

Influence of Gender Stereotypes on Gender Inequality & Discrimination in the Workplace

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Abstract

This paper highlights how women face discrimination and stereotypes that in turn impact their interview opportunities, salaries, and levels of leadership. Specifically, the paper discusses the negative impacts of gender bias and stereotypes on women that work for Fortune 500 companies. This paper will highlight forms of gender-based workplace discrimination in the form of the wage gap and unequal promotional opportunities. While exploring theories, such as a practice-based theory of diversity and the glass ceiling. This paper utilizes relevant case studies, filing from the U.S Census Department, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, peer-reviewed sources, and charts of surveys that prove and demonstrate the hypothesized theory.

Keywords: Women, Discrimination, Gender Stereotypes, Gender Bias, Interview Opportunities, Promotional Opportunitites, Levels of Leadership, Salaries, Wage Gap, Practice-Based Theory of Diversity, Glass Ceiling

Introduction

Societal constructs of the male and female genders have influenced the unequal opportunities in the professional workplace for women. While improvements have been made to strive for equality between men and women, the workplace exemplifies the progress that still needs to occur to reach complete gender equality. As diversity, equity, and inclusion are becoming more prominent within Fortune 500 companies' cultures, why are women continuing to experience a wage gap and limited interview as well as promotional opportunities, compared to men?

These are the concepts that I will deep-dive into throughout this thesis paper. I will provide the readers with a more in-depth understanding of some of the hardships women endure within the corporate workforce, specifically among Fortune 500 companies.

In the current paper, I further explore the stereotypes and predisposed gender bias that women encounter from entry-level to senior executive positions within Fortune 500 companies. I focus on how these stereotypes and biases impact women's wages, interview opportunities, and levels of leadership.

I begin this paper with a detailed explanation of gender stereotypes, gender bias, and a practice-based theory of gender. Furthermore, I explain the impact that each one of these topics has on women in the workforce, specifically within Fortune 500 companies. I used previously executed studies and surveys to highlight the connection between predisposed gender bias and how women are treated in the workplace through job opportunities, promotions, and pay compared to men. This paper concludes with charts and data tables that express to the audience the unequal interview opportunities, wage gap, level-of-leadership differences, and additional data that helps support the studied hypotheses.

Literature Review

Ontology

Stereotypes

Forms of gender inequalities within a professional environment are based on the foundation of societal stereotypes of each gender. Stereotypes regarding gender are especially influential because gender is an aspect of a person that is readily noticed and remembered (Hentschel Et. al., 2019). A stereotype is a fixed, generalized belief or thought about a person, group of people or a class of people.

Theories behind social inequalities

Diversity, inequalities, and exclusions of a specific person or groups of individuals can be viewed as well as analyzed through a vast variety of perspectives that are dependent on

numerous factors, such as: who is acknowledging the problem and the circumstances of the situation. After approximately three decades of research, diversity scholars are increasing their search for strategies to theoretically advance and rejuvenate the field (Janssens & Steyaert, 2019). Revisiting diversity research from an ontological perspective means considering how scholars are approaching the nature and basic structure of social life and social phenomena (Janssens & Steyaert, 2019).

The workplace has sometimes been referred to as an inhospitable place for women due to the multiple forms of gender inequalities present (Stamarski & Hing, 2015). Organizations continuously act as a key role in generating and maintaining gender stereotypes through forms of inequality and unfair employment outcomes, regardless of attempted diversity efforts.

A diversity climate is focused on employees' perceptions about the extent to which an organization successfully promotes fairness and the elimination of discrimination, as well as expressing, listening to, actively valuing, and integrating diverse perspectives (Janssens & Steyaert, 2019). Women studying diversity and gender inequality will have a different perception of the problem at hand, compared to men. Therefore, performing a practice-based theory of diversity is the performative nature of these "predictors," which aim to uncover how inclusive human resource departments, company cultures, and diversity practices coincide to produce an enhanced, equal climate for all employees (Janssens & Steyaert, 2019). The main benefit of executing a practice-based theory of diversity is to eliminate the influence of personal perception and understand the genuine underlying impacts of climate-producing practices.

