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Gender Pay Gap: Bad Behavior Among Behavior Analysts *Study Calls for Salary, Promotion Equity for Behavior Analysis Faculty*

The gender salary gap among behavior analysis faculty is proving to be, well, a bit of an example of bad behavior.

That's the finding of a study published online in the journal *Behavior Analysis in Practice*. Researchers report that differences in wages for women and men who work as assistant, associate and full professors in university-based behavior analysis training programs, accredited by the Association for Behavior Analysis International (ABAIA), are "enormous" and should be a cause for "concern."

A review of 103 faculty salaries -- 54 women and 49 men -- finds that the average salary difference between genders is more than \$20,000 across all academic ranks, with women at \$87,283 and men at \$107,399.

The gap is not nearly as significant when median salaries are compared. Median salaries of men are 3 percent, 3 percent and 17 percent greater than those for women at assistant, associate and full professor levels, according to the study.

Such "quantitative differences" between mean and median salaries indicate that "very high salaries" are likely being paid to relatively few men and "very low salaries" to relatively few women, thereby skewing group averages, study investigators indicate.

One bright note: "Advocates for women will be heartened to learn that, although there are nearly twice the number of men as women at rank of full professor, women outnumber men as assistant and associate professors" in the behavior sciences, writes lead investigator Anita Li, a graduate instructor at Western Michigan University. "These data suggest that recent hires in behavior analysis are about as likely, or more likely, to be women as they are to be men, which was not the case several years ago."

On the other hand, the finding that twice as many women can be found in lower academic ranks within behavior analysis programs, specifically at the associate professor level, compared to twice as many men at the full-professor level might suggest fewer women are being promoted to full professorships, Li reports. But current study data are inadequate to determine whether this seeming inequity in promotions is the result of discriminatory behavior or due to other variables, she says.

These “other variables,” including “years in rank, specialty area within behavior analysis, success in securing extramural funds, years required to secure promotions and other measures of productivity,” also may be affecting salary levels and should be a future consideration in follow-up studies, researchers state.

Meanwhile, study authors say they “want to leave the reader with a call to action beyond vigilance for overt or subtle [gender] discrimination. We believe our data give women faculty in behavior analysis solid evidence of pay inequality, and we hope that they argue forcefully and effectively for equal pay.”

The investigators add that all faculty members – men and women – should be arguing on behalf of equal pay and that the ABAI, the accrediting program agency, “take steps” in support of these efforts.

“Universities place heavy emphasis on maintaining and obtaining accreditation, so including a metric in the accreditation process that requires demonstration of activity to combat inequity in hiring, pay and promotion practices should enhance our [behavior analysis] field,” the researchers conclude.

Their study is scheduled for print publication in a special December 2019 issue of *Behavior Analysis in Practice*.

Behavior Analysis in Practice is a publication of the Association for Behavior Analysis International (ABAI). Established in 1974 and based in Portage, Mich., ABAI now represents a global network of more than 7,000 member professionals, educational specialists, scientists, and students. The organization’s focus is on contributing to societal well-being by supporting the theory, study, and practice of behavior analysis through basic, translational, and applied research.