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# The Gender Wage Gap in the Film Industry: A Review of Literature

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**The Gender Wage Gap in the Film Industry:  
A Review of Literature**

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Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the Degree in  
Bachelors of Arts in Communications and Media Studies  
School of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences  
Thesis Advisors: John Duvall

Dominican University of California  
San Rafael, California  
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This thesis, written under the direction of the candidate's thesis advisor and approved by the Chair of the undergraduate program, has been presented to and accepted by the Faculty of the Department of Communications and Media Studies in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Bachelor of Arts. The content and research methodologies presented in this work represent the work of the candidate alone.

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Date

## **Abstract**

The gender wage gap is defined as the difference between the amounts of money paid to women and men, often for doing the same work (Cambridge, 2017). The gender wage gap is a reoccurring financial issue in all aspects of the business world. Most all career paths have had a wage gap between men and women. Having equal pay for equal work should be a thing of the past. However, women today are still fighting to close the wage gap and work equally in all fields. The film industry is one of the largest entertainment industries in America and still shows large amounts of women not being paid the same as men in above and below the line positions of film. In my research study my focus is to better understand the gender wage gap in the film industry and I will do this through a review of literature based around my topic. The purpose of this literature review and critique is to provide information about the gender wage gaps underlying effect in the film industry and present articles, studies, and findings that show a different perspective on the positive effects of closing the pay gap.

## **Key Words**

Gender, Wage Gap, Film Industry, Economics, Cultural Differences, Unequal Pay, Position, Work Ethics, Celluloid Ceiling, Equality, and Inequality.

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## **Introduction and Rationale**

The Gender wage gap has been a long-standing issue in American culture since the early 1940s. Wage gap is the percentage difference between the annual earnings for women compared to the annual earnings for men in work fields. This is a prominent issue in many places of work in the United States due to men earning higher wages than some women in the same position who do not earn equal wages for that same job. Currently research shows that the wage gap in recent years in this country is around 80% in difference, men earning the higher amount of wages in this percentage compared to women. This is an issue of inequality that really draws my interest because I know it will directly affect me in my near future.

I am interested in this topic because the film industry is the career path I want to follow and I want to know what my opportunities and disadvantages are before I enter into it. I can also say though that I do not see myself backing away from this career choice even when the pay gap is so distance from men doing the same job. Advertising for the film industry is my main interest, specifically making movie trailers. This field of work is very well known to be male dominated and thus a field of work that most women usual stray away from. I have changed my mind numerous times over my young life as to what career path I dream to go down, but since I was 15 years old I have stayed solid in my dreams of becoming a movie trailer maker. I hope to be successful enough in this field in my future and be able to be a good example for other young girls and women that desired to enter any part of the film industry.

The wage gap is prominent in many different forms of work communities in the U.S., the film industry being no exception, and it is a concern to women all over the

country including myself. If there is any way of making this percentage closer in equality for women I want to find out and know what my part can be in the future of its improvement and where I need to be in film community to be of importance and make a difference.

### **Position Statement**

My research approach on the issue of the Gender Wage Gap in the Film Industry is coming from the viewpoint of a young woman of Caucasian and Portuguese ethnicity. I was born and raised in the Suburban city of Elk Grove, CA. I am a student at Dominican University and have a major in Communication and Media Studies with a concentration in Organizational and Professional Communication. I have taken film history classes while attending Dominican and had the opportunity to study abroad in Italy spring semester 2016 of my junior year. Over my last three years at Dominican I have also obtained video and trailer making skills; expanded my knowledge on Public Relations and Marketing procedures including necessary knowledge on numerous forms of useful advertising skills in the media industry.

