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## WOMEN IN ORGANIZATIONS: LEADERSHIP AND OVERCOMING BIASES

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WOMEN IN ORGANIZATIONS: LEADERSHIP AND OVERCOMING BIASES

by

Madison T. Witt

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment  
Of the Requirements for the  
University Honors Program

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Department of Business Administration  
The University of South Dakota  
May 2023

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## ABSTRACT

### Communication In Business: Comparing Styles

Madison T. Witt

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This thesis will work to describe the different experiences women have in the workplace compared to men. It will discuss the biases faced: prove-it-again bias, tightrope bias, and the maternal wall bias. These play a large role in why women act as they do in the workplace as well as why they tend to experience different barriers within the corporate ladder. This research notes both gender biases facing women and the additional bias women of color face. These different experiences change how women lead companies when placed in executive positions. These leadership styles of women tend to be more welcoming and encouraging compared to the more task-oriented ones often embodied by men. Women in the Workforce (2022) states that women make -up just under half of today's workforce and understanding the variation in leadership style they are likely to employ when given a leadership position is key to understanding the value of more balanced promotion practices and reducing the barriers women face in being promoted to leadership positions.

Keywords: Women, Communication, Leadership, Difference, Business

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To all the women  
pushing me  
to reach my goals.

## INTRODUCTION

Today “Woman make up more than 40% of the overall workforce” (Women in the Workforce, 2022, p. 2) they are pushing the barriers and striving to show their worth in the workforce. With a higher percentage of women in the workforce businesses are noticing they bring different skill sets to the company. Women and men are known to communicate and act differently which plays a large role in preventing women from moving up within companies. While different experiences and opinions are beneficial, yet they are not always viewed as positive. While women have made great strides to improve workplace culture and demonstrate the benefits of diverse leadership and skill sets, gender bias and pay differentials persist in limiting their full involvement in the workforce. There are a few Fortune 500 companies led by women, yet we continue to recognize that “Women start to vanish as the corporate hierarchy ascends” (Ammerman & Groysberg, 2021, p. 40). Despite this, women are continuing to push barriers and have their skills noticed but they continue to face many strongly rooted gender biases.

This thesis is going to examine women in the workplace, biases they experience, wage differences, and the different leadership styles they typically utilize. Women have not always been prominent in the paid labor force and since women’s involvement increased, their experiences differ from men’s in many ways. Women are likely to interact within the workforce in different ways, resulting in different leadership styles being utilized. Being aware of the different experiences each gender has within their jobs helps to explain why they incorporate different leadership styles into the workplace. It can also help to explain some of the bias’s woman face in the workplace and how they can overcome them.



## WOMEN AND LEADERSHIP STYLES

The number of women in leadership positions has increased “as of May 2020, 7.4 percent of companies in the *Fortune 500* were led by a female CEO” (Ammerman & Groysberg, 2021, p. 40). Breaking that percentage down means that only 37 women, compared to 463 men, are in leadership positions in Fortune 500 companies. While their numbers may be small, these women are pushing barriers to show they belong in the workforce. Additionally, while they may use different leadership styles than their male counterparts, these women are still able to achieve success. The stereotypical “masculine leader emphasizes achievement of organizational goals, whereas the stereotypically feminine leader emphasizes people and relationships” (Gardiner & Tiggemann, 1999, p. 302). These are two different ways men and women view leadership and how it affects their techniques as well as the outcome they bring to a company.

Generally, leadership can be categorized in two ways: heroic and post heroic. These large categories house other, more specific types of leadership styles that can be utilized (authoritarian, relational, servant, etc.). When looking at the heroic leadership styles we see a more “transactional, autocratic and task based” which in turn “advocates a single charismatic, authoritarian leader” (Prowse, Prowse & Perrett, 2022, p.775). This is a leader who is more transactional based and less involved with creating relationships. This style of leadership “is deeply rooted in masculine-linked images and wisdom about how to ‘produce things’ in the work sphere” (Cuadrado, Navas, Molero, Ferrer & Morales, 2012, p. 775). When looking at heroic leaders they will often fall into one of two categories: autocratic or task oriented. While these specific categories have their own

distinctive features, they are similar in that the leader employing them is more likely to make decisions on their own.

