

Jacquelyn M. Hurtado

Humanities

Ms. Hood-Esparza

March 20th, 2018

### Women in STEM

“I used to not like being called a 'woman architect.' I'm an architect, not just a woman architect. The guys used to tap me on the head and say 'you're OK for a girl.’” said Zaha Hadid, the first woman to receive the Pritzker Architecture Prize (Anderson). STEM includes the subjects of science, technology, engineering and mathematics. Women should be motivated to go into the STEM fields by being encouraged at a young age, being provided with necessary resources and mentors as well as continue to give support throughout their career.

Starting in elementary school, STEM education is already not implemented on young students as much as it should be. Most school projects is centered more around learning how to read, writing and articulate difficult words. “Teachers in early childhood environments need more robust training and professional development to effectively engage young children in developmentally appropriate STEM learning” (McClure). The teacher must know the material in order to give correct information since children will understand anything you try to explain to them because they have not developed the critical thinking portion of their brain. The benefit of this curriculum in elementary school is because it allows the students to “tap into their natural and innate curiosity about the living world by simply allowing them to investigate and encouraging them to ask questions about the real world” (Sneideman).

Mentors must provide resources that help women in the field with giving them strength to follow a career path. Strong and successful female advocates would influence the success they can achieve. “Having women STEM mentors and role-models who are also prominent in the media give young girls figure to look up to and careers to aspire to so they do not short charge themselves with short-term views” (Hughes). The term “Tug-of-war” refers to “women who have encountered discrimination early in their careers and how they often distance themselves from

other women” (Williams). Friendly competition is great but competition where you take advantage of opportunities to better yourself is not the best.

Often, when women decide to have a family and want both that and a successful career, society makes them choose one or the other. Creating policies that allow a woman to build a career, financially support her family, and still have a family, if she chooses, are ones that will increase the women in STEM by enabling them to be both women and STEM leaders (Hughes). Women experience a sense of isolation due to intentionally keeping their personal lives hidden in order to maintain their authority. (Williams) Signs of weakness is a big no-no, being a woman you have a pressure to continually prove your worth in the field. By encouraging women with their desired life choices will make the workspace more positive and women would want to stay in the field.

Studies have shown that empowering women in more gender-equality like countries give them options to be more inclined to picking career choices they enjoy more. Gender equality does not only mean the leadership in STEM fields, so this affects much more. Girls in those countries (less gender-equal) might be more inclined to choose STEM professions, since they offer a more certain financial future than, say, painting or writing. (Khazan) You can argue that if both men and women want more women in the STEM related workplaces, why are they mostly likely to hire men for the mathematical skills. They should hire someone based on what they have to offer not because they are a male and the stereotypes around men is that they are suppose to be “smarter” and better at math.

Taking steps to move towards more women in STEM consists of encouraging them at a young age by improving the curriculum in elementary school, gathering more mentors to help women stay in the field and continue to motivate by promoting the idea of having a family and become successful is not too out of the norm. All of this can be reached if everyone is on board to move towards gender equality in the workplace.

## Works Cited

- Anderson, From Becky. "At Last, It's Zaha Hadid's Time to Shine." *CNN*, Cable News Network, 8 Aug. 2012, [edition.cnn.com/2012/08/01/business/leading-women-zaha-hadid/](http://edition.cnn.com/2012/08/01/business/leading-women-zaha-hadid/).
- "Feature Story." *Engaging Children in STEM Education EARLY! | Natural Start*, [naturalstart.org/feature-stories/engaging-children-stem-education-early](http://naturalstart.org/feature-stories/engaging-children-stem-education-early).
- "Sowing the Seeds for Successful STEM Learning in Early Childhood." *National Institute for Early Education Research*, 3 Feb. 2017, [nieer.org/2017/02/03/sowing-seeds-successful-stem-learning-early-childhood](http://nieer.org/2017/02/03/sowing-seeds-successful-stem-learning-early-childhood).
- Williams, Joan C. "The 5 Biases Pushing Women Out of STEM." *Harvard Business Review*, 6 Dec. 2017, [hbr.org/2015/03/the-5-biases-pushing-women-out-of-stem](http://hbr.org/2015/03/the-5-biases-pushing-women-out-of-stem).
- Khazan, Olga. "The More Gender Equality, the Fewer Women in STEM." *The Atlantic*, Atlantic Media Company, 18 Feb. 2018, [www.theatlantic.com/science/archive/2018/02/the-more-gender-equality-the-fewer-women-in-stem/553592/](http://www.theatlantic.com/science/archive/2018/02/the-more-gender-equality-the-fewer-women-in-stem/553592/).