Gender discrepancies

Gender-based expectations of inferiority insinuate an underperformance on many important tasks, including decision-making and leadership roles. Studies reveal that, when being

considered for male-typed (i.e., male-dominated, believed-to-be-for-men) jobs, female candidates are evaluated more negatively and recommended for employment less often by study participants, compared with matched male candidates (Stamarkski & Son Hing, 2015).

Men are characterized as more agentic than women, taking charge and being in control, and women are characterized as more communal than men, being attuned to others and building relationships (Hentschel Et. al., 2019).

The embedding of gender stereotyping from a young age affects the human evaluation of the roles and responsibilities of both men and women. Stereotyping has proven to have stronger implications for women. For instance, women are conditioned since their childhood that unless they demonstrate masculine characteristics, they are less likely to carry out leadership-like roles in organizations and less likely to be successful in work events (Chakraborty & Chatterjee, 2021). However, a meta-analysis of experimental studies reveals that when women act in a stereotypically masculine fashion within leadership positions, they receive lower performance evaluations than matched men (Stamarkski & Son Hing, 2015).

Workplace Discrimination

Theory of Gender Inequality

Gender equality is the concept that all women and men have equal conditions, treatment, and opportunities for realizing their full potential, human rights, and dignity, as well as for contributing to economic, social, cultural, and political developments (UNICEF, 2017). While equality does not signify that women and men are identical in every aspect, the concept conveys that each gender should be offered the same rights, opportunities, along with responsibilities. Therefore, every individual has the chance to develop their abilities and form decisions without the limitations set by gender stereotypes (UNICEF, 2017). More prominently, gender

discrimination is the act of unequal or disadvantageous treatment of an individual or group of persons based on gender, such as sexual harassment.

Gender bias

Gender bias is the tendency to favor one gender over another. By definition, a concept is a form of unconscious bias, also referred to as implicit bias, which occurs when one individual unconsciously attributes certain attitudes and stereotypes to a different person or a group of people (Reiners, 2021). These behaviors impact how individuals understand and interact with each other (Reiners, 2021).

Gender bias is mainly apparent throughout professional settings, such as a corporate work environment. A corporation demonstrates gender bias across various aspects of the operations, including recruiting strategies, decisions of hiring managers, job descriptions, interview questions, career advancements, compensations, mentoring programs, benefits, parental status, and sexual harassment (Reiners, 2021).

Hiring managers act as critical components for the demonstration of gender bias in the workplace during the recruiting process by who is chosen for interviews, the types of interview questions that are asked to candidates, and their overall hiring decisions. Throughout the recruiting process, gender bias is liable, to begin with where and how companies select the potential candidates. For instance, following her college graduation, Erin McKelvey did not receive any responses from employers. However, when she changed her name from Erin (a feminine name) to Mack (a more masculine name) on her resume, she received a 70% response rate (Gaetano, 2016).

Language is known to have gendered associations, such as confidence, decisive, strong, and outspokenness, which are found to attract male candidates and deter female candidates from a specific position (Reiners, 2021).

A study performed by the Harvard Library found that when candidates were separately reviewed by individual hiring managers, 51% of managers were influenced by the applicant's gender and selected the under-performing candidate (Bohnet Et al., 2012).

Additionally, during interviews, hiring managers tend to ask more targeted questions about a female candidate's leadership abilities and unconsciously prefer more masculine leadership styles (Reiners, 2021). The entirety of the recruitment process leads to the inevitable continuation of gender bias in the workplace, following hiring the desired candidates.

Impact on productivity

Companies within any industry share a similar goal of maximizing their productivity, remaining competitive, achieving their mission, and earning revenue. Diversity within a firm drives innovation and leads to an increase in the corporation's overall productivity. Specifically, gender diversity among leadership roles has been proven and linked to higher profitability (Bohnet Et al., 2012).

However, gender bias is still a dominant force that limits women from promotional opportunities; therefore, lessening the diversity throughout the numerous levels of positions within a corporation.