### **Literature Review**

#### **The Gender Wage Gap**

Lutter (2010) talks about social capital, social networks, gender inequality, and the film industry. In this article, “Do women suffer from network closure? The moderating effect of social capital on gender inequality in a project-based labor market”, women’s work ethic in the film industry is put under a microscope going all the way back to 1929 and the results correlated and compared together up till 2010. Lutter explains

throughout this article that he performed his study on the different forms of social capital because he wanted to know how those differences affected gender disadvantages in career advancement mainly within the film industry. What is social capital? What is the gender wage gap? How can these disadvantages of the wage gap really affect women over the years? The focus of this article was mostly on the film industry and it's acting and producing skills. My main focus is more of behind the scenes work for women and less of the acting skills. However I still find this source useful for my thesis because it takes a different look into the wage gap of women in the film business. Lutter says, " this study sheds light on the long discussed but never quantitatively analyzed idea that women are more likely to suffer career penalties from network closure" (Lutter, 331). From this quote I understood his meaning to be that this issue really is only important to women and only few men, such as Lutter and that more research and studies like this one need to be done to end the career penalties Lutter speaks of.

My main focus for my research topic, as previously stated is the gender wage gap specifically as it pertains to the production and post-production film industry. To learn more about this issue I looked for articles that discusses this and how it has been affecting women. I wanted to have a better understanding on the gender wage gap overall but I also wanted to focus on the film industry and I felt that this article did both of those things. More so about the wage gap and how that effected females as actresses compared to male actors but still helpful when gathering research for my topic.

Gender wage gap is a reoccurring issue in the United States in most all-major career fields. Women have been working to make this gap smaller over many decades but unfortunately it has only gone to a more dramatic difference between men and women's



wages today. In the article *Distributional Changes in the Gender Wage Gap* (Kassenboehmer, 2014) it discusses the most important points of the gender wage gap. It is not specifically focused on one group but instead used a panel study of income dynamics data between the wage differences for men and women over a long amount of time and throughout an entire wage distribution. Their research and studies of the wage gap began with data from a nationwide longitudinal study of almost 9,000 United States families that began being collected in 1968. This study though focused most of its research from 1994 to 1996 as well as from 2005 to 2008. Their key motives to digging through all their data was to organize it from year and by occupation, for example armed forces were removed from their sample data. They split their analysis data into four parts: union membership, work history, educational attainment, and region of the country between the men and women of this study. This article portrayed a general vantage point of the gender wage gap in the United States without having too much of a main focus group.

This article gives a detailed description about the gender wage gap over a very long period of time. Even though I am not doing my research paper on just the gender wage gap, I felt it is important to have a wide range of research on just the gender wage gap itself as well as sources on this topic focused on the film industry.

The main focus of the article, *Pay secrecy and the gender wage gap in the United States* (Kim, 2015) is pay secrecy, its prevalence, and the law in the United States. It is yet again another article focusing only on the gender gap and not focusing on the film industry. The author of this article, Marlene Kim, says that from her study she found that, “states that outlaw pay secrecy reduce the gender wage gap. I find that in states that have

outlawed pay secrecy, earnings for college-educated women are greater, reducing the gender pay gap” (Kim, 649). Pay secrecy is defined as rules, policies, and practices that prohibit workers from discussing or sharing information about their earnings. Kim’s article states how it could be a solution to bringing the gender gap closer to equality between men and women. She used a natural experiment of certain states in the U.S. that prohibit pay secrecy compared to those other states that do not.

I had no idea what the pay secrecy was until this article and I found it to be one of the most interesting topics in the article. This is one of the only peer-reviewed articles I have found that discusses a possible solution to the gender wage gap. It opens the door to discovering if there is or ever will be a solution to the gender wage gap, specifically in the film industry. This article by Kim shows some proof that there might be a way to make equal pay for women a reality and is one of my most prominent and important sources for my topic.

The most straightforward explanation of the gender wage gap in economic inequality between the genders is covered in the article, *Gender and Economic Inequality* (Wienclaw, 2015) states that economic inequality still exists in the United States. The author Ruth Wienclaw goes into all of the many potential explanations as to why inequality is still an issue. She goes about this article by showing charts and tables of women’s salaries throughout the early twenty-first century. Some of the main factors of this article on inequality are education, domestic responsibility, work devaluation, women, and poverty. Wienclaw also conducted income inequality studies to better understand the rising and reducing economic inequality between the genders and all people’s human rights and social justice. Wienclaw says, “more research is needed to

better understand the reasons for economic gender inequality so that individual men and women and policy makers can make informed decisions to help women become more economically successful and counteract the lingering effects of discrimination in the workplace” (Wienclaw, 8).

