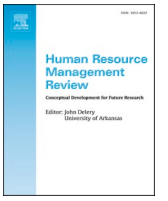
Human Resource Management Review 33 (2023) 100968

Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

Human Resource Management Review

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/hrmr



# Gender inequities in the workplace: A holistic review of organizational processes and practices

Leanne S. Son Hing *, Nouran Sakr, Jessica B. Sorenson, Cailin S. Stamarski, Kiah Caniera, Caren Colaco

*Department of Psychology, University of Guelph, Canada*

ARTICLE INFO

*Keywords:*
Gender equity
Sexism
Gender discrimination
Intersectionality
Workplace
Cumulative disadvantage

ABSTRACT

In this paper, we provide a broad, integrative review of the degree to which gender inequities exist in organizational domains and practices covering areas such as performance evaluation, compensation, leadership, work-family conflict, and sexual harassment, spanning the employee lifecycle from selection to exiting the organization. Where the literature allows, we review intersectionality findings. We also review the factors and processes that facilitate and hinder gender equity in the workplace, by drawing on the most robust empirical evidence. Throughout the paper, we distinguish between findings that allow us to infer gender inequity versus gender equality. Consolidating these disparate literatures allows us to develop a model that explains how gender inequities cumulate across the employee lifecycle and are reinforced across multiple levels (i.e., societal, organizational, interpersonal, and individual). We also identify important gaps in the literature, suggest next steps for research and highlight practical implications for organizations aiming to advance gender equity.

Despite having made great strides, women in North America continue to fare worse than men along many important dimensions of their work experiences. For instance, although women make up 47% of employees in the United States, they comprise only 27.6% of chief executive officers (U.S. Bureau of Labour Statistics, 2020). Among Canadian full-time workers, women earn only $0.87 for every dollar men earn (Pelletier, Patterson, & Moyser, 2019) with the wage gap higher among racialized women (Block, Galabuzi, & Tranjan, 2019). Twice the number of American women (42%) say they have experienced gender discrimination at work, compared with men (Parker & Funk, 2017), and in Canada, women comprise 94% of reported sexual harassment victims (Employment and Social Development Canada, 2017). When Canadian workers are asked about their experiences of discrimination in the workplace over the last year, more reported experiencing discrimination on the basis of sex (27.3%) versus race (16.1%) or disability (7.0%; Nangia & Arora, 2021). Thus, large gaps remain between women's and men's status, outcomes, and treatment within the workplace. These experiences are consequential, as they negatively affect women's mental health, job satisfaction (Sojo, Wood, & Genat, 2016), psychological withdrawal (Glomb, Munson, Hulin, Bergman, & Drasgow, 1999), employee performance (Leskinen, Cortina, & Kabat, 2011), as well as firm performance (Hoobler, Masterson, Nkomo, & Michel, 2016).

To understand such gender differences, we draw upon the distinction between the distributive justice principles of inequality and inequity (Deutsch, 1975). *Gender inequalities* refer to absolute differences in the treatment and outcomes for men versus women (e.g.,

* Corresponding author.
*E-mail address:* sonhing@uoguelph.ca (L.S. Son Hing).

https://doi.org/10.1016/j.hrmr.2023.100968
Received 12 August 2022; Received in revised form 28 March 2023; Accepted 3 April 2023
Available online 30 April 2023

the % of CEOS that are men vs. women), that may or may not be deserved.[1] *Gender inequities* specifically refer to differences in the treatment and outcomes for men versus women that are undeserved given their merits or contributions to the organization (e.g., the preference to promote a man over a woman to the position of CEO when he is less qualified). Gender inequities can occur in multiple organizational domains and practices: from resume screening to performance evaluations to sexual harassment to layoffs. Gender inequities may stem from: explicit or implicit biases of organizational decision makers, as well as systemic/structural/institutional discrimination in organizational structures, processes, and practices. Gender inequities may be unintentional or deliberate and subtle or blatant in form. Importantly, gender inequity extends beyond discrimination, which entails differential treatment on the basis of group status that results in worse outcomes or treatment at work (Civil Rights Act, 1964; Canadian Human Rights Act, RSC, 1985; United Nations' International Labor Organization, 2015). This is because, due to their differential experiences outside of work, treating all genders the same and even ambient stimuli in the workplace can create gender inequities at work.

Whereas others have focused on gender differences pertaining to *gender inequalities* (Stamarski & Son Hing, 2015), in this paper, we aim to review evidence pertaining to *gender inequities* in the workplace and focus our discussion on how gender equity can be promoted within the workplace for two reasons. First, a focus on eliminating gender inequity will have positive consequences for the organization, as it will focus efforts on creating human resources (HR) policies and practices that are validated, consistent, and merit based, thereby increasing employee performance (e.g., Schmidt & Hunter, 1998). Second, in Canadian and American workplaces, a strong preference is given to distribute outcomes (e.g., pay) on the basis of equity rather than equality (Hegtvedt, 1987; Miller & Komorita, 1995). Thus, when organizational efforts to advance the status of women are seen as *equity violating*, they are deemed reverse discrimination, met with backlash, and can produce unintended negative consequences for women (e.g., Bobocel, Son Hing, Davey, Stanley, & Zanna, 1998; Caleo & Heilman, 2019; Dover, Kaiser, & Major, 2019; Leslie, Mayer, & Kravitz, 2014). Therefore, to be effective, strategies to promote women's representation and status in the workplace must be seen as equitable. Both issues point to the organizational importance of understanding the prevalence of gender inequities, the processes that generate them, and how to best mitigate them. In our Discussion section (Section 9), we consider how an accumulation of gender inequities can negatively affect the apparent qualifications of women and its consequences for conceptualizing merit.

## 1. Scope, structure, theoretical bases, and contributions

The goal of the current paper is to comprehensively review the literature on gender inequities, and the factors and processes that enhance and mitigate them in Canadian and American workplaces. We limit our review to these countries because experiences of gender inequities at work can be affected by labour laws, HR practices, and the levels of gender inequities at a societal level (Hideg & Krstic, 2021), and it is beyond the scope of this paper to review international differences. Importantly, Canada and the USA have similar labor laws and human resources (HR) practices (Block & Roberts, 2000), as both prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex and race (Canadian Human Rights Act, RSC 1985; Civil Rights Act, 1964). Furthermore, the two countries have reached similar levels of success in supporting gender equity: According to the World Economic Forum's (2022) Gender Gap Index, the United States and Canada rank 27th and 25th overall for gender equity. Moreover, both countries' progress has remained relatively stable in recent years (World Economic Forum, 2022). Thus, the current paper focuses its review and recommendations to Canada and the United States, given the similar social and legal contexts around workplace gender (in)equities. Future reviews of the literature in other societal and legal contexts can highlight cross-cultural differences as well as global and common trends in gender inequities.

Gender inequities exist for multiple genders (Dray, Smith, Kostecki, Sabat, & Thomson, 2020) and trans, queer, and non-binary people experience more discrimination at work than do cisgender women (Waite, 2021). Yet, given the overwhelming focus of the literature, we only review differences between cisgender men and women. Whenever possible, we provide findings considering how gender intersects with other identities. We conducted literature reviews by drawing on the most robust empirical evidence, primarily peer reviewed meta-analyses (of field and experimental studies), and field studies that were either large scale or experimental in nature. We conducted a comprehensive literature review, however, given the methodology of many studies, it is often not clear whether gender differences reflect gender inequalities (i.e., gender differences) or inequities (i.e., undeserved differences). In such cases, where possible, we draw on tightly controlled experimental studies that hold merit-related factors constant, to allow for inferences about gender inequity. Thus, compared with other reviews that have conflated gender inequities and gender inequalities (e.g., Stamarski & Son Hing, 2015), in this review, we are better able to identify the gender differences in the workplace that arise due to organizational inequities.

This literature review is structured by covering gender inequities within various organizational domains and practices that are critical for women's experiences at work: recruitment and hiring (Section 2), the stressors of sexual harassment and work-family conflict (Section 3), performance appraisals (Section 4), promotions and ascension to leadership (Section 5), compensation (Section 6), as well as turnover, layoffs, and retirement (Section 7). Finally, we review research on the efficacy of broad initiatives (including affirmative action, diversity initiatives, and diversity climate) that might best promote gender equity in the workplace across domains, ranging from recruitment to turnover, and suggest how to put these findings into practice (Section 8). Previous literature reviews tend to focus on one topic, such as the gender pay gap (e.g., see Bishu & Alkadry, 2017), gender bias in hiring (Isaac, Lee, & Carnes, 2009), or gender differences in leadership (e.g., Shen & Joseph, 2021). Similarly, extant meta-analyses typically focus on a specific topic, such as work-family conflict (e.g., Shockley, Shen, DeNunzio, Arvan, & Knudsen, 2017), or a subset of topics, such as rewards (e.g., Joshi,

[1] Deservingness can result from gender socialization (Ceci, Williams, & Barnett, 2009; Meussen, Begeny, Peters, & Ryan, 2021).

Son, & Roh, 2015). Although such scholarly work is critical to conduct, a siloed approach makes it difficult to identify where gender inequities are most problematic or to develop a model of the cross-cutting factors and processes that contribute to gender inequity.

Stamarski and Son Hing (2015) presented an integrative model of the root causes of gender discrimination in HR policies, decision-making, and enactment. However, this work did not distinguish gender inequalities from gender inequities. Furthermore, Stamarski and Son Hing deductively proposed a model of the antecedents of gender discrimination that guided their literature review. In contrast, we have inductively created a model of gender inequities in the workplace rooted in a review of robust empirical evidence. Finally, based on a review of more recent research, we find that a key aspect of their model is not supported (i.e., the role of organizational decision-makers' sexism). Thus, our review allows us to make more up-to-date, evidence-based recommendations for organizations hoping to promote gender equity.

Much of the work we review is grounded in theory on the importance of gender stereotypes, which possess both descriptive features (i.e., outlining what a group member *is* like) and prescriptive features (i.e., outlining what a group member *should* be like; Heilman, 2012). While men are stereotyped as agentic (i.e., achievement orientated, assertive, rational, independent), women are stereotyped to be communal (i.e., warm, concerned for others, and empathetic; Sczesny, Nater, & Eagly, 2018). In line with role (in)congruity theory (Eagly & Karau, 2002) and the lack of fit model (Heilman, 2001), these stereotypes can engender negative, biased judgments of female targets (e.g., job applicants or incumbents), thereby harming women's workplace outcomes. Specifically, raters can perceive that female targets will not fit the requirements of a job (e.g., technical skills) or the gender-type of the job (e.g., male-dominated jobs such as law enforcement or high-status jobs such as engineering; Heilman, 2012) because of what they assume about women's characteristics and qualifications. Similarly, evaluators can penalize women who are high in agency and low in warmth for not meeting the prescriptive gender stereotype (Eagly, Makhijani, & Klonsky, 1992). This review draws heavily from this work to understand how such social cognitive processes affect interpersonal judgments, and we integrate these insights with a review of gender inequities operating at different levels of analysis.