One measurement of an organization's productivity is derived from its quarterly, semi-annually, as well as/ or annual performance reviews. In analyzing men's and women's written performance reviews, a study discovered that women were more likely to receive vague feedback that did not offer specific details of what they had done well and what they could do to advance

(Mackenzie Et al., 2019). Results have proved that women were more likely to be told, for example, to “do more work in person” with minimal to no explanation regarding how to overcome the issue or the goal of change. This demonstrates performance review bias, which occurs when employers, managers, and colleagues review an employee of one gender differently from another (Reiners, 2021). Generalized evaluations are ambiguous; therefore, bias is more prevalent.

As many studies have shown, without structure, people are more likely to rely on gender, race, and other stereotypes when making decisions; rather than, thoughtfully constructing assessments using agreed-upon processes and criteria that are consistently applied across all employees (Castilla, 2008).

Limited feedback depletes an individual's opportunity for growth, as they will not be able to acknowledge their strengths and grow upon their weaknesses. The disparity between promotional opportunities between men and women begins with entry-level roles, where men are 30% more likely than women to be promoted to management roles (Waller, 2016). Though the numbers are growing slowly, women hold less than a quarter of senior leadership positions and less than one-fifth of C-suite roles (Waller, 2016). A solution to this aspect of gender bias, which would also benefit the company by increasing its productivity, is to offer women chances to meet with senior executives daily, attempt challenging projects, and gain exposure to tasks that are not in their day-to-day jobs. Some big businesses have rolled out executive-shadow programs for women, to help give them more access to top leadership and visibility within the company (Waller, 2016). As of June 1, 2019, 33 of the companies on the ranking of highest-grossing firms were led by female CEOs for the first time (Zillman, 2019).

Workplace Opportunities

Compensation and benefits for men versus women

One of the biggest gender gaps is in the area of income. In a study of over 2000 managers, women were compensated less than men were, even after controlling for several human capital factors (Stamarski & Hing, 2015). One-in-four working women (25%) say they have earned less than a man who was doing the same job; one-in-twenty working men (5%) say they have earned less than a female peer (Parker & Funk, 2017). Additionally, between men and women, the gender pay gap ranges from 3% to 51% and on average sits at 17% (International Labor Organization, 2022).

It is important to consider the two measurements of the gender pay gap: adjusted and unadjusted. The unadjusted gender pay gap solely factors in the average salary of men and women. Whereas, the adjusted gender pay gap takes into account factors, including differences in education, occupations chosen, skills, hours worked, and job experience. With the adjusted gender pay gap, women make about 95 cents to every \$1 that men make (Chamberlain Et al., 2017). When considering the gender pay gap, it is critical to account that more women are segregated to lower-level jobs in low-paying industries and are unable to obtain upper-level roles due to biases. These disparities in opportunities prevent women from excelling in their career and inhibits their ability to make the same amount as men (Reiners, 2021). At every stage of their careers, women face barriers that place them at a disadvantage for career opportunities, mentorships, promotions, and pay raises.

Promotional Position Opportunities

There is a clear discrepancy between the promotional opportunities granted to men versus women in the workplace that is expressed through statistical data. In most companies, according to the McKinsey and Lean In study, women, and men are represented roughly equally at the

entry-level, and they lobby for promotions at the same rate (Waller, 2016). Women comprise 56.1% of the U.S. civil labor force; however, only 21% have a seat in the C-suite (Reiners, 2022). Women are less likely to obtain those promotions, as they also receive fewer challenging “stretch” assignments, less training, and fewer development opportunities than men. Therefore, it is not surprising that for every 100 men promoted to manager, only 85 women get promoted (Reiners, 2022).

Recognition regarding the minimum number of women in corporate governance appears to be widespread, with several countries having introduced or considering introducing various forms of affirmative action (Labelle Et. al., 2015) As of 2019, just 26.5% of executive/ senior management positions at S&P 500 companies were held by women (Shaw & Milli, 2021). The lack of clear and objective metrics on gender diversity causes organizations to hesitate to increase women’s representation at the highest levels. Only 11% of top earners were women at S&P 500 companies, as were a mere 5.2% of chief executives in these companies (Shaw & Milli, 2021). However, compelling firms to appoint less experienced women in a short time frame to solely demonstrate that the company has a diverse senior management group will lead to fewer women with sufficient senior management-level business experience to sit as directors.