“Employer Attitudes, the Marginal Employer, and the Ethnic Wage Gap” (Carlsson/Rooth, 2016) is an article that focuses mostly on the many countries in Europe and their statistics on how the gender wage gap affects the working class. Then the article takes an even closer look at one particular country in Europe, which is Sweden. From this article readers learn more on how the author describes, “the role that prejudice plays in the creation of the ethnic wage gap in one of Europe’s most egalitarian countries” (Carlsson/Rooth, 231). Research for this article started in 2003 and continued until its conclusion in 2011. To conduct their research the authors, Carlsson and Rooth, used data they obtained from the Research Group for Societal and Information Studies.

The only slight difference this article has compared to the other ones is that it looks more closely on the ethnic wage gap in Europe instead of the gender wage gap in America. But this viewpoint is still something I find important to know for my research. It shows as a kind of compare and contrast article for my other sources that are based on the work force in America. This idea is useful to me in the endeavor of making this difference known and also something to improve upon in the States.

The book “From Marriage to the Market: The Transformation of Women’s Lives and Work” (Thistle, 2006) is focused on the transformation of women’s role in the work force since the beginning of the second half of the last century. Through the process of her study, which she goes into detail in her chapters of the novel, she explains how she

conducted the study through the research method of comparative analysis. She compares the occupations of married women who are stay at home mothers and of married women who decided to enter into the work force. Thistle also compares cultural differences of African American women and Caucasian women and the changing roles in their home and work settings.

Thistle's end results of her study in her novel showed how this change over the last forty years, from before this novel's publication in 2006, to be influencing and shaping the families of today and the American economy. Her analysis of the wage gap was built upon by history, sociology, economics, census data, and employment rates to further show how gender is the center of the economic changes over the years in the United States. I chose this novel for part of my research because of its well-documented information on the workingwomen's role in our society.

The book by Claudia Goldin, "Understanding the Gender Gap (1990)", grabbed my attention solely on the information in the introduction. This book was written in 1990 and stated that at the time the wage gap was estimated to be at a stable rate of 40 percent difference between men's and women's wages since the 1950s. That fact was most shocking to me because the research I have done from recent studies in the last ten years now state the gap to be at about a rate of 20 percent difference, which is only up 20 percent of what it was in the early 1940's and late 1950's. From this novel I have been able to make comparison for the pay gap 40 years ago to the pay gap today and its potential difference in the future.

Another reason I chose this novel is because of Goldin's background with the economic history of women's work. She earned her undergraduate degree from Cornell

University and her doctorate in economics at the University of Chicago where her main focus of study was on the economic history of women in the United States. In the Preface of her novel Goldin states, “Our generation is constantly reminded that it is undergoing significant change in the economic role of women. The percentage of American women at work has just exceeded 60 percent, nearly 50 percent of all workers are women, and more than 50 percent of women with newborns are back at work within one year [...] each generation of Americans, at least since the mid-nineteenth century, has claimed to be on the verge of an unprecedented and momentous change in the economic position of women” (Goldin, 1990).

Even though this quote is on facts found back in 1990 I believe that it still has relevance today in our current economic standings for women. The wage gap percentage is proven to be unequal enough back when this book was written in the 90’s but it is even farther away now which was not something that Goldin and others in her same field prospected back then. She does state that she has hope for change in the future, but still realizes that equality and non-discrimination in the matter of wage gap still has far to go even from today.

“‘Women’s Work’ and the Gender Pay Gap” (Schieder/Gould, 2016) is an article about differentiating what is considered women’s work in the public eye of the majority of this country. “How discrimination, societal norms, and other forces affect women’s occupational choices – and their pay” (Schieder/Gould, 2016). I chose this article because of the call to action. The authors of this article states that blame should not be put onto women who are apart of the economic shifts over the years. They argue that all attempts to understand the wage gap should look at were the American economy, “provides

unequal opportunities for women at every point of their education, training, and career choices” which are factors I agree need to be looked at in every aspect of the pay wage.

The gender wage gap is said by some to be a hoax. To some people it has been made up to make women believe that they have been treated unfairly all their lives. This then begs the question; why would this huge difference in pay rates between men and women be made up? The gender wage gap has turned into the norm for a lot of women in the United States and practically goes unnoticed entirely by men in the work force. For those who are aware of it some continue to believe it isn't true while the rest work to break down the barriers.

The wage gap is, “the difference in men’s and women’s median earnings, usually reported as either the earnings ratio between men and women or as an actual pay gap” and it can also be known as the pay gap (Miller, 2015). This difference in wages has grown smaller over the last few decades starting to narrow in the 1960s but it is still far off. Its estimated in the report by AAUW, The American Association of University Women, titled *The Simple Truth* that there is a 20 percent gap in pay from working full time women and working full time men. That means that these women are getting paid only 80 percent of what men are being paid. In the recent change of pay rate for women from 1960 to last year pay equity could occur by 2059. Unfortunately, this change in pay rates has begun to slow down and at its current rate; it could take until 2152 for women to have equal pay as men. These facts are what concern myself and many other career women. The gender wage gap in the film industry is my main priority and I wanted to make this my focal point for my research because this is the field of work I want and aspire to join once I graduate from college.

## **The Wage Gap in the Film Industry**

This topic stuck out to me because of how much I already knew about it but also because of how much I don't know about it such as when I read the article, "The Film Industry's Problem of Gender Inequality is Worse Than You Think" (Laham, 2016) about the celluloid ceiling being, "" used to describe barriers to workplace advancement for women and minorities. In the film industry, glass barriers and pervasive stereotypes of women persist. This systematic underrepresentation of women in creative positions in Hollywood is the 'celluloid ceiling'" (Laham, 2016). I have endeavored to expand my knowledge on this particular issue because I want to better understand the career path I am choosing to take.

The celluloid ceiling was a new term for me to see in this research but it is also a fact that I already knew about just from its basic deflection. From my research I can surely say that most women would know of this ceiling because they experience it on a regular basis. The invisible barrier that Laham speaks of is becoming more visible everyday in our current society and yet this pay gap still stands unequal, only making small head way in certain other career fields. In the film industry it is treated by many to still be nonexistent. Laham's article on this issue is important for my research because she not only discusses females in acting roles and their standing there but also on the behind the camera jobs.

Throughout my research I was able to discover occasions of pay gap to be present in positions above and below the line. The salaried positions that are above-the-line go to actors, directors, writers, producers, and composers who are on contract. The below-the-

line positions are typically union wage scale or hourly positions such as camera assistants, grips, make-up, and wardrobe.

In the article, *Matthew Weiner is Wrong. The Gender Wage Gap is Real; Even in Hollywood* (Gibson, 2014) the base of the issue is about how television producers of two different popular television shows on the same network are not being paid equally. The producer of *Mad Men* in 2014, Matthew Weiner, said that he doesn't believe this difference is due to gender. In fact he said, "I don't think that's a gender issue. Jenji's entitled to every dollar but you have to fight for it, male or female. No one gives you anything'" (Gibson, 2014). Jenji Kohan is whom he is referring too and is the show runner and producer of *Orange is the New Black*.

Throughout this article the author, Megan Gibson, supports her title "Matthew Weiner is Wrong. The Gender Wage Gap is Real, Even in Hollywood" with consistent facts from wage gap studies and interviews with numerous other women who have experienced the same kind of unfairness that Jenji experienced from her friend Weiner. Gibson makes great points on how Jenji has made many efforts to get her salary raised based solely on the success of her show, but is also lucky at all to have even gotten her foot in the door with a business that has only 14 women listed on the top 50 TV writers/producers of 2013.

This article is another resourceful academic article I have found about the gender wage gap in the film industry. I find the information to be an exact example of the issue I am trying to present. The way in which Weiner spoke on Jenji illustrates in stark reality the daily issues females in this industry must go through to even have anything close to equal standing as the men in the same position as them.

