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GENDER DIFFERENCES IN PAY EXPECTATIONS AT THREE CAREER STAGES

A Thesis Submitted

in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Designation

University Honors

Elijah Rogeay Seay

University of Northern Iowa

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Abstract

Major and Konar (1984) found a difference between genders in pay expectations, but no difference in the perceived fairness of expected pay. In my study, I evaluated pay expectation differences in gender at three career stages. In previous studies, researchers have only looked at what individuals earn at the beginning and peak of their careers. I specifically examined both men and women and asked them to indicate their expected pay at the beginning, middle and end of their careers. In this study the main effect for gender was significant such that males had higher pay expectations than females. In addition, the main effect for career stage was significant such that pay expectations increased over the course of a career. Further, the interaction between gender and career stage was significant, with greater differences between genders in pay expectations occurring in later career stages. Lastly, I examined perceptions of pay fairness and I found that there were gender differences in the perceived fairness of expected pay, although I had hypothesized that this difference would not be significant.

Gender Differences in Pay Expectations at Three Career Stages

Introduction

Major and Konar (1984) found a strong gap between genders in pay expectations. Actual pay certainly shows this gap. According to Murphy (2006), females earned, on average, 77¢ for every dollar that males received. This number has not changed in recent years. One possible reason for this gap in both real and expected pay is discrimination in the workplace. One such example of discrimination occurred in one of the most well-known stores in the country, Walmart. According to the Huffington Post (2012), approximately 2,000 female employees sued Walmart for not giving equal pay to both men and women. Another example consists of a higher profile case. According to american progress.org (2012), a woman named Heidi Wilson sued Citicorp for \$340,000 in back pay because she was unjustly and grossly underpaid compared to the men who also did the same work and held the same position she had. She won her case, but it should not have to come to suing a company for her to be able to receive what she rightly deserved. It does not seem to matter the extent to how much the company wanted to pay the women, low wage versus high wage positions, there was still discrimination against the women. However, the purpose of this study is to examine another possibility for understanding the gap in pay, that is, that pay expectations influence how much one is actually paid.

Logically, the gap in pay expectations should only increase over time and never decrease. If the starting pay for women begins at a lower amount than men, then men will always have an advantage when it comes to salary because raises are generally based on a percentage of current salary. Hogue, DuBois, and Fox-Cardamone (2010) stated that if the initial starting salary is low, then it can have a career-long impact on salary. Those with low expectations are unfortunately

prone to many future problems and not just the initial fact of being paid less. Gasser, Flint, and Tan (2000) discovered that applicants who initially had lower starting salary expectations were also less prone to asking for a raise or seeking promotions. Clearly, this is a topic with important consequences to a significant portion of our population. Everyone is affected by the pay gap. From lawyers and doctors, to convenience store workers, everyone is influenced by the dramatic difference in pay. The purpose of this study is to further our understanding of gender differences in pay expectations. This research will help to find ways in which to reduce the gender gap in pay that is currently present in today's society. I utilized a 12-question survey that used a likert-type scale in order to assess the potential reasons to why expected pay is different for males and females.

There are many different kinds of research findings that suggest that there are ways to assess the gender gap in pay expectations. However, a majority of the research is old. This shows the need for more research to be done and that this type of research is well overdue. In my study, I assessed three different stages in career (beginning, middle, and end) for males and females and attempted to discover a mediator that could help explain this difference.

In this research, there are three important questions that I investigated. First, are there significant pay expectation differences between males and females? Secondly, how large is the difference among males and females in what is expected in the future regarding pay? Thirdly, do males and females both see their expected pay as fair? For this study, I investigated four specific hypotheses:

- 1) There is a main effect for gender in that males will expect to make more than females.
- 2) There is a main effect for career stages as one will expect more income the further they go in their career.

- 3) There is interaction between gender and career stages in that males will expect to receive more than females as the career continues and the gap between the two genders in expected pay will increase.
- 4) There is a no difference in perceived fairness between males and females in regards to expected pay.

Literature Review

Major and Konar (1984) found that job candidates with higher pay expectations are actually offered more money than those that are equally qualified with lower expectations. Further, Major and Konar (1984) introduced the Five Factor Model as a way to explain the gender difference in pay expectations. The first factor is the contrast in career paths chosen between males and females. Women, on average, pursue less advanced degrees, plan to spend fewer years working full time, and self-select into lower paying occupations than men (Hoiberg, 1982; Treiman & Hartmann, 1981). In addition, Farmer, Wardrop, Anderson and Risinger (1995) found that women generally are less likely to participate in science-related careers. This could be due to social expectations of what an appropriate career may be for a female. Knowing that science is a male-dominated field could deter many women from trying. The same can be said for males in that many men will not attempt to be nurses because of the gender label society has placed on nurses. The career path chosen can play a large role among genders in that most gravitate toward the occupations that is mainly represented by their gender.

The second factor of the model is objective job inputs. The main premise of this factor is understanding the stereotypes that are associated with genders in that males may be perceived to be more competent than females at a job. This is much like the first factor in that stereotypes can play a huge role in the belief that women have in themselves to perform at the same level as males. O'Leary (1974) and Schein (1973) recognized that though the stereotype is not proven,

this perception is an important factor to consider with managers who control pay. Perceived job inputs is the third factor in this model. Lenney (1977) discovered that women, on average, have lower performance evaluations and devaluate their own performance. Deaux and Farris (1977) also found that there is a difference in attributions among men and women. Men tend to attribute successes internally while attributing failures externally. Women are more likely to attribute successes externally while attributing failures internally. Women, for example, are more likely to say, "We as a team did excellent" or "I failed." Men are more probable to say, "You all failed" or "I succeeded." The thoughts of the employer, when it comes to evaluations and possible promotions, could be altered by what the employee believes and not necessarily what the employer assessed. The fourth factor is related to what is important in a job. On average, women tend to value interpersonal relationships rather than money (Callahan-Levy and Messé, 1979; Crosby, 1982; Sauser and York, 1978). Lastly, social comparisons is the fifth factor to consider. Men and women generally will compare themselves to their same gender when determining fair or desired pay (Gasser, Oliver, and Tan, 1998). This model is helpful in further understanding pay expectation differences in gender.

My study also looked at perceived fairness and how that relates to pay expectations. Several examples of perceived fairness exist in research. Keaveny and Inderrieden (2000) stated that regardless of lower salaries, women on average are not less satisfied. Women do not generally feel they are being paid less and actually view their pay as fair pay (Barron, 2003). In fact, there is no evidence that women feel more dissatisfied with pay and this phenomenon is called the "paradox of the contended female worker" (Major and Konar, 1984). Jackson, Gardner and Sullivan (1992) conducted a study in which they surveyed a wide variety of men and women in different majors and specifically college seniors. The researchers found that women generally

expected to receive lower starting and career peak salaries than men and perceived lower pay as fair pay.

Method

Participants

Eighty-six students from the University of Northern Iowa participated in the study; however, 6 of the subjects were removed from the sample because of the lack of demographic information or incomplete pay expectation information. Of the individuals that participated, 43 were male and 37 were female. The average age of the males was 21.1 years and the average age of the females was 20.9 years.

Materials and Procedure

Data were collected during the summer of 2013. Students were advised that their responses would be confidential and not shared with anyone. The participants were also not instructed to divulge any information on the survey regarding their major, GPA, or academic year at UNI. I used a 12-question survey that measured entry, middle, and end career pay expectations. In addition, the survey also posed questions involving how many children each respondent expects to have and how they will be reared at an early age. A copy of the survey was presented in the appendix. For example, one question asked, "The annual salary (i.e., \$20,000 per year, \$40,000 per year, etc.) I expect after college graduation when I enter my chosen field is: (Please report a salary that you realistically expect to have, not one that you hope to have)."