Gender inequities are affected by identities beyond gender, and thus, it is important to take an intersectional lens; however, what this means is contested. The dominant intersectional perspective is the double jeopardy hypothesis, which suggests that people with more than one marginalized identity experience the cumulative disadvantage of stigmatization (Beal, 1970), which may operate in additive or synergistic (i.e., multiplicative) ways (Berdahl & Moore, 2006). In contrast, according to the ethnic prominence hypothesis, people who belong to ethnic minority groups will predominantly experience discrimination on the basis of racio-ethnicity, and therefore gender will play a smaller role (Levin, Sinclair, Veniegas, & Taylor, 2002). This is because, sexism is a milder form of prejudice, as gender relations are marked by codependence, whereas ethno-racial relations are marked by intergroup aggression (Sidanius, Hudson, Davis, & Bergh, 2018). In contrast, according to the intersectional invisibility model, a person with multiple marginalized identities will be categorized and subsequently stereotyped based on how prototypical they are of their group (e.g., the femininity of Black women is invisible because women are less prototypical of Blacks), which can result in oppression or opportunity depending on the situation (Purdie-Vaughns & Eibach, 2008). Similarly, MOSAIC focuses on stereotypes associated with intersectional categories, attempting to explain the complex ways by which they are integrated to either intensify or minimize group stereotypes, depending on whether they are consistent or inconsistent (Hall, Hall, Galinsky, & Phillips, 2019). As this is an undeveloped area of research, where possible, we will review findings for the effects of intersectional identities and note which theoretical perspective they support.

In our Discussion Section (Section 9), we provide a model of Cumulative Gender Inequities in the Workplace. Based on our review, we develop a model of the factors and processes that contribute to (or mitigate) gender inequities in the workplace. This model illustrates how, over the course of people's careers, gender inequities cumulate, as well as how gender inequities exist and are produced at multiple levels (i.e., societal, organizational, interpersonal, and individual). We find evidence that gender inequities affect and reinforce each other, and that top-down processes appear to be more powerful than bottom-up processes. Our comprehensive, integrative approach not only allows us to identify cross-domain factors and processes that contribute to the existence of gender inequities, but also how to mitigate them. Importantly, we identify critical gaps in the literature and provide some recommendations for how to best advance future research on gender inequities at work. Finally, we return to the issues of gender equality versus gender equity. By illustrating how gender inequities in organizational domains and practices cumulate across the employee lifespan, we raise questions about how merit should be evaluated and how organizations might take a broader perspective on gender equity and gender equality.

## 2. Recruitment and hiring

In this section, we review barriers to gender equity starting with obtaining employment or "getting in the door," where women face a gender bias in resume screening, the interview, and hiring decisions. For each phase of selection, we identify ways to reduce gender inequities.

Audit studies reveal gender inequities in resume screening and call back rates in line with societal, descriptive gender stereotypes characterizing women as less competent than men. In these studies, thousands of resumes are sent for real job applications while varying only the applicant's first name to signal gender (e.g., Jane vs. John). Such studies reveal that, for high skill jobs (e.g., managerial jobs), resumes with women's (vs. men's) names receive half the number of call-backs (Quadlin, 2018). Further, parental status leads women, more so than men, to receive fewer call-backs after submitting their resume (Correll, Benard, & Paik, 2007), to be rated as less competent and to be screened out based on their resume (Heilman & Okimoto, 2008), suggesting a double jeopardy effect. A field study found that, during interpersonal exchanges, pregnant women were allowed to fill out a job application less often than matched non-pregnant job applicants (Morgan, Walker, Hebl, & King, 2013), demonstrating the importance of parenthood as an intersectional identity. Thus, at the screening stage, women applying for high skill level jobs and (expectant) mothers experience

gender inequities.

Different organizational HR practices can be employed to try to reduce gender inequities at the screening stage of the hiring process. Anonymous hiring practices, that is, when identifying information such as names are removed before assessing candidates, should facilitate gender equity (Hausman, 2012). Further, presenting counter stereotypic information regarding the applicant's commitment, flexibility, and accommodation appears to counteract discrimination against pregnant women (Morgan et al., 2013).

In terms of selection procedures, the use of the typical, unstructured interview (i.e., an interview with no fixed, pre-determined questions, Ryan, McFarland, Baron, & Page, 1999) results in women being rated lower than men across many criteria, and particularly on ratings of experience (Huffcutt, Conway, Roth, & Stone, 2001). Additionally, agentic women who exhibit stereotypically masculine behaviours are evaluated more poorly in interviews, compared with men exhibiting the same behaviours (Isaac et al., 2009). When evaluating women's interview performance, raters with stronger implicit gender stereotypes give lower evaluations (Latu, Mast, & Stewart, 2015). Thus, the use of unstructured interviews disadvantages female applicants.

The use of more rigorous selection processes can mitigate gender inequities. Meta-analyses reveal that gender differences in applicant ratings are eliminated with the use of structured behavioural interviews, whereby all candidates respond to scripted questions that focus on examples of competency-related past behaviour and their responses are evaluated using specific rating scales (Alonso, Moscoso, & Salgado, 2017). In addition, the use of assessment centers (which use a battery of job-related exercises such as leaderless group discussions for managerial selection) and situational judgment tests (written tests with typical work scenarios) show no gender differences in ratings of candidates' performance (Dean, Roth, & Bobko, 2008; Whetzel, McDaniel, & Nguyen, 2008).

Gender stereotypes can affect final hiring decisions. A meta-analysis of tightly controlled experimental studies found moderate gender differences favoring men for male-dominated occupations; however, no gender bias is found for gender integrated occupations and bias in favor of women is found for female-dominated occupations (Koch, D'Mello, & Sackett, 2015; see also Davison & Burke, 2000). Furthermore, managers more negatively evaluate female job applicants who provide care to others (children and elders) in both male- and female-dominated jobs, compared with their male counterparts, despite having matched qualifications (Henle et al., 2020). Thus, it appears that women are presumed to be less competent for male-dominated occupations. However, experimental studies, reveal that clearly competent women also face hiring discrimination because highly agentic women are seen as having weaker social skills, and therefore are less liked and less likely to be recommended for hire, compared with a matched male candidate (Rudman & Glick, 2001; Rudman, Moss-Racusin, Phelan, & Nauts, 2012). Neither raters' levels of sexism (Jones et al., 2017) nor their perceptions of others (e.g., top organizational decision-makers) as sexist (Vial, Dovidio, & Brescoll, 2019) predict their discrimination against women in selection decisions. Thus, lab-based experiments demonstrate that interpersonal biases in line with societal prescriptive and descriptive gender stereotypes produce gender inequities in hiring decisions for male-dominated fields, and that both those who are lower and higher in sexism engage in such biases.

The effects of gender in selection appear to depend on other marginalized identities and the stereotypes associated with that identity, although we are just starting to uncover these effects, as research in this area is scant. In a study of hiring for Physics professors, Black and Latina women were rated as less hirable than others, but Asian women were rated as hirable as men (Eaton, Saunders, Jacobson, & West, 2020), apparently benefiting from the Asian competence stereotype (Cuddy, Fiske, & Glick, 2008). A set of experimental studies found that the effects of intersectionality depended on the gender type of the job (Hall, Galinsky, & Phillips, 2015). For a feminine-typed job, Asian and White women were favored compared with Black women (who are seen as less feminine) and men. In contrast, for a masculine-typed job, Black women (who are seen as more agentic, Rosette et al., 2018) and men were favored for hiring, compared with White and Asian women. These findings most closely align with the MOSAIC (Hall et al., 2019), as it appears that stereotypes and perceived fit to the job (Kulik, Roberson, & Perry, 2007), play a powerful role in understanding how discrimination against people with intersectional identities work. A meta-analysis found that LGBTI (vs. straight) applicants faced discrimination in hiring and to an equal degree for gays and lesbians Flage, 2020). In addition, research indicates that White and Black mothers do not differ in the extent to which they experience the "motherhood penalty," as they are both rated by evaluators as less hireable compared with childless men and women (Correll et al., 2007). Thus, neither of these studies support the double jeopardy nor ethnic prominence hypotheses.

Research has shown that structuring aspects of the decision-making process should ensure gender equity in hiring decisions. First, structuring the conditions around how decision-makers evaluate candidates (e.g., committing to decision criteria before evaluating candidates) increases the number of women who are hired (Isaac et al., 2009). Further, structuring the information provided to decision-makers (e.g., providing only job-relevant information) increases the hiring of women (Isaac et al., 2009). For instance, a longitudinal study of orchestra performers found that blind auditions successfully increased the number of women selected (Goldin & Rouse, 2000). Finally, having more women in the role of evaluator on hiring committees (Gorman, 2005), or represented in the organization (Cohen, Broschak, & Haveman, 1998), increases the number of women who are hired.

Importantly, increasing the representation of women in the applicant pool increases the number of women ultimately selected (Gorman & Kmec, 2009; Heilman, 1980). Specifically, increasing the proportion of women in the applicant pool to at least 25% can help reduce gender inequity during hiring (Isaac et al., 2009). To elicit more representative applicant pools, it has been shown to be beneficial for organizations to have job advertisements with more detailed job characteristics (Chapman, Uggerslev, Carroll, Piasentin, & Jones, 2005), explicit affirmative action/employment equity program messages (Harrison, Kravitz, Mayer, Leslie, & Lev-Arey, 2006), an emphasis on long-term career benefits (Linos, 2018), and without gendered language (Gaucher, Friesen, & Kay, 2011). As well, the use of targeted recruitment, shadowing opportunities, and diverse recruitment committees can increase the number of female applicants (Spottswood et al., 2019).

### 2.1. Summary

Broadly, barriers to gender equity are present in recruitment, applicant screening, the implementation of selection measures such as interviews, and in final hiring decisions, hindering women's ability to "get in the door." Such biases in the evaluation of candidates occur especially for women applying for high skills jobs, in more masculine settings, and for women with caregiver identities, as they are viewed as less competent (i.e., in line with descriptive stereotypes), as well as for agentic women, who violate prescriptive stereotypes. Structuring these processes (e.g., by using structured behavioural interviews rather than unstructured interviews) and increasing the representation of women (in the applicant pool, as evaluators of applicants, and throughout the organization) can help reduce gender inequities in obtaining employment.

## 3. Sexual harassment and work-family conflict stressors

Although there are many stressors that individuals face at work (e.g., work pressure, deadlines), in this section, we focus on the stressors of sexual harassment and work-family conflict because they are faced more often by women than men (Employment and Social Development Canada, 2017; Moyser & Burlock, 2018); and as described below, they contribute to gender inequities within organizations.

### 3.1. Sexual harassment

Experiences of sexual harassment at work are a barrier to gender equity, as sexual harassment victims are primarily (94%) women (Employment and Social Development Canada, 2017). Further, those who experience sexual harassment subsequently suffer worse physical and mental health (e.g., increased stress and depression), lower job satisfaction and organizational commitment, greater job withdrawal (Glomb et al., 1999; Willness, Steel, & Lee, 2007), such as absenteeism and avoidance of responsibilities (Magley, Hulin, Fitzgerald, & DeNardo, 1999), and ultimately lower job performance (Magley, Waldo, Drasgow, & Fitzgerald, 1999). Thus, the targeted sexual harassment of women affects their ability to engage with their jobs and perform as healthy employees.

Meta-analyses reveal that a consistent organizational predictor of whether sexual harassment will occur is the degree to which the work context or job is male dominated, including whether one's supervisor is a man (Cantisano, Domínguez, & Depolo, 2008). As the percentage of women in the organization decreases, sexual harassment is more likely to occur (Cantisano et al., 2008). Interestingly, for women working within male-dominated organizations, those who are more masculine are more likely to be sexually harassed (Berdahl, 2007a). A review of sexual harassment in organizations finds that the effect of race/ ethnicity is mixed, with studies showing that ethnic minority women are victimized more, the same as, or less than White women (Cortina & Berdahl, 2008).