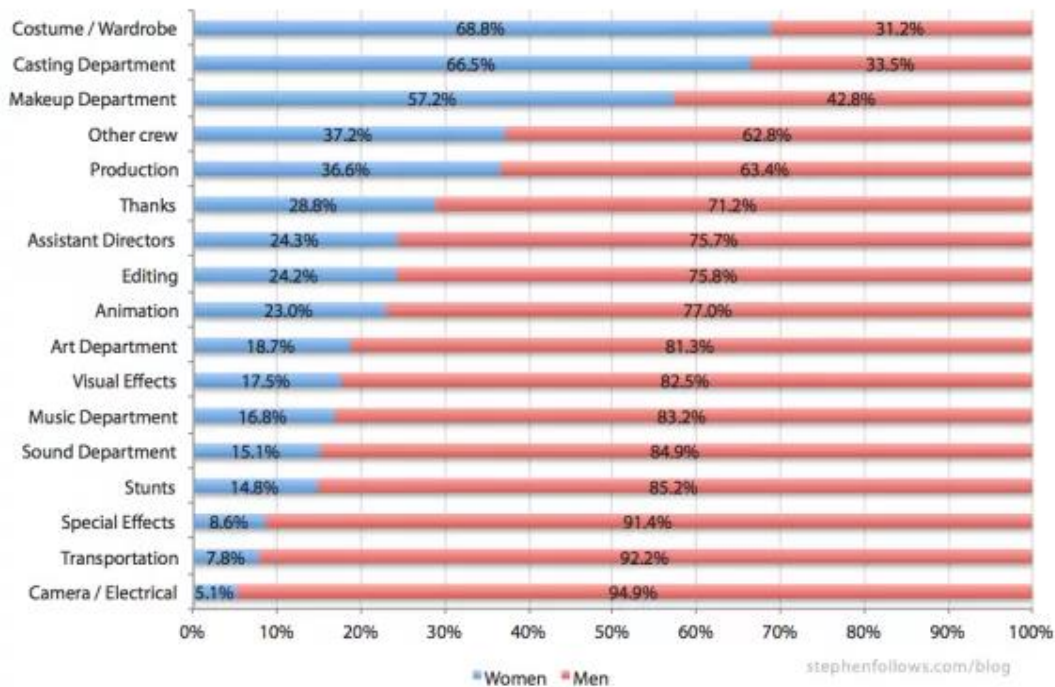


Stephen Follows, a writer and producer from the United Kingdom, released a report in 2014 that shows that of 2,000 of the largest U.S. grossing movies in the twenty years between 1994 and 2013, only 22 percent of film production jobs were held by women with the bulk of the jobs in that industry, 78 percent going to men. Even with overwhelming evidence, Follows at the time was determined not to read the data he compiled as a determination that film industry is "institutionally sexist", but preferred to interpret the statistics as a situation in which the industry simply didn't know that the industry is made up of an over-representative number of men.

Director Beryl Richards said she thinks the "completely unregulated " freelance structure of the film industry is responsible for what is in effect a sort of blockade of women in certain jobs and departments, particularly those jobs that pay higher salaries. "People can underestimate how much discrimination can go on. There is no one monitoring and no one challenging the pattern that is replicating itself, that is why nothing is changing" (Petersen, 2014).

Follows found that film crews were comprised of just 22 percent women during that twenty-year study period. The departments that had the highest percentage of women were Costume and Wardrobe, which had women to men ratio of 68.8 percent (w) to 31.2 percent (m). The Casting Department which also had more women than men with a ratio of 66.5 percent (w) to 33.5 percent (m), and a Make-Up Department ratio of 57.2 percent (w) to 42.8 percent (m). But in the Camera/Electrical Departments, which pays more money, the ratio is only 5.1 percent women to a whopping of 94.9 percent men. These findings are shown in the chart below in figure 1.1 (Follows, 2014).

