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Application of Situational Leadership Theory to gender-based pay inequality

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ABSTRACT

Application of Situational Leadership Theory to gender-based pay inequality

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Women have made significant progress eliminating the equality gap with men in many areas. The one area with a persistent gap is pay. The gender wage ratio is about 81.2%. The median weekly earnings for women is about $669, compared with $824 per week for men (Hegewisch, Williams, & Henderson, 2011). The gender wage gap has an impact on women, families, and employers. It is important for leaders to understand some of the reasons for the wage gap and the impacts and be equipped to address them. The Situational Leadership theory is one tool that is available to leaders to help them address this problem. The theory uses an approach to leadership that advocates that leaders understand their own style and behavior, the behavior of their subordinates, and the situation before utilizing a particular leadership style. It is the interaction between the leader and the follower in a given situation.

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Introduction

On January 29, 2009, President Obama signed into law his first bill as President -- The Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act. The act reverses a Supreme Court decision by expanding the time in which a plaintiff can submit a pay discrimination suit. The act was named after Lilly Ledbetter, a Goodyear employee, who after 19 years of working for the company as Supervisor, discovered and complained that she was paid less than her male counterparts (Putnam, 2009).

This paper will assess the current state of gender-based pay inequality in order to understand clearly the scale of the inequality. It will analyze the inequality by occupation, industry, and by race. It will review the causes and impacts of gender-based pay inequity in the United States. This paper will also analyze and use the Situational Leadership theory by looking at the specific behaviors of the followers [women], styles of the leaders and situations associated with gender-based pay inequality. It will end with a proposal, which will include a guide for leaders to help them assess pay inequality in the context of an employee's motivations and willingness to perform tasks in order to meet organizational goals.

Based on this rapidly changing landscape and differing views regarding the impact of pay inequality, it is imperative that a leader understands the many dimensions that a gender wage gap may, or may not, have on women employees and be equipped to apply the appropriate skills so as to be able to get the employee [women] to accomplish organizational goals. There are many leadership theories and models available to provide leaders with the skills and guidance that would assist them in addressing gender-based wage gap.

This paper will use Situational Leadership Theory to answer the following question: How does gender based pay inequality impact the follower's readiness and the leader's leadership style, based on the distinctive aspects of Situational Leadership Theory? What are the implications for the leader and the follower? Is gender based pay inequality even a problem for the follower, i.e. does it have an impact on job satisfaction and motivation?

I became aware of the importance of this topic when I began to hire employees. That part of my job gives me some latitude to determine salaries for new employees. It also grants me access to salary information of employees, who were hired by my predecessors. Above and beyond the moral and ethical issues related with equal pay, as a leader it is important for me to have a good understanding of the possible factors that drive salaries, from the perspective of the employee, the leader and the situation at that point in time. Furthermore, it is important to understand the extent to which pay inequality or perceived pay inequality may have on my leadership style and the best style to use in order to cope with such a dynamic.

Literature Review

The literature review will cover the following areas: The state of the gender-based pay inequality, selected reasons for the pay inequality, the youth gap, and the impact of the pay inequality. I will also cover the Situational Leadership Theory, its associated criticisms and the relationship between gender-based pay inequality and the Situational Leadership Theory. I will be using both historical and recent literature and data in the literature review.

The state of pay inequality

According to the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2012), gender wage gap is defined as "…the difference between male and female earnings expressed as a percentage of male earnings" (Definition and Methodology Section, para. 1). This definition raises several questions. For instance: How is this percentage measured? Is the comparison between men and women doing exactly the same work in the same place or, at the other extreme, between all male and all female workers across the whole economy? (Robinson, 1998).

"In the past decades, women in the United States have made progress in closing the earnings gap with men. In 1970, full-time working women in the nation earned 59% of full-time working men's earnings" (Gittell, 2009, p. 170). With the help of equal pay legislation, organizations like the National Organization for Women (NOW), and other influences, the pay gap has improved in recent years. Gittell (2009) noted that by 2007, working women's earnings had increased to 78% of that of full-time working men.

Hegewisch, Williams and Henderson (2011) from the Institute for Women's Policy Research (IWPR) found that in the United States in 2010, women earned an average 81% of men's earnings. The median weekly earnings for female full-time workers were $669, compared with $824 per week for men, a gender wage ratio of 81.2%. Hegewisch, Williams and Henderson (2011) discovered this wage gap in virtually all occupations. Furthermore, they note that women's median earnings are lower than men's in nearly all occupations, whether they work on occupations predominantly done by women, occupations predominantly done by men, or occupations with a more even mix of men and women. Ren and Zhu (2010) also found that although women are attaining more upper-management and high-level executive positions within US corporations there is still a salary gap. They state, "…among top management, gender differences in salary still exist" (p. 93).

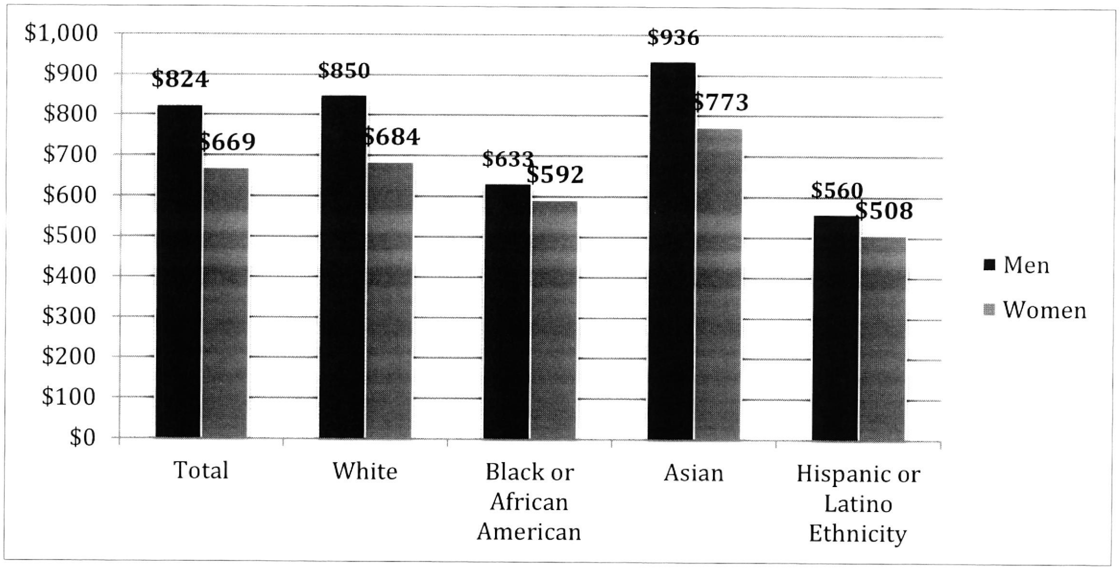
The U.S. Department of Labor has studied and analyzed the gender wage ratio by race, occupation and industry. The data show that there is a consistent gap; however, the gap varies across race, occupation and industry. According to the Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics, in 2010, a white woman's weekly full time wage was 80.5% of a white man's. Black and African American women earned 93.5% of black and African American men's. Hispanic and Latino women earned 90.7% compared to Hispanic men and Asian women earned 82.6% of Asian men's weekly full time wages. Data show that there has been a consistent growth in earnings for women across all race groups with the largest increase occurring between 1980 and 1990 (See Table 1 and Figure 1).

Table 1. *Women's earnings as percent of all men in their demographic group, median usual weekly earnings of full-time wage and salary workers, in current dollars, by race and Hispanic or Latino ethnicity, 1980–2010 annual averages.*

Year	Total Women	White Women	Black or African American Women	Hispanic or Latino ethnicity Women	Asian Women
1980	64.2	63.4	75.8	73.5	-
1990	71.9	71.5	85.3	87.4	-
2000	76.9	75.8	84.1	87.8	79.9
2010	81.2	80.5	93.5	90.7	82.6

Note: From The Editor's Desk U.S. Department of Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2010

Figure 1. Women's earnings as percent of men's, median usual weekly earnings of full-time wage and salary workers, in current dollars, by race and Hispanic or Latino ethnicity, 2010 annual averages



Note: From "Highlights of Women's Earnings in 2010" U.S. Department of Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2010

According to the U.S. Department Bureau of labor statistics, in 2011, one of the occupations with the lowest gender wage gap was a computer and information systems manager. In this occupation, women had median weekly earnings of $1,543 as opposed to men who had median weekly earnings of $1,595, that is, women earned 96.7% of men's earnings in this occupation. One of the occupations with the biggest gender wage gap for women is a personal financial advisor, with average median weekly earnings for full-time work of $1,381 for all workers, and a female/male earnings ratio of 58.4 percent, a gender wage gap of 41.6 percent. This pay gap is consistent with the overall financial services industry statistic of having the highest gender pay gap (U.S. Department of Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2011, p.10).

