Women are at a Disadvantage in Science

Stance: Agree

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

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

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

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

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

References:
