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Abstract

The purpose of this research is to discover the effectiveness of gender diversity initiatives undertaken by organisation in order to promote and support gender diversity.

The first part of the research was carried on one of the big multinational organisations based in Dublin in order to build a case study. The second part of the research was conducted through the HR professionals. The theoretical framework discussed gender diversity phenomenon, stereotypes around gender, women's choices and initiatives taken by the organisation to support gender diversity.

The investigation was carried through interpretivist philosophy. Research claims to be inductive however there are deductive elements in it as well. This is a mixed methods research which uses combination of both qualitative and quantitative techniques used in the research.

Qualitative practices used in the research were both: interviewing and observing, where quantitative practices used in the research were a questionnaire. Questionnaires were used in order to collect wider data for the research and support the hypothesis states in the thesis.

The research contributes for a better understanding of gender diversity phenomenon and initiatives used by organisation to support gender as well as contribute for better understanding of effectiveness of those initiatives.

Keywords: gender diversity, management, effectiveness.

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INTRODUCTION

With the trend of globalisation more and more people have been moving from one place to another all around the world. Globalisation means that home companies experience increased competition from foreign businesses when trying to find required talent and skills. Inescapable changes are clearly visible in the labour market, where diversity has become common phenomenon (IBEC, 2006).

In the last couple of years Irish demographics has changed, moving into society more diverse, multinational and multicultural. Due to globalisation, a remarkable increase of immigrants coming to Ireland has been noticed in the recent years. The number of issued work permits has increased from 6,215 in 1999 to 40,321 in 2002. Initiatives to manage diversity have been implemented in many Irish organisations as a result of such noticeable changes in the business environment (IBEC, 2006).

Labour market has experienced increased participation of women in the workplace. Population around the world has become diverse and heterogeneous as never before. "During the 21st century, one of the most important trends affecting the workforce is be that of increasing diversity" (Seymen, 2006, p.298). Organisations are prepared to hire people from different backgrounds around the world in order to find required skills and knowledge necessary for the business to grow. There is more communication between people from different countries than ever before. Multinational businesses and corporations recognize the impact of new phenomenon and diversity through the globalisation, however organisations see many challenges coming with the diversity as well. (Nataatmadia and Dyson, 2007).

The abstraction of the workplace diversity has appeared in Ireland and UK only in the last couple of years. The idea of diversity at workplace has been introduced for the first time in US in 1990 during the remarkable changes which have been noticed throughout the demographics. Not much later, Ireland went through the massive workforce change, due to increased immigration, at the beginning of 2000's and has become one of the biggest and fastest growing economies in Europe (IBEC, 2006). Many American companies like Microsoft, Dell, PayPal or Google have decided to

locate their headquarters in Ireland, seeing this country as a perfect location for their business in European market (OECD, 2011).

Due to globalisation, it has become important and worth to study the diversity at the workplace, and especially gender diversity, which is a one of the most important aspects of diversity at the workplace due to the historical position of the phenomenon. From the time perspective there has always been a debate around gender, local interpretation of it, stereotypes around gender and gender influences at the workplace.

There has been plenty of case studies on the topic (CIPD, 2013; CIPD, 2015; IBEC, 2006; IBEC, 2012; Pringle, Prasad and Konrad, 2006; Shortland, 2009; Wittenberg-Cox, 2010) however there is very little study referring particularly to the Irish market. Study which has been carried by CIPD (2015) refers only to women at the leadership level, and majority of the data collected in Ireland that is related to the gender diversity is mostly available through the statistics.

Changes in labour market, economic environment and development of new technologies led companies not only to recognise diversity but, more importantly, to manage it. Many researches show correlation between gender balance and performance of organisation in the marketplace, proving positive impact of presence of women at the top of organisations and through the workforce (Wittenberg-Cox, 2010).

The research rationale of the thesis is to demonstrate effectiveness of the initiatives taken by organisations to promote gender diversity at the workplace. Many international organisations recognise gender diversity and have introduced different practices and initiatives to promote gender diversity. Despite introducing many different approaches statistic show that there is still disproportion between men and women at the workplace.

CIPD (2005) shows that only around 6 percent of staff working in the engineering and technology sector are women, comparing to nursing sector where they are 90 percent of the workforce. According to Microsoft's report (2015) the overall

demographics of workforce is being represented in 73% by men and only 27% by women. At the technology level the ratio is even lower showing that women make only 17% of employees working in that sector. Report presents similar figures at the leadership level, where women hold 17.5% of the positions. Comparing to other multinational organisation (Google), figures are very similar. According to Google's diversity report women hold only 30% of overall positions in the company, where 18% of technical employees and 22% of leader position's. Why, despite many initiatives taken by organisations, figures show such low women's participation in labour workforce especially at technical and leadership level? What organisations are doing to change current situation? How organisations work on gender diversity? Is there any specific reason why women participation is still low?

The research will be composed of analysing gender diversity initiatives within one multinational organisation based in Dublin in order to give guidance on initiatives which are used by organisations to manage and promote gender diversity. The research aim is to demonstrate that despite different tools and programs carried by organisations to promote gender diversity there are other reason why there is low women's participation at the workforce. The results of the effectiveness of organisational approaches will be comparing with CIPD (2015) investigation and their results.

In order to coordinate this research, first part of this thesis presents a literature review that holds the theoretical study of the gender diversity concept. Chapter attempts to explain diversity and its origin, separately looks into gender diversity with the reference to diversity in Ireland and review diversity management with the evaluation of practices and initiatives taken to manage gender diversity. The following chapter concentrates on the methodology, declares the research questions and the aims of the investigation. Next one – research methodology – firstly explains how the study is constructed and how data has been collected for the study, and then follows with findings from the study and discussion over the results. The last chapter concentrates on conclusions in relation to the research topic.

CHAPTER I
LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this section is to review and examine relevant literature and academic papers which are related to gender diversity. Review of the existing literature is crucial to understand concept of gender diversity and theories behind the topic. This part of the dissertation will start with general overview of diversity phenomenon and its origin, followed by discussion over gender diversity, stereotypes around gender, women's choices in their professional career and examination of initiatives taken by organisations to support and manage gender diversity. Brief discussion around literature review and a short analysis of carried investigation will close this chapter.

1.1. Diversity

1.1.1. Diversity definition

Different authors give many unique definitions of diversity phenomenon (CIPD, 2014; Seymen, 2006; Mlliken and Martins, 1996; Pringle, Prasad and Konrad, 2006, Roosevelt, 2010) where CIPD (2014) indicates that the workforce has never been as various as it is now.

Diversity, according to the definition of Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD, 2014), means 'valuing everyone as an individual – valuing people as employees, customers and clients '. In another research, CIPD (2005) adds that 'the diversity concept is inclusive and based on valuing everyone as a unique individual and celebrating this difference. It expands thinking beyond equality issues covered by law and builds on recognised approaches to equal opportunities. It adds new impetus to the development of equal opportunities and the creation of an environment in which enhanced contributions from all employees will work to the advantage of business, the people themselves and society more generally.' Rosevelt (2010) describes diversity as a mixture of differences and similarities any tensions

between the two of them. Authors adds that when people talk about diversity them describe different characteristic of different groups- which can refer to anyone who work within organisation.

Seymen (2006, p.297) supports CIPD (2014) view by giving definition of diversity as a combination of people from different groups in the same organised structure, and at the same time author compares diversity to the workforce profile where "organisation is composed of worker groups which show differences depending on demographic or other characteristics, diversity emerges". Similar interpretation to CIPD (2014) and Seymen (2006) is offered by Mlliken and Martins (1996) who identify diversity as a phenomenon where people recognize each other needs and accept large aspects and opportunities that each person has. Pringle, Prasad and Konrad (2006) in their Handbook of Workplace Diversity summon definition of diversity from Thomas and Ely (1996, p.80) which defines it as 'the varied perspectives and approaches to work that members of different identity groups bring'.

However Seymen (2006) in his article refers to diversity through its different dimensions and adds that term of diversity depends on the way of looking at it. Cox (2008) agrees with Seymen (2006) and adds that the dimensions of the phenomenon have a big influence on the organisation's performance however specific conditions of the situation have to be considered in each case.

The idea of workforce diversity accepts the fact that population is formed by people with 'visible and non-visible differences' (CIPD, 2012; IBEC, 2006). In the society there are things that people have in common and there are elements that differentiate one person from another. Some of the characteristic, such as 'disability, gender reassignment, sex, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, religion and beliefs, sexual orientation and age', have been protected by the legislation in order to give security against discrimination and unfair treatment (CIPD, 2014). However Seymen (2006, p.297) recognises other characteristics (like "functional or educational background, physical and cognitive capability, language, lifestyles, beliefs, cultural background, economic category, tenure with the organisation and sexual preference") and divides them into two dimensions: basic and secondary.

Author explains that basic dimension are the ones we are born with, where secondary dimensions are the one that people acquire through their lives and have less influence on individuals.

According to Seymen (2006) one of the biggest tendency influencing workforce will be rapid grow of diversity and its global context. Author continues that it will affect organisation's structure. As an example author gives USA where "workforce gradually becomes much more diversified particularly with respect to race, ethnic origin, age, gender, and physical and cognitive capability" (Seymen, 2006, p. 298). Seymen (2006) and Mlliken and Martins (1996) underpin that good understanding of diversity and implementation of strategies designed to support the phenomenon at the workplace can bring many benefits to organisation.

This research looks particularly into gender diversity, its impact on organisation's performance, and effectiveness of carried practices promoting gender diversity.

1.1.2. Origin of Diversity

The origin of diversity recognition starts in US, where between 1960s and 1970s American Society observed movements in workforce (Allard and Harvey, 1995). Major influence on development of the new trend of diversity was new legislation that has been introduced at that time, named as Civil Rights Act, 1994. However authors continue that, at the beginning, this new phenomenon has only been recognised in numbers. More women and people with disabilities have been coming into workforce but very little has been done to facilitate and support that phenomenon. Authors describe the process in their research as a 'three phase diversity programme', where in first phase only few changes have been made in company's policies. Second stage of the process was to establish general differences between characteristics of different groups of society, their values and beliefs. However Allard and Harvey (1995) indicate that this stage has failed and led to creation of stereotypes. But at the same time authors add that Human Resources practitioners introduced and started utilise talents coming from diverse workforce. Final stage of the process, which authors refer to as 'current', is 'managing

diversity'. This stage shows advantages of how proper management of diversity can bring benefits into organisation, increase productivity and develop better working environment. Authors indicate that organisations can learn from diversity which can bring many advantages and profits to the business.

Theoretical studies around diversity and equal opportunities were somehow limited in Europe. One of the first publications recognising the subject topic was made by Kandola and Fullerton in 1994, which has become one of the most recognised works around the topic. Following publications were based mostly on Kandola and Fullerton research. This influence is also strongly visible in works published by Irish academics.

Demography in Irish society has gone through many changes over the recent years (IBEC, 2003; CIPD, 2005). Globalisation and increased migration around the world had influenced shape of Irish workforce. Organisations have started to recognise that fact through their policies and procedures however IBEC (2006) indicates that there were some national factors which influenced the development of managing diversity in the country, like Employment Equality Act, 1998 and the Equal Status Act, 2000. Both acts gave regulation framework on how diversity should be managed within organisations in some of the areas.

IBEC (2006, p. 4) continues that "Traditional equal opportunity approaches have tended to focus on compliance with legislation and regulation, both of which are externally driven, as well as positive action initiatives for specific groups, which can include a focus on meeting targets. On the other hand, managing diversity policies seek to benefit from the particular abilities of individuals from a business perspective while recognising the benefits which can accrue from the diversity itself within the workforce". Employment Equality Act, 1998 covers discrimination in the employment in nine grounds: gender, marital status, sexual orientation, disability, race, membership of travel community, religious beliefs, age, family status.

1.2. Gender diversity

1.2.1. Gender diversity definition

Gender is a significant and relevant part of diversity at the workplace as well as diversity in the population. Topic of gender diversity has a wide aspect, considering position of gender diversity historically through different dimensions (Pringle, Prasad and Konrad, 2006).

Gender, according to Aoyama, Hanson and Murphy (2010, p.158), "Refers to perceived differences between women and men and to the unequal power relations that are based in those perceived differences". However authors add that perception of the gender is structured through the daily activities together with social and economic processes. The concept of gender diversity has changed especially in labour market in the last number of years.

With the evolution of research around workplace diversity, study around gender diversity has been increasing as well. Main reason behind that was the fact that more women have participated in different courses at universities, being involved in varied researches. Women, being aware of the history and the fact that they were missed out in many disciplines of life and research, started to take part studies in order to be recognised at labour market. Authors add that at some stage of the research development, participation of the women has been highly emphasised and appreciated, making women position very influential at the marketplace. Many studies have been carried out across European countries, published in national languages, looking for answer for many questions in relation to women's participations, barriers that they experience to access top management positions (Pringle, Prasad and Konrad, 2006).

Topic of gender diversity is getting a significant attention in the last couple of years. History had showed that for centuries women were limited with access to the power. Only in last decade more female have been elected as head of countries (Perkins, Philips and Pearce, 2013; Lewis 2009, Maddock, 2002).

1.2.2. Gender diversity Ireland

In the last decade, women employment rates in Ireland has grown significantly and in the current economic environment women represent almost half of the workforce available on the market (IBEC, 2006; Wittenberg-Cox, 2010). Lots of initiatives have been made to promote women in the market place. Still, however, women underrepresent in senior and management position, since only 6% of Irish organisations has a women at the top of the board (IBEC, 2006).

"The survey reports that the labour force participation rate for males decreased from 71.1% in the fourth quarter 2001 to 70.4% in the second quarter 2002, whilst female participation increased from 48.6% in the fourth quarter 2001 to 48.8% in the second quarter 2002" (IBEC, 2006, p.). According to the Central Statistical Office (2011) women in Ireland work less hours but at the same time they earn less and 'are under-represented in the Oireachtais and in local and region authorities'. It is also recognised that women are generally better qualified than men, but at the same time they are more likely to take the responsibility of looking after family at home.

1.3. Women's Choices and Stereotype

Research around women's choices and the reason behind disproportion between women and men at the workplace has been carried out across different countries but the results have been varied. The early studies showed direct connection between women's participation at the labour market and local politics. However, authors indicate that in the past century middle-class women have always been actively working but they gave up their work after they got married. Authors continue that labour market has been more interested in looking for necessary skills through the women because of the general shortage in the workforce (Pringle, Prasad and Konrad, 2006).

In the last decade, there has been a massive discussion over gender diversity and role of gender diversity in the business (Agustın and Siim, 2014). More organisations see gender diversity as important part of business strategy and objectives. Even small or

mid- size companies start recognizing value of the gender diversity in the workplace (Wittenberg-Cox, 2010). "Women's participation rates are thought to range from around 30 per cent in more female-friendly sectors, such as non-profit and charitable organisations and 25 per cent in media and publishing, to as low as 6 per cent in construction and engineering with an average of 15 per cent across all industries" (Shortland, 2009, p.366) however there is a lack of statistic and research done on the real numbers. Author points out that there are many factors why women participation in some sectors is higher than in the other. Shortland (2009) shows that, due to personal choices and personal decisions, lots of women do not necessarily want to participate in many international assignments or projects. "Women are influenced by learned cultural and social values and stereotyping of occupations" (Shortland, 2009, p.371). Image of the women is still seen through the domestic work, however man is perceived as the one who works in public (Maddock, 2002).

CIPD (2015) shows that one of the reasons of smaller participation of women in different business sectors lay deeper than people think. Report indicates that current situation has been developed in the long period and in order to reverse this trend changes have to be made either at educational level or at entry career level. As an example CIPD states that percentage of women taking qualification in science is much lower than men, which will have an impact on filling those roles in next 20 years. According to Irish Higher Education Authority (2015) the total number of part time undergraduate enrolments in all Higher Education Authority Funded Institutions, particularly in the field of Information and Communications Technologies, was 124 students, where there were only 40 women.

According to Sparrow (1994) the distinction between men and women is natural because it comes from the biology. Authors continue that there are some behaviours that are expected to be famine and some behaviours that are expected to be masculine. However this is very old way of perception of gender and leads to lots of criticism.

Particular types of work are part of composed gender stereotype at the workplace (DeLaat, 2007). Author continues that data collected through the U.S research shows that the first time when sex segregation has declined was between 1970 and 1980.

There were many legal and economic circumstances behind that phenomenon, including enforcement of Civil Rights Act from 1964, women movements in 1970'a as well as educational opportunities. Women started to take professions in disciplines previously being held only by men, like: medicine, law or in academic research. However stereotypes around gender often act as a suggestion for women to enter the occupation which allow them childbearing at the same time. Women prefer to choose organisation that offer flexible working condition and family friendly policies rather that financial reward (Lewis, 2009).

1.3.1. Women's Choices theories

Literature suggests different theories in relation to women diversity and their choices and participation in the labour market. Shortland (2006) in her article explains all of the literature theories behind the gender imbalance at the workplace. Mostly she concentrates on international assignments and women fit as an expat, however she adds that theories can be used in the domestic employment contest as well. Author in her article explains all the theories behind women's choices in relation to their career progression.

1.3.1.1.   Rational Choice theory

Rational choice theory (Becker, 1981) indicates that women are more concentrated on family life and their role as a mother but men spent more time concentrating on work. However, theory was not reflected in real life as more women expressed interest in taking part in labour market and participating in international assignments. Rational choice theory has been modified by Crompton and Harris (1998) explaining that women can in fact achieve high level in their careers and be able to fulfil family goals at the same time. But in their research authors give contrast between 'professional and managerial occupations', comparing medicine and banking sector. Their finding is that women have a better chance to achieve higher level of job in occupational roles rather than professional, where their roles can interfere with organisation. However authors also pointed out that some of the occupations, like oil

and gas section, experience low participation of women due to a lack of suitable environment for them. Where Wittenberg-Cox (2010) gives an example of Exxon Mobil- one of the largest international oil and Gas Company, which states on their website that company is ready to promote gender balance in their business. Exxon Mobil provides data, confirming that in year 2000 company registered increased participation in executive's roles by 3 percent comparing to the previous year, staying at the level of 12 percent. CIPD (2005) supports Crompton and Harris (1998a) view adding that some of the norms have been created by the society making stereotypes around gender and occupations that they enter but suggest at the same time that stereotypes set up by the society should not define what professions women should or shouldn't enter.

1.3.1.2.   Family Power Theory

Family power theory (Harvey and Wiese, 1998) suggests that persons in the family that has most power dominate in achieving career goals. Theory assumes that women are limited in career progression due to the fact that for some time they do not take active part in the labour market as they are looking after kids and family. However Shortland (2005) questions this theory in her article by saying that the new data indicates that men do not necessarily hold main power in the family any longer as more women participate in the labour market.

1.3.1.3.   Preference Theory

Hakim (2000) suggests that most women decide to look after a family as a result of their conscious and preferred choice, where at the same time men are work concentrated. However Shortland (2005) has some doubts regarding the theory saying that author does not consider any circumstances around that statement and does not take into account origins of women's choices and decisions.

1.4. Gender diversity management

"Diversity management calls for maximizing the potential of all individuals and groups" (R. Roosevelt Thomas, Jr., 1999, p.8). Thomas Roosevelt Jr. has been one of the first authors that tried to measure diversity management. In his article he mentioned about strategic and tactical approach to diversity, focusing on diversity and its management through the different tools: recruitment, hiring, promotion and retention. Cox and Blake (1991) suggest that well managed diversity can bring many advantages creating comprehensive work environment in organisation and helps utilizing individual skills and potential through the different tools. Perception of diversity management is different through the literature.

Managing diversity concentrates on merging 'individual differences' in order to benefit from it (IBEC, 2006). Unique qualities give new opportunities and resources for organisation and have been seen as a chance not a deficit. However only 49 percent of organisations, that participated in the CIPDs survey, declare that they monitor gender diversity within the business in order to manage it where 28 percent of the companies admit that they do not monitor it at all (CIPD, 2015). Many organisations have discovered the value of workforce diversity, but some of the businesses still do not understand its benefits, especially those that come from gender diversity (Wittenberg-Cox, 2010). According to CIPD (2015, p.6) report and their findings, 'HR professionals believe that there are a number of wide-ranging benefits associated with having a good gender balance in the boardroom'. Author continues that in the world, where fifty percent of population is being represented by the females and every year fifty percent of the graduates are women, companies cannot ignore skills from almost half of the population. Especially due to the fact that in the last decade they have been obtaining professional qualifications and became more powerful and ambitious as ever before.

Wittenberg-Cox (2010) gives Norway as an example of new regulations, where new legislation requires that new companies who are listened on Oslo Stock Exchanged are required to have 40 percent of women and men on board. Mandatory legislation has also been introduced in other European countries. However CIPD (2015) shows in their study that mandatory quotas may result in a situation where companies will

be more interested in reaching the right numbers rather than look into the real reason why women are progressing slower onto the top management levels. Respondents in CIPD survey agreed that mandatory quotas can impact on quality of hired staff where some of the candidates might be selected because they are women not because they have right experience or qualification. In a contrast - Equality Act 2010 in UK and Ireland is in fact forbidding from hiring on the gender ground (CIPD, 2015)

More organisations are being interested in the gender balance but they still struggle with attempts to do this (Wittenberg-Cox, 2010). Author shows, through her research, that companies see the benefits of gender diversity but they are often pressurised by "talent issues, mirroring their markets more accurately and responding to diversity of stakeholders pressure" (Wittenberg-Cox, 2010, p.8).

Today more employers participate in promotion of gender balance within organisation through the family friendly policies and practices in order to support people within organisation. "Public interest in work and family balance policies has expanded significantly in recent years" (Lewis, 2009, p.1). However balance between men and women in the leadership roles have not changed. Both men and women perceive that men are more effective as a manager rather than women. CIPD (2005) shows that male directors earn 14 percent more than females at the same level. 'Female progression to top roles is not sustainable unless organisations provide a strong and sustainable framework to recruit and develop women at every stage of their career' (CIPD, 2015, p. 2). The stereotype of the ideal manager has been seen as a man. However in term of theories of the effective management, there is no theory that men management style is better than women. What the research examine is that certain behaviours, people-centred for example, has in fact been taken from females. According to the research, women leaders can bring more mature and ambitious approach and create better bond in their team (Wittenberg-Cox, 2010). