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Compensation Parity-Job Happiness Nexus: A Women Educators' Perspective in a Local University

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Abstract

Aim: The primary goal of the study is to investigate the connection between pay equity and job happiness among women professors at University X. It aims to examine gender-based pay equity, identify causes of pay discrepancies, and offer recommendations to enhance gender-based wage equality and job happiness.

Methodology: The study adopts a qualitative research approach, comprising semi-structured interviews with fifteen women educators at University X. Purposive sampling was used to choose participants, who all had at least two years of job experience. The interviews lasted 25 to 30 minutes and were audio-recorded and transcribed for analysis.

Results: The study reveals prevalent gender-based payment disparity among women educators in the university setting, with different themes emerging from the feedback of the respondents. The need for more equitable opportunities to showcase capabilities is emphasized as participants voice concerns about the impact of the payment process. Task-oriented performance pay is a source of inequality, with fewer fair opportunities for women educators. Payment disparity is said to be significantly influenced by the unequal working setting. Gender-based payment inequality is influenced by knowledge of compensation parity, which is linked to uneven job assignment. Unfair promotions, unfair performance reviews, and not being able to connect with important people in the organization all lead to dissatisfaction and turnover. According to interviews, the main causes of job unhappiness and quitting are a significant wage gap and payment disparity. To highlight the significance of addressing payment disparity for improving job happiness and coordinating HRM practices with corporate goals, the study draws on theoretical frameworks such as the Equity Theory, HR Strategy Framework, and Harvard HRM Model. To promote payment equality, policies that pay companies for hiring women during maternity leave and encourage male workers to take paternity leave are at the center of calls for government intervention.

Conclusion: The findings reveal the deep influence of pay discrepancies on numerous elements of women educators' professional lives by utilizing theoretical frameworks, emphasizing the significance of addressing issues connected to payment methods, workload distribution, and access to opportunities. While acknowledging the societal norms that contribute to gender-based pay disparities, the study emphasizes the importance of comprehensive policy measures and organizational changes to eliminate these inequities, promoting a more equitable and satisfying work environment for women educators, and fostering greater gender equality in academic settings.

Keywords: compensation parity, job happiness, gender pay gap, women educators, gender equity

INTRODUCTION

In today's rapidly evolving societal landscape, discussions surrounding gender equity, workforce diversity, and inclusivity have become pivotal points of interest across various sectors (Khan & Bhattacharya, 2022; Morfaki & Morfaki, 2022; Olzmann, 2020). Education, one of the fundamental pillars of social progress, has been particularly under scrutiny regarding gender-based inequalities (Fontanella et al., 2019). The context of this study revolves around the intricate interplay between compensation parity and job happiness, viewed through the lens of women educators in a local university setting. The study aims to shed light on the nexus between these factors, thereby contributing to the broader discourse on gender equality within academia.



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The Global Gender Gap Report 2023, published by the World Economic Forum, serves as a crucial benchmark in assessing the progress towards gender parity on a global scale. The report assesses gender differences in a number of areas, including as political empowerment, economic empowerment, educational attainment, and health and survival. The World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Report 2023 is a key reference point for determining how far we have come toward achieving gender parity globally. In the report, gender disparities are evaluated with regard to health and survival, political and economic empowerment, educational attainment, and other factors. In-depth research of the gender gap in numerous countries and industries is provided in the Global Gender Gap Report 2023, which also highlights pressing problems and possible growth areas. The issues with persistent gender-based pay inequities across numerous industries, including academia, have come to light in recent studies. For instance, despite advancement, a study by Chen and Crown (2019) in the higher education sector found that there are still discrepancies in the base pay and bonuses for women faculty members. Career advancement and job happiness are directly impacted by these variances.

This study underlines the significance of undertaking thorough investigations into the elements causing these differences and their effects on worker satisfaction and output. Similar to this, a thorough analysis by Puente and Sánchez-Sánchez (2021) looked into the nuanced connection between pay and job happiness for women across several industries. The study stressed the importance of eliminating gender-based pay gap in order to foster a motivated and engaged workforce in addition to ensuring economic fairness. This review offers a theoretical foundation for comprehending the dynamics involved in the proposed investigation by synthesizing the body of prior knowledge. Furthermore, Meilani et al. (2020) recently examined the effect of pay equity on the career goals and job happiness of women academics in the academic field.

The study's findings indicated that gender-based payment disparities led to reduced job happiness, decreased motivation, and even hindered the pursuit of leadership roles. This research substantiates the critical role of fair compensation in shaping the overall career trajectories and well-being of women educators. The relevance of this study becomes all the more apparent when contextualized within the broader higher education sector. Higher education institutions are tasked with the responsibility of not only imparting knowledge but also cultivating an environment conducive to critical thinking, innovation, and societal progress. Women educators within these institutions play an instrumental role in achieving these goals. Their presence and contributions influence not only the academic quality of education but also the development of diverse student role models.

The University X, situated in the Philippines, serves as the backdrop for this research endeavor. The Philippine higher education sector, while showing considerable progress in gender equity and women's rights, still grapples with certain systemic discrepancies (Philippine Commission on Women, 2022). These discrepancies extend beyond the classroom and often manifest in administrative structures and compensation practices. In such a context, Merlin (2022) mentioned that the gender-based payment disparity among women educators not only undermines their professional well-being but also has broader implications for the quality of education and the cultivation of an inclusive learning environment.

Furthermore, the academic sector is uniquely positioned to lead by example and drive societal change (Purcell et al., 2019). The research objectives of this study align with the university's commitment to creating a model of gender equality and fairness that extends beyond its campus boundaries. By evaluating the current status of gender-based payment equality within the university, the research seeks to pinpoint any systemic or structural barriers hindering parity and job happiness among women faculty members.

The study's scope is intricately tied to the education sector's role as a societal progress and transformation catalyst. By examining the compensation parity and job happiness nexus among women educators within the context of University X, this research aspires to contribute valuable insights to the ongoing dialogue surrounding gender equity, workplace satisfaction, and academic excellence. The ultimate goal of this study is to bring about positive change by creating a more inclusive, fair, and supportive environment for women faculty members. This objective is in line with the broader goals of the university and the advancement of society as a whole. The study intends to spur changes that advance equality and foster a more welcoming professional environment for women educators by addressing gender-based wage inequities and their effect on job happiness. These initiatives not only help the participants themselves but also advance the university and society as a whole.



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Objectives

The primary goal of this study is to investigate the connection between pay equity and job happiness among women professors at University X. There are three main objectives for the study.

1. To examine the existing situation of gender-based pay equity at University X in-depth by looking at the compensation plans, regulations, and procedures in place. The objective is to find any pay differences between male and women faculty members and comprehend how these differences affect the satisfaction of women educators at work.
2. To identify the many causes of gender-based pay discrepancies at the university. The study aims to shed insight on the fundamental causes of these gaps by probing systemic biases, historical impacts, and negotiation dynamics. This knowledge is essential for addressing and resolving the complex problems that sustain unfair pay practices.
3. To offer University X useful suggestions that will help advance gender-based wage equality and improve the general job happiness of women educators. These suggestions, which could include policy changes, initiatives to increase transparency, support for negotiations, and awareness campaigns, will be based on a review of present procedures and the identification of important issues.

By bridging the gap between pay parity and job happiness and encouraging inclusivity and harmony within the academic community, the research ultimately intends to contribute to a more fair and happy professional environment for women educators at the university.

METHODS

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative approach, specifically using semi-structured interviews. Qualitative research is chosen to gather in-depth insights into the experiences and perceptions of women educators at University X regarding compensation parity and job happiness.

A qualitative approach is a research methodology that aims to comprehend, analyze, and investigate the fundamental meanings and attributes of a phenomenon. It is frequently employed in the social sciences, humanities, and other disciplines that prioritize acquiring comprehensive understanding of the intricacy and context of a topic (Creswell & Creswell, 2022; Saunders et al., 2019).

Population and Sampling

The research population is the larger group from which the study's participants are chosen (Creswell & Creswell, 2022; Saunders et al., 2019). In this case, the population consists of women educators from University X. The process of selecting a subset of individuals from the population to participate in the study, on the other hand, is known as sampling.

