

GENDER WAGE DISPARITIES, OCCUPATIONAL SORTING, AND PRODUCTIVITY-RELATED OUTCOMES

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ABSTRACT

The cross sectional data set consisted of 1000 employee records used in this study to explore gender differences in compensation and implications for labour productivity. Gender, age, education, department, job title, seniority, performance evaluation, base pay, bonus, total compensation, and dismissal status were the variables included. The following descriptive statistics, Welch independent-samples tests, chi-square tests, effect-size estimates, and ordinary least-squares regression model with heteroskedasticity-consistent standard errors were used. While women's mean total compensation was 96,417, the mean for men was 104,919, the male advantage was 8.8% when unadjusted. The disparity was almost entirely in base pay, with bonuses being virtually equal. There was strong association between job title and gender, reflecting significant occupational segregation. The adjusted female coefficient is the effect of gender on compensation, holding constant the factors of age, performance evaluation, seniority, education, department, and job title, and is shown to be a nonsignificant difference in compensation of about -0.5%. The relationship between performance evaluation and compensation was positive and the interaction between gender and performance was not significant. The rate of dismissal was also comparable for women and men. The results show that the overall gender wage gap was mainly due to occupational composition and to observed characteristics of the job, but not to a uniform adjusted gender penalty. The data lacked data on interviews, perceptions of employees, and a direct measure of productivity, however, so it was not possible to gain a sense of actual life in the workplace or a causal productivity impact.

Keyword: gender wage inequality, gender pay gap, occupational sorting, pay transparency, performance evaluation, labour productivity

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1. Introduction

Despite the progress of women's education and employment in the labour market and their increasing access to professional jobs, gender wage gap continues to be a symptom of inequality in the labour market. Women earn less than men, and the extent and sources of the earnings gap differ by occupation, organization, and stage of career, across economies. This persistence has been explained by occupational segregation, working time differences, caregiving burdens, bargaining processes, organizational wage-setting processes, and competence and commitment assessments that are gendered (Blau & Kahn, 2017; Goldin, 2014). Thus, the gender wage gap is not simply a result of compensation differences between otherwise comparable workers, but also of the division of women and men into different jobs and of the differential value and position of jobs for women and men.

The wage gap has a significant relationship with the occupational and organizational structure. Women are still over-represented in low-paid jobs and under-represented in the top levels of the job market, and occupational gender segregation is still a feature of labour markets (Levanon & Grusky, 2016). Employers vary also in their wage policies, promotion policies, bargaining policies, and allocation policies. Evidence suggests that sorting across firms and bargaining within firms is related to the relative pay disadvantage faced by women (Card et al., 2016). It is possible for gender disparities to start early and to grow over the course of organizational careers, as suggested by establishment-level earnings trajectories (Barth et al., 2017; Kronberg, 2020). The role of the workplace context is, therefore, essential to an understanding of the development of aggregate wage gaps.

Earnings are also influenced by the different working situations and career continuity of the genders. In many high-paying jobs, long hours are rewarded, but the higher burden of caregiving responsibilities can limit women's ability to work around expectations for constant availability (Cortés & Pan, 2019; Cha & Weeden, 2014). Preferences for flexible employment arrangements are not necessarily synonymous with a lack of restrictions in individual choice, but rather they are related to workplace structures (Mas & Pallais, 2017). These inequalities are worse for parenthood, whereby women's earnings drop after giving birth, while men's earnings are relatively stable (Kleven et al., 2019; Musick et al., 2020). The motherhood penalty also has a significant impact on career experiences, promotion, occupational mobility, and wage growth, contributing to gender disparities throughout the life course (Cortés & Pan, 2023; Blundell et al., 2025).

Other factors include organizational assessments and negotiation processes. Gendered evaluations and rewards can still occur in merit-based systems, as firms that focus on meritocracy may perpetuate these evaluations and rewards (Castilla & Benard, 2010). Inequalities can also arise between performance appraisals and the associated compensation or recognition (Castilla, 2015). It is found from experimental and field studies that negotiation opportunities, competitive situations, and expectations of negotiating for higher wages impact workplace outcomes (Azmat & Petrongolo, 2014; Exley et al.,

2020). Women can also indicate lower salary demands than similarly qualified men that can also impact employer offers and end salaries (Roussille, 2024). Everyday experiences of wage setting processes are significant to understanding perceived fairness, motivation and workplace behaviour.