When analyzing the data, by not only occupation but also race, they show that overall Asian women earn the highest. White women, and then black or African American women follow this. Hispanic or Latino women consistently earn the least. For example, in management and professional related occupations, Asian women earned a weekly median salary of $1,143. White women earned a median weekly salary of $932. Black or African American women earned a median weekly salary of $812. Hispanic or Latino women earned $789 (See Table 2)

Table 2. *Earnings and employment by occupation, race, ethnicity, and sex, 2010 (in U.S. dollars).*

Occupation	Asian		White		Hispanic or Latino ethnicity		Black or African American	
	Men	**Women**	**Men**	**Women**	**Men**	**Women**	**Men**	**Women**
Management, professional, and related occupations	$1,408	$1,143	$1,273	$932	$1,002	$789	$957	$812
Sales and office occupations	$715	$643	$761	$600	$589	$532	$596	$577
Natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations	$733	$406	$730	$537	$538	$362	$707	$616
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations	$596	$479	$661	$473	$510	$385	$576	$469
Service occupations	$555	$473	$559	$423	$437	$387	$498	$420

Note: From The Editor's Desk U.S. Department of Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2010

Contrary to general rule, studies have shown that in some situations women earn more than men in narrowly-defined occupations, such as in the fast food industry where women's median weekly salary is $388 and 112% of men's (U.S. Department of Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2010, p.18). Another area where women earn more than men is in office and administrative support occupation where women earn 109% of men's salary with a weekly median salary of $634. However, overall there is a general gap between the average pay of women and men in broad occupational groupings, with women earning on average less than men (Robinson, 1998, p.3). Robinson notes the possibility that men and women might be paid relatively similar wages in each occupation; however, if the distribution of men and women varies, there will be a difference in the overall average pay of men and women. The best way to get an accurate measure would be to measure whether men and women performing the same work in the same place or establishment are paid the same or not. This would require detailed pay information for every worker in every organization.

Selected reasons for pay inequality

In this section I will review three selected reasons for pay inequality. The three that I will review are: entry barrier, occupational segregation and work-family conflict. In my research I found these three reasons to be the most common reasons cited for pay inequality.

Entry Barriers

There are numerous factors that have caused and keep sustaining the earnings gap. Some of these include, but are not limited to, education level and occupational choices, gender image/role, occupational segregation, and authority level. Another reason for gender pay gap is entry barriers.

There are many industries where entry barriers for women are significant. Information technology is one industry where the entry barrier for women has been a contributing factor for the sustenance of pay inequality. This section will only focus on the IT industry, but there is recognition that the problem of entry barrier is wider spread to many other industries.

According to the U.S. Department of Labor Bureau of Labor Statistic's chart of *Women as a percent of total employed in selected occupations*, women currently account for 56% of all professional positions in the U.S. workforce. In 2011, women accounted for 34% of all IT positions in the U.S. (U.S. Department of Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2011). Despite significant growth in the IT profession in recent years, there still remains a wide gender imbalance. A study released by the Information Technology Association of America (ITAA) in 2003 found that racial minorities and women have made few inroads into high tech employment. It is noted that women and minorities earn significantly fewer undergraduate degrees in computer science and engineering. Women's participation in computer-related occupations is low overall and significantly declines on the high end of the corporate ladder. Wentling and Thomas (2011) found that women in leadership positions within IT are sparse, "comprising of thirteen percent of board members and executive officers at the top 100 Fortune 500 IT companies" (p.26).

Even though data have shown that the lowest gender wage gap exists among computer and information systems managers, the ratio of men to women in the high technology fields shows a gender gap. This may be a result of the male dominated perspective in the development and design of technology. Wentling and Thomas (2011) discovered that "women bring a different life experience and a different perspective to the innovation process and diversity in innovation leads to the design of products and services that benefit a broader range of consumers as well as business organizations" (p.27). The absence of women in IT has many impacts including a loss of opportunities for corporation and individuals, as well as a loss of talent and creativity for the workforce, which impacts the bottom line of an organization.

Glastonbury and Lamendola (1993) note that there appear to be poor advancement opportunities for women in IT due to corporate culture issues and gender socialization. A willingness to accept a diversity of skills is the single factor that can promote women's success and break the entry barriers. It is suggested that the larger percentage of men rather than women being hired and promoted in IT organizations, leads to perceptions that the organizational climate is unfriendly towards women. According to Glastonbury and Lamendola (1993), the IT culture is largely described as "white, male dominated, antisocial, individualistic, competitive, all-encompassing and non-physical" (p.121). Wentling and Thomas (2011) cite a study that was conducted by Wardell, Sawyer, Reagor and Mitory in 2005 in which they discovered that women are nearly three times as likely to leave the IT workforce than men. The lack of representation of women in the IT workforce continues to grow and appears to be compounded by poor retention statistics.

The entry barrier for women in to the IT industry has a direct impact on pay gap. These barriers hinder women's promotion into higher paying IT positions; therefore, impacting the pay gap negatively.

Wentling and Thomas (2011) highlight a study that was conducted by Miles and Huberman in 1994 to examine the workforce culture characteristics that hinder and assist the career development of women in IT. Their research method included an in-depth, semi-structured telephone interviews with a group of twenty-five women in IT positions across the United States. The position titles that the study participants held in the IT field ranged from computer analyst to chief information officer. Wentling and Thomas (2011) cite Miles and Huberman's study that discovered ten workplace culture characteristics. The most frequently mentioned characteristic was "male dominated" or "good old boy culture" (p.31). This was mentioned by 80% of the participants. Other characteristics discovered in the study include: results driven culture, teamwork oriented, high accountability, diversity not valued, very competitive, challenging, face paced, intellectual, logical thinking, and problem solving focus (as cited in Wentling and Thomas, 2011, p.31).

The study participants in Miles and Huberman's study also mentioned aspects of their workplace culture characteristics and environment that hindered their development. In this category the most frequently mentioned category, again was male dominated. This was mentioned by 80% of the participants (as cited in Wentling & Thomas, 2011, p.31). Other characteristics in this category include: very competitive, diversity not valued, very conservative, non-consensus, exclusive meaning not all people treated the same, some made to feel like outsiders, and hostile/threatening (as cited in Wentling & Thomas, 2011, p.31). The participants who cited the male dominated, good old boy aspect of their workplace indicated that the good old boy network made it difficult for them to feel accepted. They also noted that not being part of this network often created inhibitors to career opportunities, which resulted in an impact on their self-confidence (as cited in Wentling & Thomas, 2011, p.31). Several of the participants reported instances of intimidation and the use of derogatory comments by male colleagues in order to obtain work assignments or special projects. These women felt threatened and devalued in these environments and moved quickly to leave such hostile surroundings (as cited in Wentling & Thomas, 2011, p.32). The participants also indicated that female role models and mentors were difficult to find in the IT field because it is mostly male dominated. It is noted that having female role models and having the opportunity to talk and share experiences was important for building self-confidence. The study participants also indicated that the large number of males in the organization made it difficult for females in the organization, especially those with family, to get sympathy for their particular challenges.

The participants who identified a very competitive environment as hindering their development in IT, indicated that there were few high level positions available, and many talented or competent people within the organization who wanted these positions, which sometimes made it difficult for them to get promoted in a timely manner. The study participants, who indicated that diversity was not valued in their workplace environment, stated that their company's culture valued similarities and sameness (as cited in Wentling & Thomas, 2011, p.32). They noted that this hindered their career development because their personalities and values did not match the existing culture. The participants who identified non-consensus decision making in the workplace as hindering their development indicated that organizational decisions that affected them, for example, work schedules, equipment purchases, and research and development policies, were often made without a clear structure or consensus approach (as cited in Wentling & Thomas, 2011). Their input was not often requested. They were frequently excluded in the decision making process.

Alternatively, there were participants who cited the collaborative and team-oriented aspect of their workplace culture and environment indicated that working together on projects and building close relationships with colleagues benefited them the most in their career development. One study participant commented, "The fact that we are very collaborative and team focused means that you don't compete with people that you work with for promotions. As a result, you end up helping each other succeed" (as cited in Wentling & Thomas, 2011, p.33). The study participants who identified the supportive or caring aspect of their workplace culture and environment as helping their success indicated that having support from senior management as well as colleagues helped them do so. The participants who cited the employee or people-oriented aspect as a characteristic that assisted in the participants' development indicated that the part of the culture that provided them with training and development programs, resources, mentoring, and challenging

work opportunities benefited them the most in their career development (as cited in Wentling & Thomas, 2011, p.33). These participants said that their companies had given them the opportunity to obtain a wide variety of work experience that had been very valuable to their career development. A study participant said this about her company's workplace environment and culture: "My company provides strong support to its employees. Whether it's a personal or professional challenge, there are a number of people within the organization to help and support you. For example, when I took my assignment in Europe, I knew that if for some reason things didn't work out for me there, my company would provide me with the help I needed or bring me back. They encouraged me to take risks, but I knew they would be there for me if that risk turned out to be nonsuccessful" (as cited in Wentling & Thomas, 2011, p.33).

There are many distinctive aspects and implications in exploring the entry barriers that hinder and assist the career of women in the Information Technology field. This ultimately has an impact on the population size of women in information and technology by making it smaller, which in turn skews the results of the gender wage gap.

Occupational Segregation

Another major factor that has an impact on gender pay gap is occupational segregation. It is no secret that the number of women enrolled in and graduating from colleges and universities has out paced the number of men in recent years. However, Gittell (2009) notes "the closing of the gender earnings gap has slowed, and women's economic progress has not kept pace with women's gains in educational attainment" (p. 171). A contributing factor to the narrowing of the gap is an increase in the number of women graduating with Bachelor's and advanced degrees. According to 2007 data presented by Gittell (2009) from the U.S. Department of Education, it is very clear that women do have better educational attainment numbers overall compared with men (see Table 3). Nonetheless, there is still as an earnings gap when comparing women and men who work full-time and have equal levels of educational attainment (Gittell, 2009). Thus, it appears the choice of occupation after graduation, among other factors, could be a major factor in pay differences for women compared with men.