An autocratic leader falls into the heroic style since they are “characterized by the leader’s making decisions unilaterally, not allowing the group members to participate” (Cuadrado, Navas, Molero, Ferrer & Morales, 2012, p. 3085). A leader who uses this style is going to make decisions on their own disregarding the inputs of others and how they could view the choice. When working with an autocratic leader the team members will have little to no say in what decisions are made and how tasks are completed. They will often be told what to do and how to do it. Not only to autocratic leaders make the decisions on their own, but it is also unlikely they will care what team members think of their decisions since they will have taken the course they saw as accurate. Autocratic leaders fall into the heroic leadership style category; however, task-oriented leaders are also part of this group.

Task-oriented leaders are much like autocratic leaders, except they are more concerned on the outcome. A task-oriented leader is categorized as a heroic leader since they are “mainly concerned with achieving the group goals – emphasis on achieving the task” (Cuadrado, Navas, Molero, Ferrer & Morales, 2012, p. 3085). This is a leader that will take what team members say into account, but they are not concerned about the team members. A leader who is task-oriented is going to look at the end goal and determine the best way to achieve it, their interactions with team members will not be personal, but transactional, to ensure all goals are being met. They are not concerned with team well-being but rather the task at hand and ensuring it is completed as best as possible. Task-

oriented and autocratic leaders push to ensure a task is completed without regard to the team members.

The next type of leadership category is post-heroic leadership. This is the opposite of heroic styles as post-heroic leadership “is regarded as a set of practices with the leader using empowerment, delegation, facilitation and an interpersonal style” (Cuadrado, Navas, Molero, Ferrer & Morales, 2012, p. 775). When looking into this style we see a leader who is more open to outside insight and concerned about their team members. This form of leadership is “deeply rooted in feminine-linked images and wisdom about how to ‘grow people’ in the domestic sphere” (Cuadrado, Navas, Molero, Ferrer & Morales, 2012, p. 775). When looking at post-heroic leaders they will utilize one of three categories being: democratic, relationship-oriented, or servant leadership. When a leader uses one of the post-heroic leaderships styles, they are likely to encourage team members while also valuing the input they provide.

A democratic leader fits into the post-heroic category as it takes team members into account. This is a take on leadership that works to be “participative, consultative, and involves the group, and the leader allows and encourages group members’ participation in the decisions” (Cuadrado, Navas, Molero, Ferrer & Morales, 2012, p. 3085). A leader focused on being democratic wants to ensure the entire team is working together and that all members have a say in how the task is completed and its outcome. When working with a democratic leader the team will be asked for their opinions while also receiving recognition and encouragement from the leader. This is opposite of the autocratic leader since what the rest of the group has a say rather than the leader choosing what the team

does. Democratic leaders fit into post-heroic leadership since they are concerned with the group and encourage one another.

Relationship-oriented leaders also fit into the post-heroic leadership style. A relationship-oriented leader is “concerned with their followers’ well-being and satisfaction – emphasizing the quality of relations with others” (Cuadrado, Navas, Molero, Ferrer & Morales, 2012, p. 3085). This is a leader who not only looks to the task at hand but instead focuses on the team members to ensure they are doing good and feel involved in the completion of the project. When a leader emphasizes this style, they will ensure those on their team have a say in how a task is completed while also ensuring they feel encouraged and appreciated while working together. When someone is working with a relationship-oriented leader they will experience the leader asking how they are doing and looking for their input to the project. A relationship-oriented leader will focus on creating relationships which is opposite of a task-oriented leader as they focus simply on the task at hand and not who they are working with.

Someone utilizing the servant leadership fits into a post-heroic leader as it is often “identifies helping and developing others as its primary concern” (Lemoine & Blum, 2021, p. 4). When looking into a leader that utilizes the servant leadership style they will typically “prioritize communal concerns as well, caring for and developing their followers” (Lemoine & Blum, 2021, p. 4). This form of leadership does not focus on achieving a certain task or empowering the leader but rather is “brings other-centered or person-centered aspects of leadership ... and makes the growth of those served its objective” (Reynolds, 2011, p. 158). These leaders will focus on those around them and

pushing their team to be the best they can rather than only focusing on the task at hand or gaining recognition for themselves.

Understanding different leadership styles is only part of identifying how a leader functions within an organization. Gender is also another important factor to consider. “There are undeniably visible differences between women and men’s expectations, attitudes and behavior in relation to leading in work organizations” (Nicolson, 2015, p. 129). This informs how they lead a team and what values they take into consideration while leading. The heroic and post-heroic leadership styles are both rooted in gender stereotypes which helps show that each one is likely used by one gender more than the other. It is often assumed that “Women take care and men take charge” (Prowse, Prowse, & Perrett, 2022, p. 776). This reinforces the idea that women are more likely to use post-heroic leadership styles while men tend to use heroic leadership styles. Women will focus on those around them and push them to be better while also making sure they have a say in the group outcome. Men will tend to focus on the task that needs completed along with gaining recognition for themselves rather than the team.

Looking into Fortune 500 companies led by women can show how the leadership style can affect the company’s environment. Michele Buck is the President and CEO of The Hershey Company, a widely recognized candy company. The Hershey Company produces many different chocolate bars and different types of candy but looking into the leadership is a great way to understand how women lead compared to men. Michele Buck “has proven success transforming businesses and organizations to accelerate profitable growth and is motivated by harnessing others’ strengths, expertise and perspectives” (*Leadership*, n.d.). These examples demonstrate she strives to help others around her

while also listening to their opinions. This shows a form of post-heroic leadership. While The Hershey Company is led by Michele Buck, the senior vice president is Hector De La Barreda. When looking at Barreda's leadership it is seen that "he guides the strategic direction of ways of working and process optimization" (*Leadership*, n.d.). This shows a more heroic leadership style that that does not look to those around him but instead makes decisions based on the task at hand.

Best Buy is also a Fortune 500 company led by a female CEO, Corie Barry. Best Buy is the leading provider of consumer technology products and services, with approximately 100,000 employees in North America and \$47 billion in annual revenue" (Corie Barry, 2022). Although they have been a successful company in recent years and a leading retailer of technology under Barry's "leadership, Best Buy is driving toward being one of the best places to work in America, doubling our significant customer relationship events to 50 million and growing annual revenue to \$50 billion by fiscal 2025" (Corie Barry, 2022). While this does include financial improvements for the company it also shows that Barry is working to create a better work environment for the employees while also making the company more appealing to customers. She is working to build relationships among employees and customers, which displays post-heroic leadership values. Recognizing current women in leadership positions can help to understand the leadership styles they tend to use while also displaying the reasons they use more post-heroic leadership styles.

Women's successes in organizations show that post-heroic leadership is a viable option that more leaders, men included, could adopt. This has fostered more community at work and has increased productivity. Women have created "safe spaces" (Kessler-

Harris, 2014, p. 59) at work, these spaces help employees feel safe and more at home in their day-to-day routines. We can even acknowledge open door policies as creating a safer space for employees bring up concerns with the company. This promotes the idea that all opinions and voices matter so that everyone can help improve the company and push it to new and better levels. Leadership plays a wide role in how individuals are viewed within the workplace, but power can also affect how one chooses to lead. The power a person feels can change how they perceive themselves and in exchange how they treat those around them.

### GENDERED POWER

Power can be viewed and seen in many ways, men and women are likely to experience power in different ways due to how they grew up and how society treats both genders. Research indicates “men behave as if they were powerful, or at least heirs to power, almost from the start of life. Women behave as if they were not autonomous and potentially influenced beings but are the objects of the powerful.” (Nicolson, 2018, p. 50). Looking at society men “traditional succeed over women in terms of their ... seniority and status of their profession” (Nicolson, 2018, p. 7). Women get the sense that they belong to a man and are subordinate; when looking at the workforce we often see women taking on “secretaries, teachers, nurses and ‘nursing, psychiatric, and home health aides’” (Hegewisch & Hartmann, 2014, p. 4) positions while the men have higher positions in the workplace.

Not only do we see these roles portrayed in the workforce but also within many households. Men are seen as the head of a household and often given the higher positions in a company giving them the “potential for power” while women are seen to be

powerless and simply the “object of a powerful man” (Nicolson, 2018, p. 49). This power difference created differing perspectives meaning “there are both male and female ways of looking at the world. The male from the position of authority and power, the female from the position of the ‘other’, whose only access to power is through being desired but being desired as a woman with all the implications that femininity brings.” (Nicolson, 2018, p. 49). Men are equipped with power and authority from the beginning, yet it is something women often fight for. It is not always easy for women to gain power without the help of a man, someone who is willing to validate their competence.

What about the women who do push past the barriers and take higher level positions in organizations, are these women willing to help others? Many women who have achieved this great success view it as something that was deserved and not simply handed to them, they “clearly [believe] that women who achieve senior status deserve to do so. None appears to feel that power and influence is detrimental to their femininity, but all feel they are being assessed as senior *women* rather than as vice-chancellors *per se*” (Nicolson, 2018, p. 74). These women do not view their position as being earned by the power they hold but rather something they earned through hard work. They have worked hard to get to an executive position and recognize that the women standing beside them have done the same. Women work to gain leadership positions while recognizing the power they have yet they are likely to face biases along the way.

#### BIASES WOMEN FACE IN THE WORKPLACE

Historically, gender biases have been easier to identify (e.g., obvious verbal harassment), but in recent years these biases can be less blatant and harder to identify. Even though they are more difficult to openly identify, these biases still exist. Research



has shown that there are four basic gender biases many women face when stepping into the workforce. Williams and Dempsey (2018) identify these biases as the “*Prove-It-Again!... The Tightrope... The Maternal Wall... [and] The Tug of War*” (p. 3). Each of these biases serve a different purpose and affect women in the workforce differently. It is also not uncommon for a woman to face more than one of the biases at a time.

The prove-it-again biases stem from stereotypes; when people think of business professionals, they often think of a man dressed in a suit who is dominant and assertive. This bias shows “that information that supports preexisting stereotypes tends to be noticed and remembered, while information that contradicts them tends to be overlooked and soon forgotten” (Williams & Dempsey, 2018, p. 25). Someone is more likely to remember something when it fits into their preconceived expectations and stereotypes. Conversely, someone is more likely to forget information when their expectations and stereotypes are not met. This bias results in men having “to prove their competence” while “women have to prove it again – and again and again.” (Williams & Dempsey, 2018, p. 25). A woman can work harder than her male counterpart but since she does not fit into a professional stereotype, she must fight to hold attention and be remembered as hard working and competent. Many women in the workplace are faced with the prove-it-again bias, no matter their race.

The prove-it-again bias is not only faced by white women, but it also affects women of color. It is found that women of color are “4 percentage points more likely than white women to report” (Williams & Dempsey, 2018, p. 24) experiencing this bias. Meaning about 72% of black women will be faced with the prove-it-again bias. This can be caused by the stereotype that women of color “often trigger negative competence

assumptions” (Williams & Dempsey, 2018, p. 24). The women are not seen as capable of completing a task not only because they are women, but also due to race. While the prove-it-again bias is a difficult challenge for both women of color and white women to overcome in the workplace, it is not the only bias women face. Similarly, the tightrope bias is rooted in our preconceived societal perceptions of how a woman should act in the workplace.

