

The purpose for this paper is to identify, gain insight from professional Black women, and address the wage gap and the lack of executive leadership representation in the workforce. The research will describe the challenges that Black women face in their quest to achieve and perform in leadership roles in the workplace with equal compensation. By showing the history of Black women in the workforce and identify barriers and biases that Black women are currently experiencing, the research will provide an opportunity to create community conversations about unintentional biases due to race and gender with a focus to affect corporate behaviors and policies that will create equal opportunities of advancement and salary equality for Black Women.

Black Women, have the worst pay and leadership representation numbers across the board, despite being the most educated. Black women are treated as an addendum to larger discussions about the gender workforce gap rather than a central focus, according to Harts. “Oftentimes, when we speak about statistics for women, we usually speak about white women first, and Black Women are more of an afterthought.” According to American Association of University Women ([AAUW](#)), Black women make 58 cents to every \$1 white men make. Black Women’s Equal Pay Day celebrated on September 21st and is the approximate day a Black woman must work into the new year to make the same salary a non-Hispanic white man earned at the end of the previous year. Black women must work more than 264 days into 2022 to make the salary that non-Hispanic white men made in 2021.

In addition to not having advocates to speak on their behalf in the workplace, Black Women often do not advocate for themselves, said Harts. As black women move up into leadership positions, they are more likely to face microaggressions that challenge their competence, according to the [Women in the Workplace 2021 Report](#). Black Women are far more

likely than white women to experience disrespectful and othering behavior, such as surprise at their language skills or other abilities. The result is that women who experience microaggressions are twice as likely to experience burn out, and they are less likely to stay at the company. Kevin L. Nadal, Ph.D., a professor of psychology, defines microaggressions as: “The everyday, subtle, intentional – and oftentimes unintentional – interactions or behaviors that communicate some sort of bias toward historically marginalized groups.”

Leadership traits that have been the most highly valued, such as assertiveness and competitiveness, have often been linked with a [traditionally masculine leadership style](#), largely due to a lack of Women of color in top leadership positions and the majority of leaders being men. As we’ve seen with the pandemic, traits such as empathy and flexibility, which have traditionally been associated with feminine leadership style, are essential to [respond to the new world of work](#). “As women of color, we have quite different lived experiences. Yet there has never been space to bring all our stories, strengths, or lived experiences into leadership,” says Purushothaman. “They would be valuable right now, where leaders need to know how to work in complexity and develop and manage diversity. We have had to navigate not being seen and heard within structures. Despite this added stress and exhaustion, women are rising to the moment as stronger leaders and taking on the extra work that comes with this: compared with men at the same level, women are doing more to support their teams and advance diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts. They are also more likely to be allies to all women of color. Yet this critical work is going unrecognized and unrewarded by most companies, and that has concerning implications. Companies risk losing the very leaders they need right now, and it is hard to imagine organizations navigating the recovery of the pandemic and building inclusive workplaces if this work is not truly prioritized.

In conclusion, yes improvements have progressed and there are more metrics from research , but more change needs to come and more issues addressed and action performed, so that there is a space for Black Women to be there authentic self and show up in full voice, to lead with their power, to make change, to innovate, to really ask different questions and embrace the power of leadership that Black Women have to offer. Many studies have suggested that employers should make changes in their hiring processes that implement equitable recruitment, hiring and promotion practices that should include developing and implementing practices to include a restart search for executive positions if applicant pools do not produce an adequate number of qualified candidates from diverse backgrounds as implement blind resume screening practices as well as require adequate training for interview panels on unconscious bias training. By offering to pay Black Women fairly and create a transparent system regarding pay scales so that all qualified individuals with same credentials, experience, and level of education, will ensure that the professional landscape and compensation in the workforce is equal for all.

References

Race and the Pay Gap. (n.d.). AAUW : Empowering Women Since 1881. Retrieved October 30, 2022, from <https://www.aauw.org/resources/research/race-and-the-pay-gap/>

Harts, M., n.d. *The Memo: What WOC Need to Know to Secure a Seat at the Table*. 1st ed. Basic Books, 2019.

Nadal KL, Griffin KE, Wong Y, Davidoff KC, Davis LS. The Injurious Relationship Between Racial Microaggressions and Physical Health: Implications for Social Work *Journal of Ethnic & Cultural Diversity in Social Work*. 26: 6-17. DOI: 10.1080/15313204.2016.1263813

Purushothaman, Deepa, [The First, the Few, the Only: How Women of Color Can Redefine Power in Corporate America](#) (Harper Collins, March 2022).

[Data Source: LeanIn.Org and McKinsey & Company, Women in the Workplace 2021.](#)

The purpose of this paper is to gain insight from professional Black women on the wage gap and to address the lack of executive leadership representation in the workforce.

