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Influences on the gender wage gap of Trinidad and Tobago: An economic concept or a social construct?

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Abstract

Purpose This paper examines the presence of a gender wage gap in Trinidad and Tobago and its possible influences.

Methodology Investigation of the issue utilised data from the 2009/2008 Household Budget Survey. A combination of linear regression and Oaxaca-Blinder decomposition analysis permits segregation of wage differences into explained and unexplained.

Findings At the aggregate level, there is a significant difference between male and female wages. Investigation showed that the demographics with the highest levels of discrimination were in the age groups 44–35, income levels 5,999\$–3,000\$ and private sector employment versus public sector.

Social implications Contrary to males, females continue to exhibit improvements within employment, labour force participation and educational attainment. Continued discrimination within the workplace may erode many of the positives in the last couple of decades.

Originality/value The results of this research can serve as a useful tool for more gender-sensitive employment policies in Trinidad and Tobago, and possibly the wider Caribbean region.

Keywords Trinidad and Tobago, Gender wage gap, Gender Inequality Index

Paper type Research paper

Introduction⁴

In recent times, Trinidad and Tobago performed relatively well in the global indices measuring disparity between female and male in the areas of health, empowerment and economic activity. Two main rankings considered by policy-makers are the Gender Inequality Index and the Global Gender Gap. The Gender Inequality Index looks at reproductive health, empowerment and economic activity. In the latest ranking (2012), Trinidad and Tobago was positioned 50 out of 148 countries. The Global Gender Gap examines the gender gap on the areas of health (life expectancy, etc), access to education, economic participation (salaries, job type and seniority) and political engagement. Trinidad and Tobago ranks 36 out 136 countries in the 2013 report. While there are many positive sentiments emanating from these reports, there is still the perception that in Trinidad and Tobago a significant differential exists in the wages earned by women versus men due to discrimination. This paper seeks to investigate the veracity of this perception using the traditional tools of the literature, namely the Mincerian human wage capital equations and the Oaxaca-Blinder decomposition. Notably, as a signatory to the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women as well as other conventions and protocols, the government has moved over the years to eliminate legislation that was discriminatory against women in the workforce. In addition, the institution and subsequent amendments of the Minimum Wage Act does not allow for discrimination in the remuneration of men and women. Further, in Trinidad and Tobago, the government service is one of the largest

employers, and remuneration received depends on the classification of occupation within the public service. The paper is structured in the following format: the next section provides a brief overview of recent studies from the voluminous literature on the gender wage gap, and this is followed by a review of the developments in the labour market in Trinidad and Tobago related to participation and wages. In the empirical section, the results generated from the investigation are presented and the paper concludes with some recommendations for future work.

Literature review

Over the years there have been numerous studies examining the phenomena of the gender wage gap, often from the perspective of the individual country. Such studies seek to highlight what factors influence the gender wage gap, and hence allow policy-makers to develop strategies to reduce the gap. More recently, the focus has shifted slightly to look at the impact of wage inequality on the economic development of a country.

According to a recent study by the IMF (2013), the current contribution of women to economic growth and development is far below their potential contribution. The IMF (2013) refers to data suggesting that the vast majority of women with underutilised contributions to economic growth exist in emerging and developing economies. Further, even advanced economies could achieve improvements in Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of between 5 per cent (US) and 9 per cent (Japan) if women were allowed to reach their full potential. Cuberes and Teignier (2012)

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estimated that certain regions lose a potential 27 per cent of GDP due to the existence of a gender gap. Within the CARICOM region, Slater (2013) identified potential improvements in GDP through the delaying of pregnancies to post-adolescent years. This gives some indication that the region stands to gain economic benefits with improved conditions for the female workforce. However, the concept of gender parity need not only be an economic construct.

In its report, "Closing the Gender Gap" (2012), The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) established that gender equality goes beyond the concept of economic empowerment and includes social, political and cultural dimensions. As such, it is imperative to address issues such as participation within the political system and providing the roles of caregivers within societies. The report further espouses that women weigh the costs of becoming economically inactive versus childcare costs and the burden of household chores. In cases where the monetisation of these duties exceed the remunerations earned from participating in measured economic activity, women will remove themselves from the labour market. In this way, a growing disparity in the gender wage gap may discourage female participation, especially for those in relationships.