The answer of the organization and the regulation is pay transparency. Disclosure will limit information asymmetry, and uncover unexplained differences that can spur employers to investigate pay practices. The evidence suggests that transparency requirements can help to reduce gender gaps and affect organizational wage-setting (Bennedsen et al., 2022; Baker et al., 2023). But the effects of transparency can also be detrimental in some aspects, such as squeezing wages, modifying negotiation, or modifying the link between pay and performance, which are not necessarily the same (Obloj & Zenger, 2022; Cullen & Pakzad-Hurson, 2023). If disclosure is paired with accountability, with some sort of job value system, consistent promotion processes, and corrective action, then it can be effective (Cullen, 2024).

The issue of wage inequality could have ramifications for more than just income. Compensation is a message of organizational recognition and a determinant of fairness in judgments about effort and performance. If employees feel that there is an inequity in the rewards, motivation, commitment, cooperation and discretionary effort can suffer. On the other hand, fair wages can help establish trust and further reinforce the link between performance and compensation. In the context of flexible wage setting, bargaining processes can generate gender gaps in the same institutional context; in the context of platform work, experience and constraints, and time use, can generate gaps without classic managerial wage setting. These findings alert policy makers to the dangers of drawing simplistic conclusions about what is driving wage differences.

In the context of this background, the current study looks at the experiences of gender wage inequality at work and its implications for labour productivity. It emphasizes the ways wage disparities are organized by gender, job attributes, performance, and organization level. The study aims to see if the observed inequality is linked to the occupational allocation and employment characteristics or if it is an independent gender inequality. The study is significant in the literature because of its attention to wage inequality as a labour market outcome, and a process in the workplace that can have implications for employee performance and/or the effectiveness of the organization in modern labor and employment relations systems.

2. Methodology

2.1 Research Design and Data Source

A secondary quantitative analysis was conducted using the Glassdoor—Analyze Gender Pay Gap dataset obtained from Kaggle (Anelim288, 2025). The data used was cross-sectional with 1,000 employee records. The records contained information on job title, gender, age, performance evaluation

rating, education, department, seniority, base pay, bonus, total compensation, and status of the termination.

2.2 Variables and Measures

Gender was indicated as either male or female, and was used as the primary grouping variable. The main wage differentials studied were the base pay, bonus and total compensation. Total compensation was a group of the compensation value provided in the data set. The currency or pay period was not specified in the source file, and therefore compensation values have been provided in the units as presented. Years were used as the measurement of age. The performance evaluation was measured on a five-point scale and was used as a proxy measure for labour productivity, as the data did not include an actual measure of labour productivity. The five-point scale was also used to measure seniority. Education, department and job title were categorized. DISMISSAL STATUS: A dichotomous variable was created to indicate whether a student was in “Yes” or “No” status, indicating dismissal.

2.3 Data Preparation

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2.4 Statistical Analysis

The sample and the principal variables of the study were summarized using descriptive statistics. Categorical variables were analyzed using frequencies and percentages and continuous and ordinal variables were analyzed using means and standard deviations. The mean values for age, performance evaluation, seniority, base pay, bonus, and total compensation were reported separately for the genders. Welch independent-samples tests were employed to test the mean values of women and men since these tests do not depend on equal variance between the groups. Cohen's d was used to report the size of each gender difference. The unadjusted gender pay gap was defined as the mean difference between the compensation of males and females. The percentage difference was computed in terms of the percentage difference from the mean for females:

$$\text{"Gender gap (\%)" = ("Male mean" / "Female mean" - 1) \times 100}$$

The association between gender and job title and gender and dismissal status were tested for independence using chi-square tests. The direction and size of the gender gap was also analyzed separately by job title for women and men to determine whether all job titles shared a consistent pattern of gender wage differentials.

The natural log of total compensation was used as the dependent variable in an ordinary least-squares regression model. The major explanatory variable was gender (men was the reference category). The model was statistically adjusted for age, performance evaluation, seniority, education, department, and job title. Heteroskedasticity-consistent HC3 standard errors were used. The adjusted gender coefficient was transformed using $\exp[\beta] - 1$ and reported as a percentage difference in total compensation.