A review of current literature, existing data, and lived experiences will highlight challenges Black women face in their quest to achieve and perform in workplace

leadership roles – and to do so with equal compensation. By outlining the history of Black women in the workforce and identifying barriers and biases Black women face, the research will provide an opportunity to create community conversations about unintentional biases due to race and gender with a focus on affecting corporate behaviors and policies that will create equal opportunities for advancement and salary equality for Black women.

Black women have the worst pay and leadership representation numbers across the board, despite being the most educated. According to Harts (in-text citation), Black women are treated as an addendum to larger discussions about the gender workforce gap rather than a central focus. “Oftentimes, when we speak about statistics for women, we usually speak about white women first, and Black women are more of an afterthought.” According to the American Association of University Women (AAUW), Black women make 58 cents to every \$1 white men make. Black Women’s Equal Pay Day, celebrated on September 21st, is the approximate day a Black woman must work into the new year to make the same salary a non-Hispanic white man earned at the end of the previous year. Black women must work more than 264 days into 2022 to make the salary that non-Hispanic white men made in 2021.

In addition to having no advocates to speak on their behalf in the workplace, Black women often do not advocate for themselves (Harts). As Black women advance into leadership positions, they are more likely to face microaggressions that challenge their

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competence ([Women in the Workplace 2021 Report](#)). Kevin L. Nadal, Ph.D., a professor of psychology, defines microaggressions as: “The everyday, subtle, intentional – and oftentimes unintentional – interactions or behaviors that communicate some sort of bias toward historically marginalized groups.” For example, Black women are far more likely than white women to experience disrespectful and othering behavior, such as [expressed surprise](#) at their language skills or other abilities. [These encounters often result in burnout and departure from the workplace \(insert citation\)](#).

The most highly valued leadership traits, such as assertiveness and competitiveness, have often been linked with a [traditionally masculine leadership style](#), largely due to a lack of women of color in top leadership positions and the majority of leaders being men. As [witnessed during the pandemic](#), traits such as empathy and flexibility, [traditionally associated with feminine leadership style](#), are essential to [respond to the new world of work](#). “As women of color, we have quite different lived experiences. Yet there has never been space to bring all our stories, strengths, or lived experiences into leadership,” says Purushothaman. “They would be valuable right now, where leaders need to know how to work in complexity and develop and manage diversity. We have had to navigate not being seen and heard within [structures](#).” Despite this added stress and [subsequent exhaustion](#), [women](#) are rising to the moment [and managing the extra work that comes with being](#) stronger leaders. [Compared to men at the same level](#), women are doing more to support their teams and advance diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts. [They are](#) also more likely to be allies to all women of color. [However](#), this critical work is going unrecognized and unrewarded by most companies, [which](#) has concerning implications. Companies risk losing the very leaders they need right now, and it is hard to imagine

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- Moved up [1]: Kevin L. Nadal, Ph.D., a professor of psychology, defines microaggressions as: “The everyday, subtle, intentional – and oftentimes unintentional – interactions or behaviors that communicate some sort of bias toward historically marginalized groups.”
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organizations navigating the recovery of the pandemic and building inclusive workplaces if this work is not prioritized.

In conclusion, yes improvements have progressed and there are more metrics from research, but more change needs to come and more issues addressed and action performed, so that there is a space for Black Women to be their authentic self and show up in full voice, to lead with their power, to make change, to innovate, to really ask different questions and embrace the power of leadership that Black women have to offer. Many studies have suggested that employers should make changes in their hiring processes that implement equitable recruitment, hiring and promotion practices that should include developing and implementing practices to include a restart search for executive positions if applicant pools do not produce an adequate number of qualified candidates from diverse backgrounds as implement blind resume screening practices as well as require adequate training for interview panels on unconscious bias training. By offering to pay Black women fairly and create a transparent system regarding pay scales so that all qualified individuals with same credentials, experience, and level of education, will ensure that the professional landscape and compensation in the workforce is equal for all.

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Commented [LEK18]: Are you focusing on women of color as a whole or Black women in particular? Or both? You still have time, but you'll need to make this distinction moving forward; and, as I mentioned above, you want to be consistent in using whatever you choose throughout your writing.

Commented [LEK19]: This sentence needs to be reworked. The first part is vague.

What improvements have been made (you don't really reference any in the preceding paragraphs, so how does the reader know this statement is accurate/why you're saying it)?

What metrics are there more of and from what research? Although this is a summary, the main points still need to be clearly articulated. Keep in mind that, especially for longer papers or your dissertation, many readers will jump right to the conclusion for your findings/summary statement; so, it is critical that you have a strong, thorough yet concise, closing.

For a short paper such as this, and if you're trying to make the point that there really hasn't been much progress/things are still pretty bad for women of color in the workplace, you could possibly save stating what little progress has been made for this final paragraph by saying:

"Some progress has been made toward improving workplace experiences for women of color, such as <insert 1-3 example(s)>. Despite these minor advances, more actionable change is needed to cultivate professional spaces conducive to Black women's career progression, mental and physical wellbeing, and financial gains. Spaces where Black women can be their authentic selves as they powerfully lead the way to effective, impactful, and innovative change; their voices are heard and valued; and they are afforded legitimately viable opportunities for success and advancement."