The same question was asked for the middle and end of the career as well. The question concerning fairness stated, "I think that the pay that I expect to receive across my career is a fair

and appropriate salary for me." A likert-type scale was applied to this question that ranged from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree". In order to analyze the results, I used SPSS software.

Results

In response to hypothesis one, results showed that there was a significant main effect for gender F(1, 78)=6.12, p=.02. In addition, the second hypothesis was significant as the results revealed a main effect for career stage F(1, 78)=16.55, p=.00. Finally, the interaction between gender and career stage was also significant F(1, 78)=4.42, p=.04. Females exhibited lower mean scores for the beginning (M=40,013.51, SD=15,306.36), middle (M=56,716.22, SD=30,200.38), and end (M=71,972.97, SD=43,952.78) of career compared to males for the beginning (M=55,360.47, SD=42,586.79), middle (M=91,430.23, SD=95,129.77), and end (M=155,627.91, SD=209,411.57) of career.

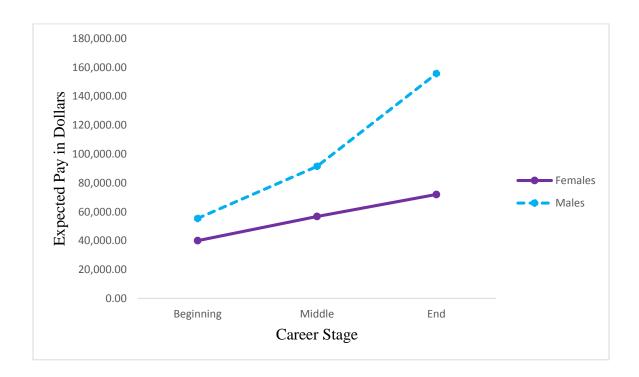


Figure 1. The figure shows the difference in pay expectations between gender at the beginning, middle and end of career.

Although I expected a non-significant difference for fairness, the difference between genders for perceived fairness of expected pay was significant, t(78)=-1.98, p=.05. The average score for perceived fairness of pay was scored on a five-point likert scale ranging from (1) strongly disagree to (5) strongly agree. The mean for males was 4.23 (SD=.92). The mean for females was less at 3.78 (SD=1.10). Although this mean difference is significant, an examination of the frequency counts indicates that 72.9% of females reported either agree or strongly agree when asked if their expected pay was fair. For males, 88.4% reported either agree or strongly agree when asked if their expected pay was fair. Clearly, the large majority of both males and females indicated that their expected pay was fair.

In addition to researching gender differences in pay expectations, I also looked at some factors that could be mediators of these differences. The results also showed that there was a significant difference for three other questions included on my survey regarding raising children. The data showed that there was a significant difference for males and females for question five, concerning the age in which they will start having children, t(71)=-2.26, p=.03. The average age was lower for females (M=27.65, SD=2.10) than males (M=28.90, SD= 2.57). In addition, question seven, the amount of weeks that males and females will spend away from the workplace for childrearing was significant, t(73)=5.25, p=.00. The average amount of weeks were much higher for females (M=9.20, SD=.3.11) than males (M=5.16, SD=3.49). Lastly, question eight, the degree to which males and females will raise newborn children was also significant, t(75)=2.94, p=.00. The degree may seem small because it seems that females (M=2.34, SD=.54) and males (M=2.02, SD=.41) are similar. However, to properly display this information, table 1

and figure 2 are displayed to show the frequency count for males and females. Note that of the participants that chose to answer the question relating to leaving the workforce for childrening, no individual - male or female - stated that they would leave the workforce completely to raise their children.