Human Resource Implementation

The Glass Ceiling

The glass ceiling is a metaphor for the evident, yet intangible hierarchical impediment that prevents women and minorities from achieving elevated professional success (Reiners, 2021). Multiple factors, which have been discussed, such as psychological implications, gender roles, and bias, along with sexual harassment have contributed to the development of the glass ceiling and common gender discrepancies in the workplace. Exposure to the reality of the metaphorical

glass ceiling is the foundation for progress toward gender equality (Reiners, 2022). 60% of male managers state that they are uncomfortable mentoring, socializing, or working one-on-one with female employees (Reiners, 2021). Recognizing the reasons why men are uncomfortable offers the opportunity for transparency in discussions regarding the various forms of gender inequality in the workplace. 36% of men believe it would negatively impact their image if they worked one-on-one, traveled with, or had dinner with female colleagues (Reiner, 2021). Men should be able to treat and work alongside a woman within a professional, business environment without enduring a sense of discomfort. Honest conversations can be complex and uncomfortable. However, when knowledge and resources are shared, it will become a prevalent topic among colleagues that will alter how the individuals view as well as understand the concepts involved (Reiners, 2022).

Preventative Measures against Gender Discrimination

Since 2002, the Leadership Excellence Acceleration Program, or LEAP, has gathered high-performing women whom managers have identified as promotion-ready (Waller, 2016). The program continues to offer approximately 400 women per year to participate in the 12-month virtual course. The women meet online monthly to hear guest speakers and receive homework and action assignments, such as making on-camera presentations. The goal of the course is that the women are to have expanded their networks and increased their urge to take risks, to earn promotions against male candidates. Netflix has taken the initiative to increase diversity through employment and promotional opportunities. Women now make up 51.7% of Netflix's global workforce expressing a 3% increase in female employment from 2020 (Myers, 2022). Of the 22 leaders across the company's senior leadership team, ten are women, which equals 45% of the team.

Blind applications increase a chance of (Miller, 2016). Companies need to provide additional training for managers and executives, as these are the individuals that are in regards to the diversity standards and goals the company is striving to achieve. The process starts by assessing how diverse the company is and identifying which demographics are noticeably absent from the corporation (Reiners, 2022). Understanding this information will form a standard for the conditions that a company is currently operating under and will assist in determining the following steps for improving diversity and diminishing the glass ceiling within a company. ensuring their subordinates are executing a healthy company culture that is inclusive to all employees. The leadership team sets the foundation for getting a job by 25 to 46 percent woman's Additional efforts, to lessen the magnitude of the inequalities occurring based on gender bias within workplaces, include, conducting blind screenings, implementing bias and stereotype training, setting diversity hiring as well as promoting goals.

Hypotheses

H1: Women are discriminated against more in the workplace than men.

H2: Women receive lower wages than men receive.

H3: Women receive less promotional opportunities than men receive.

Method

Subjects

People

Women and men that hold entry-level through senior executive positions within the United States that work for Fortune 500 companies, to compare gender bias in the workplace through human resource processes, promotional opportunities, and wage disparities.

Companies

Companies that will be examined are corporations that are on the list as Fortune 500 companies.

Places

The companies and their employees that are located within the United States of America.

Measures

Table 1: Components of Study

Table 1: Hypothesis, Variables, and Statistical Analysis						
Hypothesis	Variables				Hypotheses & Variable Relationships	Statistical Tests
	Gender (G)	Workplace Discrimination (WD)	Wages (W)	Promotional Opportunities (PO)		
H1: <u>Women are discriminated against more in the workplace than men.</u>	G	WD			G=WD	correlation; regression; line charts
H2: <u>Women receive lower wages than men receive.</u>	G		W		G=W	correlation; regression; line charts
H3: <u>Women receive less promotional opportunities than men.</u>	G			PO	G=PO	correlation; regression; line charts

Adapted from: Rudestam, K.E. & Newton, R.R. (1992). *Surviving Your Dissertation*. Newbury Park, California: Sage Publications, Inc. page 138.