The tightrope bias puts women in a very hard position as it makes them question how they should behave in the workplace. This bias centers on what is “acceptable” behavior for women in the workplace and how those “acceptable” behaviors could be different for different groups. It is the idea that you are “damned if you do, damned if you don’t” (Williams & Dempsey, 2018, p. 60). The tightrope bias stems from preconceived stereotypes and how women are to fit within these stereotypes; they cannot behave as men in situations. Yet if a woman steps into “a traditional female role, which is more consensus building and gentler in terms of team dynamics and looking out for the team, [women are] considered just too wimpy to have what it takes to succeed.” (Williams & Dempsey, 2018, p. 61). Whereas when she steps into the role of a male she is “labeled as a bitch immediately.” (Williams & Dempsey, 2018, p. 61). This makes it difficult for a woman to win in the workplace as she will never be seen as strong yet nice enough to make it in male dominated field. Women are more likely to experience the double bind due to the issue of being too nice or too aggressive. This becomes a matter of balancing the two and ensuring that a woman is staying on the “tightrope” to ensure her demeanor is being balanced and she is not coming off as one or the other.

No matter a woman's race she is still susceptible to experiencing the tightrope bias. Williams and Dempsey (2018) found that 73 percent of white woman will experience the tightrope bias while it is "9 percentage point more likely... (77 percent)" women of color will experience this bias (p. 60). A black woman is more likely to be judged on her femineity or masculinity than a white woman. The tightrope bias is difficult for women to balance and women of color are more likely to experience this struggle in the workplace than a white woman, yet it is not the last bias women face.

Not only do woman have to worry about the prove-it and the tightrope biases, but they also must manage the maternal wall. The Maternal Wall bias affects woman in all positions, but it seems woman in executive roles are more likely to hit this organizational barrier. The maternal wall bias is the perception that a woman is less committed or competent in her job because she is pregnant or has children, even if nothing has changed in the quality of her performance. Women must make the decision to work harder at their job with less focus on their family if they wish to remain in the position; this choice puts a lot of stress on the woman as well as her family. Many women do not decide to quit right away. They try "to adjust their work schedule to accommodate family responsibilities (Williams & Dempsey, 2018, p. 130). However, this additional stress can quickly force women to step out of the workforce. While women attempt to achieve success in both areas it is not always true that the workforce will accommodate this change. It is often found that "once women become mothers, they often find they have to start proving themselves all over again" (Williams & Dempsey, 2018, p. 151). This forces women to make a choice that most men don't have to face focus on being successful in the job or focus on their family. The result of this choice is a wall forming

between the woman and their organization, a wall that is almost impossible to breakdown.

The maternal wall affects both women of color and white women, however it is found that “Mothers of color were more likely (63 percent) to hit the Maternal Wall than white mothers ... (56 percent)” (Williams & Dempsey, 2018, p. 128). Women of color are more likely to face the maternal wall dilemma which can push them out of their job and show “racial differences or hostility to mothers” (Williams & Dempsey, 2018, p. 128). All women are likely to experience biases within the workplace, but women of color are more likely to face steeper consequences from the maternal wall bias.

The final bias women tend to face in the workplace is the tug-of-war patterns. This has to do with woman fighting with other women in the workplace. These fights are not as simple as women may say since “workplace fights over gender play a much larger role in complicating office politics for women than do men’s fights over gender with men... gender bias against woman often fuels conflict among women” (Williams & Dempsey, 2018, p. 180). Women are trying to fit into their workplace culture and, if that culture is male dominated, they are trying to disassociate themselves from women to protect themselves from being discriminated against by men. This occurs when a woman is experiencing gender discrimination leading her to “stereotype, distance [herself] from, and criticize other women” (Williams & Dempsey, 2018, p. 179). These women will begin to act like their male coworkers and begin to treat fellow women as they are being treated which prevents women from working together.

Women of color are likely to experience many biases due to their gender, but they are also likely to experience discrimination in different forms, such as “stereotypes,

excessive demands, an absence of mentoring, exclusions from work [office] cliques, being ignored and/or harassed, and assumptions that they are incompetent” (Hall, Everett, & Hamilton-Mason, 2012, p. 211). These forms of discrimination can be seen within two dimensions of racial bias, institutional discrimination, and interpersonal prejudice. Each form entails different things and different stereotypes. This makes the workplace more difficult for women of color as they not only have the biases noted for all women, but they must also overcome biases in relation to their race.

Institutional discrimination is one of the racial biases a woman of color can experience. This form of discrimination is when management imposes “organizational policies or procedures that unfairly restrict the opportunities of Black Americans or that perpetuate advantages or privileges for the majority group” (Hall, Everett, & Hamilton-Mason, 2012, p. 211). We can see this happen when a woman of color is “excluded from informal social networks in the workplace, [is] presumed to be incompetent, and [is] expected to perform at exaggerated levels” (Hall, Everett, & Hamilton-Mason, 2012, p. 211) Women experiencing this form of discrimination can identify it by looking at their coworkers and identifying how they are treated in comparison. Institutional discrimination comes from the higher levels of an organization rather than by one’s coworkers.

A second form of discrimination based on race is interpersonal prejudice. This form of discrimination “refers to the negative beliefs, attitudes and feelings toward Black Americans and actions and behavior that are based on them” (Hall, Everett, & Hamilton-Mason, 2012, p. 211). This form of discrimination happens between coworkers rather than coming from the higher levels of an organization. The discrimination is often

recognized instantly and can be seen through “a high level of discriminatory language and behavior” (Hall, Everett, & Hamilton-Mason, 2012, p. 211) which can come from coworkers, management, and even customers. An example could be “nurses’ aides” reporting on discriminatory behaviors “on the part of management and patients” (Hall, Everett, & Hamilton-Mason, 2012, p. 211). It tends to be more obvious for a woman to recognize when she is experiencing interpersonal prejudice as it is likely to occur openly without being hidden.

White women experience the four biases discussed and women of color experience them along with discrimination biases. There are likely additional biases faced by women in the workplace no matter their race which means they must also find ways to counteract or change these biases. Combating the bias is not easy yet it “has often propelled women to develop, out of necessity, skills that make them exceptionally suited to leadership” (Williams & Dempsey, 2018, p. 211). Women can make tough decisions to help a company succeed. Women are also able to look at their past experiences and see how it affected them so they can avoid or create the same environment for their employees. This allows women to grow their abilities and learn how to overcome obstacles which in turn can show their worth. These solutions are not all easy to obtain but, can help a woman change how she is viewed in the workforce.

However, there are not the only issue affecting women. They also suffer negative effects due to the wage gap that exists between men and women. Women frequently watch “plum assignments go to favored male peers while they, by contrast, were often relied on to put out fires” (Williams & Dempsey, 2018, p. 211). A woman must work

harder to overcome bias and prove her worth all while making less than her male coworkers.

## GENDER WAGE GAP

Gender wage gap is the notion that “women are much more likely to earn poverty level wages than men” (*2020 Occupational Wage Gap*, 2020, p. 5). The wage gap is affected by many different factors yet is also “differs by race and ethnicity” (*2020 Occupational Wage Gap*, 2020, p. 5). Previous studies show that the cause for a gender wage gap “is attributable to individual choice” (Olson, 2012, p. 45). This pushes the idea that women choose to create a wage gap and perpetuates the idea that women want differing, less important roles in a company so they can focus on family rather than work. They choose “lives that yield less certain rewards in the workplace” (Kessler-Harris, 2014, p. 1). However, when looking into wage deficits we can find that social and gender constructs are factored into wage determinations. This contradicts the previous idea that women create the wage gap solely based on the choices they make. We can see in the past that “a ‘man’s’ wage was a badge of honor” providing the image of “self-sufficiency and strength” (Kessler-Harris, 2014, p. 3). Conversely “a ‘woman’s’ wage...was frequently a term of opprobrium” giving women the sense that they were “not deserving” (Kessler-Harris, 2014, p. 3) of the wage.