Closer to home, recent years have witnessed some negative impacts regarding gender parity, given the stifling economic environment across the Caribbean region. Following the Global Financial Crisis and rising commodity prices, post 2008, economies of the Caribbean witnessed rising poverty levels, increased government debt and recessionary changes to output. Development agendas of the region face severe constraints for the sustained impact of these macroeconomic concerns

(ECLAC, 2009). Expenditure reductions within public sector budgets often affect education, health and social services; these are some of the sectors comprising a predominantly heavy female workforce (ECLAC, 2009). Further, increasing participation rates of women across the region increased competition within jobs in the services sector, thereby, driving wages downwards. The predominance of women in these sectors produced larger impacts on their wages compared to males and thus, widened the gender wage gap.

At the national level, studies on the gender wage gap tend to focus on similar variables. The United States (US) Department of Labour (CONSAD, 2009) identified major strides in improving female participation and education rates between 1970 and 2007. These improvements saw women outnumbering men in management positions, decreases within the gender wage gap and strong growth in the number of women accessing higher education. In this study, six factors showed strong correlations with the gender wage gap, namely occupation, human capital, work experience, career interruption, motherhood and industry sector. In attempting to build a similar understanding for Trinidad and Tobago, consideration was given to similar factors.

Analyses of the topics of female labour force participation and the gender wage gap converges with two main findings throughout various empirical tests, 1) women are increasingly taking advantage of educational opportunities and 2) in spite of improving levels of female participation in the labour force, women remain vastly underrepresented compared to their male counterparts. The dichotomy these two characteristics pose is one where the labour force fails to attract all of the highly trained professionals within the particular economy. The resulting impact on

lower levels of productivity, efficiency and equity has various socio-economic drawbacks.

National situation

According to the latest population census report for Trinidad and Tobago there are slightly more males (50.2 per cent) than females (49.8 per cent) in the country. Looking more closely at the distribution of working age, those aged 15 and above, the population is more evenly split between the two sexes. Data from the 2011 Population and Housing Census indicated that the 25–29 five-year age grouping contained the mode of females. An interesting dynamic captured within the data is that males outnumber females in all age categories except for those above 65 years of age. This can be attributed to the continued pattern of increasing male deaths in the younger age groups. Comparing the population statistics between the last two censuses indicates that the female population of Trinidad and Tobago grew by 5.1 per cent between census years 2011 and 2000.

Over most of the first decade of the 21st century, Trinidad and Tobago benefitted from positive economic growth and a booming energy sector. In fact, Trinidad and Tobago navigated the adverse impacts of the economic crisis, post 2008, comparatively better than many of its regional neighbours. While there was some difficulty due to the failure of two financial institutions and fluctuating oil and natural gas revenues, unemployment rates remained well below double-digit rates, and employees were able to negotiate increases in their remuneration packages. Indeed, one estimate suggests that over the period 2009 to 2011, wage increases ranged from 4.7 per cent in the service sector to 7.8 per cent in the energy sector.

Unemployment rates declined from 12.1 per cent in 2000 to an average of 5.0 per cent for the first three quarters of 2012. Both the male and female unemployment rates declined strongly over the period, barring some uptick between 2008 and 2010. A noticeable achievement regarding gender parity in employment was female unemployment rates falling to closer levels to their male counterparts. In 2000, male unemployment was 10.2 per cent compared to a rate of 15.2 per cent for females. In contrast, data for the first three quarters of 2012 showed female unemployment at 6.3 per cent compared with 4.1 per cent for males.

At the earlier stages of development and in preparation for entering the labour force, females are also making positive strides in educational attainment. Females with some level of educational attainment at the tertiary non-university levels and higher accounted for 16.4 per cent of the female population compared to 12.8 per cent within the male population. In fact, of all the persons attaining tertiary level education and higher, the 2011 Population and Housing Census showed that the majority were females (56.0 per cent).

In Trinidad and Tobago, the participation rate (the labour force divided by the non-institutional population)⁵ has generally remained above 60 per cent over the last decade. Males dominate the labour force of Trinidad and Tobago, accounting for some 60 per cent of the labour force; however, the number of females has been steadily increasing. Indeed, while males in the labour force grew 2.8 per cent between 2000 and 2010, the Labour Force Report (CSO) showed a 16.5 per cent increase in economically active females over the identical period. These changes helped increase the female participation rate to 50.9 per cent in 2010 compared to

⁵ The non-institutional population consists of those persons who are 15 years old and over and who are not institutionalised. The labour force consists of persons with a job, or those who are unemployed and seeking work. Persons who are not seeking work, for example a discouraged worker or a student, are not considered to be in the labour force.