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You also don't necessarily need to say "In conclusion" - especially in longer papers where you'll most likely have Conclusion(s) as a section heading.

Commented [LEK20]: <insert 2-3 relevant in-text citations> after the word "studies" or at the end of the sentence (depending on your style guide).

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Commented [LEK21]: This is a run-on sentence and needs to be reworked. You could possibly say:

"...have suggested that employers implement equitable recruitment, hiring, and promotion processes. One such practice is restarting searches for executive positions if applicant pools do not produce an adequate number (... [11])

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References

Race and the Pay Gap. (n.d.). AAUW : Empowering Women Since 1881. Retrieved October 30, 2022, from <https://www.aauw.org/resources/research/race-and-the-pay-gap/>

Harts, M., n.d. *The Memo: What WOC Need to Know to Secure a Seat at the Table*. 1st ed. Basic Books, 2019.

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[Data Source: LeanIn.Org and McKinsey & Company, Women in the Workplace 2021.](#)

This is an extremely long/wordy sentence. It's important content, but you want to figure out a way to break it down into at least two sentences. Considering rewriting as:

"The research will foster opportunities for community conversations on race and gender bias through consideration of the history of Black women in the workforce and related barriers. This work will focus on affecting corporate behaviors and policies to create equal opportunities for advancement and salary equality for Black women."

Include citations that speak to:

1. Black women having the worst pay across the board (what does "across the board" mean? i.e., in comparison to who/what?)
2. Black women have the worst leadership representation numbers across the board (same comment for "across the board")
3. Black women being the most educated (out of what population(s); in comparison to what?)

Be careful/mindful of making blanket statements without references, even if you know them to be true. Unlike other types of writing, academic writing often requires us to cite even the most commonly-known info. Tedious and frustrating at times, but also can lend credence to the validity of your work (especially in certain circles and particularly when writing about the Black experience).

I'm not sure what citation style you use (I use APA), but most require year/name/page# for in-text citations. I believe business as a discipline uses Chicago style, which would be (Name Year, page#).

Page 1: [4] Commented [LEK8] Latasha Eley Kelly 11/10/22 12:00:00 AM

You go from talking wage gap numbers to self-advocacy. "In addition to..." implies you were just talking about the topic. You could rewrite as:

"In addition to the significant pay differential, Black women often have no advocates in the workplace who speak on their behalf, and also do not advocate for themselves."

Page 1: [5] Commented [LEK9] Latasha Eley Kelly 11/9/22 11:46:00 PM

Insert correctly formatted in-text citation.

Page 2: [6] Commented [LEK13] Latasha Eley Kelly 11/10/22 12:13:00 AM

This implies a direct connection between women of color specifically (not just women in general) and masculine leadership style, as in, if there were more women of color in top leadership positions, these leadership traits wouldn't be only associated with masculinity - is that your intent? If not, the sentence might be more clearly written as:

"...largely due to a lack of women in top leadership positions."

Page 2: [7] Commented [LEK14] Latasha Eley Kelly 11/10/22 12:18:00 AM

Insert a sentence, between these two, that makes a connection/bridges the gap between the experience of women in general and that of women of color.

Page 2: [8] Commented [LEK15] Latasha Eley Kelly 11/10/22 12:17:00 AM

Confirm that this is where the quote ends.

Page 2: [9] Commented [LEK16] Latasha Eley Kelly 11/10/22 12:20:00 AM

Women of color or women in general? Be clear and consistent on who is the focus of your study.

Page 2: [10] Commented [LEK17] Latasha Eley Kelly 11/10/22 12:25:00 AM

Who? Men? Women of color? Women in general? I know you don't mean men, but your reader may not. Try to avoid loosely using pronouns, as it can lead to ambiguity/confusion if it is unclear from the previous sentence (where you've mentioned at least two different groups of people) which group you're referencing.

If you're referring to women of color, you could say:

"Women of color are more likely to be allies to other women of color."

If you're referring to women in general, you could say:

"Women are also more likely to be allies to women of color."

*Confirm what the source says, and be sure to cite it.

Page 3: [11] Commented [LEK21] Latasha Eley Kelly 11/10/22 1:10:00 AM

This is a runon sentence and needs to be reworked. You could possibly say:

"...have suggested that employers implement equitable recruitment, hiring, and promotion processes. One such practice is restarting searches for executive positions if applicant pools do not produce an adequate number of qualified candidates from diverse backgrounds. Blind resume screening and requiring adequate interview panel and unconscious bias training are additional strategies. Another is offering to pay Black women fairly while simultaneously creating a transparent pay scale system. This is to ensure equitable compensation based on qualifications, credentials, experience, and education level and provide equal opportunity for upward mobility and longevity in the workplace."