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Table 2: Hypothesis, Instruments, and Statistical Analysis

Table 2: Detail About Variables				
Data	Variables			
	Gender (G)	Workplace Discrimination (WD)	Wages (W)	Promotional Opportunities (PO)
Instrument / Survey	Earnings of Age Group	Gender Based Workplace Discrimination Survey	Earnings of Age Group	Who Gets Promoted Survey
Author / Publisher	U.S. Bureau of Labor	Pew Research Center	U.S. Bureau of Labor	The Wall Street Journal
Type of data	Quantitative	Qualitative	Quantitative	Quantitative
Range of scores	Description	Description & Percentage	\$USD	Percentage
Adapted from: Rudestam, K.E. & Newton, R.R. (1992). <i>Surviving Your Dissertation</i> . Newbury Park, California: Sage Publications, Inc. page 140.				

Variable 1: Gender

This variable acts as the basis for comparing the inequalities, bias, and stereotypes between men and women. This variable affects additional variables such as wages and promotional opportunities.

Variable 2: Perceptions of Women

The predisposed perceptions of women influences disparities that women encounter in the workplace, including less interviews, lower wages, and limited promotional opportunities compared to men.

Variable 3: Wages

Comparing wages between men and women that hold the same level position within Fortune 500 companies will support the hypothesis that men earn more than women.

Variable 4: Promotional Opportunities

The comparison of the rate of promotional opportunities that are offered to men versus women demonstrates the gender bias within the workplace based on gender stereotypes.

Procedure

Procedure To Locate Journal Articles And Data

Databases Searched, Search Terms, Dates Of Searches

The data has been collected by using the following database, Business Source Premier, since February of 2022. I filtered my results by peer-reviewed journal articles. While navigating through the Business Source Premier, I utilized the search terms: women, women in business, gender stereotypes, gender inequality, management, promotions, diversity, equity, and inclusion. Additionally, I gathered sources from Google and Google Alerts with similar search terms. The results from Google's search engine that were relevant for my research were the U.S Census Department, U.S Labor Department, Harvard Business Review, Pew Research Center, etc.

From the articles above, I analyzed the relationship between the female and male genders, along with their stereotypical attributes and how each impacts their interviewing processes, salaries, and promotional opportunities.

Reasons For Choosing Articles

I have chosen the sources with a ten year time span, to recognize any improvements in lessening the disparities between how men and women are treated differently in the workforce. The articles that I have chosen are beneficial for comparing the data and viewing the information from different perspectives. Specifically, human resource context, employees, and senior directors within a firm. Additionally, I will be able to gauge the specific connections between gender stereotypes and my chosen variables.

Other Sources Of Data

Statistical Methods To Present And Analyze The Data

Following a further analysis of the presented data, I will develop tables and line charts that will clearly represent the correlations and regressions among the variables I have chosen.

**Tables, Line Charts,
Correlation, Regression**

Results

Variable 1 & Variable 2: Gender and Discrimination

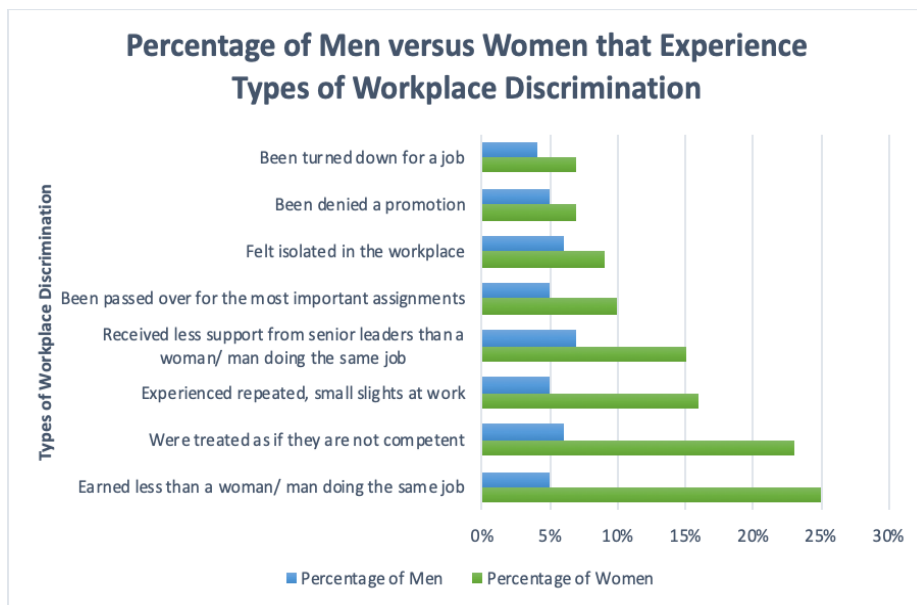
Table 1 shows eight types of discriminations in the workplace. The table also expresses the percentage of women, compared to men that have experienced each form of workplace discrimination.