An interaction term between gender and performance evaluation was added to the compensation model to investigate the productivity-related pattern found in the data. This interaction was examined to determine if the relationship between performance evaluation and total compensation was different for women than for men. Two-sided p-values were presented, and the statistical significance was determined at 5%.

2.5 Ethical Considerations

This study used a publicly available, anonymized secondary dataset from Kaggle and involved no direct interaction with participants or collection of identifiable personal information. The data were analyzed in aggregate for academic purposes, with no attempt to re-identify individuals, and the findings were interpreted without attributing discrimination or misconduct to specific employees or organizations.

3. Results

3.1 Sample characteristics and data quality

1000 observations were made, all successful. There were 46.8% women and 53.2% men in the sample. There were no significant differences in mean age and seniority between the sexes, but modestly poorer mean performance evaluations among women (2.94 vs. 3.13; $p = .035$). The difference between men and women occurred at base pay and thus was transferred to total compensation, as can be seen in Table 1, where mean bonuses were virtually the same.

Table 1. Gender-specific profile and unadjusted comparisons

Measure	Females mean (n = 468)	Male mean (n = 532)	Male – female	p value	Cohen d
Age (years)	41.83	41.01	-0.82	0.364	-0.06

Performance evaluation (1–5)	2.94	3.13	0.19	0.035	0.13
Seniority (1–5)	3.01	2.93	-0.08	0.374	-0.06
Base pay	89,943	98,458	8,515	<.001	0.34
Bonus	6,474	6,461	-13	0.919	-0.01
Total compensation	96,417	104,919	8,502	<.001	0.34

Note: p values are for the Welch independent samples tests. A higher male mean will result in a positive Cohen d value. Compensation units are reported as being supplied when there is no information in the source file about a currency or pay period.

3.2 Magnitude and composition of the raw wage gap

The absolute difference between women's mean base pay (89,943) and men's mean base pay (98,458) was 8,515, and the male advantage was 9.5% of the mean base pay for women ($p < .001$). Total compensation averaged 96,417 for women and 104,919 for men, producing an 8,502-unit gap, or 8.8% relative to women's mean ($p < .001$). The difference between standardized total compensation was small to moderate ($d = 0.34$). On the other hand, the difference in bonuses between the 13 units was not significantly different, $p = .919$. As illustrated in Figure 1, the observed aggregate gap was primarily due to base pay and not to the allocation of bonuses.

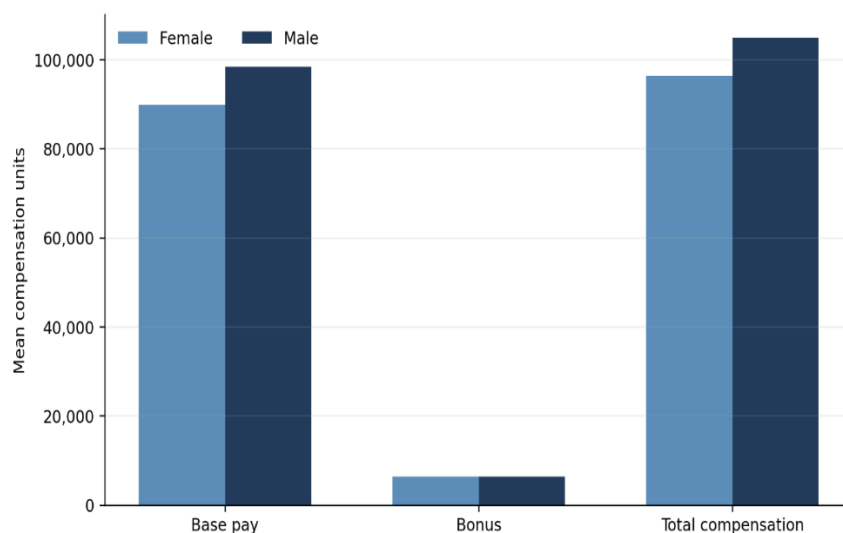


Figure 1. Mean compensation components by gender

3.3 Occupational structure and within-title differences

Gender and job title were strongly associated, $\chi^2(9) = 188.24$, $p < .001$. This imbalance in compositions was particularly noticeable in the marketing associates, with 107 women and 11 men; software engineers, 8 women and 101 men; and managers, 18 women and 72 men. As can be seen from Table 2 and Figure 2, differences within titles were not consistently in favour of males. Overall male mean compensation was higher in 5 titles and female mean compensation was higher in the other 5 titles.