47.1 per cent in 2000. In spite of this improvement, female participation rates remain significantly depressed compared to their male counterparts (73.4 per cent in 2010). For the first three quarters of 2012, female participation increased to 51.7 per cent compared to 72.0 per cent for males. Roopnarine and Ramrattan (2012), in exploring the reasons for the lower rate of female participation in Trinidad and Tobago, identified factors such as the number of children in a household, access to social programmes and chronic illness as being important determinants that negatively affect a woman's decision to join the labour force.

A further positive indicator regarding females within the labour force looks at the percentage of new entrants into the labour force obtaining jobs. In 2000, 67.2 per cent of females who entered the labour market were able to obtain jobs compared to 81.3 per cent of males. The majority of these females obtained jobs in occupational groupings Service Workers and Clerks. In 2008, 75.0 per cent of females entering the labour force obtained jobs compared to 73.7 per cent of males. The Services and Clerical occupation groupings remained the modal options, as well as a significantly improved success rate within Technicians and associate professionals.

As a result of these factors, over the period 2000 to 2010, persons with jobs increased by an average 1.0 per cent for males and 2.7 per cent for females. Over the period, the services sector remained the main employer of females within the domestic setting, namely community, social and personal services and the wholesale and retail trade, and financing, insurance, real estate and business services. The growth within these sectors drives the notion that continued development of the services sector creates improved

opportunities for female participation in the labour market. However, there has also been growth in sectors considered non-traditional female groupings. Noticeably, over the period 2000 to 2010, the construction and petroleum sectors witnessed a strong increase in females with jobs (14.0 per cent and 8.0 per cent, respectively). For the first three quarters of 2012, growth in number of females employed in the services sector continued. In contrast, the petroleum and construction sectors recorded some declines, post 2010, but remained higher than in the early 2000s. These may be early signs of a shift in the demographics of female employment to non-traditional female sectors.

Males continue to receive earnings higher than their counterparts, but there are early indicators of improving benefits accruing to female participation. The male-to-female employment ratio, measured by males employed as a percentage of females, narrowed between the years 2000 and 2009. After starting the millennia at 1.7 males per female employed, the gap closed to 1.5 males per female employed in 2009. Thus, the labour market experienced a certain level of convergence of female and male employment numbers. The average earnings of females within the labour force increased 84.7 per cent over the period 2000 to 2009. The average monthly incomes for females in craft and service workers more than doubled (107.5 per cent and 100.7 per cent, respectively). This suggests strong nominal improvement for females relative to their male counterparts but the data still show male bias regarding remuneration. The average male earns almost 25 per cent more than their female counterparts (24.0 per cent in 2000 and 24.9 per cent in 2009). In fact, the data suggest some uptick in the disparity between genders, although minimal. Given the

increased numbers of females within the labour market, this dichotomy in earnings is a point of concern.

Methodology

The conflicting indicators of what is occurring in the labour market suggest a need for a greater investigation into the area. In addition, there has been limited published work on the gender wage gap for Trinidad and Tobago, hence this paper seeks to help fill the void in the literature as well as provide some policy direction. Firstly, the paper tests whether a difference in the wages earned by men and women in Trinidad and Tobago persists, and secondly, it identifies possible reasons for such differentials. This paper uses information sourced from the 2008/2009 Trinidad and Tobago Household Budgetary Survey. The information covers the monthly income of the individuals surveyed and a diverse range of their characteristics. For the purposes of this paper the dataset was truncated to include only persons who were 15 years of age or older, who had a job and were earning a wage. This resulted in a database with 8379 individuals of which 4751 were male and 3628 female.

For the purposes of this paper, both the typical human capital equation and the Oaxaca-Blinder decomposition are used. While the former continues to provide insights into the factors determining the earnings of individuals, the latter has become popular in the literature as a way to assess the level of discrimination among different groups.

Results

An initial examination of the raw statistics in the database revealed that while the average female earned TT\$4821.26 per month, the average male earned TT\$5985.58 per month (Figure 1). This suggests that a gender wage gap is present in Trinidad and Tobago. This is

consistent with the information available in the Labour Force Survey; as indicated earlier, those figures suggest that in recent times there may have been a widening of the wage gap.

The presence of a gender gap in the Trinidad and Tobago economy is of little surprise as studies in both the advanced and emerging economies have all identified this phenomena. For example, the European Commission (2011) found that across the EU women earn on average 17.5 per cent less than men, varying from nearly 31 per cent in Estonia to below 5 per cent in Italy. In Australia, women earned 17.0 per cent less than men did in 2009 (Cassells et al., 2009). Bellony, Hoyos and Ñopo (2010) found that in Barbados men earn between 14 and 27 per cent more than women, and between 8 and 17 per cent more than the average females' wages in Jamaica. Notably an earlier study using 1993 data for Trinidad and Tobago by Olsen and Coppin (2001) found that there was an earning differential of 19 per cent between the sexes. Olsen and Coppin (2001) focused heavily on the influence of race on the earnings of the population, finding that women of African descent were more disadvantaged compared to their male counterparts, than were women of Indian or Other ethnicity. Sookram and Watson (2008) focused their study on wages earned in the informal sector in Trinidad and Tobago. They found that persons operating in the informal sector earned lower wages compared to the formal sector, and in the informal sector, men earned more than women.

However, simply looking at the difference in the average wage does not tell us why this variation occurs, and whether it is due to differences in the characteristics of the sexes, or due to discrimination. Thus, the next phase of the analysis is to use the typical human capital equations to assess

the influence of various factors on the wage-earning capacity of the two groups. In this case, the data are segmented into two groups representing male and female respectively.

An overview of the results indicates that for men factors such as age, being in a relationship (married or cohabitating), attending university and having a permanent job are all positive influences on the individual's wage earning capacity (Figure 2). Additionally, males in the categories: Legislator, Senior Manager or Corporate Manager, earn higher wages than males in other categories. For females, similar factors affect their wage-earning capacity, although those categorised as professionals earn the highest wages. Thus, we see that the same characteristics affect the wages of both men and women, yet women earn on average less than men. However, a few interesting comparisons are noted. In the case of married versus single, the hypothesised married premium is higher for men than for women. Indeed, those women who had previously had a partner or been married but were at the time single had higher coefficients than those in the other categories. In the case of education, women derive higher benefits from pursuing their education than men, as evidenced by the higher values of the coefficients.

This paper seeks to investigate further the reasons behind the difference in the wage-earning capacity between the two groups. To do this, the paper employs the Oaxaca-Blinder decomposition methodology, which shows that the difference in wages can be separated into explained and unexplained segments. The explained part looks at the difference in the characteristics of the two groups while the unexplained part is often attributed to discrimination between the sexes. This approach also allows for an estimate of how much a

group's wage could change if it took on the characteristics of the comparator group.

Using the Oaxaca-Blinder decomposition for the individuals in the dataset reveals that women earn on average 27.9 per cent less than men. Approximately 40.0 per cent of this variation is unexplained, suggesting that there is some level of discrimination in the wages paid to women. However, taking note that the variation in the level of earnings can differ by the nature of the job, a more detailed investigation was undertaken by looking at the wages differential by job category.

As can be seen from the table in all the broad job categories, the average wage earned by men was higher than that earned by women (Figure 3). However, the size of the gender gap varied widely among the different groups. The gaps were widest for Service and Shop-sales, Plant Workers and Machinery Operators and Legislators, Senior Officials and Managers. On the other hand, the gap was narrowest for Professionals and Clerks. These two categories also had the smallest unexplained portion, suggesting the smallest level of discrimination. One potential reason for this finding is that in the category of Clerks and Professionals, the number of workers are evenly split between the public and the private sector. In the other sectors, the private sector dominates as the main employer.

A further decomposition of the average wages earned by the nature of the employer, whether government or private sector, indicates that while females in the public sector earn 31.1 per cent less than their male counterparts, only 34.6 per cent is unexplained. In the private sector, women earn 29.9 per cent less than men, however 49.3 per cent of this variation is unexplained. As such, this suggests a higher probability

of discrimination occurring in the private sector.

The classification Finding a Job is further divided into different categories and here it is found that in some job groupings, women earn a higher wage than men (though from a statistical standpoint the difference was not statistically different). This occurred in the job categories of Legislators and Senior Officials, Doctors and Health Professionals, Computer Professionals and Other Professionals. Indeed, in several categories, although numerically women earned less than men, the difference in the wages was not statistically significant. The categories in which males earned statistically more than females include the Legal Profession, Industrial Plant and Other Machine Operators, Cooks, Waiters and Bartenders, Agricultural and Other Labourers.

While the results suggest some level of gender discrimination, it must be noted that one of the limitations of the current data set is that variables such as number of hours worked, tenure of job and level of experience are not available. Such variables would play a role in determining the wages that individuals earn. One suggestion in the literature for the diversion of wages between men and women hinges on women's role as child bearer and caregiver. The results were further tested to assess the impact of having children on wages. The results indicate that for both male and female the number of children was an insignificant factor in the level of wages earned. A more significant factor was whether the person was a single parent and in the case of both men and women, being a single parent negatively affected the level of income earned. Suggestions for this finding include the need to be the sole provider may result in the person being willing to take a lower-paid job. In addition, the person may wish to sacrifice

pay for a job with flexibility to deal with family demands.