Figure 1.1 Gender Split of Crew by Department of 2,000 highest grossing films, 1994-2013



Adding to the near lockout of women in certain jobs and departments is that jobs where women are in the greatest numbers are also the jobs that are valued less and therefore pay less money.

For actresses the wage gap is much more prominent in their careers as compared to their male acting counterparts. “Everything You Need to Know About the Hollywood Pay Gap” (Berg, 2015) mentions names like Marilyn Monroe, Meryl Streep, Jennifer Lawrence, and Viola Davis as some of the most prominent actresses in Hollywood. Berg explains about how Hollywood loves leading ladies but likes them less when it comes to how much they are paid for their work. Women are underrepresented in all media outlets like television and film and are not paid as fairly as the males that play in roles of comparable importance.

Jennifer Lawrence has spoken out on the wage gap in recent media to draw more attention to the topic. Berg elaborates on the “less-than-entertaining ways that the entertainment business compensates its female stars” (Berg, 2015). Lawrence made around 52 million dollars in 2015 for all of her on-screen appearances in some of the biggest movies of that year such as *The Hunger Games* and *Silver Linings Playbook*, but that amount is overshadowed by the 80 million dollars made by Robert Downey Jr., the world’s highest paid actor. Many women, Lawrence included, have said in the past that the reason they are paid so much less than the male actors is because they didn’t fight as hard to negotiate the terms of their payment. But this can’t be the case for all actresses in the industry.

After years of this inequality in a time when it should no longer be expectable, people are starting to notice. Scarlett Johansson made 35 million in 2015 and was the only other actress besides Lawrence to make the celebrity 100 Forbes’ list of top-paid celebrities in 2015. She was one of the lead characters in the Marvel Avenger movies as the Black Widow superhero, and was actually paid a fair amount equal to the two male lead characters played by Chris Evans and Chris Hemsworth.

Now that this issue is becoming more of a talking point in the entertainment world, other women like Patricia Arquette, who made a statement during the 2014 Oscars in her acceptance speech for Best Supporting Actress, are coming out in a stand against the unfairness, saying “it’s our time to have wage equality for once and for all” (Berg, 2015). Seeing as women make up half of the world’s population, they should be given half of the opportunities to be in the big film roles that offer the higher payouts. A chart within this article provided by the Annenberg School at the University of Southern

California shows that only 28 percent of the characters in the 2014 films of the year were female and that only 21 of those positions offered were lead or co-lead roles.

Berg then goes onto briefly to discuss how the female positions held in jobs below the line or behind the camera are treated even worse in comparison to the actresses. In those same best films of 2014, it was reported by the Annenberg School that women made up about two percent of directors, 11 percent of writers, and 19 percent of producers, and those are numbers for the whole year of movies made. From this information it is clear that Hollywood and the industry itself is in a public position to make a change and be an example for change for all other fields of work that the wage gap is also effecting. The women and even some men in this spotlight need to keep this discussion going to make this change if an equal opportunity for all genders is ever going to be made.

In her article, “Why You Should Care About the Hollywood Wage Gap?” Alicia Adamczyk (2016) writes about women in film and how being a women and race play into the amount of money they are paid for the movies they are in. After the Sony Company executives’ emails were hacked and it was revealed exactly how much some of the male and female actors were paid for the same movies, Jennifer Lawrence wrote an open letter to the makers of the movie *American Hustle* that she started by asking why she was being paid so much less than her male costars in the film. They were all the leads of the movie and no one person’s role was made to be obviously more important than another, so it begged the question of “why such a difference of pay?” When it comes to star power right now, Jennifer Lawrence is one of the most well-known and popular stars around, but she is still not paid even close to some men who don’t have the kind of star

power she does. The reason for this can be solely based on the fact that she is a woman and they are men.

Adamczyk also mentions the study “Age, Gender, and Compensation: A Study of Hollywood Movie Stars” (De Pater, 2014) to show that earnings peak for women in their early thirties, being high until the hit their late thirties, while men’s wages rise until they are almost fifty years old and don’t show decline after that. That’s almost more than a twenty-year difference in time for women’s acting careers to last compared to men’s. This difference in wages means, “25-year old Lawrence has nine years to go, while 40 year old Bradley Cooper has 11” (Adamczyk, 2016).

