

Bridging the Gap: An Examination of Men's and Women's Wages

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This paper examines the existence of the gender wage gap and the reasons that cause the difference in wages between men and women. For most of history, women were not present in the workforce. However, during the Enlightenment, they began to question norms regarding their role in society. When the Industrial Revolution changed the production process, women entered the workforce in order to provide their families with supplementary income. After the American feminists secured the right to vote, they turned their focus on narrowing the discrepancy in wages between men and women, as women earned approximately 60 cents for every dollar men made in 1960. After the introduction of the Equal Pay Act of 1963, women looked to narrow the gap. From 1980 to 2000, the gap narrowed from 60 cents on the dollar to 80 cents because of women's improved educational preparation for the workforce. However, since 2000, their progress has substantially slowed, as the wage gap today sits at approximately 85%. Many in society claim that this gap exists because of sex discrimination, but this is not the case. Women experience more career interruptions than men, work fewer hours per week, tend to choose jobs that pay less than the jobs men take, and frequently neglect to negotiate their salaries. These logical, economic reasons contribute to men, on the whole, earning more than women. The next generation of workers should focus on obtaining fair pay, where each employee is paid according to the value he provides his employer.