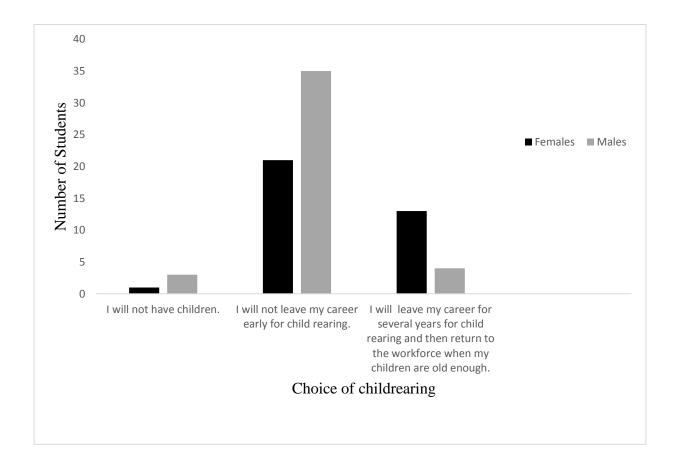


Figure 2. The figure shows the number of students, both male and female, that answered question 8 regarding ways of early childrearing.

Table 1

Frequency count for question 8.

	Females	Males	Total
I Will Not Have Children.	1	3	4
Not Leave My Career.	21	35	56
Leave My Career for Several Years.	13	4	17
Total	35	42	77

Given the gender differences found in questions five, seven, and eight, it is possible that these variables may act as mediators of the relationship between gender and pay expectations. These questions on the survey inquired about the age in which the individual would have children and ways in which they were going to rear the child. Indeed, it seems reasonable to assume that if women expect to have children at an earlier age than men, plan to take more unpaid leave through the Family and Medical Leave Act, and are more likely to expect to leave their careers for several years for child rearing, then they would also expect to receive less pay. This effect should be especially pronounced during the mid-career, exactly when our results indicate the gender gap in expected pay shows a large increase.

These three variables were examined as potential mediators of the relationship between gender and pay using the Baron and Kenny (1986) approach that is commonly used to explore potential mediation. Unfortunately, all three variables failed at step three in the moderation process. When each potential mediator and gender are included in the same regression equation predicting pay expectation, neither the potential mediator nor gender prove to be significant. This

suggests that multi-collinearity prevents each potential mediator from demonstrating significant unique variance in addition to that supplied by gender. As such, none of the potential mediators proved significant.

Discussion

The results show that three of the four hypotheses are supported. There was a main effect for gender in that males had higher pay expectations than females. This correlates with the current beliefs of the population. There was also a main effect for career stage in that the pay that one expects to receive increases over the course of the career. Lastly, an interaction between the two main effects were found. This shows that as males and females further advance in their careers, the gender gap will continue to increase. Males will expect to receive more pay at a greater rate than females. Males expect to receive almost double that of females in the middle of their careers, and triple that of females at the end of their careers. Obviously this substantial gap in pay is unrealistic, but it shows the mindset that males and females can have prior to embarking on a career. This mindset could potentially influence pay seeking behaviors.

Gasser Flint, and Tan (2000) asserted that there were a few factors that explain pay expectation differences. First, those with higher pay expectations are more likely to ask for raises and raises more often. The action of approaching the employer and seeking raises may be generally easier for the male because most employers are males. The fact that most business leaders are male may make it more difficult for females to be able to move further up in a company. Obtaining those raises will ensure one a higher position in the business, in turn, making that individual in an even higher position of power.

Previously, I discussed the Five-factor Model that Major and Konar (1984) created. The fourth facet of that model mentions job facet importance. The belief in this factor is that women, on average, value interpersonal relationships more than money (Callahan-Levy and Messé, 1979; Crosby, 1982; Sauser and York, 1978). With this in mind, one can see how women would be less likely to seek raises for a couple reasons. The first possible reason is that women do not seem to find money as appealing as men. Of course money is important, but the desire to obtain it through raises and longer hours may not be as important for females. The second reason could possibly be because women would be less likely to leave the position they were in for another one in the company, even if it were to give them more money. Since women place a higher value on interpersonal relationships than money, according to the research, then women could possibly be less willing to leave the position they are in because of the connections that they have made with their co-workers and bosses. If a female were to leave that position for a higher one, then many of the connections she has made may fade away and she may lose those relationships. Major and Konar (1984) tend to believe that a women would most likely not risk those interpersonal relationships for monetary advancement.

Another expressed pay-seeking behavior tends to occur at the beginning of a career. Since raises are based on percentages of previous salary, initially asking for a higher amount of money at the start of the career could result in a substantial difference in pay that compounds as time goes on. The last facet in the Five-factor Model mentions how social comparisons can affect how much one expects in their career. If women were to compare how much they expected to receive in pay to other women, then the gap will never decrease. However, if females were to compare how much they expect to make to males, then there would be a more level playing field. Since women generally compare themselves to other women, the amount a female worker asks

for will always be lower than what a man would ask for at the beginning of their careers. Major and Konar (1984) discovered that initial pay is important and a potential game changer. Women should insist on the same amount of pay that a man would receive at the beginning of their careers. Although most females compare themselves to other women, females would be able to obtain more in their salary when comparing themselves to men; if this information was publically available.

Contrary to the "paradox of the contented female worker," I found a significant difference between genders in perceived fairness for expected pay. Although there is a significant difference in mean perceived fairness, an examination of frequency counts indicates that the strong majority of both males and females felt that their expected pay was fair. I believe that the reason that a majority of the students believed that their pay was fair was because they were also comparing themselves to the same sex. Gasser, Oliver, and Tan (1998) stated that men and women generally will compare themselves to their same gender when determining fair or desired pay. Imagine a student taking the survey and trying to determine how much he or she would expect to make and whether it would be fair or not. The first person he or she most likely thought of was the person in that same profession who was of the same sex. I am sure there were some that looked at the entire field and decided how much that they expected to receive; however, based on the research, most did not. This type of comparing is most likely the main reason why the gender gap in pay expectations is so large. Currently, this conjecture is purely speculation; however, I see it as a plausible cause for the gender gap. Future research should be conducted to investigate this possibility.

Limitations

Of course, there are some potential limitations in my study. Since I asked college students about future pay expectations, many of the students may not have known how much they would be paid in their future career. Their speculations may very well be inaccurate. The students' age would also cause future decisions, such as in which way to raise their children, to be erroneous. Many students, who are not married, will have a different mindset than those who have stabilized and settled down in a career. I did not ask the students if they planned to be a single parent or have support around them when they are raising their children. Single parents may not have as much time to take off of work than the students initially indicated in the surveys. In addition, the students did not have to indicate what job that they planned to pursue, which makes it difficult to compare if male and females do indeed choose different careers and how that affects their children. Lastly, since we only surveyed University of Northern Iowa students, we could not generalize the information across the country or to more diverse samples.

Further Research

When comparing gender differences in pay expectations, there is a multitude of further research that can be done in order to be more precise and get the root of the issue. One potential area of further research is to recognize the difference in major choice and examine how that affects how much one expects to receive in pay. At the University of Northern Iowa, many students are business and education majors. With that said, there is a stereotype that most males obtain a business degree, while most females obtain education degrees. If this is the case, then the survey could also have reflected how many business majors feel about their expected pay and how many education majors feel. I did not instruct them to indicate their major. Having the

participants divulge their majors will show the trend that the different majors have about expected pay. Even identifying themselves by their college can help reveal the direction in which many of the students are thinking. Another way is to control for a specific major and only give the survey to those individuals. This would be more difficult to find enough participants to conduct the study.

Another area of further research is to find a way to generalize the data among other universities. Having only surveyed students of the University of Northern Iowa, I am unable to distinctly state that the results mirror a majority of the country. A way to gather this information is to travel to several schools within the different regions of the country (South, West, East, and Midwest) and have them conduct the survey. The different regions most likely have variance in the opinions of where females and males should work and how much money they deserve. In addition, the general personality types of both males and females can be different in other areas of the country. Such as, a female in the East could be more prone to asking for raises and raises more often because she is more aggressive than females who live in the Midwest. Aggression not being a positive or negative trait, but just different.

Racial Differences

Race has also been known to play a role in pay inequality. With social comparisons being one of the facets in the Five-factor Model, this type of study could be ruled as vital for researchers. Table 2 describes the differences in races when compared to the same gender as well as White males in the United States (Hill, 2014). The data is based on the statistics found in 2012.

Table 2

Comparisons of gender and race in expected pay.

	Women's earnings as a	Women's earnings as a
	percentage of men's earnings	percentage of white men's
	within race/ethnicity	earnings
Hispanic or Latina	89%	53%
American Indian and Alaska	87%	60%
Native		
African American	89%	64%
Native Hawaiian and Other	89%	66%
Pacific Islander		
White (non-Hispanic)	78%	78%
Asian American	79%	87%

These statistics are staggering. According to the study, Asian American women earn the most out of all women in the United States. With only a 13% difference between Asian American women and White males in pay. The high earnings in Asian American women could be due to the culture that is created for them. Most are encouraged to pursue higher education which would lead to higher paying occupations.

The data also shows that Hispanic or Latina women suffer from the largest gap in pay in the United States. This statistic is at a dreadful 53% of what White males make. This is unfair and unfortunate that Hispanic or Latina women only earn about half of what White males earn. African American, American Indian and Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander women do not earn much more than the Hispanic or Latina women do in comparison to white males. This data can be used to help discover the reasons for this dramatic gap in pay. With that in mind, there are many different environmental factors that can play as mediators for this difference.

Potential Mediators

In my study, mediators were believed to play an essential role in finding reasons for the gender difference in pay expectations. In the survey, questions were posed about child rearing and the amount of time that one would take off of work in order to raise the child if they so decided to have one. The data showed that there was no significance for those specific mediators; however, that does not mean that there are many more that cannot be examined. One such mediator can be the personality of the individual. The personality of the person can contribute to the pay-seeking behaviors that was mentioned previously. Those with higher levels of extraversion could possibly exhibit behaviors that would cause an increase in pay. Since all the statistics are based on averages, it would be beneficial to be able to break down exactly the types of personalities that fair well for people that expect a high amount of pay.

Intelligence is also a potential mediator that could affect how much one expects to receive. Major and Konar (1984) mentioned how career path factors affected one's ability to have high or low expectations. The career one has is also closely related to intelligence because certain degrees are required to obtain certain jobs. I am referring to academic intelligence which is the type of intelligence that would help one succeed in a university setting. Many times, very educated individuals will self-select into majors that will yield them a high return when entering the work force.

Another possible mediator for the gender difference in pay expectation is self-efficacy. Hogue, DuBois, and Fox-Cardamone (2010) suggested that in order to reduce the gender gap in pay expectations, women will have to gain higher self-efficacy for their performance at work, because self-efficacy has been shown to moderate the relationship between gender and pay

expectations. Lower self-efficacy can influence several pay-seeking behaviors including negotiating for a high starting salary (Barron, 2003). Despite legal action encouraging equal pay and societal changes that have increased awareness of pay inequity, the gap in pay between genders is like to continue until females themselves increase their valuation of their own work performance and proactively seek out higher levels of pay.

According to O'Shea and Bush (2002), those that have low expectations have low actual pay and those that have high expectations have high actual pay. A factor of the gender differences in pay expectations, and potentially the most important, is self-fulfilling prophecy. The belief in receiving a high amount of pay will most likely lead to a high amount of actual pay. This is vital because of the simplicity. Although correlation never means causation, research has been done to show that there is definitely a possibility that what one expects to receive in pay is what they are going to get. This claim is viable because one will begin to behave in the ways that will cause the individual to attain whatever expectation they believed. Whether high or low expectations, one will believe that they are deserved of those expectations. Many people may take this finding for granted as they acquire new careers and professions. Self-efficacy also plays a role in the self-fulfilling prophecy. If one has high self-efficacy, then they will give high regards to their performance. Major and Konar's third facet in their Five-factor Model show this to be true. Mentioned previously, women have lower performance evaluations and tend to devaluate their performance. This is an example of a self-fulfilling prophecy because the belief in low performance can lead to a belief in low pay expectations.

Conclusion

In my study, I was able survey and analyze students at the University of Northern Iowa about gender differences in pay expectations. I found that males expect more and will expect to make more than three times as much as women by the end of their career. This mindset may seem extreme, but tends to show the attitude that men have regarding how much they expect to be paid. Regardless of this difference in pay, most of the women that participated in my survey found that their pay was also fair. The minority reported feeling expected pay was very unfair. Although childrearing practices did not seem to have a significance in my study, there could be other mediators that have to deal with raising children that have not been researched. Many factors contribute or have a strong possibility of contributing to the gender difference in pay expectations. Considerably more research must be done to understand this important issue because the current research is outdated and needs to be revisited. There are many things that can be done to alter the current state in order to decrease this gap and provide a more equal opportunity for women.

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Appendix

Thank you for participating in my survey. I am conducting research as a McNair scholar and the purpose of this research is to examine the factors that create gender gap in pay expectations. Unfortunately, you will not receive any compensation or benefits for this research. You may choose to decline any questions that you do not want to answer. Remember, your identity will not be linked to this survey in any way. If you want to know any more about this process, I can give you a phone number to call.

Pay Survey

1. The annual salary (i.e., \$20,000 per year, \$40,000 per year, etc.) I expect after college
graduation when I enter my chosen field is: (Please report a salary that you realistically expect to
have, not one that you hope to have).
Annual salary in dollars at the start of your career
2. The annual salary I expect during the middle of my career is: (Again, please report your
realistic expectation, not your desire).
Annual salary in dollars at the middle of your career
3. The annual salary I expect at the end of my career before I retire or choose to permanently
leave the workforce is: (Again, please report your realistic expectation, not your desire).
Annual salary in dollars at the end of your career
4. I think that the pay that I expect to receive across my career is a fair and appropriate salary for
me. Please use an X to choose an answer that best represents how you feel.
Strongly Agree
Agree
Nautral

Disagree
Strongly Disagree
5. At what age do you think you will start having children? Indicate N/A if you do not plan on having children.
Age in years when you will start having children
6. How many children do you plan on having? Indicate N/A if you do not plan on having children.
Number of children
7. The Family and Medical Leave Act gives both males and females up to 12 weeks of unpaid job protected time off for the birth of a child and to take care of a newborn or for the adoption of a child. How many weeks do you think you will take away from work to care for a new child in your family? Indicate N/A if you do not plan on having children.
Weeks away from work (Respond with a number from $0-12$)
8. Some people choose to voluntarily leave the workforce early to devote to child rearing. Please use an X to indicate the response that best represents what you expect will happen to you in you career. Please choose only one response.
I will not have children.
I will not leave my career early for child rearing.
I will leave my career for several years for child rearing and then return to the workforce when my children are old enough.
I will leave my career early for child rearing and not return.
9. At what age do you think you will permanently leave the workforce either by retiring or by choosing to voluntarily leave early?
Age in years when you will retire or permanently leave the workforce
10. What is your current age:

11. Use an X to indicate your gender:
Female Male
12. Place an X by the answer that best describes your ethnicity
White
Black
Hispanic
Asian/Pacific Islander
I am of mixed race.
Other

This Study by: Elijah Rogeay Seay

Entitled: Gender Differences in Pay Expectations at Three Career Stages

has been approved as meeting the thesis or project requirement for the Designation

University Honors

5/5/2014		
Date	Dr. Michael Gasser, Honors Thesis Advisor	_
<u> </u>	Dr. Jessica Moon, Director, University Honors Program	