The even more staggering facts from this article are that movies with female leads actually make more money overall compared to those with male leads. Adamczyk says that research done on the box-office grosses of 2015 show that movies with female leads like *Spy* and *Pitch Perfect 2* brought in about 235 million dollars on budgets nowhere near that size, whereas movies with male leads such as *Wild Hogs* made only about 80 million in the same year – meaning that, “top grossing movies about women earned 45 million dollars more at the box office than movies about men” (Adamczyk, 2016).

Race is another part of the wage gap that takes precedence and in this article it is looked at in a clearer light. The Twitter post #HollywoodSoWhite was going around for a while during the 2015 Oscars on all the biggest social media platforms, because hardly any people of color, male or female, were nominated for an award in any category.

Adamczyk makes the point in saying that women of color have it even harder than anyone else in the industry, and according to Viola Davis who said in her 2015 Emmy acceptance speech, “The only thing that separates women of color from anyone else is

opportunity. You cannot win an Emmy for roles that are simply not there” (Adamczyk, 2016) that struggle is only because of opportunity.

Opportunity is the reason this disparity is ongoing in Hollywood. All that needs to be done to even the playing field at this point is to offer more chances to women, and not just to white women but also to women of color. Adamczyk ended by stating that women have star power equal if not exceeding the men they are on screen with, and showed a chart that made the difference in wages for male and female actors even more obvious, with Robert Downey Jr., George Clooney, Matt Damon, Leonardo DiCaprio, and Dwayne Johnson being listed as the highest paid actors of 2015 before a women, Jennifer Lawrence, even appeared on the list.

In “Natalie Portman Speaks Out About Her Gender Pay Gap”, Molly Driscoll (2017) writes on how Portman is actually an actress not apologizing for her pay ever and noting the unfairness she has faced in the industry. She is actually saying that it doesn’t matter if women like her are getting paid healthy paychecks in the million-dollar range; it still isn’t close to fair to the even higher millions the men are making. That’s the whole point behind the wage gap. It doesn’t matter if these women are making millions of dollars; they are still not making anywhere the same amounts as the male actors, and that is how we have to base the inequality off of, just like every other job position affected by the pay gap.

Many other actresses have been criticized for demanding their work be of equal value as the actors. This is happening because people believe that, because they do make a lot of money in the film industry, they have no room to argue and complain about the indifference. Portman described her opinion on the wage gap perfectly when talking

about one of her most recent experiences working with her costar Ashton Kutcher in the 2011 romantic comedy *No Strings Attached*; Kutcher was paid three times more than she was even though they both shared the lead. She was quoted, “I knew and I went along with it because there’s this thing with ‘quotes’ in Hollywood...His ‘quote’ was three times higher than mine so they said he should get three times more. I wasn’t as angry as I should have been. I mean, we get paid a lot, so it’s hard to complain, but the disparity is crazy. Compared to men, in most professions, women make 80 cents to the dollar. In Hollywood, we are making 30 cents to the dollar” (Driscoll, 2017). This is overlooked simply because these actresses are making a lot more than minimum wage, but it still doesn’t excuse the wage gap occurring in the industry.

The article concludes with Portman’s powerful and truthful closing statement from her interview: “I don’t think women and men are less capable [...] we just have a clear issue with women not having opportunities. We need to be part of the solution, not perpetuating the problem”. (Driscoll, 2017) Her saying that women need to become more of a solution and less of the problem with the gender wage gap is a call to action for the other actresses that say they don’t need to fight as hard because they are getting paid well for their work. They should be getting paid fairly, not just well.