Table 3: Percentage of Women versus Men that have Experienced Types of Workplace Discrimination

Type of Discrimination	Percentage of Women	Percentage of Men
Earned less than a woman/ man doing the same job	25%	5%
Were treated as if they are not competent	23%	6%
Experienced repeated, small slights at work	16%	5%
Received less support from senior leaders than a woman/ man doing the same job	15%	7%
Been passed over for the most important assignments	10%	5%
Felt isolated in the workplace	9%	6%
Been denied a promotion	7%	5%
Been turned down for a job	7%	4%

Source: Pew Research Center

Figure 1: Percentage of Women versus Men that have Experienced Types of Workplace Discrimination



Source: Pew Research Center

Variable 1 & Variable 3: Gender and Women's Wages versus Men's Wages

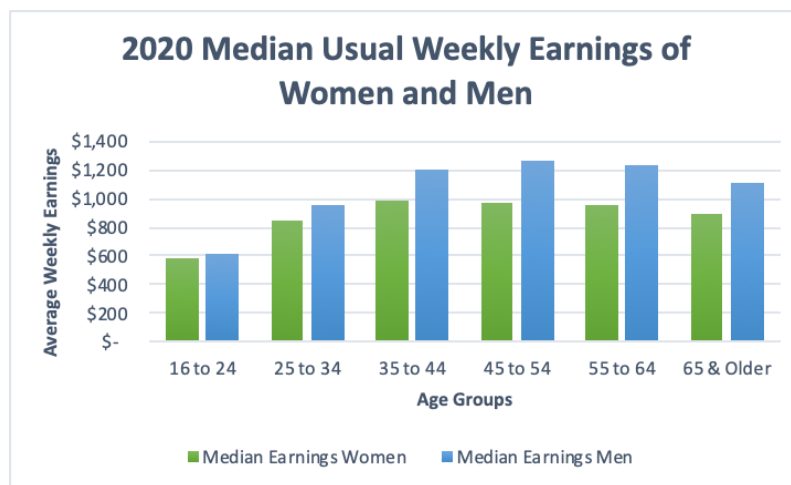
Table 2 represents, by age, the average weekly earnings of female and male employees that hold a full-time wage or salary position during 2020.

Table 4: Median Weekly Earnings of Women and Men who are Full-time Wage and Salary Workers, by Age, 2020 Annual Averages

Age	Median Earnings	
	Women	Men
16 to 24	\$ 589	\$ 622
25 to 34	\$ 852	\$ 952
35 to 44	\$ 978	\$ 1,205
45 to 54	\$ 977	\$ 1,260
55 to 64	\$ 955	\$ 1,228
65 & Older	\$ 897	\$ 1,115

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor

Figure 2: Median Weekly Earnings of Women and Men who are Full-time Wage and Salary Workers, by Age, 2020 Annual Averages



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor

Variable 1 & Variable 4: Gender and Women’s Promotional Opportunities versus Men’s Promotional Opportunities

