

Salary gap slowly closing

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3 Nov 2016

The battle for equality between the sexes is not over. According to a study conducted by employer brand management consultant Universum, the gender-based pay gap still exists.



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The survey shows that young professional women - with a business or commerce background - in South Africa earn R80,218 less per annum than their male counterparts. Those with an engineering or technology background have a gender pay gap of R39,504.

This is according to figures shared by respondents working in those fields.

Human resources expert Terry Taylor says that, although the salary gap is closing in South Africa, the figures are still about 15%.

"I've had experience of pay gaps of 10%-15%, but this is dependent on the industry," she said.

Taylor explains that, although it was difficult to make comparisons, there are countries where the gap is "as low as a 2% differential, whereas others are as high as 35%".

She says that in South Africa, the revised Employment Equity Act is helping in addressing the differentials given that the principle of "equal work for equal pay" is included.

Anita Bosch, a professor in the department of industrial psychology and people management at the University of Johannesburg, edited *The SA Board for People Practices 2015* report on the gender pay gap in South Africa.

Bosch says that although women-headed households far outnumber those headed by males, there is still gender disparity in work remuneration.

"Women's income is still seen as 'jam' money," she says, "even though women in lower income brackets have no choice regarding work."

Bosch adds that "feminised" work - which involves skills like care and nurturing - is undervalued by the market. "We see it in psychology, teaching, nursing and care-giving. As soon as a profession is seen as feminine, even if it is undertaken by some men, its economic value falls.

"It may make an important contribution to society but it is not given a high economic value."

Source: The Times

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