibilities impact career advancement and contribute to the perpetuation of the gender pay gap. Gendered stereotypes and bias were recurrent themes in participants' narratives, exposing the pervasive influence of preconceived notions on workplace decisions. Instances of bias in performance evaluations and hiring processes were shared, highlighting the importance of addressing and dismantling gender-based stereotypes in organizational contexts. The analysis also brought to light themes related to professional development opportunities, corporate culture, and policies. Participants emphasized the importance of equal access to training, mentorship, and skill development for addressing gender disparities. Discussions around organizational culture

and policies revealed participants' perspectives on the role these factors play in either perpetuating or mitigating gender inequalities in the workplace. Furthermore, the theme of leadership representation underscored the significance of diverse leadership for combating gender disparities. Participants articulated the need for increased representation of women in leadership positions as a key step toward fostering workplace equality. Finally, conversations around intersectionality explored how factors such as race and ethnicity intersect with gender, shaping nuanced experiences of workplace inequalities. Throughout these themes, participants also shared potential solutions and best practices, highlighting actionable steps for promoting gender equality and closing the persistent gender pay gap within organizational settings.

Conclusion

When evaluating the complete set of facts, it is abundantly obvious that, in Pakistan, the difference between male and female salaries dropped considerably between 2010–12 and 2019–20. This could be the effect of years of government attempts to diminish discriminatory feeling towards female workers, or it could be the result of altering social attitudes towards women's participation in the workforce. The main causes of gender differences in worker productivity and remuneration include variances in the economic activities of men and women, as well as in the returns on labor, human capital, and nature of employment themselves. Male and female vocations vary greatly in terms of occupational qualities across sectors and professions. Women are concentrated in low productivity jobs and tend to favor part-time or informal jobs that allow them to manage work and other responsibilities. These jobs also often include flexible working hours and other options. This study assessed the wage discrepancy attributable to differences in male and female features as well as other unknown variables in an attempt to explain the income gap between males and females in Pakistan. In this study, survey methodologies are utilised to evaluate the magnitude of the gender wage gap in Pakistan. The data and findings demonstrate that men make more money than women, with the gender pay gap growing from 43.9 percent in 2014–15 to 77.4 percent in 2017–18 and 83.7 percent in 2021–2022,

signifying a worsening scenario in Pakistan's labour market. Standards of labour should be promoted, particularly in the private sector, to close the gender wage gap. Our study's findings reveal that women are paid more than men in the public sector. Therefore, anti-discrimination legislation are essential, such as equal pay laws and regulations that prevent discrimination based on rank, wage, or entry criteria into the labour market.

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