Meta-analyses reveal that an even stronger organizational predictor of sexual harassment is whether a climate tolerant of sexual harassment exists (Willness et al., 2007). Thus, one way to mitigate sexual harassment is to create an organizational climate that is intolerant of sexual harassment. To do so, organizations need to have sexual harassment policies and practices that make it easy for victims to come forward, sanction perpetrators, take victims' complaints seriously, and ensure there is no backlash against victims (Willness et al., 2007). Having a more intolerant sexual harassment climate is associated with improved well-being, job satisfaction, and performance among employees (Cantisano et al., 2008). More research is needed to understand the impact of specific aspects of policies and practices (Fusilier & Penrod, 2015).

Societal level changes can further impact gender inequities in the workplace. For instance, longitudinal data suggest that the Me-Too Movement has led to a reduction in sexual coercion and unwanted sexual attention at work but an increase in gender harassment (Keplinger, Johnson, Kirk, & Barnes, 2019), raising questions of backlash. As organizations work on preventing sexual harassment, they must create a sense of support and trust among male employees who may fear false accusations, leading them to avoid mentoring women, thereby contributing to gender inequities (Soklaridis et al., 2018). Thus, all genders must perceive sexual harassment policies and practices to be fair to reduce sexual harassment, prevent backlash, and ultimately facilitate gender equity.

### 3.2. Work-family conflict

A major stressor that serves as a barrier to gender equity is work-family conflict, which results from gender differences outside the workplace (e.g., prescribed societal gender roles). Full-time working women spend substantially more time (i.e., 12 h a week) on housework, childcare, and other household responsibilities than their male counterparts (Moyser & Burlock, 2018), even when they hold the same job (Shollen, Bland, Finstad, & Taylor, 2009). Among caregivers of children, women are more likely to experience higher emotional exhaustion and parental burnout than men (Roskam & Mikolajczak, 2020). In addition, among caregivers of elderly parents, meta-analyses reveal that women spend more time care taking, experience more depression, and have reduced physical health, compared with men (Pinquart & Sörensen, 2006). Broad societal changes can also affect women's experienced work-family conflict. During the COVID-19 pandemic, it appears that full-time teleworking mothers have experienced greater increases in housework and childcare (Del Boca, Oggero, Profeta, & Rossi, 2020), and worse work and well-being outcomes, compared with others (Feng & Savani, 2020; Lyttelton, Zang, & Musick, 2020). Although men and women equally experience work interfering with their family, women experience more family interfering with their work (Shockley et al., 2017), and greater feelings of work-family guilt than men (Borelli, Nelson-Coffey, River, Birken, & Moss-Racusin, 2017). Furthermore, employees' experiences of greater family-interfering-with-work conflict predict greater experiences of work-interfering-with-family conflict (Shockley & Singla, 2011). Finally, organizations must heed both forms of work-family conflict, as greater job demands (e.g., workload) are predictive of greater family-interfering-with-work

conflict and work-interfering-with-family conflict (Michel, Kotrba, Mitchelson, Clark, & Baltes, 2011).

Work-family conflict can adversely influence workplace experiences. Higher levels of work-family conflict are associated with lower job satisfaction (Duxbury & Higgins, 2001), higher job distress (Korabik, Lero, & Whitehead, 2008), and lower well-being (Allen, Herst, Bruck, & Sutton, 2000). Harder hit is the sandwich generation, that is, those who are providing care to their children and to their parents, who face great strain at work (Zacher & Schulz, 2015). Importantly, the effects of work-family conflict on work attitudes including job and coworker satisfaction (Boles, Wood, & Johnson, 2003) and career satisfaction (Martins, Eddleston, & Veiga, 2002) are stronger for women than they are for men. Thus, for organizations to achieve gender equity, work-family integration issues must be addressed.

Organizations must go beyond implementing work-family policies to address problems of work-family conflict. Simply the presence of specific work-family policies has no effects on employees' work-family conflict (Premeaux, Adkins, & Mossholder, 2007), and having more policies available does not help work-family conflict (Butts, Casper, & Yang, 2013). This is perhaps because work-family policies can be applied in a discretionary manner that discriminates against women (Bobbitt-Zeher, 2011). More promising results are found when looking at the use of and satisfaction with organizational policies. The more employees use family friendly policies (e.g., compressed scheduling, and part-time work), the less work-family conflict they experience, and the more satisfied they are with their work-family balance (Saltzstein, Ting, & Saltzstein, 2001). In particular, the use of telework policies reduces work-family conflict—particularly for women—and improves job satisfaction and performance (Gajendran & Harrison, 2007). Further, employees' satisfaction with work-family policies positively affects organizational performance (Lee & Hong, 2011). However, caution must be taken in regard to how programs work for different groups as racio-ethnic and American Indian women report lower satisfaction with work-life balance programs than do White women, White men, and minority men (Hamidullah & Riccucci, 2017). It may be the case that Indigenous and other racio-ethnic groups have different needs due to cultural norms around extended family care responsibilities that are unmet by existing programs (Harr, Russo, Sunyer, & Ollier-Malaterre, 2014). Therefore, organizations must strive to implement work-family policies in an inclusive manner for all employees.

Gender equity can also be promoted more broadly by creating a supportive work-family climate, which involves implementing organizational programs and policies to reduce time-demands that interfere with family life, by showing that employees can devote time to family with few negative career consequences, and by managers supporting work-family balance (Thompson, Beauvais, & Lyness, 1999). Experiencing a more supportive work-family climate predicts women's higher job satisfaction, organizational commitment, career satisfaction (Gordon, Whelan-Berry, & Hamilton, 2007; Mauno, Kinnunen, & Piitulainen, 2005; Mauno, Kinnunen, & Ruokolainen, 2006), acceptance of job offers (Wayne & Casper, 2016), and they are less likely to turnover due to experiences of work-family conflict (Gordon et al., 2007). Benefits of a more supportive work-family climate extend to all employees, as it improves work-family balance, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, physical illness symptoms (Mauno et al., 2005, 2006), and it reduces strain (Zacher & Schulz, 2015). Relatedly, interpersonally, male and female employees appear to benefit equally from having mentors who support their efforts to balance their work and home lives, as those who experience supportive mentorship experience lower levels of work-family conflict (Nielson, Carlson, & Lankau, 2001).

### *3.3. Summary*

Given the disproportionate levels of sexual harassment and family demands that women experience compared with men, and the negative impact of sexual harassment and work-family conflict on women's work experiences, these experiences can breed more gender inequities within organizations. Workplaces must ensure that organizational sexual harassment and work-family policies are not only offered but also applied in a fair and inclusive manner across employees by managers. Fostering an intolerant sexual harassment climate and a supportive work-family climate can contribute to gender equity in the workplace.

## 4. Performance appraisal

In this section, we review barriers to gender equity in performance appraisals that follow a pattern in line with the lack of fit model (i.e., assumptions about women's poor fit with the requirements and skills of a particular role or occupation, Heilman, 2001). When it comes to performance appraisals, across a wide variety of jobs, meta-analyses reveal no overall gender differences (Joshi et al., 2015). However, for male-dominated occupations, raters evaluate women's performance lower than men's (Joshi et al., 2015; cf. Bowen, Swim, & Jacobs, 2000). These effects can be compounded with other marginalized identities. For instance, in line with the double jeopardy hypothesis, female professors receive worse student evaluations than male professors (Mitchell & Martin, 2018), with minority women receiving the worst evaluations (Chávez & Mitchell, 2020). In a meta-analysis of experimental studies that simply vary the name (and therefore gender) of the employee while holding constant performance-related information, women are rated lower than matched men, specifically by male raters (Koch et al., 2015). Thus, women's lower performance evaluations in male-dominated fields appears to be a result of descriptive societal stereotypes (i.e., how society views women to be) and interpersonal biases producing gender inequities, rather than differences in actual job performance.

Raters also distinguish between women's and men's agentic versus communal job-related behaviours. For instance, women are rated lower than men for stereotypically masculine (e.g., leadership) dimensions while the opposite is found for stereotypically feminine (e.g., interpersonal sensitivity) dimensions (Bowen et al., 2000). Interestingly, perceptions of men's and women's competence and warmth differentially affect performance evaluations. Perceptions of employees' interpersonal warmth (i.e., communal behaviours) predicts job performance ratings more strongly for women than men; whereas perceptions of employees' technical competence (i.e., agentic behaviours) predicts job performance ratings more strongly for men than for women (Biernat, Tocci, &

Williams, 2012). Therefore, raters' beliefs about how women should behave appear to bias how they evaluate their performance.

Situational factors appear to moderate when gender inequities are found in performance evaluations. Experimental research reveals that when participants receive negative feedback (but not positive feedback) from a woman in authority, they evaluate her performance as worse than that of a matched man (Sinclair & Kunda, 2000). As well, female leaders' performance is rated more negatively when they engage in more diversity-valuing behaviours, whereas male leaders are rewarded with more positive evaluations for the same behaviours (Hekman, Johnson, Foo, & Yang, 2017). Thus, such gender inequities may derive from motivated social cognition whereby the gender stereotype of women's incompetence can be used to: discredit negative feedback (Sinclair & Kunda, 2000), impede diversity initiatives (Hekman et al., 2017), and exclude women from traditionally masculine domains (Lyness & Heilman, 2006; Rudman et al., 2012).

Interestingly, compared with men, women either receive less negative verbal and written feedback regarding their job performance (King et al., 2012) or more positive written feedback (Biernat et al., 2012). Despite lower numerical ratings, women receive more positive verbal and written feedback, because raters do not want to hurt women's feelings (Jampol, Rattan, & Wolf, 2022). However, individually, negative feedback is needed to guide employees on what behaviours are appropriate and often directs goals for further development (Van Velsor, McCauley, & Moxley, 1998). Indeed, receiving negative feedback has been associated with increased performance and learning outcomes among employees (Hazucha, Hezlett, & Schneider, 1993). Thus, this lack of negative feedback can hinder women's learning and development.

Organizational procedures for performance appraisals can be structured to mitigate gender inequities. For occupations that are dominated by men, ensuring that evaluators have the necessary time and attention to focus on performance evaluations can reduce interpersonal bias in appraisals. This is because individuals are less likely to use societal stereotypes when they devote more attention to performance ratings made under less time pressure (Martell, 1991). Systems should be structured to use performance criteria that are as objective as possible to limit the effects of interpersonal biases (Sharma & Sharma, 2017). Raters should have to account for their decisions to reduce gender bias in performance evaluations (Koch et al.,2015). Additionally, those conducting performance appraisals should be encouraged to provide women with critical feedback and opportunities to grow, as women and men are equally interested in challenging assignments (King et al., 2012). Further, gender gaps in performance appraisals are mitigated when women comprise a high proportion of senior leadership positions within an organization (Joshi et al., 2015). Unfortunately, relying on mixed gender committees does not appear to reduce any gender differences in performance appraisals (Prati et al., 2019), however, having more women (vs. men) raters appears to reduce gender differences in rewards, such as evaluations of competence (Koch et al., 2015). Gender bias in performance appraisals appear to be unrelated to evaluators' sexist attitudes (Jones et al., 2017), which suggests that male raters give preference to men due to societal stereotypes that they may unknowingly apply. Finally, the use of 360-degree feedback, which is a structured approach to performance evaluations that involves investigating ratings from self, supervisor, peers, and subordinates, can be used to mitigate gender inequities. When 360-degree feedback systems are employed, women and men receive equivalent performance evaluations, or gender differences favoring women are found, even in a male-dominated field (Millmore, Biggs, & Morse, 2007).