Table 2. Total compensation by job title and gender

Job title	Female n	Female mean	Male n	Male mean	Gap %
Data Scientist	53	102,452	54	95,450	-6.8%
Driver	46	93,197	45	98,418	+5.6%
Financial Analyst	49	101,744	58	101,116	-0.6%
Graphic Designer	48	98,810	50	96,584	-2.3%
IT	50	96,838	46	97,240	+0.4%
Manager	18	133,244	72	130,929	-1.7%
Marketing Associate	107	82,251	11	88,162	+7.2%
Sales Associate	43	98,221	51	100,894	+2.7%
Software Engineer	8	101,147	101	113,034	+11.8%
Warehouse Associate	46	100,084	44	93,364	-6.7%

Note. Gap % = (male mean / female mean - 1) × 100. Positive values indicate higher male mean compensation.

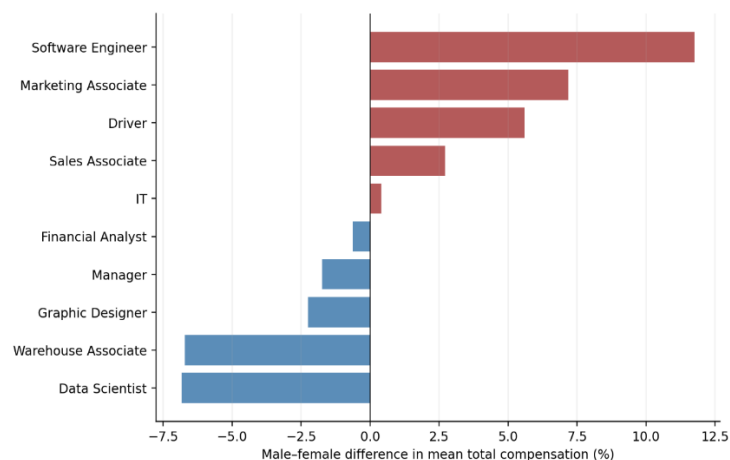


Figure 2. Within-job-title percentage differences in mean total compensation

3.4 Adjusted gender difference in total compensation

A conventional log total compensation regression model, after controlling for: age, performance evaluation, seniority, education, department, job title. 81.1% of the observed variation was explained by the model. When the observed characteristics were controlled, the female coefficient was found to be 0.5% less than male (95% CI -1.1% to -2.1%; $p = 0.519$) (Table 3). After adding all other measured covariate to the model, the large unadjusted gap was not maintained. This does not establish that much of the difference in aggregates is attributable to compositional sorting, but it does not rule out that this sorting was equitable and that discrimination did not occur.

Table 3. Summary of gender wage-gap estimates

Estimate	Difference	95% CI	p value	Interpretation
Unadjusted total compensation	8,502 units	Not model-based	<.001	Male mean 8.8% higher
Adjusted female coefficient	-0.5%	-2.1% to 1.1%	0.519	No adjusted difference detected

Note. The adjusted model used heteroskedasticity-consistent (HC3) standard errors. Reference gender was male. The percentage coefficient is $\exp(\beta) - 1$.

3.5 Productivity-related implications

The provided data are not suitable for a direct test of the effect of wage inequality on labour productivity. The cross-sectional link between performance evaluation and compensation was only in the field of productivity adjacent to performance evaluation and can not be used to determine direction of effect. Among men, about 1.0% of the total compensation was linked to every one-point rise in performance evaluation in a log-compensation model that controlled for the other factors observed. The interaction of gender and performance was not significant ($p = .355$) suggesting that there was no evidence of gender disparity in the compensation that could be attributed to a one-point increase in performance. Dismissal rates were also similar: 41.2% for women and 42.1% for men, $\chi^2(1) = 0.05$, $p = .831$ (Table 4, Figure 3).

Table 4. Productivity-related and employment-status indicators

Indicator	Female	Male	Statistical result
Mean performance evaluation	2.94	3.13	Welch p = .035
Dismissed	193/468 (41.2%)	224/532 (42.1%)	$\chi^2(1) = 0.05, p = .831$
Performance return in pay model	—	$\approx 1.0\%$ per point	Main effect p = .005
Gender difference in performance return	—	—	Interaction p = .355

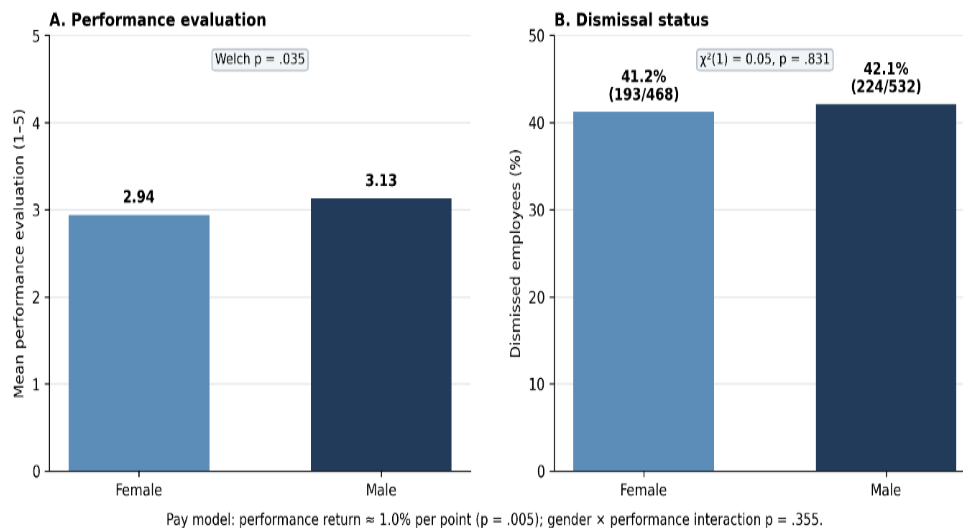


Figure 3. Gender differences in (a) performance evaluation and (b) dismissal rates, with performance-related compensation results

3.6 Synthesis of findings

There is an obvious gap in the overall compensation earned by women and men, with women earning less in both base pay and total compensation, even though they are similar in age and seniority. The difference, however, was entangled with a very gendered distribution of the job titles, and the gender-adjusted coefficient was not statistically different from zero. This evidence, then, lends support to an interpretation that focuses on occupational structure and role-specific underrepresentation of women instead of a single uniform underrepresentation within roles. The data can't be used to make qualitative statements about workplace experiences or causal statements about wage inequality and labour

productivity. These questions need to be answered by employee interviews or open ended accounts, with a valid longitudinal or experimental productivity measure.

4. Discussion

The results show an uncorrected pay difference between men and women. The total compensation for men was 104,919, while for women it was 96,417; a male advantage of 8.8%. This disparity was due almost entirely to the disparity in base pay as mean bonuses were almost identical. Rotman and Mandel (2023) identify gender-specific wage structures as an important source of earnings inequality. When the analysis is adjusted, however, there is a result. Once age, performance evaluation, seniority, and education, department, and job title were controlled for, the difference between the female coefficient and the male coefficient was a minuscule -0.5% , which was not statistically significant. When interpreting wage gaps, it is crucial to consider skills, sorting and returns together, as argued by Humphries et al (2024). The net difference then reduced to a large extent with the inclusion of the observed employment attributes.

This adjusted result does not show that there wasn't gender inequality in the workplace. There was association between gender and job title, with males being more likely to be software engineers and managers, and females to be marketing associates. Goldin et al (2017) demonstrate that wage differentials grow as workers move from one occupation to another within an establishment, move along career paths, and move from one establishment to another. Keloharju et al. (2022) also pinpoint the challenges holding women back from advancing to leadership. Allowing for a difference in job title may then help to eliminate a dimension of the difference that is also a source of inequality.

There was no consistent gender difference in the wage gap in within-title comparisons. In five titles men were paid more and in five women were paid more. The greatest gender gap was in software engineering, while women were more likely to be earning more in data science and warehouse-related roles. This variation in wages suggests a differential rather than a uniform penalty on the occupation level. Biasi and Sarsons (2022) show that gender effects can be created in both institutional and non-institutional settings with the use of flexible wages and bargaining. Bertrand et al. (2010) also demonstrate that the path women take to the labor market, such as working arrangements, career interruptions, and career opportunities affect their earnings trajectories.

Occupational distributions can be a consequence of educational decisions or recruitment procedures, flexibility at work, caregiving limitations, or differential promotion. Wiswall and Zafar (2016) cite workplace preferences as being relevant to the gender difference in occupational choice. But preferences are subject to constraints and should not be taken as unconstrained preferences. Goldin (2021) states that the traditional career track and incentivization of flexibility continue to drive gender

inequality. Occupational sorting could thus be a mix of employee choices and structural variation in access to rewarded occupations.

Differences were greater for women than for men, but they were small, in terms of performance evaluations. Compensation related to performance but this interaction was not significant. There was also no evidence that there were gender differences in compensation returns to performance. That does not, however, provide any evidence of unbiased assessments. Without accountability in evaluation, promotion and compensation, merit commitments are not enough, according to Dobbin and Kalev (2022). This indicates that there was no difference in the performance–compensation association measured for women compared to men.

The rates of dismissal were not very different, 41.2% for women and 42.1% for men. In itself, the differences in termination by gender were not sufficient to account for the compensation gap. But the dismissal status does not account for voluntary quitting, limited promotion or position, or leaving due to an unfairness perception. Nevertheless, England et al. (2020) highlight inequalities that manifest in a variety of organizational and career outcomes, which are not immediately apparent in one employment outcome.

There are some cautionary notes for labour productivity. There was no output or efficiency measure of productivity and performance evaluation was the only productivity measurement indicator. Platform-work evidence suggests that wage systems may lead to continued earnings gaps due to differences in experience and constraints between women and men, as well as their respective work patterns (Cook et al., 2021). Thus, if there is a wage gap, it does not necessarily mean there is a productivity gap. Furthermore, there were no employee interviews, fairness perceptions or motivation measures, and no open-ended workplace accounts in the dataset. Correll et al. (2007) provide an example of how the workplace experiences of mothers cannot simply be surmised from pay data, because an assumption about motherhood and commitment may impact how they are evaluated.

The results are applicable to wage review for organizations. Openness of compensation is growing, and employers have more responsibilities to disclose and justify compensation disparities (Maiso, 2026). Aggregate gaps should be considered along with base pay, occupational representation, starting salaries, promotion opportunities, and performance-based rewards. In conclusion, the raw wage gap was linked to occupational composition and to measures of employment, but not to a common adjusted gender gap. The results do not establish or disprove discrimination; they merely indicate that the conclusions reached will vary based on whether analysis is done at the level of aggregate earnings, comparable jobs, or the processes by which these jobs are filled.

5. Conclusion

In this study, gender differences in compensation and their relation with labour productivity were discussed. The total compensation was 8.8% higher for men. The disparity was entirely in base pay, with almost equal bonuses indicating that the overall disparity was built into the wage structure and not due to bonus discretion.

Small and statistically insignificant gender coefficient remained after the effect of age was removed and after performance evaluation, seniority, education, department and job title were controlled. Job title, however, was correlated with gender, with the distribution of women and men across job categories not being equal. The raw wage gap was therefore strongly linked to the occupations in and within rewarded occupations. However, it is important to note that the lack of significance of the adjusted coefficient does not indicate that there was no inequality, since occupational sorting could be a channel through which gender inequalities arise.

Performance evaluation was found to be positively correlated with compensation, where the compensation return for the men and women did not differ. There was no significant difference between the number of men and women who were dismissed. The results did not show differences in the compensation gap due to differences in performance-related rewards or job loss. However, the evaluation was limited to a proxy measure for productivity only and did not include measures of output, efficiency, motivation or engagement.

Instead of using the pay gap figure as a whole, organisations concerned with the gender pay gap should focus on things like base pay, starting pay, representation in occupations, job allocation, promotion opportunities, and opportunities for highly paid positions. As no narrative nor perceptual evidence from the data was found, qualitative research should explore how employees perceive wage inequality and whether pay unfairness has an impact on their motivation, commitment, retention and labour productivity.

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