

Towards Closing the Knowledge Gap of Why the Gender Wage Gap Won't Close: Consideration of Four Unique Perspectives for Future Exploration

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JEREMY STAFFORD, UNIVERSITY OF NORTH ALABAMA



Focus of the Investigation

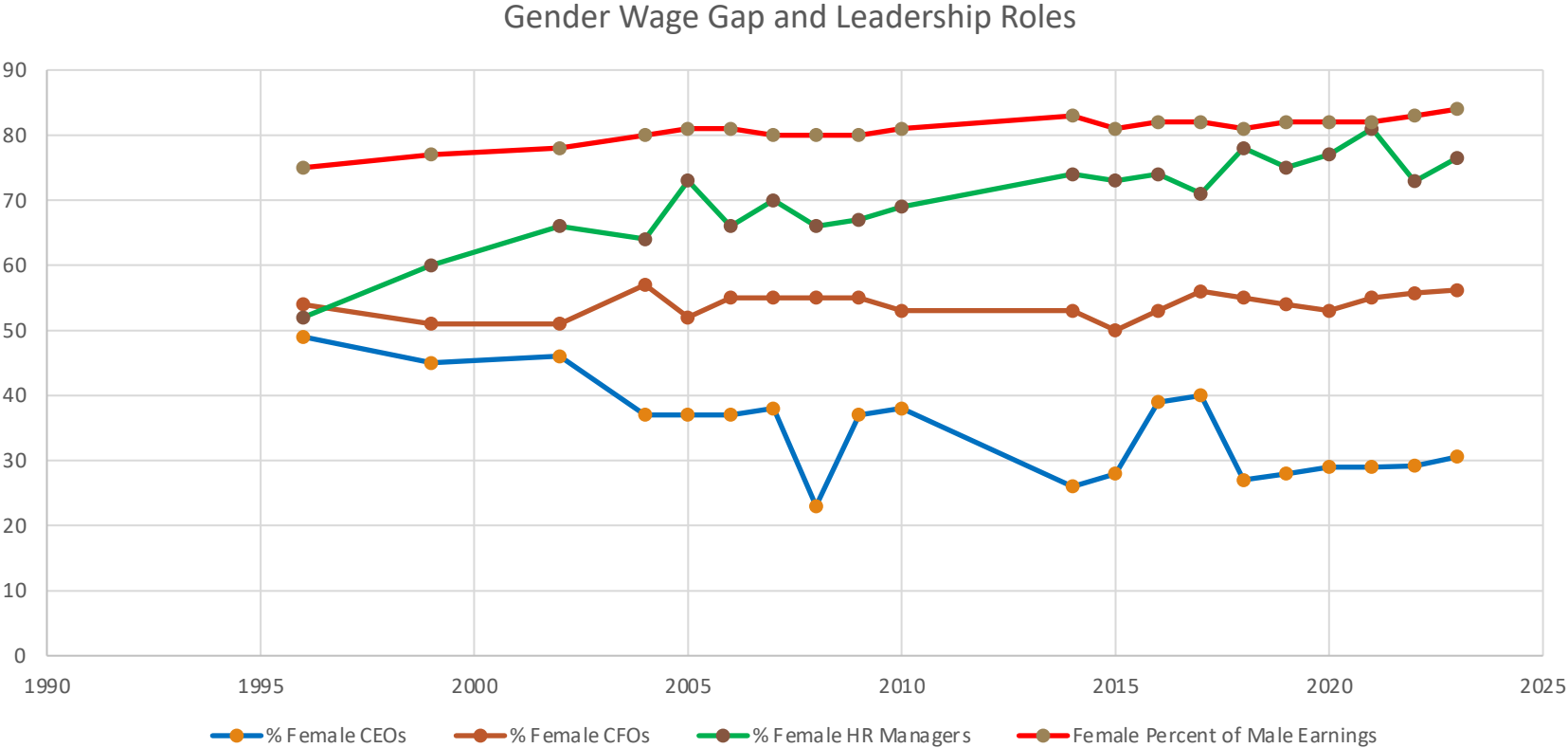
- ❖ While significant advances in closing the gender pay gap were made in the later 20th century (between 1980-2000) the gap has remained stable throughout the past two decades.
- ❖ To address this stagnation, researchers with the U.S. Department of Labor's Women's Bureau and the U.S. Census in 2020 assessed the variables that had been used to try and determine the gender wage gap, and concluded that those variables accounted for roughly 30% of the total explained variance.
- ❖ In other words, **almost 70%** of the variance in the gender wage gap today is due to factors that have **yet to be identified** and measured.
- ❖ The general view right now is that widespread '**discrimination**' is the reason for the unexplained variance, yet no specific forms of discrimination have been identified.

Looking Into the Data

- ❖ Given the apparent lack of direction for gender wage gap research, we felt that it would be worth looking into and see if there was any theoretical perspectives that might have been overlooked.
- ❖ Also, because the vast majority of prior research focused on variables related to workers and their jobs, we wanted to consider the other side of the employment relationship by looking into variables related to senior management and leadership roles.
- ❖ Specifically, employee wages are often determined by senior managers and organizational leaders, so we wanted to look into that aspect.
- ❖ What we found in the historical data ([BLS.gov](https://www.bls.gov)) were several trends that seemed to have a story to tell... but we need to try and figure out what narratives could be.

Findings from the Bureau of Labor Statistics (1996-2023)

(note the lack of major historical effects in each trendline, such as 9/11, 2008, or COVID)



Research Options to Explore

- 1. Compliance Without Advocacy:** Wage gap persists because hiring managers and leadership are stuck in a 'compliance loop' by strictly adhering to current wage and anti-discrimination laws without advocating changes or challenging those laws.
- 2. Relational Aggression:** While women have overwhelmingly surpassed men in senior Human Resource Manager roles, we have to consider that some form of underlying gender-specific apathy or even aggression might be at work.

3. C-Suite Myopia: While hiring is primarily a responsibility for HR, ultimately it is the CEO, CFO, and/ or other C-suite level executives (especially CFO) that approve compensation plans and rate suggested by HR (e.g., based on compa-ratios, industry specific standards such as CUPA etc.).

Further, as Koutsoumadi (2023) notes “*Direct oversight of human capital has not historically been part of boards’ job description*” and further notes that because human capital has historically been difficult to value, it is a challenge to measure and report.

4. Dominance of the “Manosphere”: Attitudes and perceptions of men who are part of the Gen Z cohort are often more likely than any other generation to not only view feminism negatively, but as being harmful to them in some way (see Duffy, Campbell, and Skinner, 2024) .

Furthermore, the *internet “manosphere”* on anti-feminism beliefs and attitudes has led Gen Z females to *anticipate* earning \$6,000/ year less than a male counterpart.

Instead of keeping up the fight for pay equality, young women today seem to increasingly be giving up on any hope of being paid equally, thus normalizing the inequity.

Thoughts, Questions, or Ideas?