Perhaps even more interesting than the findings of wage discrimination, is the influence of some variables on the characteristics of the wage-earning capacity of an individual. In the case of education, the Oaxaca-Blinder decomposition revealed that if women were to take on the characteristics of men, their average earnings would in fact decline. In Trinidad and Tobago women are more likely to engage in higher level education than men. An examination of the statistics from the University of the West Indies, St Augustine, finds that in most departments, and at both the undergraduate and postgraduate level, women enrolled outnumber men at an approximate 2:1 ratio. It is only in the field of engineering that the number of men exceeds the number of females.

Examining the decomposition by age finds that at the entry/junior level (those aged 24 and younger) the wage differential is smaller than in the other age groups. In fact, it is at the other end of the spectrum, those over the age of 55 where the wage differential is the greatest. Taken from the perspective of discrimination, the unexplained part of the decomposition suggests an inverse U pattern, with the peak occurring in the 35–44 age group.

A review of the literature suggests that being married or in a relationship results in a wage premium. Possible explanations put forward include that employers use marriage as an indicator that the employee would be loyal and dependable and hence are will to pay them more. Another finding in the literature related to the productivity of the workers and that never-married workers are less productive than workers who have been married and are correspondingly paid less. In looking

at the difference in the wages paid to men and women, the results indicate that married women (living with the spouse), as well as those in common-law relationships were paid significantly less than their male counterparts, with 63 and 75 per cent respectively of the difference being attributable to discrimination. A possible explanation is that women with a partner have a lower reservation wage as the household would possibly have two sources of income, or that they are willing to take a job with a lower pay for more flexibility to deal with family issues.

Another avenue of investigation undertaken was to look at the decomposition at various pay scales. The salaries are grouped into various brackets with the lowest being those who earn less than \$1,000 per month and the highest being those earning over \$15,000 per month. The results reveal that in the majority of the wage groupings, the differential of the earnings between the two sexes is insignificant. Two instances, however, stand out in the findings. In the first case, for those earning between \$3,000 and \$5,999, there is a significant differential in the wages and the unexplained portion is also significant. It is important to note that this category also covers the largest number of persons, accounting for 41.6 per cent of the total database. The other interesting category is that of those earning between \$6,000 and \$7,999. In this case, the results indicate that women earn significantly more than men, though the effects are primarily due to differences in characteristics rather than discrimination. However, this does not account for as large a proportion as the \$3,000 to \$5,999 income earners. As a result, its impact on the overall results is not as large.

Limitations and recommendations

One of the limitations of this current study is that we are unable to assess the evolution of the gender wage gap and discrimination in Trinidad and Tobago. In addition, as mentioned previously, important variables such as the number of hours worked, and the average earnings per hour, experience, tenure, and age of the firm are all absent from the dataset on which the analysis was conducted. Further, the literature notes some issues with self-selection; however, this paper did not address this issue as previous work highlighted some of the main reasons for lower female participation. From a policy perspective the results suggest that the initiatives undertaken by successive governments to ensure the equality of remuneration among the sexes have worked to a large extent; however, there are a number of sectors in which there remains a disparity in the income earned. Thus some policies targeted to those sectors may further reduce the gender wage gap and result in all having an equal place in the work environment. The policy of building early childcare centres may have positively affected the earning capacity of single parents, as they now have a place to leave their children while they go to work.

Figures

Figure 1. The characteristics of the average wage in Trinidad and Tobago (TT\$)

	Male	Female
Mean	5,895.58	4,821.26
Min	137.00	291.00
Max	70,000.00	55,000.00
Standard deviation	4,813.97	3,961.88

Figure 2. Microeconomic determinants of wages in Trinidad and Tobago, 2008

lwages	Pooled model	Male	Female
Female	-0.341*** (24.89)		
Age	0.005*** (7.71)	0.004*** (4.60)	0.006*** (6.10)
Marital Status			
Married but now living alone	0.154*** (5.67)	0.108*** (2.66)	0.160*** (4.45)
Had a partner but now living alone	0.127*** (5.17)	0.090 (2.30)	0.109*** (3.44)
Married living with spouse	0.180*** (10.92)	0.287*** (12.88)	0.048* (1.92)
Living common law	0.131*** (6.92)	0.237*** (9.69)	-0.017 (0.56)
Not stated	-0.033 (0.35)	-0.083 (.056)	-0.037 (0.30)
Education			
Pre-school	0.157 (0.94)	0.204 (0.90)	0.347 (1.27)

Figure 2. Microeconomic determinants of wages in Trinidad and Tobago, 2008

lwages	Pooled model	Male	Female
Primary	0.040 (0.38)	-0.018 (0.15)	0.257 (1.23)
Secondary	0.249 (2.37)	0.178 (1.48)	0.485 (2.32)
University	0.683*** (6.33)	0.545*** (4.68)	0.928*** (4.39)
Other	0.410*** (3.80)	0.351*** (2.82)	0.641*** (3.02)
Not stated	0.200 (1.10)	0.018 (0.09)	0.645 (1.86)
Job			
Professionals	0.067 (1.34)	-0.225*** (4.31)	0.129 (2.44)
Technical and Associate Professional	-0.0189*** (6.06)	-0.274*** (6.18)	-0.106 (2.44)
Clerks	-0.325*** (10.00)	-0.531*** (10.16)	-0.212*** (4.93)
Service and Shop Sales workers	-0.419*** (13.71)	0.444*** (9.96)	-0.369*** (8.86)
Agricultural, Forestry and Fishery workers	-0.717*** (14.74)	-0.782*** (13.74)	-0.655*** (5.93)
Craft and related workers	-0.429*** (14.20)	-0.487*** (12.25)	-0.490*** (8.91)
Plant and Machine Operators	-0.344*** (10.65)	-0.400*** (9.66)	-0.438*** (6.59)
Clerks	-0.325*** (10.00)	-0.531*** (10.16)	-0.212*** (4.93)
Service and Shop Sales workers	-0.419*** (13.71)	0.444*** (9.96)	-0.369*** (8.86)
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Craft and related workers	-0.429*** (14.20)	-0.487*** (12.25)	-0.490*** (8.91)
Plant and Machine Operators	-0.344*** (10.65)	-0.400*** (9.66)	-0.438*** (6.59)
Elementary workers	-0.640*** (21.84)	-0.714*** (17.48)	-0.544*** (13.02)
Employment status			
Temporary	-0.244*** (14.08)	-0.180*** (7.70)	-0.308*** (12.07)
Contract	-0.059(2.38)	0.005(0.15)	-0.137*** (3.76)
Seasonal	-0.289*** (3.11)	-0.142 (0.90)	-0.366*** (3.21)
Occasional	-0.431*** (10.01)	-0.334*** (5.99)	-0.531*** (7.96)
Not applicable	-0.373*** (21.20)	-0.348*** (16.05)	-0.372*** (12.45)
Not stated	-0.183 (1.95)	-0.111 (0.79)	-0.228 (1.83)
constant	8.507*** (75.66)	8.607*** (65.47)	7.906*** (36.43)
R2	0.3480	0.3182	0.3722
Obs.	8379	4751	3628

Note: absolute standard errors in parenthesis

Figure 3. Wage differential and discrimination by job category

Job category	Unexplained (%)	Wage differential (%)
Legislators, Senior Officials and Managers	49.6	59.7
Professionals	9.7	2.2
Technical and associate professionals	26.6	28.5
Clerks	11.7	13.8
Service and Shopsales workers	43.7	65.7
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing workers	37.7	36.0
Craft and related workers	48.2	58.6
Plant and Machinery Operators	51.4	64.2
Elementary workers	33.9	37.5

Conclusion

By examining both the human capital equation and the Oaxaca-Blinder decomposition, it is observed that at the aggregate level there is a significant difference between the wages earned between the sexes. However, a closer examination reveals that in many occupations this difference is insignificant, and in fact there are some cases where women earn more than men. However, the wage differential is significant in the larger categories/categories leading to the overall results. Closer investigation into these sectors is needed. Taken from the perspective of age, we see that wage differential grows as the group ages, though this is more likely to be a result of the different characteristics, as discrimination peaks at the 35–44 age group. However, the results indicate that at the wage bracket of

\$3,000–\$5,999, women earn significantly less than men, with some evidence that this is due to discrimination. Further, we find that women currently living with a partner (married or common-law) earn significantly less than men in a similar situation. Unsurprisingly, we find that there is less wage differential in the public sector when compared to the private sector. The results indicate that in Trinidad and Tobago the gender wage gap is less of an issue than in many countries, though there remains room for improvement.

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