Table 3. *Number and percentage change in degrees conferred to U.S residents by degree-granting institutions, percentage distribution of degrees conferred, and percentage of degrees conferred to females, by level of degree: Academic years 1999–2000, 2004–05, and 2009–10*

Level of degree and race/ethnicity	Number			Percent change, 1999–2000 to 2009–10	Percentage distribution			Percent conferred to females		
	1999–2000	2004–05	2009–10		1999–2000	2004–05	2009–10	1999–2000	2004–05	2009–10
Associate's	554,845	682,576	833,337	50.2	100.0	100.0	100.0	60.3	61.6	62.0
Bachelor's	1,198,809	1,393,903	1,602,480	33.7	100.0	100.0	100.0	57.5	57.7	57.4
Master's	406,761	506,567	611,693	50.4	100.0	100.0	100.0	60.0	61.7	62.6
Doctor's[1]	106,494	118,369	140,505	31.9	100.0	100.0	100.0	47.0	52.0	53.3

Note: From "The Condition of Education 2012" by the National Center for Education Statistics U.S. Department of Education, 2010

Even though women clearly have outpaced men in obtaining advanced degrees, how they apply them and which occupation they choose can be influenced by family role/work conflict within the home. "A key factor in explaining persistent earnings inequity is women's continued role as primary care provider in marriage and with children. There are 5.4 million stay-at-home moms and only 98,000 stay-at-home dads in the United States…" (Gittell, 2009, p. 171). When women with families choose an occupation and make use of their degrees, Gittell (2009) notes the "choices are often limited to those that enable them to meet expectations of their role in the family. An example of this is women's predominance among primary and secondary teachers, in which school-year schedules coincide with children's academic schedules" (p. 171).

Research supports the theory that the types of occupations women choose to pursue, also contribute to the disparity in earnings when compared to men as a whole. "Occupational segregation occurs when women are segregated to certain occupations, such as social services, education, and nursing. Underrepresentation of women in many traditionally male occupations remains a major problem in the business and public sectors in the United States" (Alkadry & Tower, 2011, p. 741). Furthermore, female-dominated occupations have a tendency to pay less and afford fewer chances to advance into better paying positions with more authority (Gittell, 2009); for example, there are "constrained opportunities for moving into higher paying positions, such as from primary teacher to administration or from nurse to physician" (p. 172). Therefore, as explained by Alkadry and Tower (2011), "this underrepresentation of women in higher paying occupations subsequently results in a widening wag gap between men and women" (p.741).

The glass ceiling concept in corporate America has further exacerbated the gender earnings differential. Alkadry and Tower (2011) explained that the amount of authority a person holds plays a significant role in the level of pay for a position. In their study of 384 public sector Chief Procurment Officers, they noted:

> The literature review has thus far shown that gender affects authority by hindering women's progress into positions of authority. Authority affects salary in that people in positions of authority earn more money than those in nonauthority positions...[additionally,]...while women are attaining executive positions, they tend to occupy executive positions with less authority-defined by the number of people they supervise and the amount of money they manage (p. 743).

Thus, although women are attaining more upper-management and high-level executive positions within US corporations, "...among top management, gender differences in salary still exist" (Ren & Zhu, 2010, p. 93).

Regarding gender-based executive compensation in the US, the research brief by Ren and Zhu (2010) builds on a 2010 study conducted by Fernando Munoz-Bullon out of the Universidad Carlos III de Madrid. "What Munoz-Bullon found was fascinating. Overall, women in executive roles earned nearly 50% less in total compensation [base pay, variable pay, and stock options] than their male counterparts" (p. 94). These findings also revealed that while women executives earned comparable base pay, the gap in total compensation was attributed to "gender differences in variable pay" (p. 94).

Research and statistics show that the percentage of women in the workforce is climbing at a very rapid rate and shows no signs of stopping. According to the U.S. Department of Labor (2012), women currently account for 47% of the labor. It is projected that between 2008 and 2018, women will account for 51% of the total labor force.

Mathew Bidwell, a Wharton Management Professor, and Roxanne Barbulescu, a Management professor at McGill University and Montreal further support this position in their findings in 2012. They found that at least half the pay gap reflects the fact that women tend to work in different kinds of occupations and industries from men, a phenomenon known as "gender segregation." Understanding the causes of that gender segregation is a key part of any attempt to address the pay differential (as cited in Knowledge@Wharton, 2012).

Bidwell and Barbulescu researched and published a paper in 2012 on the causes of gender segregation and pay differential. In their research, they focused on the job applicant themselves instead of variances in the kinds of jobs that men and women choose, or at the decisions made by employers during the job application process. They researched 1,255 men and women entering the job market after graduating from a large, elite, one-year International MBA program. Bidwell and Barbulescu surveyed the students about their jobs at the beginning of the program and then again at the end to find out what jobs they applied and got offers.

According to Knowledge@Wharton (2012), Bidwell and Barbulescu discovered that women were significantly less likely to apply to Wall Street-type finance jobs, somewhat less likely to apply to consulting jobs, and more likely to apply to jobs in general management, most notably internal finance and marketing. Coincidentally, the types of finance and consulting jobs that women avoided were also the ones that were most highly paid.

Bidwell and Barbulescu dug deeper to explain the results. They found three big reasons. First, they found out that women were significantly less likely than men to apply for jobs where work and life satisfaction ranked low. This explained why fewer women were applying for consulting jobs. Consulting jobs are usually associated with a lot of travel. Even though in consulting, work hours were not greater than in investment banking jobs, one was expected to spend four days a week sleeping in hotels (as cited in Knowledge@Wharton, 2012).

Second, Bidwell and Barbulescu also discovered that women identified the least with stereotypically masculine jobs, and they tended to apply to industries that usually employ a higher proportion of women (as cited in Knowledge@Wharton, 2012).

Third, women had a lower expectation of receiving a job offer in stereotypically masculine jobs. Bidwell and Barbulsecu found that individuals applied to jobs where they believe that they would have a higher probability of success. “It may not make sense for applicants to pour a lot of time and effort into applications for jobs they do not expect to get” (as cited in Knowledge@Wharton, 2012, p. 2). Bidwell and Barbulescu found that at the beginning of the MBA all students had a high expectation of getting the job that they applied to except investment banking. According to Bidwell, since women might already have lower expectations of job offer success in stereotypically masculine jobs, and no industry has more of a macho image than investment banking, "Women just didn't think they would get jobs there, so they didn't apply," he notes (as cited in Knowledge@Wharton, 2012, p. 3).

Work-Family conflict

According to Robbins and McFadden (2003), another major component that has a negative impact on the gender wage gap is work-family conflict. One of the most important issues for American society is to achieve balance between family roles and work roles. The changes in the American family structure are a major source of stress in both the home and at work. The task of caring for a home and children is a full time job, and women typically perform this task.

Dual-earner relationships are predominant in the Unites States. The U.S Labor Department reported the number of married couples where both parents work to be 57% (as cited in Kelleher, 2007). Dual-earner households with children will experience greater time demands on the family roles.

In a comparative study that was conducted in 2001, Saroj Parasuraman and Claire Simmer examined the impact of work and family role characteristics on work-family conflict, and indicators of psychological wellbeing among self-employed and organizationally employed women and men. Their research suggests that the amount of time spent at work differs between men and women as well as the amount of energy dedicated to dual roles of family and work. Men tend to spend more time at work and devote less energy on family roles. On the other hand, women tend to work fewer hours than men but are almost exclusively responsible for all family roles (Parasuraman & Siemmers, 2001).

Time demands on the family roles and parental demands increase as the age of the children decrease (Parasuraman & Siemmers, 2001). The earnings of women have become more important to dual-earners family as the number of women at

work increases; this only adds to the work-family conflict since women still carry most of the burden of home and care for the children, which means that most women essentially have two full time jobs. Work-family conflicts become noticeable when performing work roles interferes with family roles or vice-versa.

There are two dominant work family conflicts: time- based conflict and strain-based conflicts (Parasuraman & Siemmers, 2001). For example, a parent receives a phone call phone from school to inform him or her that their child is sick. Most often, the mother is the recipient of the phone call. At this time, she has to leave work in order to care for the sick child. Another scenario, the mother is required to stay at work past regular hours in order to complete an urgent project. In this case, the family roles have to be shifted to the other parent. It may also occur that the father already has urgent work to be completed; now both parents have to decide which one's job is less likely to be affected by executing the family roles.

It can be easily noted how work- family conflicts can be compounded by the absence of a parent. Most often, the father is the one absent from home; this means women will care for the home and children by themselves. In homes where the father is missing, the woman has to provide all the emotional support, nurturing, and cognitive stimulation for the children; she also has to perform all other task related to the home such as shopping, cooking, cleaning, and transportation for the family. It is evident that single- parent mothers suffer the most strain while coping between work roles and family roles (Robbins & McFadden, 2003).

In addition, work-family conflict has an impact on labor market experience. The more time that mothers spend outside of the labor market in order to raise children, the more their level of experience in the labor market will suffer. Consequently, the wage gap due to reduced experience will increase. This is especially so with mothers where there is an absence of a parent. According to Jane Waldfogel (1997), mothers earn lower wages than women without children. She notes that, "Prior research has established that at least some portion of this unexplained wage difference between mothers and women without children can in fact be accounted for by the fact that mothers have less labor market experience" (p. 2). The second portion of this unexplained wage difference between mothers and women without children can be explained due to two reasons. The first reason, according to Woldfogel (1997), is a lack of commitment and motivation to paid work. Essentially, the first reason refers to the relative importance men and women place on earnings and other occupational characteristics. Waldfogel (1997) references a number of studies by Brenner and Tomkiewicz (1979); Herzog (1982); Lueptow (1980); Major and Konar (1984); Peng, Fetters, and Kolstad (1981) that found that men place more importance on earnings than women do, and, therefore, men end up in higher paying jobs. Some studies including one by Jacobs and Steinberg argue and reject this line of reasoning based on different preferences and values. Jacobs and Steinberg show that men and women's attitudes towards earnings do not explain the gender wage gap.