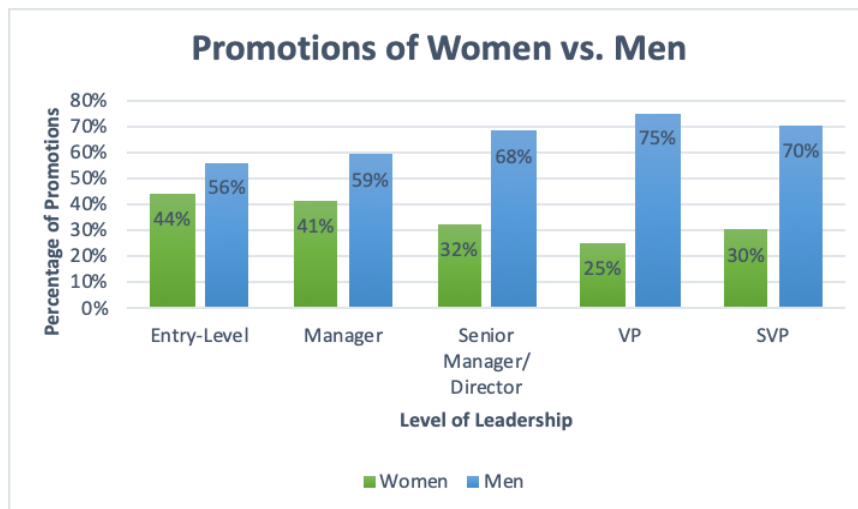
Table 3 displays five levels of leadership within a corporation. Table 3 shows the percentage of men and women that hold positions within each level of leadership category.

Table 5: Percentage of Promotions offered to Women versus Men

Level of Leadership	Women	Men
Entry-Level	44%	56%
Manager	41%	59%
Senior Manager/ Director	32%	68%
VP	25%	75%
SVP	30%	70%

Source: The Wall Street Journal

Figure 3: Percentage of Promotions offered to Women versus Men



Source: The Wall Street Journal

Discussion

H1: Women are discriminated against more in the workplace than men.

The results in Figure 1. indicates that female employees are more likely to experience discrimination in the workplace, compared to male coworkers. While male employees have claimed to encounter discrimination in their workplace, the data clearly displays that for each form of discrimination a higher percentage of women, compared to men have encountered the unequal treatment during their career. Specifically, 23% of female employees compared to 6% of male employees, a 17% difference between genders, have noted to being treated as incompetent.

H2: Women receive lower wages than men receive.

Figure 2. reveals the data that on average women are not paid equal to men, when comparing full-time salaries. The breakdown of the weekly median pay for both genders demonstrates the consistent wage gap between women and men from ages 24 to 65 and beyond. Men on average earn anywhere from 6% to 23% more than women.

H3: Women receive less promotional opportunities than men receive.

Figure 3. represents the unequal opportunity for women to be promoted, compared to men among five levels of leadership. The data expresses that between each level of leadership a higher percentage of men hold each leadership position, than women. This gap grows larger as the level of leadership becomes higher, depicting that women are not promoted as much as men within companies.

Conclusions

General Conclusions

This report has explained the impact of gender stereotypes and gender bias on how women are treated in the workplace, compared to men. The research has proposed the idea based on society's stereotypes of women and men, along with the glass ceiling theory, that women are not granted equal opportunities for success in Fortune 500 companies. This study has identified

multiple forms of gender discrimination that women encounter in the workplace versus men, including less interview opportunities, minimal potential for a promotion and rising in their level of leadership, and a wage gap. The human resource department within Fortune 500 companies do not offer women an equal chance when interviewing for a position as well as when competing for a promotion. Women are paid less than men when holding positions within the same level of leadership in a Fortune 500 company. Therefore, women are not granted equal opportunities to succeed, compared to men in the corporate workplace, due to gender bias that leads to gender discrimination.

Implications for Practice

Fortune 500 companies need to be more conscious of how gender stereotypes influence the discrimination that women encounter within the workplace, compared to men. To experience any form of change, the company needs to prioritize implementing diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) efforts into their company's culture. As stated within the thesis, the foundation of reducing any form of discrimination begins with the company's human resource department. Recruiters should be more aware of gender bias when recruiting positions, to create an equal opportunity for the job regardless of the candidate's gender. Furthermore, companies should offer mandatory training sessions to increase awareness of the forms of gender discriminations within the workplace and strategies to diminish each type.

Implications for Research

Researchers should analyze various DEI implementation initiatives to determine which strategy is most effective in lessening gender discrimination within the workplace. In recent years, Fortune 500 companies have begun to prioritize diversity, equity, and inclusion; however, there is still evident progress that needs to be made regarding gender bias in the workplace,

based on the research conducted throughout this paper. Therefore, further analyzing the success rate of multiple Fortune 500 companies' approaches, such as Netflix will be beneficial in promoting and progressing toward complete gender equality. Specifically, by lessening gender discrimination in the aspects of the workplace highlighted within this paper.

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