The idea that women are choosing to earn a lower wage reinforces the idea that women are willing to be treated differently in the workforce. Consequently, we continue to see women being “discriminated against in hiring, promotion, and salary decisions” (Olson, 2012, p. 47). They are overlooked for certain positions as the thought of a woman as a CEO does not fit the traditional stereotype. Instead, the idea “that men ought to be

able to support wives and daughters” while “women need not engage in such support. They ought to be performing home duties” (Kessler-Harris, 2014, p. 9) is still being pushed forward. The above stereotypes are upheld, and it is assumed that women are working to “supplement those of other family wage earners” (Kessler-Harris, 2014, p. 1). The wage gap is not only an issue for white women, but it also affects woman of other ethnicities.

Women of color are also likely to make less than white men and women. When looking at who typically makes the most money in a family it is found that “black women are particularly likely to be the main breadwinner in their families and are often the bedrock of their communities” (Institute for Women’s Policy Research, 2020, p. 1). Women of color are going to uphold much of the family income, yet they are making less. Not only is a woman of color likely to be the bread winner of her family but “the pay gap [is] greater for ... black women than for White women” (Women in the Workforce, 2022, p. 7). The median pay for black women in 2021 was “an estimated \$41,719”, “Hispanic or Latina women earned an estimated \$38,082”, “Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander women earned an estimated \$43,174”, “Asian women earned an estimated \$63,761” while “White women earned an estimated \$51,777” (Women in the Workforce, 2022, p. 7). Women of color are faced with many biases, some centered on gender and others on race. These biases can change the workforce experience and create a wage deficit.

While wage has several determining factors, there is also the idea of what constitutes one’s wage. Kessler-Harris (2014) indicates “the efficiency of the worker and the supply of labor” are large determinants of wage setting (p. 8). While this seems true,



“women’s median annual earnings for full-time work are still only 76.5 percent of men’s” (Hegewisch & Hartmann, 2014, p. 1). This shows one’s wage does not only come from their efforts, but from something deeper. It is possible that wage is “a set of ideas about how men and women should live and a marker of social status” (Kessler-Harris, 2014, p. 8). The wage is being set and inadvertently telling woman that they do not deserve the life men do.

Historically, the issue of a wage gap goes farther than the companies and men themselves, but it can be found in our federal government as well. The idea of women being unequal has been embedded in America’s consciousness for hundreds of years. This does not only have to deal with those on Wall Street setting wages, but in April of 1923 a court case was brought before the Supreme Court; “Adkins v. Children’s Hospital” (Kessler-Harris, 2014, p. 31). The outcome of this case “negated the constitutionality of a Washington, D.C., law that provided a minimum wage for women and minors” (Kessler-Harris, 2014, p. 31). The case did not pass through the Supreme Court and instead allowed companies to pay women and children any wage they choose; without setting a minimum pay. This decision was “unexpected” (Kessler-Harris, 2014, p. 32) and did receive backlash. The decision allowed companies to pay women any wage they chose. The long-term effects of this decision resulted in women not earning as much money as their male counterparts, resulting in women holding a different position within society, one of lower standing. Companies could more easily take advantage of their time and effort without being reprimanded. It also brought up the notion that women were to partake in “free labor” (Kessler-Harris, 2014, p. 35). It perpetuated the idea that women should work at home for free so men could go about life in the business world. The

Supreme Court decision was not the only time women and wages were discussed in our federal system of government.

In 1963 the Equal Pay Bill was passed and “would prohibit differential wages for women doing ‘equal work on jobs the performance of which requires equal skill, effort and responsibility, and which are performed under similar working conditions’” (Kessler-Harris, 2015, p. 75). This not only helped women provide for their families better but, it also “captured a shifting and diverse set of gendered expectations” (Kessler-Harris, 2014, p. 79). This was a push in the correct direction for women. A woman would be more likely to enter the workforce so that her abilities could be recognized giving her value in a company.

Even though the Equal Pay bill was passed in 1963, women continue to face the problem of unfair wages. Many will say, “the demand for labor and the available supply – determines the wage paid” (Kessler-Harris, 2014, p. 109) and “the gender wage gap is attributable to individual choice” (Olson, 2012, p. 45). Women must work to bypass different biases they face in the workplace while receiving less monetary compensation. Women will complete the same task and bring new ideas to a company, yet they are told the issue with their pay comes from their choice in “college majors and jobs” which are deemed as “less lucrative ... while men tend to do the opposite” (Olson, 2012, p. 45) when selecting a career. The gender wage gap continues to be an issue in recent years, showing that it has not yet been corrected or identified as an issue.

This idea has carried through to more recent years. In 2009 “after commissioning a review of the literature, the U.S. Department of Labor concluded that ‘there may be nothing to correct’” (Olson, 2012, p. 45-46). The government does not view the wage gap

as an issue and it will condone “free labor” (Kessler-Harris, 2014, p. 35) which helps keep women out of the workforce and companies can take advantage of female employees. While there are many factors that contribute to the wage gap, it remains a barrier that many women face.

## CONCLUSION

There are different leadership styles that can be utilized within a company. These leadership styles can change the environment of a company and how the employees view the company. Research has shown that there are leadership styles with masculine roots and those with feminine roots. Each having a different effect on the organization while also being carried out within the company differently. Many of the Fortune 500 companies have male CEOs, who tend to lead with a more masculine style which does not center around others in the workforce. While most of the Fortune 500 companies are run by men there are some with female CEOs who tend to lead with a feminine style, one that focuses on the employees that make up the organization. While many women are not in the corner office there are many women in the workforce who bring different leadership styles and ideas into organizations.

When tasked with a project and team women are more likely to execute post-heroic leadership styles which tend to focus on the group rather than the task. They will ask for help from other team members and ensure everyone is involved in the decision making. This is different from how many men lead as they will typically delegate roles to individuals and make the decisions alone instead of asking for outside input. Many of the Fortune 500 companies have male CEOs, who tend to lead with a more heroic leadership style. While most of the Fortune 500 companies are run by men there are some

with female CEOs who tend to lead with a post-heroic style. Implementing the different leadership styles can change how an organization operates and bring new ideas.

Women make up a large part of the workforce, yet they are faced with many barriers preventing them from reaching higher positions within organizations. These barriers are in place due to different biases faced by all women. While the biases were once very noticeable, they are now more difficult to pinpoint. There are many different causes to the biases experienced but at the end of the day they push women out of the workforce or force them to work harder for positions. The biases white women experience are the prove-it-again bias, the tightrope bias, and the maternal wall bias. However, the number of barriers increases for women of color; they are not only faced with gender biases but also racial biases. A woman of color must prove her worth on a basis of gender and race, institutional discrimination, and interpersonal prejudice. There will be both men and women working against a woman of color when she enters the workforce. The existence of these biases makes it harder for women to prove their worth to an organization while also forcing them to fit into specific roles. Women must work harder to obtain executive positions in an organization, while also being paid lower wages.

The wage gap has been a topic of conversation since women joined the workforce. A woman is likely to make less than a man in the same position and working the same number of hours. While woman of color can make even less than a white woman making her wage gap larger compared to white woman. The wage gap can change depending on a woman's ethnicity, it will typically get larger showing that non-white women are faced with an increased number of biases in the workplace while also

making a smaller wage. Many will argue that this wage gap is created by women selecting different careers and positions so they can focus less on work and more on family, but this is not always the case. A woman is likely to be overlooked when offering promotions and she is also less likely to receive a position in leadership due to being a woman and not being viewed as a strong leader. The wage gap is an economic measure showing that women are treated differently in the workforce.

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