

Alexis Masino, Clare Hafeman, Matthew Weaver

Dr. Smith

COME 180, Sect. B

3 May 2019

An In-Depth Look at the Gender Wage Gap

Introduction:

Imagine that a man and a woman are both in the office getting an assignment from their boss. The two have the same project, but for different clients of the same caliber. They copy each other's work, and the boss does not notice. Then, the man gets paid \$10,000 for the project, and the woman gets paid \$8,000. Why would they get paid differently for the same work? This is the problem that women face and are trying to address today. Many groups in society have started to point attention to this issue of wage equality. While the issue can include the equality of genders, in general, most of the problem lies in the pay. Throughout Secret Deodorant's #IdRatherGetPaid promotional song, the delivery of their message advocates for equal pay through the visuals and efficient tools they use.

Artifact Description:

Our artifact reflects on the issue surrounding the gender wage gap in a humorous and lighthearted manner. #IdRatherGetPaid is a short video and anthem created by deodorant and antiperspirant company Secret to help allow women to voice their opinion on the gender wage gap. The video itself begins with a woman standing in the bathroom and wishing there was a

song about female empowerment, quickly rebutting that by stating "come to think of it, I would rather get paid". That simple statement changes the entire focus to being primarily on demanding a movement to be made in order to receive equal pay. The song is a message to men, executives and those who have control over creating standard wages and is meant to be a call out for them to start taking action in achieving this goal. The way this message is conveyed is a fun, musical number that allows the audience to process the information being. There are many cameos of women in positions of authority made throughout the video, and this helps enforce the message by showing that women of all kinds want their voices to be heard. Also, the song itself is incredibly catchy, and it is hard not to get out of your head. This artifact is connected to the movement of women empowerment uniquely by fighting for something specific: equal pay. To our point, *U.S. News & World Reports* notes that while marginal strides have been made, "pay gap amounted to at least \$20,000 for nearly one in six women who discovered they made less money than their male co-workers". They assert that this study by Hired comes from a lack of "being taken seriously by company leadership" (Madell, 2019). The gender wage gap is a controversy that many people try to avoid, but this artifact brings light to the situation in a very compelling way. This contributes to this movement by demonstrating how women's work efforts are equal to men, and that their ethics should be valued and celebrated by receiving equal pay.

Critical Analysis of the Artifact:

Although many tend to believe it is nonexistent, the gender wage gap is very prevalent in today's day and age. Unless a change is made by men and corporate officials worldwide, there

will remain a gender barrier between men and women. It may be only a twenty cent per hour difference for a man versus a woman, but that twenty cents can, and does make a massive difference in the lives of each gender. In fact, “in 2018, women earned 85% of what men earned, according to a Pew Research Center analysis of median hourly earnings of both full-time and part-time workers in the United States. Based on this estimate, it would take an extra 39 days of work for women to earn what men did in 2018” (Graf, Brown, Patten, 2019). What stands out the most from this statistic is that men and women working the same job are paid such uneven wages. Although research points to the wage gap existing due to the amount of education received and work experience, it is tough not to suspect a majority of the wage gap is due to gender.

Critically thinking, our artifact has many exciting aspects that should be looked at more in depth. First of all, in the song #IdRatherGetPaid, there is a definite rhyme scheme. Although it is subtle, the rhymes are direct and have a clear message. The rhymes are intended to be catchy and short, allowing for the song to remain stuck in someone's head for a while. For example, the lyric "rather make 20 more cents, and get the same paycheck as gents" is a direct gesture to the fact that the gender wage gap exists. The lyric is descriptive enough to give out a statistic, but yet the rhyme makes it a sarcastic gesture to those watching. Many people do not recognize that the gender wage gap exists. Throughout the song, it seems that the women are not trying to make this issue a big deal, or entirely about themselves, yet the lyrics they write pack a powerful punch.

The lyrics in #IdRatherGetPaid are straightforward. A listener can tell that the singers are not trying to be subtle about their song. The singers are trying to portray their message with clear, short, and to the point messages. Another example of this is right at the beginning of the song. The music video starts with a woman in a mirror singing about how women need an "anthem" to sing that tells them they can do anything. However, after that lyric, it goes straight to the singer singing "come to think of it, I would rather get paid". The song needed to be direct and to the point in order for viewers to take into consideration the gender wage gap. Since the song is directed at men and corporate businesses, creating this catchy, convincing song might have been their best shot in order to grab their attention.