The second reason is part time employment. According to Waldfogel (1997), past part time employment can lead to lower current wages because it entails the accumulation of less human capital or because employers do not grant raises in

part-time jobs. “Current part-time employment generally is associated with lower pay, although not for all workers” (p. 210).

The youth gender wage gap

Yasemin Besen-Cassino (2008) conducted a study in which she analyzed the gender wage gap among youth. In her study, she analyzed early employment patterns in order to understand gender wage differences of youths, who are a substantial group that is usually excluded from wage gap studies. Besen-Cassino argues that since this is a substantial group, it is possible that gender wage gap differences originate in early employment. Furthermore, Besen-Cassino notes that her analysis provides an opportunity to trace the origins of the gender wage gap.

According to Besen-Casino (2008), there are very limited studies on youth gender wage gaps. Most studies portray “gender utopia” (p. 147), whereby there is not a big difference between what young boys and girls earn. One main source of data cited by Besen-Casino is the National Longitudinal Study of Youth 199, NLSY97. The study was conducted the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics in 1997. The study characterized youths into three categories by age group: 12 to 13, 14 to 15, and 16 to 19.

From an employment participation perspective, the study shows no significant differences in any of the three age groups. Among the 12 to 13-year-olds, 36 percent of girls and 37 percent of boys work; among the 14- to 15-year-olds, 47 percent of girls and 51 percent of boys work; and among the 16- to 19-year-olds, 66 percent of girls and 65 percent of boys are employed. Such marginal differences mean that we can treat the labor participation rates, at least, as being approximately equal.

Besen-Cassino (2008) discovered that, from a wage perspective, the story was slightly different. She observed that, based on median annual earnings of dependent youths, median annual earnings were approximately equal for both genders during their early employment years. Among the 12- to 13-year-olds, boys, on average, make $120 a year, while girls make only slightly more, $125 a year. Besen-Cassino (2008) identifies this as being the first instance of gender equality in earnings in the American labor force. However, a further analysis shows, by the time that the youths in the study are in the second age group, 14- to 15-year-olds, boys' earnings surpass girls' wages substantially, with boys earning an average of $400 a year, and girls earning only $266. This is the beginning of the gender wage gap, and it only widens with older groups. Within the third group, 16- to 19-year-old boys, on average, make $950, while their female counterparts earn only $750.

Besen-Cassino (2008) analyzed the reasons for the youth gender wage gap. She found that some of the explanations for the adulthood wage gap do not fit. For instance, individual differences in productivity or years of education would not be applicable in the case of youth employment. Young girls, as a group, were not less productive because of having and raising children. Also, an explanation based on human capital is not applicable because both groups have about the same amount of education, i.e. less than high school, and the same amount of experience, i.e. none. One of the differences between young boys and girls noted in her study was the number of hours worked. The data show that both girls and boys work almost equal hours with girls working slightly more. Girls work, on average, 7.9 hours per week while boys work 7.2 per week.

One reason to explain the youth wage gap is job type. Boys and girls, while having equal labor force participation rates, may work in different types of jobs. The types of jobs in which youths are employed do seem to differ by gender. Besen-Cassino (2008) notes that among the 14- to 15-year-olds, girls are more likely to be employed in freelance jobs such as babysitting while boys tend to hold traditional employee-type positions such as those in retail stores or fast-food restaurants which offer more regular hours and set rates of pay.

Besen-Cassino (2008) acknowledges that there is no certainty that the wage gap is due to the job type, because there isn't sufficient evidence showing that there is a different pay for different types of jobs for youths. Essentially, the vast majority earn minimum wage. There is not sufficient evidence suggesting that freelance jobs such as babysitting pay less than the minimum wage.

In the study by Besen-Cassino (2008), she concludes that approximately 10% of the youth wage gap can be explained by job type. Over 80% of the youth gender gap is purely based on gender. Besen-Cassino states, "Over 80 percent of the gender pay discrepancy is the cost of being a girl" (p. 6).

The impact of pay inequality

Pay inequality has an impact on employees and the organization. It is imperative that leaders recognize the factors associated with the inequality and is tooled to address them with the best style available to them.

According to Gibson, Ivancevich, Donnelly and Konopaske (2012), gender wage gap has a negative impact on women and job satisfaction and employee motivation. Stacey Adams, research psychologist with the General Electric Company, developed and tested an equity theory of motivation. He states, "…employees compare their efforts and rewards with those of others in similar work situations" (as cited in Gibson, Ivancevich, Donnelly, & Konopaske, 2012, p. 146). Essentially, employees feel motivated when they perceive that they are equally treated. On the other hand, in the article, *Job Satisfaction and gender segregation*, Bender, Donohuey, and Heywoodz (2005) note that in the United Kingdom and the United states the gender earnings gap indicates that women are paid less; however, they are more satisfied with their jobs than men. Rampell (2009) echoes the same findings in his article, *Money, Gender and Job Satisfaction*, when he stated that, "…it typically takes a lot less money to get women to say they are satisfied with their work than it does to get men to say it" (para, 5)

Employees feel motivated when they perceive that they are equally treated. In their article *Pay Equity*, Fan and Neiman-Gondor (2008) evaluate equity theory. An individual evaluates the payment that they receive, i.e. salary, bonus, etc., against inputs such as education, skills, etc., and compares with other employees with similar jobs. If the employee perceives that they are overpaid, there is feeling of guilt for a short term. If the employee perceives that they are underpaid, there is a feeling of resentment, anger and personal distress. Gibson, Ivancevich, Donnelly and Konopaske (2012) note that, employees who perceive underpayment, seek to restore equity, and research has shown that the strategies used have been detrimental to organization as they include, "decreased motivation and productivity and product quality, lowered organizational commitment and pay–job satisfaction, increased counterproductive behaviors (theft, sabotage, and absenteeism), elevated intention to quit, and actual voluntary turnover" (Gibson, Ivancevich, Donnelly, & Konopaske, 2012, p. 146). According to Gibson, Ivancevich, Donnelly and Konopaske (2012), employees feel motivated when they perceive that they are equally treated.

When women are paid less than their male counterparts for comparable work, they have fewer resources to support themselves and their families especially when the women are single parents, who have to shoulder the full responsibility for the care of their children with little or no financial assistance from fathers. In this way, pay equity for women is a children's issue as well as a women's issue.

The gender pay gap has a direct impact on women's retirement income. A persistent gender gap leaves women with less retirement income than men. For example, older women's Social Security benefits are 71 percent of older men's benefits ($11,057 for women versus $15,557 for men in 2009). Incomes from public and private pensions based on women's own work were just 60 percent and 48 percent of men's pension incomes, respectively (The U.S. Congress Joint Economic Committee, 2011).

Research by the Catalyst in 2011 has shown that when women are paid less it becomes difficult for them to succeed and hold higher positions in organizations. The

Catalyst Bottom Line research of 2011 found Fortune 500 companies with more women corporate officers, on average, financially outperformed those with fewer. The same holds true when more women are in the boardroom. On average, companies with more women on their corporate boards outperform those with fewer by 53 percent on Return on Equity, 42 percent on Return on Sales, and 66 percent on Return on Invested Capital. From an organizational perspective, this could be very impactful (Catalyst, 2011).

An overview of Situational Leadership Theory

Situational Leadership Theory can provide a way for a leader to identify and resolve situations related to gender pay inequality. In this section, I will start with an overview of the theory. This will be followed by criticisms of the theory, and a review of how Situational Leadership Theory relates to gender wage inequality.

Leadership has been defined in many different ways. Hughes, Ginnett and Curphy (2012) quote Roach and Behling's leadership definition as, "The process of influencing an organized group towards accomplishing its goals" (Hughes, Ginnett, &Curphy, 2012, p.4). The organized group, for many organizations, would refer to employees, both men and women. In order for a leader to be effective, it is important to attract and retain employees, both men and women, and is able to influence them to accomplish the organization's goals. One of the components included in any recruitment effort is wages paid to perform those tasks required to accomplish organizational goals.

According to Hersey (1984), Situational leadership theory is an approach to leadership that advocates that leaders understand their own style and behavior, the behavior of their subordinates, and the situation before utilizing a particular leadership

style. It is the interaction between the leader and the follower in a given situation. Effective leaders, "know how to tailor their styles to specific situations when attempting to influence the behavior of others" (p.58). Situational leadership provides a model that helps a leader make the best decision during the interplay between his or her style and attitude against a follower's readiness to follow. The three components of Situational Leadership theory are the situation, the follower and the leader.

There are many variations of situational theories and models. Five of the most distinctive ones are: Tannenbaum-Schmidt Continuum of Leader Behavior, Fiedler's Contingency model, the Hourse-Mitchell Path-Goal, Vroom-Yetten Contingency model, and the Hersey-Blanchard Tridimensional Leader Effectiveness model (Hersey, Blanchard, & Johnson, 2001). The Hersey-Blanchard Tridimensional Leader Effectiveness model has received the most attention compared to all the other ones, and this is the model that I will be using in this research.

Paul Hersey and Kenneth Blanchard developed their situational leadership approach in 1969, based on Reddin's 3-D management style theory (Vecchio, 1987). Reddin's 3-Dimensional Management Style Theory postulates the importance of a manager's relationship orientation and task orientation in conjunction with effectiveness. From the interplay of these dimensions, Reddin proposed a typology of management styles (e.g., the autocrat, the missionary, the deserter). The theory was originally called a life cycle theory of leadership, but was renamed to Situational Leadership Theory in 1977 (Graff, 1983).

According the Hersey, Blanchard and Johnson (2001), the primary responsibility of the situational leader is to adapt their own leadership style to meet the team member's needs for varied amounts task direction and personal encouragement based on the individual's readiness to complete a particular assignment. This includes accurately diagnosing both the skill and willingness level of an individual or group, and prescribing chores that appropriately balance the follower's competency and commitment to complete the assignment.

Situational factors have an impact on the leader and the follower. According to Hughes, Ginnett and Curphy (2012), situations do not always control the leader and the follower. Leaders are also able to change situations. This is called situational engineering. Hughes, Ginnett and Curphy (2012) state that situational engineering occurs, "when leaders are able to proactively change the situation in order to enhance the likelihood of success" (p. 476). According to Hersey (1984), "Real-life situations are never static. They're in a constant state of change. Things are either getting better or getting worse. If you are looking for a single formula to apply in every situation, lets agree that there's no magic solution for leaders" (Hersey, 1984, p. 15).

There are three main levels for analyzing the situation. Each level presents varying degrees of control. The three levels are: At the task level, the organization level and the environment level. The situations at the task level are at the micro level and a leader can more easily control. A leader is less in control with situations at the organizational level while situations at the environment level are at the most macro level with the least amount of control. Environmental level situations include things such as wars or the weather. Hersey (1984) adds another factor in analyzing the situation: time available for making and implementing decisions. He states, "The shorter the decision time, the more the leader is forced into using a more direct style" (p. 45).

The follower is the integral component for any leader to accomplish organizational goals. Gibson, Ivancevich, Donnelly and Konopaske (2012) note that a leader must be able to diagnose the maturity and readiness level of the follower and apply the right appropriate leadership style. Readiness is the ability and willingness of the follower to take responsibility for directing their own behavior, depending on the task that they are being asked to perform. Followers bring their own attitudes and behaviors to any situation, which also have an impact on their readiness. According to Hersey, Blanchard and Johnson (2001), a leader needs to assess the readiness of not only the follower as an individual, but also the followers as a group. A good example of this is a class being at a particular level of readiness but a student within the class may be at a different level of readiness

Hersey (1984) has categorized follower readiness into 4 main readiness groups: R1 is when the follower is unable to perform a task or responsibility and unwilling to perform the tasks and responsibilities. R2 is when the follower is unable to perform the tasks and responsibilities, but willing. R3 is when the follower is able to perform the tasks and responsibilities, but unwilling, and R4 is when the follower is able to perform the tasks and responsibilities and is willing to perform the tasks and responsibilities. The ideal follower is the one who is at readiness level R4, because they are willing and able. This type of person has self-motivation and a desire to do high-quality work.

Situational leadership identifies leadership behavior categories: Task behavior and relationship behavior. According to Hughes, Ginnett and Curphy (2001) task behavior is when a leader tells followers what to do, how to do it, when to do it, and who to do it to. In other words, it is how the leader organizes and defines the roles of the members of a group and explains what the activities to do are as well as when and how to do them. According to Hughes, Ginnett and Curphy (2001), a good example of task behavior is when you as someone for directions and person is very precise when they tell you which exact streets to take.

Relationship behavior is when the leader engages in two-way communication. This includes listening, encouraging, facilitating, clarifying, explaining why various tasks are important and giving support. Essentially, in relationship behavior the leader provides "socio-emotional support and psychological strokes" (Hughes, Ginnett, & Curphy. 2001, p. 118). A good example of relationship behavior is when a follower understands how to do a task but needs some encouragement.

Leaders typically use both task behavior and relationship behavior in their leadership style resulting in 4 basic leadership styles, which have different levels of effectiveness/ineffectiveness in different situations (Hersey, 1984).

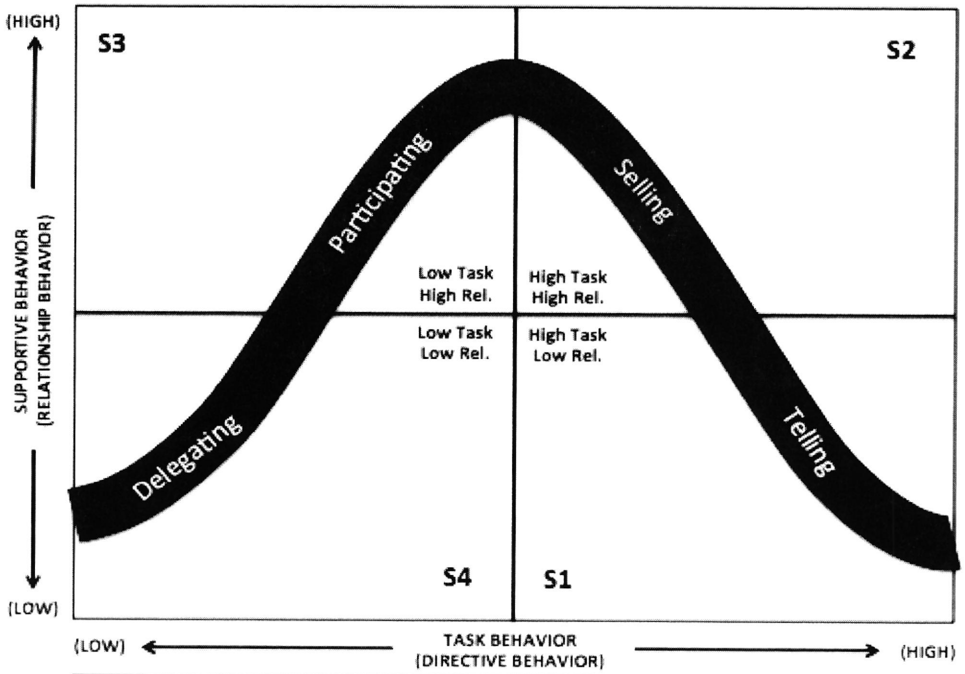
The S1 style is when a leader uses high task behavior and low relationship behavior. S2 is characterized by high task behavior and high relationship behavior. The S3 style is when a leader uses high relationship behavior and low task behavior. Finally, S4 is characterized by low relationship behavior and low task behavior.

The S1 style is effective when a fire chief is directing individuals to vacate a burning building. The style used is high task behavior and low relationship behavior, because there is not time for two way communication, and explanations. On the other hand, S1 is not effective when directing individuals to perform mundane tasks, such as how to box furniture if the individual has already moved homes several times in the past.

According to Hersey (1984), "Situational Leadership is based on an interplay among the amount of task behavior a leader uses, the amount of relationship behavior a leader uses, and the readiness level a follower demonstrates in performing specific tasks in order to meet organizational goals" (p. 58). Situational Leadership provides a blueprint for a leader to select a high probability leadership style

Hersey and Blanchard developed four leadership styles: Telling, selling, participating and delegating (Gibson, Ivancevich, Donnelly, & Konopaske, 2012). According to Hersey and Blanchard, leaders who observe followers who are demonstrating R1 readiness are most effective when they use the S1 style by telling, i.e. instructing and supervising. Leaders who diagnose followers who are demonstrating R2 readiness are most effective when they use the S2 style by selling, i.e. explaining and clarifying. When leaders observe followers who are demonstrating R3 readiness would be most effective when they use the S3 participating style, i.e. sharing and facilitating. Finally, leaders who observe followers who are demonstrating R4 readiness, are most likely to be effective when they use the S4 delegating style, i.e. coaching and assisting (See Figure 2).

Figure 2. Situational Leadership Model



R4	R3	R2	R1
Able and Willing	Able but unwilling	Unable but willing	Unable and unwilling

Note: From "The Situtational Leader," by P. Hersey, 1984, p. 63.

Although Situational Leadership is represented graphically by a four-square matrix with distinct phases, there is endless movement, in both directions, along the continuum from being unskilled and unwilling to being very skilled and very willing, with various combinations along the way (Schermerhorn, 1997). A situational leader needs to balance continually the amount of direction given with building relationships, because people's skills and motivations change over time. According to Schermerhorn, (1997) the leader must attempt to balance high technology and high touch in these dynamic times. "Leaders must have passion, be honest, communicate clearly and have good judgment; Situational Leadership also requires the flexibility to quickly adapt to changing scenarios, characters and circumstances" (p. 2).

Critique of Situational Leadership Theory

The primary strengths of situational leadership are that it is directive and flexible in nature, in that the model tells the leader what to do given different situations. Situational leadership theory can be applied at many different levels within the organization from the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of a large organization to executing a project within a business function within a large organization (Northhouse, 2006). Situational Leadership has endured a moderate test of time. It has been applied in both large and small populations, in business, military, educational and family settings for over four decades. It is both generally well accepted in a variety of venues and is also frequently utilized as a leadership-training tool in corporations, industry and in educational institutions with positive results (Northouse, 2006).

Situational Leadership has been applied in various workplaces, on a variety of followers, by an assortment of leaders, with varying success. Through its applications, it has gathered staunch followers as well as critics. One of the biggest complaints of Situational Leadership is that there are few studies to test it (Yukl, 1981). Furthermore, it has been characterized as having ambiguous constructs, and that it oversimplifies the way to analyze behavior.

In his examination of the Situational Leadership theory in 1987, Robert Vecchio references a study that conducted a test of the theory in 1982 by Humbleton and Gumpert. In this study Humbleton and Gumpert asked managers to select four subordinates to complete a survey. In this survey, managers were asked to rate and code the maturity of their subordinates as well as their own self-assessment of leadership style, i.e. high versus low task and relationship orientation. From this coding, matches and mismatches to Situational Leadership theory were identified. Humbleton and Gumpert identified only a 29% match to the expected results from the Situational Leadership Theory.

Humbleton and Gumpert acknowledge that their test suffered severe attrition, i.e. only 65 out of 159 responded, which reduced their population. They also noted that since the managers provided a self-assessment of their own style, those types of assessments should not be considered as being highly accurate. Finally, they acknowledge that some of the respondents were aware of the Situational Leadership Theory principles and may have caused some respondents to complete the survey in conformity to the theory (Vecchio, 1987).