### *4.1. Summary*

In terms of performance evaluations, gender inequities exist for male-dominated occupations (Joshi et al., 2015). Experimental evidence reveals that this gender gap results from discrimination, particularly by male raters (Koch et al., 2015). It appears that gender inequities in performance evaluations may be mitigated when organizational procedures structure ratings to be more accurate, when women hold high ranks within organizations, and when performance feedback is elicited from multiple sources.

## 5. Promotions and leadership

Gender differences in leadership are consistently found. In both Canada (Catalyst, 2020) and the United States (Coury et al., 2020), the organizational representation of women declines as they move up the corporate ladder, demonstrating a "leaky pipeline." For instance, in Canada, women comprise 47% of support staff, 37% of managers, but only 23% of executives (Catalyst, 2020). Similar patterns are found in the United States (U.S. Bureau of Labour Statistics, 2020; Coury et al., 2020). In line with the double jeopardy hypothesis (Beal, 1970), within Canadian and American corporations the pipeline problem is worse for racialized women, as they comprise only 5% of those in the C-Suite, compared with their White counterparts at 21%; interestingly, the gender gap is larger among Whites than among racialized people, largely because White men are so well represented at top leadership positions (McKinsey & Company, 2022). Barriers to leadership are also particularly high for mothers: Women are 4.3 times less likely to attain a CEO position for every child they have (Hurley & Choudhary, 2016). Hence, women's lack of ascension to leadership has negative consequences for them. This is because women in leadership benefit from greater well-being, job satisfaction (Frederick & Lazzara, 2020), pay, and perceived career success (Offermann, Thomas, Lanzo, & Smith, 2020), compared with women not holding leadership positions.

There is reason to believe that the inequality in the representation of men and women in leadership result from gender inequities. Successful leadership is typically associated with being a man and possessing agentic traits, rather than being a woman and possessing communal ones (Schein, 2001; Schein & Davidson, 1993). Thus, these societal gender stereotypes can make it more difficult for women to ascend the organizational hierarchy and maintain positions of leadership (Eagly & Karau, 2002). Indeed, it appears that women are held to higher standards than men to obtain leadership positions. For instance, among upper-level managers who receive promotions, women have a record of significantly higher performance ratings, compared with their male counterparts (Lyness & Heilman, 2006). Furthermore, meta-analyses reveal that female CEOs are older and have more elite education than male CEOs (Wang, Holmes, Devine,

& Bishoff, 2018). An older meta-analysis of experimental studies reveals a bias against female leaders, particularly in masculine industries (Eagly et al., 1992). A more recent experiment reveals that not only is a male leader evaluated as more effective than a matched female leader, but this gender effect also combines with race, such that female Black leaders are rated lowest, demonstrating a double jeopardy effect (Rosette & Livingston, 2012). Thus, in line with role (in)congruity theory (Eagly & Karau, 2002), women face great obstacles to obtaining leadership due to the mismatch between societal expectations for leadership and expectations for women.

Research on female leaders' job performance also suggests that their underrepresentation in these roles is a result of inequities rather than lower abilities. A meta-analysis reveals that actual female leaders are evaluated by others (e.g., supervisors, subordinates, trained judges) as somewhat more effective than male leaders (Paustian-Underdahl, Walker, & Woehr, 2014; cf., Eagly, Karau, & Makhijani, 1995; Eagly et al., 1992). Women's overall strong leadership performance may, in part, be a result of their stronger transformational leadership style (e.g., inspiration, intellectual stimulation, and follower consideration) compared with men, who are more likely to use a transactional leadership style that involves employing rules, rewards, and punishments (Eagly, Johannesen-Schmidt, & Van Engen, 2003). In other words, female leaders appear to be more likely to adhere to societal prescriptive gender stereotypes to be warm and communal. In line with this, many women who make it to the top levels of leadership describe their leadership style as highly relational (Cheung & Halpern, 2010). As well, the strong performance ratings for female leaders may simply reflect their high caliber (Lyness & Heilman, 2006).

Women are less likely to hold leadership positions compared with men for several reasons. Female leaders must demonstrate agentic behaviours to succeed in their leadership roles, yet people show a higher dislike of highly agentic women compared with less agentic women or highly agentic men (Heilman & Okimoto, 2007). Meta-analytic evidence of lab experiments demonstrates that when evaluating highly agentic leaders, raters evaluate men more positively compared with women (Eagly et al., 1992). Accordingly, raters' dislike of agentic women who do not conform to the prescriptive gender stereotype of being highly communal can cause them to give lower recommendations for women to assume a leadership role (Rudman et al., 2012). However, Black women are evaluated less negatively than White women when acting dominantly in leadership (Livingston, Rosette, & Washington, 2012), perhaps because in line with the MOSAIC perspective, Black women are stereotyped to be masculine and therefore dominance behaviours are stereotype consistent (Hall et al., 2019).

Over the course of their careers, women are somewhat less likely to be promoted than men (Blau & Devaro, 2007), and these effects compound as one moves up the organizational hierarchy (Martell, Emrich, & Robinson-Cox, 2012). Gender differences are more pronounced in male-dominated industries, as well as for more prestigious or complex jobs (Joshi et al., 2015). Again, we see that mothers are particularly hard hit. Interpersonally, supervisors perceive their subordinates who are mothers (vs. fathers) as less flexible for advancement and less committed (King, 2008), likely because mothers are stereotyped as lacking devotion to work (Blair-Loy & Cech, 2022). This is likely due to supervisors' assumptions about gender roles in parenthood. In addition, supervisors' perceptions of subordinates' family-to-work conflict impact their ratings of promotability (Hoobler, Wayne, & Lemmon, 2009). Importantly, compared with men, women are not afforded the work experience and developmental opportunities that are necessary to become leaders (Francis, 2017; Lyness & Thompson, 2000).

Informal networking also appears to leave women behind, as informal networks appear to be segregated by gender (Brass, 1985). The social capital of these networks (i.e., resources provided by the social relationships) explains White men's higher likelihood of receiving informal job leads, compared with White and visible minority women (McDonald, Lin, & Ao, 2009). Women belonging to gender-segregated networks within an organization have less access to information about jobs, less status, and less upward mobility (McDonald et al., 2009; Ragins & Sundstrom, 1989). Relatedly, having a mentor is related to the career success of executives, though more so for men compared with women (Lyness & Thompson, 2000). This may be because women report less access to senior leadership than do men (Cross et al., 2019). Thus, it appears that women's interpersonal connections and access to mentors, particularly from senior leadership, is critical.

Beyond leadership ascension, research on the experiences of male versus female leaders reveals inequities. Among those who make it to the CEO level, meta-analyses reveal that women receive lower prestige, power, and compensation, compared with male CEOs (Wang et al., 2018). In addition, female CEOs have shorter tenure than male CEOs (Wang et al., 2018). This may be because women are more likely than men to be promoted to precarious leadership positions where the organization is already struggling (i.e., the "glass cliff effect"; Ryan & Haslam, 2005). Experimental studies reveal that when company performance is declining, participants evaluate women (vs. men) as more suitable for a leadership position (Haslam & Ryan, 2008). This can contribute to a self-fulfilling prophecy whereby failure under these circumstances can then be misattributed to the leader's gender. Interestingly, female leadership candidates and organizational boards may be aware of the precarious position female CEOs are placed in, as they are granted larger severance packages than male CEOs, particularly when organizations are performing poorly (Klein, Chaigneau, & Devers, 2021). Thus, women may be knowingly placed in precarious leadership positions, further contributing to inequities in their leadership experiences.

Organizational HR policies and practices are one means to facilitate women's promotion to leadership positions. Given that developmental opportunities appear to be withheld from women (Hoobler, Lemmon, & Wayne, 2014), formal career management and leadership development programs that involve experiential learning, interpersonal support, challenging new jobs, work assignments or responsibilities have been suggested to help advance women to leadership positions (Hopkins, O'Neil, Passarelli, & Bilimoria, 2008). The mobility and increased developmental experiences resulting from these programs (Hopkins et al., 2008) should foster feelings that others support one's career development. As well, it has been found that the more women are provided with networking, training, and career opportunities in an organization, the more likely managers are to name a female (vs. male) successor (Virick & Greer, 2012). Moreover, when organizations implement more work-family friendly policies, over time, more women advance to managerial positions; however, this effect does not hold in male-dominated organizations (Kalysh, Kulik, & Perera, 2016). Additionally, organizations that implement targeted recruiting of women promote more women to management positions (Ng & Sears,

2017). Finally, having more female (vs. male) raters appears to moderately reduce gender differences in rewards, such as promotions (Joshi et al., 2015) and in the evaluation of leaders' effectiveness (Eagly et al., 1995; Paustian-Underdahl et al., 2014).

Furthermore, mentorship is likely to facilitate women's promotion, as meta-analytic evidence shows that those who have been mentored, particularly if the mentorship focuses on their career, are promoted more, compared with those who have never been mentored (Allen, Eby, Poteet, Lentz, & Lima, 2004). Further, formal mentorship programs have been found to be as equally effective as informal mentoring programs in mitigating career barriers, such as lack of developmental assignments (Washington, 2010) and in helping to promote women in male-dominated work environments (Farkas, Bonifacino, Turner, Tilstra, & Corbelli, 2019). Thus, gender equity in promoting women to leadership positions can be facilitated by providing women with formal career development and mentorship, engaging in targeted recruitment, and using female evaluators (e.g., in reward decisions).

### *5.1. Summary*

Broadly, barriers to gender equity are present in women's attainment of leadership roles as they are held to higher standards with a lack of opportunity snowballing over the course of their careers. Various HR policies and practices (e.g., formal career development, targeted recruitment, female evaluators) can facilitate gender equity in leadership attainment, as can building women's networks and mentorship. Such a goal is important given that female leaders are evaluated positively and that they create greater gender equity throughout organizations.

## 6. Compensation

In this section, we review barriers to gender equity in compensation (i.e., pay and other rewards) that emerge over the employee life cycle. Gender inequities in compensation emerge, in part, because of initial salaries and salary negotiation during interpersonal exchanges. Experimental studies reveal that study participants recommend higher initial salaries for male versus female job candidates demonstrating evaluator bias (Koch et al., 2015; Moss-Rauscin, Dovidio, Brescoll, Graham, & Handelsman, 2012). Meta-analyses reveal that in both field and experimental studies, women are less likely to negotiate their salaries, compared with men (Kugler, Reif, Kaschner, & Brodbeck, 2018). This is meaningful, as salary negotiations appear to increase initial salaries by an average of $5000 (Marks & Harold, 2011). However, even when women engage in salary negotiations, they are less successful than men (Mazei et al., 2015). The gender difference in salary negotiation outcomes does not appear to be explained by differences in negotiation strategies or capabilities (Gerhart & Rynes, 1991; Kennedy, Kray, & Ku, 2017; Marks & Harold, 2011; Walters, Stuhlmacher, & Meyer, 1998). Rather, experimental research shows that women who engage in negotiation behaviours that violate gender expectations experience backlash (Amanatullah & Tinsley, 2013). For example, when a woman acts more assertively in negotiations, others report lower interest in working or socializing with her (Amanatullah & Tinsley, 2013). Further, experimental evidence reveals that women fear backlash during negotiating for the self (vs. others; Amanatullah & Morris, 2010). Thus, interpersonal biases during negotiation can engender gender inequities in the negotiation process, and subsequently compensation.