Purposive sampling was used in the study, which implies that participants are chosen based on specified criteria relevant to the research aims (Creswell & Creswell, 2022; Saunders et al., 2019). The selection criteria for this study include being a women educator at University X with at least two years of professional experience. The sampling technique seeks insights from individuals who match these characteristics and will likely provide valuable information on compensation parity and job happiness among women educators.

The study chose fifteen women educators to participate in the interviews. Purposive sampling helps to guarantee that participants have appropriate experience and opinions on the research objectives. The number of participants and the selection criteria are critical considerations in qualitative research to guarantee that the data collected is rich, engaging, and relevant to the study objectives (Creswell & Creswell, 2022; Saunders et al., 2019).

Instrument

The instrument utilized in this study involves conducting semi-structured interviews with women educators at University X. These interviews are carefully crafted to be semi-structured, offering a framework of open-ended questions that encourage participants to freely express their experiences, perceptions, and insights regarding



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compensation parity and job happiness. The interviews have a semi-structured format, allowing participants to discuss specific aspects that are important to them.

Triangulation is a methodological approach that can enhance the reliability and validity of research findings by involving multiple investigators and considering different perspectives. Emphasizing a qualitative research design involving semi-structured interviews can suggest incorporating triangulation principles (Sanchez & Sarmiento, 2020).

The study utilizes various theoretical frameworks, including Equity Theory and Pay by Al-Zawahreh and Al-Madi (2012), the Strategic Human Resource Framework by Belhaj and Tkouat (2017), and The Harvard HRM Model by Beer et al. (1984). These frameworks offer a theoretical basis for guiding research, shaping interview questions, and interpreting findings within the established concepts of human resource management and gender equity.

Data Collection

The primary instrument used in this study's data collection method is semi-structured interviews. Fifteen women educators from University X were purposefully chosen based on the criterion of having at least two years of professional experience in the university. To ensure that the interview questions and schedule were useful and efficient in gathering pertinent data, a pilot interview was carried out. The interviews took place online using chat software as well as in-person, with each lasting between 25 to 30 minutes. With its dual approach, flexibility is increased, allowing for participant preferences and guaranteeing a wide variety of viewpoints. A transcript of the audio-recorded conversations was then created for methodical data analysis.

Data Analysis

Inductive reasoning is used to analyze the data gathered from the interviews. With this method, themes and patterns might emerge straight from the experiences and views of the participants (Creswell & Creswell, 2022; Saunders et al., 2019). The study design's qualitative character makes it ideal for examining intricate and subtle topics including gender fairness, job compensation parity, and happiness. Understanding the interactions between these elements in the study's setting requires an understanding of the insights that have been discovered on these subjects. The findings gain depth and richness from the analysis, which links them to the theoretical framework, body of literature, and particular study goals.

Ethical Consideration

Ensuring participant well-being and privacy protection are top priorities when it comes to ethical issues, which are fundamental to the study technique. To ensure transparency and informed consent, participants are fully informed about the goals, purpose, and procedures of the research. The confidentiality of the results and analysis is ensured, protecting the participants' privacy. Participants' safety and well-being are given top priority, and they are allowed to end the interview at any time if they so choose. These moral precautions preserve the validity of the research and show a dedication to treating study participants with care and respect.

RESULTS and DISCUSSION

The analysis of respondent feedback regarding perceptions of compensation parity revealed a prominent theme. Most participants reported experiencing gender-based payment disparity. Their accounts can be categorized into distinct aspects.

Firstly, the payment procedure's influence on payment equality was explored, particularly concerning bonuses and performance-based pay. Many companies link financial rewards to employee performance, underscoring the significance of performance evaluations in payment equity (Noorazem et al., 2021). Women educators, however, voiced concerns about needing more equitable opportunities or tasks to showcase their capabilities. The participants felt disadvantaged in terms of chances to demonstrate their performance.

Respondent 11: I believe the payment procedure plays a significant role in payment equality, especially when it comes to bonuses and performance-based pay. It seems like there's room for improvement.

Respondent 6: As a woman educator, I often feel like I need more equitable opportunities to showcase my capabilities. It's not just about the pay; it's about the chances we get to prove ourselves.