Another criticism of the Situational Leadership Theory is how the model matched leadership style to the followers' development level. In his examination of the Situational Leadership theory in 1987, Vecchio conducted a study of more than 300 high school teachers. He found that newly hired teachers were more satisfied and performed better under a principal with a highly structured leadership style. However, this did not apply to highly experienced teachers. Their performance was unrelated to the style of the principal (Vecchio, 1987).

Another criticism of situational leadership theory is that is fails to account for variables such as education and experience. For example, a study conducted by Vecchio and Boatright in 1982 showed that the level of education and job experience was inversely related to supportive leadership behavior, i.e. employees with high levels of education and experience desired less structure (as cited in Northhouse, 2006).

A final criticism situational leadership theory relates to leadership behavior vis-à-vis the group or the individual. Essentially, the question that situational leadership theory does not answer is whether a leader should match is style to the group, for example 20 employees, or to each employee individually. If the leader matches his or her style to the development level of the group, how would that affect the individuals in the group who are not at the same level of development as the whole group. According to Vecchio, there is not yet any existing research that answers this question (as cited in Northhouse, 2006).

Situational Leadership Theory and gender wage inequality

The common link between Situational Leadership Theory and gender wage gap is based on the role that motivation plays between the two. Earlier in the paper, in the section *The Impact of Pay Inequality*, I noted several impacts of the gender pay gap on women. I noted that gender-based pay gap has a negative impact on women and job satisfaction and employee motivation. Gibson, Ivancevich, Donnelly and Konopaske (2012) reference equity theorist, Stacey Adams, who states, "…employees compare their efforts and rewards with those of others in similar work situations" (p. 146). Employees feel motivated when they perceive that they are equally treated.

Motivation is one of the components that determine a follower's readiness level. Motivation has been defined as, "…anything that provides direction, intensity, and persistence in behavior" (Hughes, Ginnett, & Curphy, 2012, p. 333). Closely related with motivation are performance and job satisfaction. It is important to note that even though motivation is closely related to performance and job satisfaction, one does not cause the other. For instance, motivation does not ensure good performance. If a follower lacks the necessary skill to perform a task, trying to

motivate them would be unproductive. Hughes, Ginnett and Curphy (2012) state, "...no high school basketball team is likely to defeat the Lakers , however motivated the players may be" (p. 336).

There are many theories and approaches to motivate followers. I will review one of them, Maslow's Hierachy of Needs, in the context of gender based wage inequity and situational leadership theory.

According to Hughes, Ginnet and Curphy (2012), Abraham Maslow developed a theory based on the appeal to follower needs. Basically, one way to get a follower to engage and persist with behaviors needed to accomplish various tasks is to appeal to their needs. Needs are internal states of an individual such as hunger, the need for safety and security, the need for belonging and social ties, or the need to perform challenging tasks (as cited in Hughes, Ginnett, & Curphy, 2012).

Accoording to Maslow, people are motivated by five basic types of needs. Maslow also refers to these as five sets of goals: The physiological, safety, love, self-esteem, and self actualization (Maslow, 1943). Hughes, Ginnett and Curphy (2012) depict Maslow's hierarchy of needs by a triangle (see Figure 3).

Figure 3. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Note: From "Leadership: Enhancing the lessons of experience," by R. Hughes, R. Ginnett and G. Curphy, 2012, p. 341.

According to Maslow (1943), the level that happens to affect a follower's behavior at any point in time depends on whether the lower needs in the hierarchy have been satisfied. In other words, the basic goals are related to each other, and arranged in a hierarchy of prepotency. Maslow asserts that when a need is fairly satisfied, the next higher need emerges. The need will then, "…dominate the conscious life and to serve as the center of organization of behavior, since gratified needs are not active motivators" (p.395). Hughes, Ginnett and Curphy (2012) re-state Maslow's point by saying that lower level needs such as food; water and shelter need to be satisfied before the next higher level needs become motivating behaviors. Therefore, higher level motivating behaviors such as self-esteem and self-actualization cannot become dominant until lower level needs are satisfied. From a practical perspective, leaders can motivate follower's behaviors only by taking account of a follower's position on the hierarchy of needs (Hughes, Ginnett, & Curphy, 2012).

Hersey, Blanchard and Johnson (2001) summarized the concept of motivation within the following way: First, people seek security. There are certain insecurity needs fundamental to people's existence. If these needs are not addressed, people will not put their main focus on job performance. We cannot neglect the security aspect of effective organizations. Second, people seek social systems. Whether we call this need relatedness, affiliation, interpersonal relations, or belongingness, we cannot neglect the sociability aspect of effective organizations. Third, people seek personal growth. Whether we call this self-actualization, advancement, growth, or need for achievement. Hersey, Blanchard and Johnson (2001) refer to this as "what is in it for me" (p. 73). This is a powerful need. Hersey, Blanchard and Johnson (2001) propose that for leadership theories to be effective, they should include these three points.

Money and pay is important from the physiological level, as that is the means of providing food, shelter and clothing; however, it plays a role at every level of the hierarchy (Hersey, Blanchard, & Johnson, 2001). Pay inequity or the perception of pay inequity also plays a role at every level of the hierarchy; however, it plays a more significant role at the higher self-esteem and self-actualization levels.

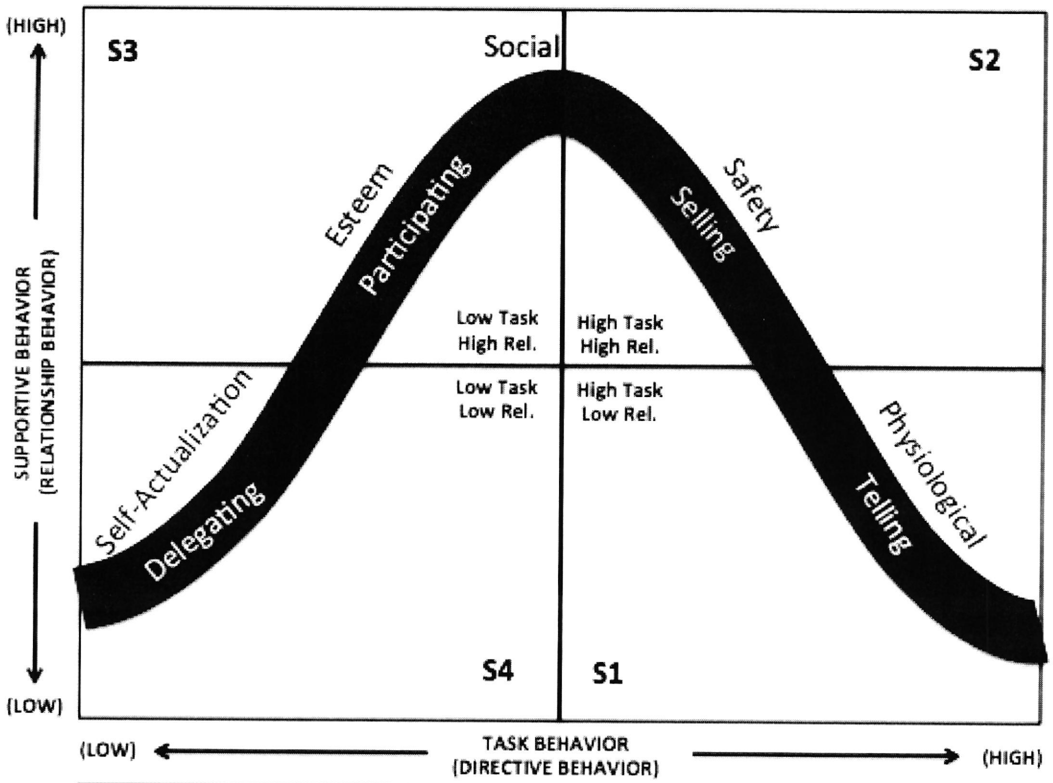
Hersey, Blanchard and Johnson (2001) have integrated Maslow's hierarchy of needs into their Situational Leadership Theory by relating motivation to follower readiness and the appropriate leadership styles that have a high probability of satisfying the needs.

According to Hersey, Blanchard and Johnson (2001), Maslow's physiological needs are closely related to followers who are at readiness level R1, i.e. follower is unable to perform a task or responsibility and also unwilling to perform the tasks and responsibilities. Essentially, followers at this readiness level are mostly motivated by physiological and safety needs. Hersey, Blanchard and Johnson (2001) recommend a leader to use the S1 leadership style by telling, i.e. instructing and supervising followers. Followers who are at R2 readiness, i.e. follower is unable to perform the tasks and responsibilities but willing, are mostly motivated by social factors such as belongingness. This readiness level is best managed using the S2 style by selling, i.e. explaining and clarifying to followers.

The R3 and R4 readiness levels are the readiness levels that are closely related to the motivational needs associated with pay inequality and perception of pay inequality. In the R3 readiness level, the follower is able to perform the tasks and responsibilities, but unwilling. This level is closely related to Maslow's self-esteem needs. These include achievement recognition, and respect. When leaders observe followers who are demonstrating R3 readiness would be most effective when they use the S3 participating style, i.e. sharing and facilitating.

R4 readiness level is when the follower is able to perform the tasks and responsibilities and is willing to perform the tasks and responsibilities. This level of readiness is closely related to Maslow's highest hierarchy of need, self-actualization. This need is characterized by creativity and fulfillment and the pursuit of inner talent. Leaders who observe followers who are demonstrating R4 readiness, are most likely to be effective when they use the S4 delegating style, i.e. coaching and assisting followers. The integration of Maslow's hierarchy of needs into situational leadership is depicted in Figure 4.

Figure 4. Relationship between Situational Leadership and Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory



R4	R3	R2	R1
Able and Willing	Able but unwilling	Unable but willing	Unable and unwilling
Self Actualization	Esteem	Social	Physiological

Note: From "Management of Organizational Behavior: Leading Human Resources," by P. Hersey, K. H. Blanchard, and D. E. Johnson, 2001, p. 452.

Analysis and Application

Gender-based pay inequality

My research has shown that the three main reasons for gender-based pay inequality include entry barrier, occupational segregation, and work-family conflict.

Most of my career has been in the Computer and Information Systems industry, i.e. IT. I started as a low level technical engineer to senior management. As I have progressed through my career, my responsibilities have evolved, from being just a follower with no management responsibilities to becoming a manager, with direct reports.

I have noticed that work-family conflict plays a significant role as a reason for gender-based pay inequality. I have observed instances whereby women have had to adjust their work status from full time to part time in order to raise their children, especially when the children have health-related issues. I have also observed instances whereby women have taken leaves of absence in order to take care of children and adjusted their work schedules in order to care for older parents, who have special needs. These types of conditions have an impact on women's pay, not only in the short term, but also in the long term. Most specifically, during annual merit awards and raises, it becomes challenging to justify a significant raise for someone who has worked part time, compared to someone who has worked full time, and had the advantage of being more visible and worked on more projects. The person who has worked full time has the advantage of obtaining more widespread positive feedback from colleagues. This has an impact on the annual review.

Another important aspect that I have not come across in my research for this paper, are foreign-born employees who are working in the United States on special work permits, such as the H1B work Visa and how they might impact the gender wage gap. The IT industry has many employees in this category, many of whom are women. I have observed many employees, who are in this category, work for lower pay rates compared to other employees. I have learned from these women that part of the reason for this pay discrepancy is their willingness to accept lower pay rates, because compared to the pay rates in some of the countries from which they come, the lower pay rates in the United States are usually higher than what they would ever have hoped to earn working in a similar role in their countries of origin.

I have also observed many of the foreign-born women in the IT industry, whom I have recruited in the past, consistently do not negotiate their salary. My observations have led me to conclude that this is the impact of culture and how it plays a role in defining a woman's behavior, especially when it relates to men and people in positions of authority. Many countries of origin for the foreign-born employees, such as India, can be characterized as having large power distances. In these countries, the leadership style is usually autocratic, with paternalistic management styles. In addition, there is an acceptance that power has its privileges, and there is an acceptance of inequality and power differences, especially where women are involved. For this reason, women are less likely to negotiate for higher pay rates when a low offer is presented to them.

To make matters worse, I have encountered situations whereby it becomes nearly impossible to promote or significantly change the job roles of women employees on work permits to a higher paying role, because that would require a change to their work permit. The change to the work permit would take a significant amount of time and money and could potentially cause down time or outright rejection by the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). I encountered similar situations when I attempted to adjust the visa status for employees who were on a work permit to become permanent residents, i.e. Green Cards. No change in their roles could occur during the 4-6 year adjustment process, because if it did, the employee would need to start the adjustment process from the beginning. I believe that these types of systemic problems are another cause for the pay inequity, especially if compounded by work-family conflicts challenges as well.

Situational Leadership Model

In this section, I will analyze the situational leadership model by itself without tying it to gender-based pay inequality. In the next section, I will tie the situational leadership model to gender-based pay inequality.

The situational leadership model is applied in organizations every day in some shape or form. Many times, those who apply it may not recognize that they are applying the situational leadership model in the many decisions that they are making.

There are numerous situations where I have applied the Situational Leadership Model. A good example where I have applied the situational leadership model is how I manage telecommuting for my team. Telecommuting is becoming more and more embraced in many organizations, especially these days as the cost of fuel keeps rising and as we become more aware of the impact of the carbon footprint caused by automobiles. I am a big supporter of telecommuting and support it for my subordinates. However, before allowing an employee to telecommute, I also analyze the readiness of the employee and calibrate the level of support for telecommuting for him or her accordingly.

Employees who are at readiness level R4 for most of the tasks that they perform, typically have my full support to telecommute as much as they would like. Employees who are at readiness level R3, and R2, I would typically allow up to two days a week of telecommuting. Employees who are at readiness level R1, I would typically not allow telecommuting or keep it to the bare minimum, because these employees need closer supervision and a lot more directing and telling.

One of the criticisms of the situational leadership model with which I agree is that highly experienced employees' performance was unrelated to the style of the leader unlike newly hired employees who were more satisfied and performed better under a leader with a highly structured leadership style. I have observed employees who are at readiness level R4, i.e. able and willing, for most of their tasks and who are senior and experienced, but prefer to work under highly structured leadership styles supported by frequent feedback of their performance. Such employees have mentioned that they feel abandoned without that kind of structured leadership style. I believe that this is driven also by their personality. I have also noticed that employees who are also at readiness level R4 who have performed well under both styles, depending on the situation and task. In some situations, I would delegate and that would be sufficient; however, in some situations, especially situations that have urgency to them, I would use a more directive, high task leadership style of telling, and they would also perform well.

From the perspective of a subordinate, I have observed that my superiors use a hybrid model, whereby they delegate tasks, but provide intermittent feedback. Depending on the progress of the task, they would fluctuate their styles between complete delegation of tasks, with very little involvement, to telling, which is characterized by high involvement and feedback. At the onset of a task, if I demonstrate that I could deliver on the task according to what is required, they would leave me alone.

From my experience, I believe it is nearly impossible to categorize an employee's readiness and leader's style over a prolonged period of time. This model seems to suggest that an employee's readiness level can be categorized and remains constant for a period of time until they mature to the next readiness level. I believe that an employee's readiness can shift many times and their readiness level depends on the task that they are performing. I believe that an employee could be working on several tasks concurrently and for some of the tasks they could be at readiness level R4 and for some they could be at readiness level R1. Furthermore, this model does not look at how an employee's readiness level within a task may shift between R1 and R4. At the beginning of the task, they may be at R1; however, throughout the execution of the task their readiness level may shift to R2, R3, and eventually R4. From what I have seen, it all depends on the personality of the employee, the leader's style, the situation, and the task itself.

Situational Leadership Model and gender pay inequality

Hersey's analysis of the relationship between Situational Leadership Theory and Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory is a way to identify the likely levels where pay inequality might have an impact on employee motivation and has provided a methodology to read the indicators of when awareness of pay inequality might have an impact on employee motivation. Essentially, what this relationship indicates is that an employee who is at the lowest motivational level of Maslow's Hierarchy of needs is also most likely to be at readiness level R1, i.e. unable and unwilling to perform tasks. This pre-supposes that an employee's readiness level can be categorized and remain constant for a period of time. The assumption is that employees are most likely going to be unable and unwilling to perform tasks that are assigned to them, until they move up to the next level on Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs.

I believe that, fundamentally, there is a weakness in how Hersey integrated Maslow's Hierarchy of needs with the Situational Leadership Theory. The relationship assumes that employees who are the higher levels of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs such as esteem and self-actualization are most likely only associated with readiness levels R3 and R4, i.e. able and unwilling and able and willing respectively. This relationship does not assume the possibility of an employee being at the higher levels of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, but at readiness levels R1 or R2. I believe that employees, including women employees, could be at the higher levels of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, but factors could cause them to be at varying readiness levels to perform various tasks. For example, if a woman at the higher levels of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs becomes aware of pay inequality, they might regress from a high level of readiness to perform their regular office tasks, but they might remain at a high level of readiness to perform work-related volunteer work in the neighborhood. I think that it all depends on the tasks assigned to them.

Conclusions

It is important to stress that the gender wage gap persists. There has been some improvement, but the overall gap persists at approximately 81.2% in 2011. Research has shown that the gender wage starts to become apparent from youth. At the age of 14 years to 15 years we start to see the gap where girls are earning less than boys. This gender wage gap continues into adulthood with the size of the earning gap varying between various occupations.

The three big reasons for the gender wage gap can be classified into entry barriers, occupational segregation and work-family conflict. Within these buckets are additional reasons such as skills, experience, and education. However, some of the gap cannot be explained by these reasons. Research has attributed this residual gap to gender discrimination.

Gender discrimination at work constrains economic growth, increases poverty and has a negative effect on the wealth and wellbeing of families and communities. The impact is most severe of single mothers, where the gap has direct impact on the children and health as they have fewer resources than their male counterparts. The gender pay gap also has an impact on women's retirement income directly. A persistent gender gap leaves women with less retirement income than men.

Finally, the gender pay gay has a negative impact on women and job satisfaction and employee motivation. Employees feel motivated when they perceive that they are equally treated. Employees who perceive inequality and underpayment, seek to restore equity and research has shown that the strategies used have been detrimental to organization as they include decreased motivation and productivity and product quality, lowered organizational commitment and pay–job satisfaction, and increased counterproductive behaviors.

It is imperative that a leader understands the many dimensions that gender wage gap may and may not have on women employees and the organization and be equipped to apply the appropriate skills so as to be able to get employees [women] to accomplish organizational goals. Situational Leadership Theory provides a model that can provide leaders with guidance to help them identify the situations related gender pay gap, understand the impact that the gap has on the followers [women], and the organization and finally provide direction by using the most effective leadership style in such situations.

The situational leadership model has many followers; however, it also has a fair number of criticisms as well. For instance, the model has very few tests instances. Also, the model focuses on the follower as an individual and does not address a whole group, i.e. how does a leader match his or her style to the group instead of to an individual. Another criticism of the model is that it fails to account for variables such as education and experience. A study showed that the level of education and job experience was inversely related to supportive leadership behavior, i.e. employees with high levels of education and experience desired less structure.

Although situational leadership theory has its critics, it has been applied in both large and small populations, in business, military, educational and family settings for over four decades. It is generally well accepted in a variety of venues and is also frequently utilized as a leadership-training tool in corporations, industry and in educational institutions with positive results.

Pay inequity impacts women's job satisfaction and motivation. Pay inequity and the gender wage gap relate to situational leadership theory from a motivational perspective. Maslow's hierarchy of needs is a theory and approach to motivate followers. The theory is based on a hierarchy of needs from the basic physiological needs of shelter and security to the highest level needs of self-esteem and self-actualizaiton. The essence of the theory states that an individual's higher level needs and motivations are based on fulfilling lower level needs before they can reach higher level needs and motivations. Even though pay inequity has motivational impacts to an employee at all levels of Maslow's hierarchy of needs, it is most closely related to the higher level of self-esteem and self-actualization.

Situational leadership theory has integrated Maslow's hiearchy of needs into the situational leadership model. By aligning the hierarchy needs with follower readiness and leadership styles. Situational leadership theory aligns self-esteem and self-actualization needs to a follower's R3 and R4 readiness levels, respectively. In both of these readiness levels the follower is able to perform their tasks. The only difference is that in R3 they are unwilling. The prescriptive leadership style for R3 is S3, participative, while the prescriptive leadership style for R4 is S4, delegating.

Leaders who are leading employees who are experiencing or perceive to be experiencing pay inequality, would be less likely to succeed if they used styles associated with employees who are at readiness levels R1, i.e. follower is unable to perform a task or responsibility and also unwilling to perform the tasks and responsibilities or R2, i.e. follower is unable to perform the tasks and responsibilities but willing. This because employees [women] who are at readiness level R1 are likely to be less motivated by pay inequality and more motivated by physiological needs such as food, water and shelter. The same would apply with employees who are at readiness level R2 as they are would be more likely motivated by safety needs such as personal security, health and well being, and stability. The same would also apply to employees who are at readiness level R3, because they would also less likely be motivated by pay inequality and more motivated by the need for belongingness, i.e. friendship, love, family and intimacy.

I think that Situational Leadership is a good model to the extent that helps to organize some components of decision making for a leader. At a high level, Situational Leadership theory provides a high-level prescription of styles for a leader, based on the situation and employees abilities and willingess. Based on the research that I have performed for this paper, I agree with one if its criticisms that it has not been sufficiently tested. I was not able to identify many tests for it. Most specifically, I did not find any test related to situational leadership and gender based pay inequality. The most important flaw that I discovered about this model is its assumption that an employee remains in one state of readiness level and cannot be in multiple states of readiness, depeding on tasks assigned to them. I believe is not accurate. Based on my experience, an employee could have several concurrent tasks and they coud be at different readiness levels for each of them.

I believe that the motivational aspect of gender pay inquality and its relationship to the Situational Leadership Theory is important for any leader to understand as they recruit and pay women in organizations. Depending on the readiness level of the employee [women], one wrong decision can have a negative impact employee motivation, performance, organizational goals, families and dependent children, health care, pensions, and the society at large.

I believe that equal pay is an ethical issue that is based on fairness. If a leader is not fair, it is discriminatory, which is just plain wrong. I am also keenly aware that situations are never simple, and there are times when a leader is constrained by resources and is unable to provide equal pay. In researching this paper, I have learned that it is important for a leader to correctly diagnose his or her followers and be able to properly determine their needs. By understanding a follower's needs, a leader might have more flexibility in determining what the impact of unequal pay may have on an employee, and substiute the unequal part of the wage with other factors that might be more important at that employees's motivational level or needs.

I believe that policies need to be put into place that force or encourage organizations to perform yearly audits and evaluations to identify, highlight, and if possible correct situations related not only gender based pay inequality, but also other types of pay-related inequality such as race and ethnicity. I think that a matrix should be developed that assesses and scores multiple variables in highlighting pay gaps or suspect cases. The variables could include things such as tenure, performance reviews, experience, education, skills, etc. Ideally, state, local, and federal departments would govern the policies and the reporting matrix.

Recommendations for the future

In my career, I have discovered that in the United States it is not easy for an employee to know the salary of another employee. Most companies even have policies that bar the sharing of this type of information among colleagues. That means that it is very difficult for women to know that they are being paid less than their male counterparts. Even if they did know, they would have to factor other difficult to obtain variable such as experience, education, tenure, etc., in order to confirm that they are truly paid less than their male counterparts. The most difficult part, even when they are able to prove that they are indeed being paid less than their male counterparts for performing similar work, is being able to determine if it is a pattern within the whole organization or if they just might be an anomaly.

Finally, I believe that some women are fearful to come forward with information related to pay inequality, especially if they discover that it is a pattern within the organization. That being said, it makes it also makes it difficult for a leader know that an employee is aware of pay inequality.

Regardless of any awareness by an employee or leader, I think that it is up to the managers and leaders in the organization to evaluate, identify and correct the cases of inequality proactively. The simplest and quickest method to fix this problem would be to review women's salaries compared to their male counterparts, align for a job role's relevant factors such education, experience, tenure, etc. and adjust salaries accordingly. Alternatively, one of the approaches that could be used in evaluating, identifying and correcting cases of inequality is using a combination of the Situational Leadership model and Maslow's Hierarchy of needs as a diagnostic tool.

The first step would be to diagnose an employee's motivational level and readiness level. If an employee is at the first or second level of Maslow's Hierarchy of needs, that means that they are likely more concerned about physiological and safety needs, and less concerned about pay inequality. Such employees are motivated by issues related to earning enough to provide for things such as food and shelter. The hard part for the leader is trying to determine whether an employee [woman] is at this level. Due to lifestyle expectation differences, an employee may believe that they are at this level, but compared to other employees their physiological and security expectations could be very high. A leader who identifies an employee [woman] who is at this level would need to first determine what a reasonable set of standard physiological needs would look like. Once determined, the next thing the leader would need to do is to assess whether employees are paid sufficiently to meet the reasonable set of standard physiological needs. If they are, but just have higher expectations, the leader would need to review expectations with the employee.

The next thing for the leader to do would be to assess the employee's readiness level. I think that readiness levels should be measured at an individual task level; however, based on a pattern of a group of tasks it might be possible to infer an overall readiness level. I think that the challenge for a leader who attempts to infer an overall readiness level is being able to accurately track the pattern of a group of tasks for all his or her subordinates in order to obtain an accurate readiness measure. The Situational Leadership model used in this research paper assumes readiness to be an overall readiness level, which would be similar to an overall readiness level. I will use this theory as the basis. Any employee who is at a readiness level that comprises an unwillingness to perform tasks, I would use as an indicator for remediation.

If an employee is at the first or second level of Maslow's Hierarchy of needs, i.e. physiological or safety levels, and they are also at readiness level R1 or R3, i.e. they are able and unwilling or unable and unwilling respectively to perform tasks, then these are problems that would need immediate remediation. If the employee were not paid sufficiently to meet the reasonable expectations required meeting the physiological and security needs, the leader would need to figure out a way to fill the gaps. Sometimes the leader could be constrained financially with what they can do. In such situations the leader would need to become creative. For example, a leader may increase vacation time, or if possible, allow employees to telecommute more and minimize costs related to commuting to work. Another option that a leader may have is to identify and assign tasks that the employee might be more willing and able to perform.

If an employee is at the physiological or safety level of Maslow's Hierarchy of needs and they are also at readiness level R2 or R4, i.e. they are able and willing or unable but willing to perform tasks. This is a problem, but I do not think that there is an urgency to remediate. This is because the employee is still motivated to perform tasks. I think that a leader facing this situation should continue to focus fulfilling the physiological and security gaps for the employee, but they have a little more time to do so.

If a leader diagnoses an employee's motivational level to be at the third level of Maslow's Hierarchy of needs, that means that they are likely more concerned about social needs, and still less concerned about pay inequality. Employees at this level are more likely motivated by a need to belong to a group. If an employee is at the third level of Maslow's Hierarchy of needs and they are also at readiness level R1 or R3, i.e. they are able and unwilling or unable and unwilling respectively to perform tasks, then these are problems that need immediate remediation. A leader, who diagnoses an employee in this situation, could encourage them to join industry and trade organizations, and allow such employees to participate in sessions, even if that would require them to do so during certain business hours. Alternatively, if available, the leader could encourage the employee to join groups within the organization, or find a mentor for the employee.

Again, if an employee is at the social level of Maslow's Hierarchy of needs and they are also at readiness level R2 or R4, i.e. they are able and willing or unable but willing respectively to perform tasks. This is a problem, but I do not think that there is an urgency to remediate. I think that a leader facing this situation should continue to focus on encouraging his or her employees to fill the social gaps for the employee, but they have a little more time to do so.

If a leader diagnoses an employee's motivational level to be at the third or fourth level of Maslow's Hierarchy of needs, that means that they are more concerned about esteem and self-actualization needs. Employees who are at these two levels are also most likely concerned by pay inequality. I think that leaders who diagnose employees who are at this level would need to have a higher sense of urgency, regardless of the readiness level that an employee is. I think that an awareness of pay inequality by an employee could cause an employee to regress to lower levels of Maslow's Hierarchy of needs. For example, this awareness might cause an employee to regress from the esteem level to the social level where he or she becomes concerned about belongingness. I believe that a leader who has employees who are at this level doesn't have many choices. Remediating the pay inequality might be the only option.

I think it is important for a leader to work with their employees to get them to an optimum level where they can reach the highest level of self-actualization and also attain a level of readiness where they are able and willing to perform tasks.

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