Substantial gender inequities in compensation (i.e., salary, bonuses) are found. Full-time working men earn more than women, even after controlling for performance, occupation, tenure, level, and business unit (Elvira & Graham, 2002; Pay Equity Commission of Ontario, 2020). Indeed, gender differences in compensation (e.g., salary increases, bonuses) are 14 times larger than gender differences found in performance appraisal ratings (Joshi et al., 2015). Some find that performance appraisal ratings are associated with compensation more strongly for men than for women (Gerhart, 1990), particularly for managerial roles (Drazin & Auster, 1987), meaning that men are rewarded for strong performance more so than women; however, there are mixed findings (Kronberg, 2020). Gender differences in compensation are found especially in male-dominated industries, as well as for prestigious or more complex jobs (Castilla & Bernard, 2010; Joshi et al., 2015). Importantly, a meta-analysis of experimental studies reveals that, for male-dominated jobs, when holding all other information constant, women are granted less compensation than men (Koch et al., 2015).

The magnitude of the gender pay gap depends on other group identities. Compared with White men, visible minority women fare much worse in their earnings than do White women (Block et al., 2019). However, the gender pay gap is larger among Asians and Whites than it is among Blacks and Latinos in the US (Misra & Murray-Close, 2014), and among other visible minorities in Canada because White men earn the most (Block et al., 2019). Further research is needed to explore how different intersections of marginalized identities moderate the gender wage gap, because for instance, lesbians earn more than heterosexual women (Carpenter & Eppink, 2017). Hence, these findings do not clearly support the double jeopardy nor the ethnic prominence perspectives. A negative consequence of the gender pay is gap is that it is associated with women experiencing a 2.43 times greater likelihood of depression and a 4.11 times greater likelihood of anxiety, compared with matched men (Platt, Prins, Bates, & Keyes, 2016).

Another key source of gender inequity in compensation is job segregation within organizations. Within organizations, women tend to be shuffled into different jobs than men, and these differences account for 55% of the gender wage gap (Thomaskovic-Devey, 1993). Unfortunately, within organizations, the greater women's representation within a job, the lower the compensation is for workers in that job (Huffman & Velasco, 1997; Thomaskovic-Devey & Skagges, 2002). This evidence highlights the lower value attributed to women and their work likely because society views men as having more worth and status than women (Fiske, 2015).

Gender inequities in compensation also result from gender inequities in the organizational promotion process. This is because being promoted through the ranks comes with greater pay (Baker, Gibbs, & Holmstrom, 1994), and women (particularly well-educated ones) receive fewer promotions than men (Addison, Ozturk, & Wang, 2014). Furthermore, after receiving promotions, women receive smaller salary increases than men, as they are placed at the lower end of the salary range (Booth, Francesconi, & Frank, 2003). Longitudinal data reveal that the number of promotions and how much wage growth that occurs with each promotion varies

considerably between men and women with each promotion being associated with lower wage growth for women (vs. men) in their mid to peak career years (Addison et al., 2014).

There are a few ways to improve gender equity in compensation. For starters, transparent salary negotiations (i.e., outlining a range of possible values; Mazei et al., 2015), presenting negotiations as opportunities to ask, and employees' increased experience in negotiations facilitate gender equity in salary negotiations (Mazei et al., 2015; Small, Gelfand, Babcock, & Gettman, 2007), as does making it clear that engaging in negotiations is acceptable (Kugler et al., 2018). Moreover, for organizations, promoting wage transparency, that is, publishing men and women's aggregate salaries diminishes the gender pay gap (Castilla, 2015). Pay equity legislation works to reduce the gender wage gap (e.g., Singh & Peng, 2010). Organizations must ensure that the gender wage gap is not mitigated through reducing salary growth for men but rather through an increase in pay for women (Bennedsen, Simintzi, Tsoutsoura, & Wolfenzon, 2018; Cullen & Pakzad-Hurson, 2019).

Furthermore, mentoring may promote gender equity in compensation. A meta-analysis reveals that those who have been mentored receive higher compensation than those who have not been mentored (Allen et al., 2004). Specifically, women benefit from having (vs. not having) high status mentors (i.e., powerful men within organizations that are dominated by men) in terms of compensation (Dougherty, Dreher, Arunachalam, & Wilbanks, 2013; Ramaswami, Dreher, Bretz, & Wiethoff, 2010). However, having a senior (vs. same status) mentor affects compensation more strongly for men than for women (Kay & Wallace, 2009). Thus, although mentoring is beneficial in improving compensation, it is also subject to gender inequities.

Additional facilitators of gender equity in compensation include the organizational context and various HR practices and policies. Meta-analytic evidence shows that the gender gap in rewards (e.g., salary, bonuses, and number of promotions) is reduced when there are more women in authority positions responsible for allocating rewards (Joshi et al., 2015). Additionally, commendation (i.e., formal recognition) from organizational leaders and increased access to opportunities for authority are suggested to help facilitate gender equity in compensation (Bishu & Alkadry, 2017; Yoder, 2001). Moreover, given how consequential the job segregation between men and women during hiring is for the gender pay gap (Kalantari, 1995; Thomaskovic-Devey, 1993), organizational efforts to combat this initial segregation should have positive implications for women's subsequent career ladders and compensation outcomes (DiPrete & Soule, 1988). For instance, organizations can track which jobs women get initially slotted into, their initial salaries, and ensure that they are provided developmental opportunities, and accordingly, adjust their job structures and compensation systems to mitigate the job segregation-induced compensation gap (Kalantari, 1995). Finally, organizational diversity goals facilitate higher pay for women, compared with men, though this appears to be specifically the case for high-potential women, who the organization needs to retain (Leslie, Manchester, & Dahm, 2017).

### 6.1. *Summary*

Substantial gender inequities are found in relation to compensation (Joshi et al., 2015), which are largely a result of industry, occupational segregation, job type, and a lack of promoting women, as well as interpersonal bias. Women's lower likelihood of negotiating salaries contributes to the gender pay gap; however, they are not rewarded equitably when they do negotiate. It appears that gender inequities in pay may be mitigated when women hold high ranks within organizations and with tracking and publishing wage data. Furthermore, gender inequities in compensation can be mitigated through mentoring, wage transparency, and job assignment.

## 7. Exiting the workplace

Gender inequities persist to the end of the employee lifecycle within an organization. In this section, we review the literature on gender inequities in exit from a given organization. Exit may be a result of turnover, which can be either involuntary (i.e., job dismissal, layoffs) or voluntary (i.e., quitting) or due to retirement. Exit can contribute to gender inequities because attrition is one means through which homophily is produced in workplaces, for instance, the inability of male-dominated organizations to retain their female workers (Ployhart, Weekley, & Baughman, 2006). Furthermore, involuntary job loss has a host of negative economic, career, and psychological negative outcomes (Brand, 2015).

The emerging consensus is that gender difference in voluntary turnover is minimal (Rubenstein, Eberly, Lee, & Mitchell, 2018), but gender inequities emerge among some groups and in certain organizational contexts. For example, meta-analytic evidence suggests there are no gender differences in voluntary turnover overall (Griffeth, Hom, & Gaertner, 2000; Rubenstein et al., 2018), but there is strong evidence that women are more likely than men to quit for family reasons (Lee, 2012; Sicherman, 1996). Multiple barriers to gender equity may be at work to produce this gender difference, such as bias against expecting mothers (vs. fathers, aka the maternal wall; Paustian-Underdahl, Eaton, Mandeville, & Little, 2019) and individuals' work-family conflict (Borelli et al., 2017; Byron, 2005; McElwain, Korabik, & Rosin, 2005; Shockley et al., 2017). There is some evidence that female leaders are leaving their organizations at higher rates than usual during and post pandemic and at rates higher than male leaders due to family pressures (McKinsey & Company, 2022). As well, women are more likely than men to frequently enter and leave the workplace, resulting in more disrupted career trajectories (Ortega-Liston & Soto, 2014). One large scale study found that minority women were more likely to quit their jobs than were White women or visible minority and White men (Hom, Roberson, & Ellis, 2008). The gender composition of an organization is also a significant predictor of women choosing to leave, with a lower representation of women related to lower feelings of fit and higher turnover among women (Rubenstein et al., 2018 cf., Hom et al., 2008), and higher collective employee turnover over time (Maurer & Qureshi, 2020).

Regarding involuntary turnover, research on job dismissals suggests that individual characteristics, such as gender, have less

influence on people's likelihood of being fired than indicators of performance (Stumpf & Dawley, 1981; Wanous, Stumpf, & Bedrosian, 1979). Indeed, the effect of gender on job dismissals appears to be small overall (Wanous et al., 1979), and although individual studies have found that men may be more likely to get fired than women (Keith & McWilliams, 1999), the inverse has been found as well (Gupta, Mortal, Silveri, Sun, & Turban, 2020). Recent, robust evidence on CEO dismissals (Gupta et al., 2020) shows that female CEOs are significantly more likely to be dismissed than male CEOs, but only when firm performance is high. In terms of organizational downsizing, women typically experience higher displacement rates than men (Farber, 1997; Kalev, 2014), perhaps because women tend to occupy lower positions and have shorter tenure, which are factors that determine layoffs (Kalev, 2014). Inequities are further compounded by the finding that, among those who are laid off because of downsizing, White men tend to find new, and better employment more rapidly than women or racial minorities (Spalter-Roth & Deitch, 1999).

Societal periods of economic recession often result in widespread layoffs that can affect genders differently, depending on which sectors or industries are most affected. Historically, recessions in advanced economies have resulted in men's jobs being disproportionately affected, as jobs were lost in construction and manufacturing (e.g., the Great Recession of 2007-2009; Alon, Coskun, Doepke, Koll, & Tertilt, 2021). However, the global recession triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in global job loss rates that are 1.8 times higher for women than men (International Labour Organization, 2020; Madgavkar, White, Krishnan, Mahajan, & Azcue, 2020), as women comprise most of the workforce in the industries most affected by the pandemic (e.g., accommodation and food services, retail; Madgavkar et al., 2020). In addition, increased childcare burdens during the pandemic due to widespread school closures, have been associated with a greater decrease in labour force participation among mothers than fathers (Collins, Ruppanner, Landivar, & Scarborough, 2021; McKinsey & Company, 2020). Experts suggest that many of these dropouts may become permanent, especially if women lose skills, face bias in rehiring, or if recovery is slow (Madgavkar et al., 2020).

In Canada and the United States, women appear to retire approximately two years before men, on average (Munnell & Drucker, 2015; Statistics Canada, 2016). Given the impact that age at retirement can have on retirement income and thus retirement satisfaction (Quick & Moen, 1998), it is important to consider the factors which contribute to this gender gap. Retirement decisions are related to women's caregiving roles, their partners' health, wealth, and financial responsibilities, as well as the age and retirement status of one's spouse (see Fisher, Chaffee, & Sonnega, 2016 for a review). Thus, women appear to make retirement decisions influenced by their home life demands and potential resources. More research is needed to understand inequities in the retirement gender gap and thus organizations' role in achieving gender equity.

Several organizational factors can help mitigate gender inequities in leaving the organization. In times of downsizing, when organizations use individualized performance evaluations, as opposed to position or tenure, to determine who is laid off, decisions are more equitable across men and women (Kalev, 2014). A supportive work-family climate is associated with lower turnover intentions among women, due to reduced experiences of work-family conflict (Gordon et al., 2007). Furthermore, women are less likely to leave an organization when more women are employed at their job level (Elvira & Cohen, 2001). Moreover, greater training and developmental opportunities are associated with lower turnover intentions among women (Singh et al., 2013). Finally, formal mentorship programs help retain women in male-dominated work environments (Farkas et al., 2019).

### *7.1. Summary*

In terms of employee exit from the organization, gender inequities are found in CEO dismissals when organizations are performing well, during organizational downsizing, and in retirement. Further, societal forces, such as the economic recession triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic has disproportionately resulted in higher job loss rates for women compared with men. To promote the retention of women in the workforce, organizations must implement procedural systems to increase fairness in layoff decisions, increase feelings of trust and fit among women employees, and provide a supportive work-family climate.

## 8. Broad initiatives to promote gender equity

Thus far, we have discussed ways to promote gender equity for a particular organizational domain or practice (e.g., the interview). However, broad sweeping initiatives for creating gender equity in the workplace can also be employed, including the use of affirmative action (AA), employment equity (EE), diversity initiatives (DI), as well as promoting a positive diversity climate. In this section, we will review the efficacy of such initiatives and barriers to their effective enactment.

### *8.1. Affirmative action, employment equity, and diversity initiatives*

Legislation to reduce discrimination can successfully increase gender equity, as is exemplified by affirmative action (AA) and employment equity (EE). AA and EE are government mandated programs (applied to only some organizations), which require that the numerical representation of target or beneficiary groups (e.g., women) within the qualified candidate pool be compared to those hired or promoted. When differences in representation are found, a plan is created to reduce them, which can involve a variety of programs (e.g., targeted recruiting). AA programs effectively increase the representation of women, including Black and Latina women, in organizations in the USA (Kurtulus, 2012; Leonard, 1984a), and the representation of women, including Black women, in management positions (Bloch, Taylor, Church and Buck, 2021; Hirsh & Cha, 2017). Similarly, EE programs have led to an increase in the proportion of women in Canadian organizations (Jain, Lawler, Bai, & Lee, 2010; Stewart & Drakich, 1995), including minority, Aboriginal, and disabled women (Jain et al., 2010); and in management positions (Leck & Saunders, 1992), and have led to increased compensation for women (Leck, St.-Onge, & Lalancette, 1995). However, AA and EE programs are not uniformly successful. For instance, affirmative

action in the United States has done little to affect the hiring and promotion of women in policing (Miller & Segal, 2012), perhaps due to poor enforcement of the policies (Lee, 2005). AA and EE are more effective when: there's a specific plan (Kalev, Dobbin, & Kelly, 2006; Leck & Saunders, 1992), more ambitious goals are set (Leonard, 1984b), with specific timetables and audits (Leck et al., 1995), and there's an individual or team responsible to monitor the progress of the plan (Kalev et al., 2006).

Other broad organizational initiatives to promote gender equity involve Diversity Initiatives (DI), which are implemented voluntarily and thus have the potential for broader reach. DIs aim to correct for discrimination and better integrate employees who belong to marginalized groups (Dobbin & Kalev, 2013). The efficacy of DI depends on the type of program. Diversity training is the most popular form of DI, yet it is not the most effective for increasing the representation and promotions of women or other groups in the workplace (Dobbin, Kalev, & Kelly, 2007; Naff & Kellough, 2003). While some forms of diversity training can lead to more positive attitudes toward diversity, meta-analyses reveal that these effects diminish over time (Bezrukova, Spell, Perry, & Jehn, 2016; Kalinoski et al., 2013). There is some promising indication that, within university settings, implicit bias training that aims to increase awareness of automatic or subtle expressions of prejudice can reduce gender implicit bias (Girod et al., 2016), and increase the number of female faculty hired (Devine et al., 2017; Sheridan, Fine, Pribbenow, Handelsman, & Carnes, 2010). Clearly, more research is needed on the efficacy of diversity training to determine what types and for which outcomes it is most and least beneficial. Moreover, it has been found that targeted recruitment and formal mentoring programs successfully increase the representation of women (Kalev et al., 2006). However, networking and diversity training show smaller and inconsistent effects (Dobbin et al., 2007). Overall, having diversity-related goals, policies, or practices can mitigate gender inequities in women's hiring (e.g., Sheridan et al., 2010), promotions (Virick & Greer, 2012), and compensation under some conditions (Leslie et al., 2017). The continuous monitoring of aggregate data and setting equity goals encourages the ongoing detection of discrimination, thereby promoting the improvement of organizational practices to produce more equitable outcomes (Crosby, 1982; Virick & Greer, 2012).

#### *8.1.1. Resistance to affirmative action, employment equity, and diversity initiatives*

Despite the potential efficacy of AA, EE, and DI, they are often met with resistance and disparaged for having unintended consequences that could impede the goal of creating a more diverse, inclusive organization (Dover et al., 2019). We tackle the evidence on different concerns surrounding these initiatives and how they might be managed below.

First, experimental research suggests that people are likely to assume that discrimination is eliminated and that procedures are fair simply because such programs exist (Brady, Kaiser, Major, & Kirby, 2015; Kirby, Kaiser, & Major, 2015). Thus, it is important for employees to understand the ongoing need for diversity management and the elimination of discrimination. Second, AA, EE, and DI are often criticized for being unfair. Meta-analyses reveal that the strongest correlate of negative attitudes toward AA is perceptions of unfairness (Harrison et al., 2006). On the one hand, programs are seen as more unfair by people who are more prejudiced toward potential beneficiaries (Bobocel et al., 1998), and those who are higher in explicit and implicit sexism are more opposed to them (Son Hing et al., 2011). On the other hand, even among nonprejudiced people, programs can be seen as unfair because they are perceived to violate the procedural justice principle of consistency (which requires all individuals and groups to be treated the same) or the distributive justice principle of equity (which requires that outcomes go to those who are most meritorious). Experimental research reveals that preferential treatment programs, in which a qualified target group member can be hired or promoted over a stronger non-target group member, which can be perceived as violating the consistency and equity principles, are more strongly opposed than programs that uphold these justice principles (Bobocel et al., 1998; Harrison et al., 2006; Son Hing, Bobocel, & Zanna, 2002).

To avoid potential perceptions of unfairness, one might conclude that organizations should only implement programs that are clearly consistent and equity upholding (e.g., providing mentorship to all employees), as they garner more support (Harrison et al., 2006). However, such programs may be less effective in changing representation in the workplace.

Alternatively, it should be possible to engage support for stronger programs (e.g., preferential treatment) if employees understand the need for them. Indeed, it has been found that, among those who strongly value equity, the more people believe that beneficiaries typically face discrimination in the workplace, the more they will support preferential treatment because it is seen to hire and promote undervalued target group members (Son Hing et al., 2011).

Third, some scholars caution against the use of DI and similar programs because they may cause others to see beneficiaries, and for them to see themselves, as receiving undeserving assistance (Caleo & Heilman, 2019; Dover et al., 2019). A meta-analysis of largely laboratory experiments clearly reveals that learning about the existence of AA programs (vs. control) leads people (including targets) to evaluate beneficiaries as less competent; however, the presence of AA programs has no effect on objective measures of performance (Leslie et al., 2014). Large-scale field studies reveal that the adoption of AA does not result in the hiring of less competent women or lower performance evaluations of women versus men (Holzer & Neumark, 2000), perhaps because of expanded efforts involving targeted recruitment, broadening of selection criteria, and extra training for employees (Holzer & Neumark, 1998). Thus, although AA/EE, and DI can call into question the competence of beneficiaries in line with societal stereotypes, this does not appear to translate to lower subjective or objective job performance in actual organizations.

### *8.2. Positive diversity climate*

Gender equity can be promoted with a positive diversity climate, that is, when people perceive that marginalized groups, including women, are well represented in the organization, treated fairly, socially included, and are not discriminated against (King, Hebl, George, & Matusik, 2010; Mor Barak, Cherin, & Berkman, 1998; Pugh, Dietz, Brief, & Wiley, 2008; Sakr, Son Hing, & Gonazález-Morales, 2023). Women who perceive a more positive diversity climate experience less conflict with coworkers and managers, as well as higher job engagement and lower burnout (Sliter, Boyd, Sinclair, Cheung, & McFadden, 2014). As well, more positive diversity

climates are associated with lower perceived discrimination for various marginalized groups, including women (Boehm et al., 2014), in addition to lower experienced discrimination and sexual harassment (Sakr et al., 2023). A positive diversity climate can benefit all employees, as those who perceive a more positive diversity climate, have better performance, higher well-being, and lower turnover intentions (Holmes IV et al., 2020). However, there is mixed evidence for the effects of a positive diversity climate on the representation of marginalized group members, such as women, in leadership positions (Oberfield, 2016; Sakr et al., 2023). More research is needed to highlight how a positive diversity climate shapes other workplace outcomes for women (e.g., turnover, retirement) and how other strategic organizational climates (e.g., inclusion, psychological safety) contribute to reducing gender inequities.

### 8.3. Summary

The research reveals that organizational programs, such as affirmative action, employment equity, and diversity initiatives can effectively reduce gender inequities if they are implemented with clear targets and with continuous monitoring. It is also clear that some programs (e.g., mentoring) are more effective than others (e.g., diversity training). Given societal stereotypes of women's lower competence, it is important that the meritocracy of, and need for, such programs be emphasized. Moreover, the evidence demonstrates that organizations should strive to create a more positive diversity climate, as it has the potential to have widespread positive consequences for gender equity.

## 9. Discussion

Having reviewed the literature on gender inequities within various organizational domains and practices spanning the employee lifecycle, we are able to integrate the findings to better understand the processes that create, propagate, and mitigate gender inequities. To illustrate these insights, we have inductively created a *Model of Cumulative Gender Inequities in the Workplace* (see Fig. 1). In this Discussion section, we describe our model and use it to elucidate and integrate key findings from our literature review. In addition, we identify gaps in the existing literature (see Table 1), and provide an agenda for future research and some clear areas of focus for practitioners. Finally, we discuss how, considering the cumulative nature of gender inequities, organizations and researchers can benefit from a broader understanding of employee merit.

### 9.1. Theoretical contributions and calls for future research

Our review of the literature has led us to create a model of gender inequities that develop from cumulative processes across the employee lifespan and that cascade across multiple levels: societal, organizational, interpersonal, and individual (see Fig. 1). The societal level refers to factors and processes occurring at the national or subnational level that reflect or produce gender equities, such