Respondent 2: The payment procedure should be more inclusive and considerate of women educators' challenges. We need a reasonable shot at showcasing our skills.



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Respondent 12: The lack of equitable opportunities for women educators to prove themselves is a systemic issue that affects payment equality in our field.

The second theme pertained to task-oriented performance pay within the university. A prevalent observation was that women educators encountered fewer fair opportunities in this context. Men educators appeared to enjoy more favorable prospects, even when tasks required overtime commitments. This inequitable assignment of tasks contributed to gender-related payment disparity (Ou & Pan, 2020), a pattern mirrored in unequal promotional opportunities influencing the wage gap between men and women educators.

Respondent 13: I've noticed that sometimes, it feels like certain opportunities are easier to come by for some educators.

Respondent 8: In my experience, it seems like there's room for improvement in providing fair opportunities to educators, regardless of gender.

Respondent 15: Equality in task-oriented performance pay should be a priority. It's not just about fairness; it's about creating a more inclusive environment.

Respondent 1: Fair opportunities in task-oriented performance pay are crucial. It's something we should address to ensure everyone has an equal chance.

The third theme delved into the impact of an unequal working environment on payment equality. Nearly most respondents cited experiencing gender-based payment disparity, attributing the issue to the unfair treatment of women educators. This disparity in payment was marked by an evident pay gap resulting from biased treatment (Beyer et al., 2019).

Respondent 7: It's important to create an inclusive atmosphere where all educators feel valued and fairly compensated. Gender should not be a barrier to equal pay.

Respondent 10: I believe that addressing the unequal treatment of women educators is crucial in tackling payment disparity.

Respondent 9: To achieve payment equality, we need to focus on creating a working environment that values diversity and promotes fairness.

The final theme emerged from the question about knowledge of compensation parity in the university among women educators. Thus, from the lens of payment distribution, the study findings revealed that women educators were frequently denied opportunities for tasks that could lead to better compensation. Blau et al. (2020) mentioned that this skewed task allocation was a driving factor in gender-based payment disparity.

Respondent 5: A fair and transparent approach to compensation is crucial. If certain opportunities are not equally distributed, it can lead to disparities.

Respondent 14: I believe that all educators should have access to opportunities that can enhance their compensation. It's about fairness and equity.

Respondent 3: Equal access to opportunities for better compensation is a fundamental aspect of payment equality. We should work towards ensuring that for all educators.

From the perspective of payment procedure parity, the study outcomes unveiled the presence of unfair promotion and raised opportunities for women educators. Their chances for advancement were curtailed, with interviewees recounting instances of losing out to male counterparts due to gender-related bias in performance evaluations and dedication assessments. Examining interaction parity, the study highlighted unequal interactions with institutional figures like deans, directors, and the academic vice president as contributors to payment disparity. Limited access to managerial support for enhanced performance and fewer opportunities than male peers to demonstrate competence before higher-ups hindered accurate assessment of their abilities, performance, and potential, culminating in payment disparity. The literature review explores job happiness through the lenses of needs and motivational factors. The interview questions delve into the relationship between job happiness and gender-based payment disparity, seeking insights into how payment equality impacts job happiness among women educators. The questions also inquire about the role of payment equality and the payment gap in relation to both needs and motivation.

Based on the interview findings, women educators have identified various payment disparity issues that affect their job happiness. These issues encompass unfair treatment in terms of promotion and salary raise



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opportunities, biased performance evaluations that impact payment parity between men and women educators, and a significant salary gap between men and women educators occupying similar positions. Furthermore, the interviews seek to uncover personal experiences of gender-based payment equality in the respondents' work backgrounds and how these experiences relate to job happiness and turnover.

The interviews encompass various themes aimed at gaining insights into job happiness from the perspective of gender-based payment disparity. Among the women educators interviewed, five of them acknowledge the presence of gender discrimination in payment and other aspects but have resigned themselves to this reality. However, it is evident that this acceptance significantly impacts their job happiness, motivation to perform better, and aspirations for career development. It becomes apparent that when women educators perceive a substantial challenge in achieving equal pay, their motivation at work diminishes noticeably. The interviews reveal a common sentiment among women educators, who express disappointment in a work environment that fails to recognize their performance and efforts, serving as a primary driver for their decision to leave their positions.

The interview findings unequivocally highlight that payment disparity and the substantial wage gap between men and women educators are the primary reasons behind the dissatisfaction leading to their departure from their jobs. Moreover, the interviews underscore the need for women educators to receive more recognition and trust regarding their abilities and contributions to their respective organizations.

From the perspective of payment procedure parity, the study outcomes unveiled unfair promotion and raised opportunities for women educators, which aligns with the Equity Theory and Pay proposed by Al-Zawahreh and Al-Madi (2012). According to this theory, individuals assess the fairness of their compensation compared to their inputs (effort, skills, dedication) and outcomes (pay, benefits). When women educators perceive gender-related bias in performance evaluations and dedication assessments, they experience a sense of inequity, leading to reduced job happiness and motivation, as supported by the Equity Theory and Pay.

Examining interaction parity, the study highlighted unequal interactions with institutional figures like deans, directors, and the academic vice president as contributors to payment disparity. This concept aligns with the HR Strategy Framework developed by Belhaj and Tkouat (2017), which emphasizes the strategic importance of human resource management (HRM) practices. Unequal access to managerial support for enhanced performance and limited opportunities to demonstrate competence before higher-ups hinder accurate assessment of women educators' abilities, performance, and potential. This misalignment of HRM practices to achieve organizational effectiveness can result in payment disparity and diminished job happiness, as outlined in the HR Strategy Framework.

Furthermore, the Harvard HRM Model principles by Beer et al. (1984) underscore the need to consider the interests of all stakeholders' interests. When women educators experience payment disparity, it not only affects their job happiness but also impacts the overall well-being of the academic community. By addressing payment parity issues and recognizing the contributions of women educators, universities can better align HRM practices with the interests of their stakeholders, promoting greater job happiness and organizational effectiveness.

Overall, the Equity Theory, HR Strategy Framework, and Harvard HRM Model provide valuable theoretical frameworks for understanding the relationship between compensation parity, job happiness, and strategic HRM practices among women educators in the context of gender-based payment disparity. These theories and concepts highlight the importance of addressing payment disparity to enhance job happiness and align HRM practices with organizational goals. The research seeks to gain insights and opinions from interviewees regarding gender-based payment disparity in the university setting and elicits suggestions for improving job happiness in this context. The initial part of the research focuses on presenting the personal experiences of the interviewees, highlighting specific instances of gender-based payment disparity. Moving on to the section that addresses the reasons behind gender-based payment disparity, it becomes evident that these disparities are deeply ingrained in the country's societal, cultural, and political beliefs and norms. These deep-seated factors pose significant challenges for change. Consequently, women who recognize this reality often find it difficult to derive job happiness from their current positions. It's worth noting that individual efforts, such as working harder or pursuing further education, do not hold the potential to rectify gender-based payment disparity on a national scale. Therefore, the suggestions put forth by women educators primarily revolve around social and political considerations. There is a consensus among the interviewees that the government is responsible for addressing gender-based payment disparity. However, there are differing perspectives on the government's policy approaches. One approach involves creating policies that compensate companies for hiring young women educators during maternity leave, thereby offsetting the costs to achieve payment equality. Another approach advocates for policies encouraging male employees to take maternity



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leave when their wives are pregnant to promote payment equality. The respondents' opinion that government engagement is essential in eliminating gender-based pay disparity is reflected in these policy recommendations.

Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations

This study offers important new information about the connection between pay equity and job happiness for women university lecturers. The study analyzes significant topics through in-depth interviews and data analysis that highlight the difficulties faced by women educators in regards to gender-based wage inequities and its effects on job happiness. To further understand the underlying dynamics, the study makes use of theoretical frameworks such as the Equity Theory, HR Strategy Framework, and Harvard HRM Model. The results demonstrate how numerous areas of women educators' professional lives are profoundly impacted by gender-based pay discrepancies. The factors causing these differences are highlighted through themes including payment methods, workload distribution, working conditions, and access to opportunities. The study confirms the usefulness of theoretical frameworks for comprehending the intricate connections between pay equity, job happiness, and organizational efficiency. Additionally, it highlights the practical ramifications and calls for a comprehensive strategy to eliminate gender-based wage inequities, including a review of payment practices and the guarantee of equitable opportunity for all educators. To close the gender pay gap, it should be a top priority to advance task-oriented fairness and resolve promotional inequities. Third, establishing pay equity and improving overall job happiness for women educators depend on fostering a workplace free from gender bias and discrimination.

However, the study also recognizes that gender-based payment disparity is deeply rooted in societal norms and beliefs. Adler (2022) highlights how cultural beliefs about pay shifted, with payment being increasingly seen as determined by market forces rather than organizational decisions, limiting employers' liability for gender pay disparity. Piketty (2021) discusses the persistence of the gender pay gap despite laws and social justice awareness, emphasizing the different factors contributing to the disparity. Bando 2019 focuses on Latin America and the Caribbean, identifying social norms and biological differences as contributing factors to gender pay disparity and highlighting the challenges in designing evidence-based policies to address the gaps. Therefore, it advocates for government intervention through policy initiatives. The suggestions put forth by women educators, such as compensating companies for hiring young women educators during maternity leave or encouraging male employees to take maternity leave, underscore the importance of comprehensive policy measures to tackle this issue at a national level.

This study highlights the pressing need to address gender-based payment disparity and provides a nuanced understanding of its consequences on job happiness among women educators. By incorporating the insights from this research, universities, and policymakers can work towards creating a more equitable and satisfying work environment for women educators, ultimately fostering greater gender equality and organizational success.

The findings of this study shed significant light on the pervasive problem of gender-based pay disparities among women academics at a nearby university. The detrimental effect that this has on their job happiness is emphasized. The report offers a number of suggestions for resolving this issue.

First and foremost, it is essential to carry out more study and data collection on gender-based wage equity, not only in universities but also in many businesses and geographical areas. We can develop a more thorough understanding of the nuances of the issue by broadening the study's focus. The success of policies and efforts can be assessed with the aid of longitudinal studies that chart changes in wage equality over time.

The study also emphasizes the necessity of government action to address the gender pay gap. It is advised that researchers actively interact with decision-makers to promote comprehensive legislation that addresses pay inequalities. Incentives for employers to attract and retain women educators, the promotion of shared parenting duties, and the strengthening of anti-discrimination laws should all be part of these initiatives. The impact of these policy suggestions can be increased by working with organizations that support gender equality and women's rights.

Addressing the gender wage gap in their ranks should be a top priority for universities and other educational organizations. To ensure fairness and openness, this entails examining payment systems, performance evaluation standards, and task allocation policies. All educators should have equal access to professional development opportunities, and efforts should be made to foster inclusive settings where they feel respected and valued. It's crucial to establish channels for reporting disparity and discrimination based on gender.

It is critical to inform both academic staff and students of the significance of gender equality in pay. To increase awareness of the importance of equitable task allocation, gender-based pay disparity, and prejudice in



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performance evaluations, universities might organize training programs and workshops. Future educators and leaders can develop an inclusive perspective by learning about gender equality in the classroom.

Researchers from different disciplines should work together to develop a thorough understanding of gender-based pay discrepancy. This multidisciplinary approach can produce creative answers and a deeper comprehension of the problem's underlying causes. To further boost awareness and discussions, researchers should actively disseminate their findings through scholarly papers, conferences, and open forums.

To evaluate the efficacy of policies and organizational reforms, it is crucial to establish appropriate monitoring and assessment procedures. It will be easier to pinpoint areas that require additional focus if success is routinely assessed in terms of narrowing the gender wage gap, eliminating prejudice in performance evaluations, and advancing gender equality within institutions.

Overall, the study's conclusions offer a solid foundation for resolving the gender-based pay gap for women educators. To effect significant change, a multifaceted strategy encompassing research, policy lobbying, organizational transformation, education, collaboration, and constant evaluation is required. The success of educational institutions and society as a whole can be improved by putting these ideas into practice, which will help to advance gender equality and provide a more equitable and fulfilling working environment for women educators.

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