Workplace Gender Gap Hits Home: ADP Canada Survey

The pandemic is negatively affecting working Canadian women's careers, stress levels, and mental health at greater levels than men; while women still earn nearly a quarter less than men in total income[1]

TORONTO, March 8, 2021 /CNW/ - A new survey from ADP Canada and Leger shows that pay equality remains a persistent challenge for Canadian organizations. The survey also reveals that the ongoing pandemic dissimilarly impacts men and women, particularly working mothers, in terms of career growth, stress levels, and potential to seek new employment.

Limited options for school and childcare placed a strain on all working parents; however, data from the survey shows working mothers were more heavily impacted. Half of working mothers (50%) reported experiencing disproportionately high stress levels due to balancing childcare obligations and work throughout the pandemic, compared to 40 per cent of their male counterparts. Working women also reported a more significant impact when it comes to mental health, with 45 per cent indicating that working during the pandemic has had a negative impact on their mental health, compared to 37 per cent of men.

"During these challenging times, it is critical that Canadian organizations keep sight of gender issues and how the demands of work and home can impact groups differently," said Natalka Haras, Legal Counsel at ADP Canada. "Leaders should exercise empathy and compassion in the workplace to ensure that their employees – particularly working mothers – are provided with the necessary support mechanisms to allow them to thrive."

Equal pay and pay equality are still major issues for Canadian working women, who are open to finding new jobs

Self-reported results from the survey show that women continue to earn 23 per cent less in total income (pre-tax salary and other compensation) than men. Women's pre-tax salaries remain 21 per cent lower than men's, while additional variable compensation, such as bonuses, profit-sharing or equity agreements, are where disparity surges, with Canadian working women earning 43 per cent less in additional compensation compared to men in 2020. While these results demonstrate a small improvement over survey results collected in 2020, when women reported earning 24 per cent less in salary and 57 per cent less in additional compensation in 2019, employers still have work to do to ensure fair compensation for all employees.

Impact on the future of work: The younger workforce is engaged today, for a more equal workplace tomorrow

With persistent gaps in pay for men and women, it is no surprise that working women were less likely to report that they believe that gender parity is a priority for their organization (69% vs 78% of men). The survey results also revealed that younger workers (18-34) are more engaged than other age groups when it comes to issues of pay equity and equality in Canada, and most willing to leave an organization that doesn't support fair pay practices. Half (50%) of respondents aged 18-34 said they would leave their organization if they found out that a colleague of equal standing but different gender received higher compensation, compared to only 37 per cent for both the other age cohorts.

"The fact that women are more likely to seek out new employment amidst the pandemic, and that younger workers are more willing to leave organizations that do not practice fair pay, indicates expectations are rising when it comes to Canadian employers' ability to address gender issues – including ongoing pay gap issues and the greater weight of pandemic-related factors," said Haras. "Through ongoing and transparent communication, reassurance of employees, and flexible options, employers can better support, attract, and retain workers and decrease this flight risk."

Additional Findings:

Compensation findings

- Canadian working men were significantly more likely to make more than $80,000 in pre-tax salary (37% vs. 20% of women).
- Working women were more likely to make between $30,000 and $50,000 (27% vs. 17% for men).

Perception of gender issues according to age

- Nearly half (47%) of respondents aged 35-54 who have childcare obligations said that it has become more stressful to take care of their child(ren) while working.
- Respondents over 55 are more likely to believe that gender pay equality is a priority for the management of their organization (50%, nearly 10 percentage points more than other age groups).

Regional findings

Ontario

- Nearly half of Ontario employee respondents (47%) said they are currently taking care of children, parents or other dependents at home, the highest in the country.
- Ontario workers are more likely to believe the pandemic has had a negative impact on their mental health (46%, vs. a national average of 41%).

Québec

- Québec workers are more likely to believe that men and women are paid equally in their organization when it comes to salary, than in the rest of the country (79%, vs. the national average of 73%).
- Québecers are also more likely to believe that pay equality is a priority for the management of their organization (81%, vs. the national average of 74%).
- Québec (53%) and Atlantic Canada were the only provinces where a majority of workers said the pandemic had not impacted their mental health.

British Columbia

- Working Canadians in British Columbia are more likely to believe men and women at their organization receive equal additional compensation, such as bonuses (78%, vs. the national average of 73%).
- Nearly half (48%) of respondents in British Columbia said they would leave their employer if they found out a colleague of equal standing, but different gender, was receiving higher compensation.

Alberta

- Half (50%) of the respondents from Alberta reported that the pandemic had negatively impacted their mental health; the highest in the country.

Prairies (Manitoba and Saskatchewan)

- Respondents from the Prairies were more likely to report that they would leave their employer if they found out a colleague of equal standing, but different gender, was receiving greater compensation (49%, vs. the national average of 42%).

Atlantic Canada

- Workers in Atlantic Canada are the least likely to say they would leave their employer if they found out a colleague of equal standing, but different gender, was receiving greater compensation (30%).
- 55 per cent of respondents in Atlantic Canada said the pandemic didn't impact their mental health, the highest in the country.

Survey Methodology

An online survey of 1,001 working Canadians (including those working full and part time) was completed between February 9 and 15, 2021, using Leger's online panel. For comparison purposes, a probability sample of this size has an estimated margin of error of +/- 3.1%, 19 times out of 20.

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[1] *Total income represents both salary and other compensation. The gender pay gap is calculated by comparing working men and women's average pre-tax salary of 2020 and total additional compensation (bonuses, profit-sharing, equity agreements, etc.), and based on self-reported figures. In 2020, women earned 21 per cent less in salary and 43 per cent less in additional compensation, which makes a 23% gap in total income.*

SOURCE ADP Canada Co.

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Additional assets available online: Photos (1)

https://mediacentre.adp.ca/2021-03-08-Workplace-Gender-Gap-Hits-Home-ADP-Canada-Survey