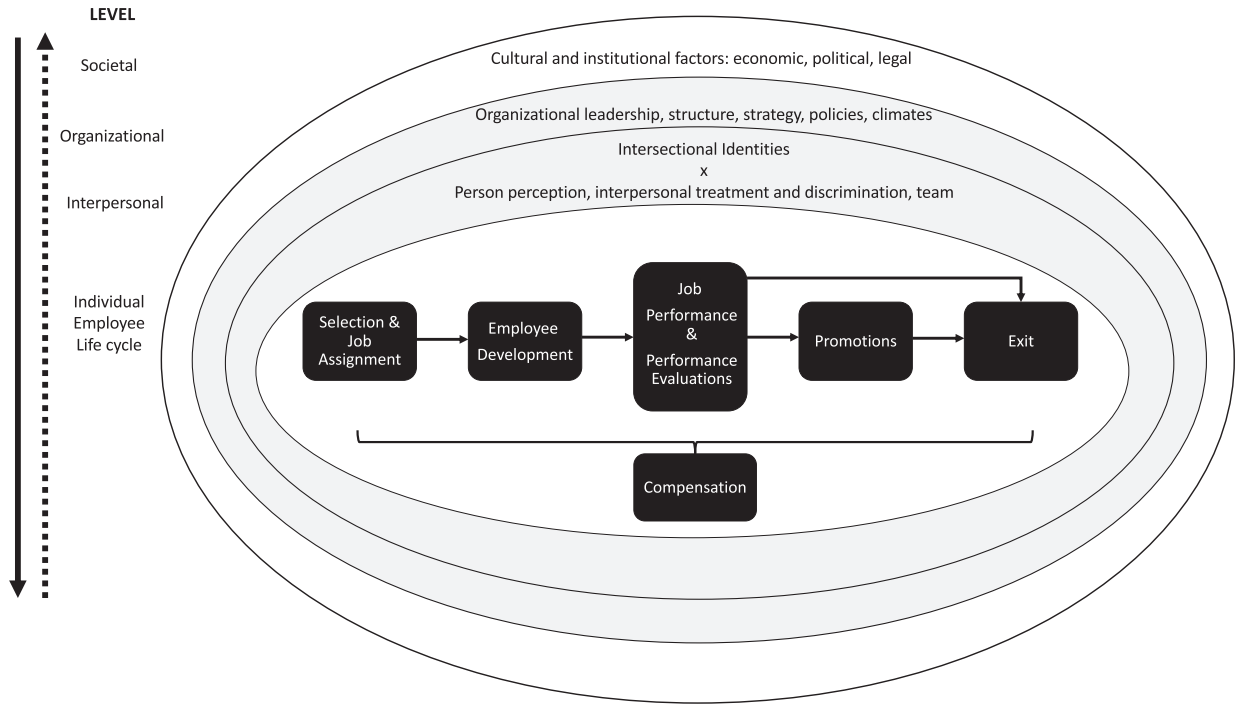



**Fig. 1.** Model of Cumulative Gender Inequities in the Workplace.

**Table 1**
Strength of Evidence for Effects of Organizational Initiatives on Gender (In)equities.

| Initiatives for Gender Equity | Organizational Domain or Practice | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Hiring | Sexual Harassment | Work-Life Conflict | Employee Development | Performance Evaluations | Promotions & Leadership | Compensation | Exit |
| Women's Representation | Strong | Strong | Some | | Strong | Mixed | Strong | Some |
| Sexual Harass Climate | | Strong | | | | | | |
| Supportive Work-family Climate | Some | | Strong | | | Some | | Strong |
| Affirmative Action & EE | Strong | | | | | Strong | Strong | |
| Diversity Targets & Monitoring | Some | | | | | Some | Strong | |
| Diversity Training | Some | | | | | Mixed | | |
| Mentorship | Strong | | Some | Strong | | Strong | Strong | Some |
| Merit-Based HR Practices | Strong | Strong | | | Strong | Strong | Strong | Some |
| Diversity Climate | | | | | | Mixed | | Some |
| Women in Leadership | Strong | Strong | | | Strong | Strong | Strong | Some |

*Note.* No evidence | Mixed evidence | Some evidence | Strong evidence

as cultural, economic, political, or legal factors (e.g., gender differences in childcare and household labour). The organizational level refers to factors and processes occurring at the organizational, department, or unit level, such as organizational climate and leadership. The interpersonal level refers to processes at the team or dyad level, which involves how people perceive, evaluate, and treat one another, which can involve discrimination, and which are contingent upon people's intersectional identities. Finally, the individual level involves employees' opportunities and outcomes over the employee lifecycle and how this determines their compensation. The solid downward-pointing arrow in Fig. 1 illustrates top-down processes whereby factors—including gender inequities—at a higher level can influence gender inequities at a lower level. The literature provides strong evidence for top-down processes. The dotted, upward-pointing arrow illustrates that bottom-up processes are also possible. However, the evidence for such bottom-up processes, particularly those related to producing *gender equity*, is weaker.

#### *9.1.1. Individual-level*

This review allows us to see that, at the individual level, gender inequities in the workplace emerge as a result of cumulative processes over time, as indicated by the right facing arrows within Fig. 1. The literature reveals great gender inequities in selection that prevent women's entry to the workplace (Quadlin, 2018). Moreover, among those selected, gender inequities in the assignment of men and women to different jobs within the organization has implications for their possibility for promotion (DiPrete & Soule, 1988). Similarly, gender inequities in developmental opportunities lead to gender inequities in promotions (Francis, 2017; Lyness & Thompson, 2000). There is also evidence that gender inequities occur in the link between performance evaluations and promotion opportunities with women having to demonstrate higher performance to get promoted (Lyness & Heilman, 2006). Finally, developmental opportunities, which are inequitably distributed, affect women's turnover from organizations (Farkas et al., 2019; Singh et al., 2013). Thus, there is much evidence that processes creating gender inequities can accumulate over an employee's lifecycle (see also Van Dijk, Kooij, Karanika-Murray, De Vos, & Meyer, 2020). Although we illustrate the employee life cycle as a linear process, it is also possible that recursive or feedback loops might occur. For instance, gender inequities in performance evaluations could affect motivation and subsequently gender inequities in performance.

To explicitly investigate individual-level cumulative processes, first and foremost, long-term longitudinal studies tracking new job incumbents from entry to exit are needed to study how gender inequities cumulate over the course of one's career and how such processes can be disrupted. One aspect of the employee lifecycle in particular need of investigation is whether providing women with development opportunities positively affects their rates of promotion. Although this strategy is often heralded (Hopkins et al., 2008), its efficacy is yet untested. Furthermore, building upon qualitative work (e.g., Carbajal, 2018; Soklaridis et al., 2017), it is important to systematically study the ways in which women, against the odds, strategize, problem solve, and work collectively to make headway in their careers. Finally, future research is needed on gender inequities in retention (or voluntary turnover). While much is known about

what job attitudes (e.g., organizational commitment, job satisfaction) predict turnover in general (e.g., Podsakoff, LePine, & LePine, 2007; Tett & Meyer, 1993), little is known about the differential drivers of women's (vs. men's) decisions to turnover (cf., Farkas et al., 2019; Singh et al., 2013). As suggested by a large-scale report of American and Canadian workers (McKinsey & Company, 2022), do unmanageable workloads, diversity climate, and a desire for flexibility predict voluntary turnover more strongly for women than for men?

Our review of the literature further reveals that gender inequities in pay can be attributed to a myriad of gender inequities that cumulate throughout the employee lifecycle regarding selection to different job titles and descriptions, with women being placed in less technical, lower status roles (Quadlin, 2018), differences in negotiations and recommendations for starting salaries (Koch et al., 2015; Kugler et al., 2018), differential access to critical training and work opportunities (e.g., Francis, 2017), different likelihoods of promotion (Blau & Devaro, 2007), differential access to powerful networks and mentors (Cross et al., 2019), and differences in pay raises associated with promotions (Booth et al., 2003). Additional support for the cumulative nature of gender inequities is the finding that the gender pay gap widens from youth to middle age (Dowell, 2022). Longitudinal field research is needed to track whether the introduction of merit-based HR policies or programs helps diminish the gender pay gap.

However, we also find that some organizational practices have greater implications for compensation than do others. Much of the gender inequities in compensation can be attributed to gender differences in industry, occupation, job ladders, education, tenure, and promotion rate (Kalantari, 1995; Pelletier et al., 2019), as well as gender differences in full-time/part-time status (Pay Equity Commission of Ontario, 2020). As well, in male-dominated organizations and/or at higher levels within an organization, gender inequities in performance evaluations can contribute to gender inequities in pay. In contrast, in more gender balanced workplaces, gender inequities in compensation are mitigated (Koch et al., 2015). Finally, there is mixed evidence in the literature as to whether high performance evaluations or strong organizational performance is more beneficial for men's compensation than women's (Gerhart, 1990; Kronberg, 2020). Multi-level, longitudinal research is needed to test (a) whether men are paid more for performance than are women, particularly at different points of an employee's career trajectory (e.g., after hiring, mid-career), and (b) which organizational factors (e.g., workforce demographic diversity, HR policies) might condition these effects.

#### *9.1.2. Interpersonal-level*

At the interpersonal level, we find evidence that how people perceive and treat one another based on their gender plays an important role in creating inequities. Evidence of rater bias is found during screening (Quadlin, 2018), in providing feedback (King et al., 2012), and when assessing subordinates for advancement (Hoobler et al., 2009; King, 2008). For male-dominated occupations, raters show biases when evaluating job candidates (Koch et al., 2015) and when evaluating performance (Joshi et al., 2015). Our review also reveals the important role mentors can play in reducing women's work-life conflict (Nielson et al., 2001), and increasing their promotions, compensation (Allen et al., 2004), and career success (Lyness & Thompson, 2000). Inconsistent with previous models (Stamarski & Son Hing, 2015), we review meta-analytic findings that individual differences in sexism among raters do not drive discrimination effects in selection or performance evaluation (Jones et al., 2017). This suggests that processes at higher levels of the model (e.g., societal, organizational) can affect interpersonal processes unmediated by individual differences in prejudice. Thus, future research should test cultural gender stereotype activation and application as mediating mechanisms of gender inequities in selection, compensation, and promotions (see Sinclair & Kunda, 2000 and Phelan, Link, & Dovidio, 2008 as examples to follow) and confirm that these stereotyping processes operate independently of raters' explicit and implicit sexism.

As indicated in our model (see Fig. 1), the literature reveals the importance of taking an intersectional perspective when investigating gender inequities. In line with the double jeopardy hypothesis, many studies find that racialized women have worse outcomes than White women, such as ratings of lower hireability (Eaton et al., 2020), lower performance evaluations (Chávez & Mitchell, 2020) higher voluntary turnover rates (Hom et al., 2008), lower earnings (Block et al., 2019), and lower representation in leadership (McKinsey & Company, 2022). Furthermore, visible minority women and Indigenous women report experiencing more discrimination (Nangia & Arora, 2021; Waite, 2021), ethnic harassment at work (Berdahl & Moore, 2006), and work-life conflict (Hamidullah & Riccucci, 2017) than White women and White and minority men. In addition, not surprisingly, it appears that the effects of intersectional identities depend upon (a) the specific stereotypes of different (e.g., ethno-racial) groups, which can produce positive or negative outcomes for women (Hall et al., 2019; Purdie-Vaughns & Eibach, 2008), and (b) the requirements of the job (Kulik et al., 2007). This provides support for MOSAIC and intersectional invisibility perspectives. However, findings do not always consistently show that women with additional marginalized identities do worse (Correll et al., 2007; Rosette & Livingston, 2012). Furthermore, it is important to remember that the gender gap is stronger among Whites than among those with racialized identities because White men experience such positive outcomes in the workplace, compared with all others (Block et al., 2019; McKinsey & Company, 2022; Misra & Murray-Close, 2014). Hence, intersectionality effects are complex and varied.

Our review of the literature reveals multiple issues in relation to the theorizing and testing of intersectionality (Bauer et al., 2021; McCall, 2005). First, researchers testing the double jeopardy hypothesis should clearly explicate if they expect additive or multiplicative effects of group membership (Berdahl & Moore, 2006), report the tests of main and interactive effects (Warner, 2008), and not simply compare extreme groups, such as Black women versus White men. Second, in line with others (Else-Quest & Hyde, 2016), we suggest that researchers should test intersectional effects from a theory driven perspective, rather than a seemingly exploratory manner. Stereotype content models (Cuddy et al., 2008) can be informative, given the multitude of potential intersecting identities that are relevant. We call on researchers to test other ethno-racial identities that are often ignored (e.g., Arab, South Asian, East Asian), as well as other marginalized identities, such disability and Indigeneity. Future research is also needed to examine how gender inequities manifest for trans men and women and for gender non-binary and queer individuals (Schilt and Wiswall, 2008). One topic in particular need of investigation with an intersectional lens is sexual harassment with a focus on gender and ethno-racial identity, disability,

gender expression, and sexual orientation.

Given statistical power issues and the complexity of the phenomena, research on intersectionality can benefit from using mixed-method approaches (Agénor, 2020; Bowleg & Bauer, 2016). To address a common research question, researchers should employ surveys of large-scale organizations (e.g., civil service, army) to obtain the sample sizes needed when considering multiple marginalized identities. In addition, experimental studies can be employed to test the main and interactive effects of multiple marginalized identities on evaluators' judgments and how this is mediated by stereotype activation and application. Large scale audit studies can be employed to test how intersectional effects might vary based on societal and legislative contexts (e.g., Tilcsik, 2011). Finally, qualitative methods, such as experiential thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2012) and interpretive phenomenological analysis (Smith & Fieldsend, 2021) can be employed, so that we might learn how the intersection of identities affect people's lived experiences.

#### *9.1.3. Organizational-level*

Organizational level factors are clearly associated with gender inequities at the interpersonal level and at the individual level. There are multiple initiatives that organizations undertake to mitigate gender inequities in a variety of organizational domains and practices. We have created a table to review the strength of the research evidence for each of these factors (see Table 1). More robust effects are indicated with deeper shading.

First, there is good evidence for the success of some organizational initiatives across several domains (black cells). For instance, an intolerant organizational climate for sexual harassment is associated with women experiencing less sexual harassment (Willness et al., 2007). Furthermore, organizational-level factors, such as having a more gender balanced (vs. male-dominated) work environment, leads to more equitable outcomes for women spanning multiple HR processes, namely hiring (Cohen et al., 1998; Koch et al., 2015), performance evaluations (Joshi et al., 2015), promotion decisions (Cohen et al., 1998; Gorman & Kmec, 2009), and compensation (Koch et al., 2015). In addition, we find that greater gender equity in leadership positions within an organization has cascading effects on gender equity for individual employees. When organizations have more women in positions of leadership, they have greater gender equity in hiring (Gorman & Kmec, 2009), in women promoted to leadership and management positions (Gorman & Kmec, 2009; Ng & Sears, 2017; Virick & Greer, 2012), in performance evaluations and compensation (Cohen & Huffman, 2007; Joshi et al., 2015), as well as increased gender integration over time (Huffman, Cohen, & Pearlman, 2010).

To build upon these well documented findings, we call upon researchers to conduct more longitudinal research with cross-lagged study designs to test the causal effects of these workplace initiatives on mitigating gender inequities and to explore mediating mechanisms. Such methodologies will help to rule out the possibility of reverse causation (e.g., that being harassed more leads women to see their workplace climate as less tolerant of sexual harassment) or third variables as causal forces (e.g., a positive diversity climate; Sakr et al., 2023). For instance, future research should test if having women in top positions of leadership causes greater gender equities in hiring, promotions, and compensation because they help to create gender-equitable policies and practices, more work-family friendly climates, or more intolerant climates for sexual harassment. As well, researchers might test if female leaders promote gender equity through their ability to make strategic decisions that affect the organization (Finkelstein, Hambrick, & Cannella, 2009), because they are seen as a source of validation and of support for women throughout the organization (Ely, 1994), because they help with the attraction, selection, and attrition of women and male allies (see Schneider, 1983), or because organizational decision makers develop new prototypes of successful leaders.

Second, some organizational initiatives have some (see dark grey cells) or mixed (see light grey cells) empirical support for their effects on gender (in)equity. An examination of Table 1 reveals that more research is needed on the organizational factors that can mitigate gender inequities in exit, given that women's turnover has major implications for their career trajectories, earnings, and pensions (Ortega-Liston & Soto, 2014; Quick & Moen, 1998). Table 1 further reveals that there are mixed findings regarding the effects of (a) women's representation within an organization, (b) diversity training, and (c) diversity climates on gender equity in promotions and in leadership. To move our understanding forward of such phenomena, multi-organization research with a longitudinal perspective is needed, as the effects of such initiatives on the promotion of women to leadership involve processes that require time (e.g., human capital development). Where there is sufficient previous research, meta-analyses would be beneficial, especially if they test moderators, such as the male-dominance of the industry or features of diversity training (e.g., duration, integration within larger diversity management programs).

Finally, a review of Table 1 demonstrates that the efficacy of many organizational initiatives to reduce various forms of gender inequity are yet untested (see white cells). Two broad areas in need of investigation are gender inequities in developmental opportunities and in performance evaluations in male-dominated workplaces. Additionally, given that experiences of sexual harassment as either a victim or an observer has negative consequences for stress, job attitudes, work withdrawal and performance (Laband & Lentz, 1998; Willness et al., 2007), we call on researchers to test the impact of sexual harassment climate on gender inequities in the workplace. Research can investigate whether, in male-dominated workplaces, creating a more intolerant sexual harassment climate leads to less sexual harassment and therefore greater gender equity in performance, and promotions, and therefore in leadership because women can perform to their full potential. As well, researchers should test whether creating a supportive work-family climate can increase women's access to career development opportunities, better performance evaluations, and subsequently their rates of promotion and compensation because (a) they experience less conflict, and (b) organizational decision makers' negative expectations of mothers are challenged. Finally, researchers should broadly test the effects of promoting a more positive diversity climate on gender inequities. For instance, can a more positive diversity climate lead to greater gender equity in compensation, promotions, and representation in leadership and more so than other initiatives for women with multiple marginalized identities?

#### 9.1.4. Societal-level

This review reveals that gender inequities in society, meaning economic, political, legal, cultural, and institutional factors can have cascading consequences for gender inequities through multiple organizational spheres and at the individual level. For instance, it appears that continuing gender imbalances in household labour and societal expectations for motherhood versus fatherhood contribute to women experiencing more family-to-work conflict than men (e.g., Duxbury & Higgins, 2001), as well gender inequities in the selection process (Heilman & Okimoto, 2008; Morgan et al., 2013), in advancement to leadership (Hurley & Choudhary, 2016), and in turnover (Lee, 2012). To provide more definitive evidence for the role of societal forces, multi-level research testing how factors, such as national differences in legislation for, and use of, parental leave affects work-family climate and gender equity in promotions and turnover.

In addition, throughout our review, we see evidence that, given societal gender stereotypes of women's lower competence, gender inequities are larger when women hold jobs that are more complex, more masculine-typed, or that have higher status (Eagly & Karau, 2002), which is seen in HR processes spanning: hiring (Isaac et al., 2009; Quadlin, 2018), evaluations of competence (Koch et al., 2015), promotion decisions (Blau & Devaro, 2007; Joshi et al., 2015; c.f., Koch et al., 2015), ascension to leadership positions (Lyness & Heilman, 2006; Wang et al., 2018), and compensation (Koch et al., 2015). Unfortunately, whether cultural differences in stereotypes indeed drive these effects cannot be directly inferred, as this is typically not tested. To test these propositions in the future, multi-level, cross cultural comparisons are needed to test the role of cultural stereotypes in producing or moderating these processes.

Furthermore, we have noted a few instances of how societal forces (i.e., the Me-Too Movement; COVID-19) can affect gender equities. However, studies of organizational psychology typically ignore broad contextual factors. There is a great need for research and theoretical integration with neighboring fields (e.g., industrial relations, organizational sociology, economics, law) to better understand how societal level factors may facilitate or mitigate gender inequities at work. At a minimum, research papers should clearly articulate external contextual factors that may serve as boundary conditions for the phenomena of investigation.

### 9.2. Practical contributions

Despite some unknowns, based on the strength of the evidence reviewed in the current paper, we have some suggestions for what practitioners should focus on to promote gender equity and the means through which to do so. First, practitioners should be aware that structuring clear and merit-based formal HR practices (e.g., for hiring, compensation, and performance evaluations) can facilitate gender equity. Structuring HR practices can be done by establishing clear and transparent methods for evaluating merit, by creating structures that minimize bias and discrimination, and by offering formal programs to all or specifically to marginalized groups, such as women. For instance, anonymous hiring (Hausman, 2012), structured interviews (Alonso et al., 2017), reducing cognitive load and the time between observations and ratings of performance (Martell, 1991), 360-degree feedback for performance evaluation (Millmore et al., 2007), the use of assessment centers (Dean et al., 2008), more open salary negotiations (Mazei et al., 2015), and formal mentorship programs (Hopkins et al., 2008), are all found to mitigate gender inequities.

Second, practitioners should be aware of the importance of women in leadership as a facilitator of gender equity throughout an organization (e.g., Huffman et al., 2010). To help promote women to leadership, they need to receive the necessary developmental opportunities and mentorship. In addition, organizations should set clear goals for the representation of women in leadership, monitor promotion processes and outcomes, openly report progress toward goals, and reward those who advance upon this goal.

### 9.3. Gender equity and implications of cumulative processes for merit

In this paper, we have gone beyond reviews of *gender inequalities* (see Stamarski & Son Hing, 2015) in the workplace to more specifically determine if those differences reflect *gender inequities*. In other words, to what extent are the gender differences that we see within organizations undeserved? To address this question, we reviewed findings from large scale field studies that demonstrate where *gender inequalities* exist and augmented them with findings from audit studies and laboratory experiments that tightly control for men's versus women's merit that demonstrate when gender discrimination is found. This approach allows us to make conclusions about *gender inequities* that are rooted in robust empirical evidence.

We have argued that organizations should focus on increasing gender equity rather than gender equality for merit-based reasons. However, our insights into the cumulative nature of gender inequities across the employee life cycle and of the cascading effects of gender inequities across levels of analysis calls into question how merit can best be conceived and measured. We propose that a focus on structured, merit-upholding, data-driven HR practices can help promote gender equity. However, such a strategy might not be sufficient. For example, imagine an instance wherein a senior male manager with superior qualifications is promoted ahead of a female senior manager for a C-suite position. When considered in the moment, this decision appears entirely merit-based and equitable. However, when one considers all the additional obstacles that the female candidate has faced, it calls into question whether the on-paper qualifications of the two candidates are indeed reflective of who might perform better, if given the chance and appropriate resources. Giving preference to a qualified woman, who at first glance appears "less qualified" than her male competition—perhaps because she has been denied key opportunities or experienced discrimination in the past—may indeed be the merit-based decision. Thus, organizations and researchers may need to reflect on broadening their understandings of gender equity.

### 9.4. Conclusion

Our Cumulative Gender Inequities in the Workplace Model provides some insight to why, after so many decades after women's

entry to the workplace in Canada and the United States, the ideal of gender equity has not been realized, particularly from an intersectional lens. However, our findings can also offer individuals, researchers, and organizations hope for the future of women at work. Although some areas remain sticky domains for gender inequities, there are also domains for which gender equity has arguably been achieved. Further, many of the initiatives to produce gender equity that we have identified are not only consistent with fair and meritocratic practices, but they are also consistent with organizational efforts to foster the develop``pment, well-being, and performance of their employees, regardless of gender. Moreover, while many of the barriers to gender equity appear to have cumulative effects for women, so to can the facilitators of gender equity. Equity-based initiatives to increase women's representation, particularly in leadership, can have sweeping effects across the organization.

## Author statement file

Leanne S. Son Hing: Conceptualization, Project administration, Supervision, Visualization, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing.

Nouran Sakr: Conceptualization, Writing Original Draft, Writing – Review & Editing, Visualization, Project Administration.

Jessica B. Sorenson: Conceptualization, Writing Original Draft, Writing – Review & Editing, Project Administration.

Cailin S. Stamarski: Writing Original Draft, Writing – Review & Editing.

Kiah Caniera: Writing Original Draft, Writing – Review & Editing.

Caren Colaco: Writing Revised Draft, Writing – Review & Editing.

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