The song also uses humor more sarcastically. The main singer makes jokes throughout the lyrics, but the lyrics are more out of spite that women deserve equal pay. For example, this portion of the song injects a humorous tone to their lyrics by stating that, "if the future is female we're gonna need that money". This shows how the song is straightforwardly declaring the message, but also being able to throw in a comical effect to keep viewers engaged. Also, the song uses irony as well to help display the message. For example, the song states that "it's great that women's sports are getting more attention, but if you paid the women fairly that would truly be perfection.". This demonstrates how the song takes an ironic jab at how sports are a priority in today's society, but the female athletes that are being showcased are still being paid less than men. Also, satire is seen throughout the entire video by being a general insult to the structure of

today's society. The inequality that women endure is still active today, and this song/video does not hold back when discussing the division between the two genders.

The style of this video helps facilitate the purpose of persuading individuals to start taking action on helping eliminate the gender wage gap by being entertaining, informative and memorable. The video itself is set in an office environment where numerous different female employees are shown singing and dancing along to the message of the song. This captivates the audience by keeping people engaged with the musical appeal of the video and having a distinct melody that will have people dancing/singing along. The style of the video is also very unique since many companies, organizations and people are hesitant to speak out about the gender wage gap. Also, the song repeatedly includes many facts and argumentative points that keep viewers intrigued, pushing them to dive deeper into the issue being presented. The message is conveyed over and over again.

The audiences that the artifact is pointed towards is men and corporate officials in charge of salary. Although at the beginning of the song the main singer talks about an anthem for women, the whole purpose of the song is to find equal pay for both genders. The witty lyrics that pose sarcasm are in order to in a way annoy a male viewer who could be on the agreement that the gender wage gap does not exist. In fact, “according to an online poll of 8,566 American adults conducted in March, nearly half of men (46%) believe that the pay gap ‘is made up to serve a political purpose,’ rather than being a ‘legitimate issue’”. Moreover, “about a quarter of men ages 18 to 34 (24%) say that media reports of men and women being paid unequally are

‘fake news’" (Steinmetz). The audience is not necessarily women because most women agree on the topic of #IdRatherGetPaid. If men are the primary audience watching #IdRatherGetPaid, it could pose as hope that the gender wage gap can be eliminated. Of course, this assumes that men are made aware of the artifact and its subject matter. While the men need to see it and be made aware of the issue, they would be the group to see it with a negative connotation. As for now, the message seems not to be received well, but current campaigns could change that. Although it is a song for women to belt out together, Secret wrote and produced this song, aimed mostly at men, in order to shift and raise awareness for the gender wage gap.

The cultural norms in the video are what is up for debate. The video takes a general understanding that it is a social norm for a hard-working woman to get paid less than that of a man. The campaign to change this social norm is the fight being fought. While Congress has made baby steps towards equality, legislation was “recently passing the Paycheck Fairness Act...to close the pay gap” (Madell, 2019). For now, U.S. News advises that women of minority race and sexuality determine the value of their labor, try for a higher salary, and support governmental actions in their favor (Madell, 2019). Advocates should be aware of these ideas as they continue to push for a change in legislation.

While the message is not going to change minds in one night, it can at least get them to start observing/recognizing the issue a little more. The campaign's lyrical and rhythmic uses can get the mind on a thought train about the issue. This is about the extent that a song can do. It

gives its audience a recognition, that yes, I do support this cause. From there, hopefully, people will be reminded of this when they influence to change this cultural norm.

Conclusion:

Analyzing and learning more about this artifact differs from the work we have completed in class by focusing primarily on the subject rather than the research surrounding it. For example, a majority of our projects have emphasized the importance of learning more about a subject before inspecting and dissecting the matter. For this project, we concentrated on our interpretations and ideas rather than articles and other sources defending their information. The research we used was only to enhance our explanations.

Overall, this artifact has an effective way of informing the audience on how society overlooks the gender wage gap, which is a significant issue when trying to obtain gender equality. This video/song shows people how women are not going to silence their voices any longer, and it is up to them and other individuals to stand together and take action. Through the description of our artifact, and our critical analysis, the issue of the gender wage gap still has some room to work on. The gap is still there and the strides the artifacts goes towards is a necessary push to reach wage equality.

References

- Graf, N., Brown, A., Patten, E. (2019, March 22). The narrowing, but persistent, gender gap in pay. *Pew Research Center*. Retrieved from <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2019/03/22/gender-pay-gap-facts/>
- Madell, R. (2019, April 29). Some women should worry even more about the wage gap. *U.S. News & World Report*. Retrieved from <https://money.usnews.com/money/blogs/outside-voices-careers/articles/some-women-should-worry-even-more-about-the-wage-gap>
- Secret Deodorant. (2018, November 19). #IdRatherGetPaid - *Secret Deodorant* (Official Music Video). Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sWaeIBsXl1M>
- Steinmetz, K. (2019, April 02). Equal Pay Day Poll: Nearly Half of Men Believe the Pay Gap Is 'Made Up'. *Time*. Retrieved from <http://time.com/5562171/pay-gap-survey-equal-pay-day/>

