

Women are at a Disadvantage in Science

Stance: Agree

Word count: 400

1 For centuries, the role of women in the scientific field has been highly understated.
 2 From the discovery of radium and polonium (by Marie Sklodowska Curie), to the first technique
 3 enabling us to take a picture of DNA (discovered by Rosalind Franklin), the amount of work
 4 done by women for the advancement of science is major, yet often goes unnoticed. This leaves
 5 us with a question – are women *truly* at a disadvantage in this area? I argue that they are in fact
 6 at a disadvantage, both in the academic science world and the workforce.

7 This disadvantage begins when women are in school, as studies show that science
 8 faculties usually exhibit a slight gender bias, favoring male students rather than female students
 9 (Moss-Racusin, 2012). In an experiment testing whether faculty members found women or men
 10 to be most hireable for a laboratory research position, the participants rated the male students as
 11 being more competent. Moreover, a higher starting salary was offered to the male students, as
 12 well as more career mentoring.

13 Furthermore, these obstacles become more prominent when women begin applying for
 14 jobs in the scientific field. When it comes to hiring new employees, it appears that both sexes are
 15 more inclined to pick a male candidate over a female one. If the women are fortunate enough to
 16 get hired, they still struggle with receiving equal benefits and acknowledgement in the scientific
 17 community. Male scientists are more likely to receive awards and research grants than their male
 18 equivalents (Lincoln, 2012), and when female scientists receive grants, it usually isn't as
 19 valuable.

20 In addition to all that stated above, women tend not to be taken as seriously as men are
 21 in the scientific community. Studies reveal that when shown different publications from
 22 individuals of either sex, participants were more likely to associate male-written publications
 23 with a better scientific quality (Knobloch-Westerwick, 2013), even if discussing female-related
 24 topics. They also found the male researchers worthier of further collaborations.

25 It is clearly evident that women have not reached the same level of respect and
 26 acknowledgment in the science world. However, if given the space to thrive and grow, they will
 27 certainly be a great asset to the scientific community. Despite the current unlevelled playing
 28 field, women have made countless contributions to this field, so if they are given the same
 29 resources, platforms, and opportunities that men are, the possibilities of their input and effort are
 30 endless.

References:

Corinne, M. A., Dovidio, J. F., Brescoll, V. L., Graham, M. J., & Handelsman, J. (2012). Science faculty's subtle gender biases favor male students. *Proc Natl Acad Sci USA*, 109(41), 16474-16479.

Lincoln, A. E., Pincus, S., Koster, J. B., & Leboy, P. S. (2012). The Matilda Effect in science: Awards and prizes in the US, 1990s and 2000s. *Social Studies of Science*,42(2).

Knobloch-Westerwick, S., Glynn, C. J., & Huge, M. (2013, February 6). The Matilda Effect in Science Communication. Retrieved September 11, 2017, from <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/1075547012472684>