Implicit Bias or unconscious bias is defined as a bias that we are unaware of and happens without our knowledge when making decisions about other people. It happens quickly and it happens to all people. In “What are the lessons of the Hollywood gender pay debate?” Wilton, Kinsey, and Rees (2016) are women who have important roles in the business world. They talk about how unconscious bias is present in all career fields but also about how obvious it is in the film industry, and they name Jennifer Lawrence as

their prime example. Kinsey says that unconscious bias needs to be addressed more often than it has been, and Wilton makes it clear that even the need to be addressed doesn't make it easy to do so. Wilton prides Lawrence on her willingness to stand up for herself and ask the tough questions on why her pay is different to the male actors around her. She says, "What gets measured get managed. Shining a light on what men are paid versus women at every level, as well as monitoring the percentage of women at every level, is proven to speed up progress [...] encouraging transparency in female representation at the top, has driven a step-change in the number of women on boards". (Wilton et al., 2016).

From this article my research is solidified and it is made even clearer that women around the world, especially in Hollywood, are advancing to guarantee gender wage equality, and by doing so they are showing the big companies that make these pay decisions that they need to address, understand, and work towards bringing the gender wage gap inequality to a halt. The wage gap needs to be closed, and from these articles and studies it is possible to accomplish this simply by offering more opportunities to women and to stop pretending that it doesn't affect the film industry when it so clearly does in all aspects of film.

### **Methodology**

The initial step for this project entailed researching the literature about the gender wage gap in the film industry. This thesis paper is focused on a literature review of all the sources I found on the gender wage gap in the film industry, and using the information from other people's opinions and knowledge on an issue to expand my research. From



these sources I was able to find all the useful viewpoints I require on connecting the gender wage gap to the film industry.

### **Research Questions**

1. What is the gender wage gap?
2. Does it apply to the focus of the film industry?
3. What can be done to improve the pay wages / equity of pay for women working similar jobs as men?
4. How will the gender wage gap in the film industry affect other women and myself in my generation and the generations after mine?

### **Limitations and Strengths**

Limitations of my research came up when I was looking for sources focused directly on the wage gap in the film industry. Although I found numerous sources on databases and other articles online, most of them were 10 years old or older. It would be more helpful to my future research to be able to have access to a more extensive library of sources . Also, I was not able to conduct my own research and expand upon my findings with personal interviews with women who have had first-hand experience in film positions. This was a limitation because of timing restraints. However I do feel I was able to get around it by being able to prove my topic to be true with a review of reliable literature.

Strengths of my research were the abundance of sources about the gender wage gap in general. Even though my thesis topic is looking specifically at the film industry, I

felt it was as equally important to know all I could about the pay gap. I was also able to expand my research to be not just about below-the-line positions in film but also about above-the-line-positions. Having material about how actors feel on the matter of the pay gap was extremely helpful in my research.

### **Conclusion**

The percentage difference of pay in this country is staggering at a 20 percent rate. This issue closely affects me as a young woman about to enter into the work force. This is why I decided to take it on as my senior thesis project. I feel that the research I have done will be helpful to me and possibly to other women as well. It is a topic of discussion that is being covered by more people today than it ever has been before. The pay gap affects all women in every career path they choose based solely on them being female. From the review of literature I have read that show its presence, the film industry is obviously no stranger to the indifference of the gap.

All of my sources are reliable and go into complete detail on the main focus of the studies. They are all different but still come together on the matter of the gender wage gap. In each one there is a resounding claim to appeal to women, men, and the heads of all major and standing companies in the American economy to end the pay gap and have equal pay for all men and women. This is the basis of my argument to have equal pay in the film industry and is supported by each of the sources I have used throughout my research on the gender wage gap in the film industry.

It would be beneficial for all companies in film to close the pay gap and hire more women for positions that are still seen even now as roles only to be filled by men.

Women are as hard workers as men and only need to be given a chance to prove it and excel within the industry. Closing the pay gap would make all things fair and equal for all men and women in film, be they actors or camera crew; the incentive to do amazing work would no longer be based on how they see their time and worth at work, but on focusing on doing what they love and are skilled in. I hope for the pay gap to come closer together in the near future so that I might have an opportunity to live out my goals of becoming a movie trailer maker and to be proud I was able to do so. Through my research I endeavored to prove that the gender wage gap is real, it can be made equal, and it affects all women in the United States, and even more so women in the film industry.

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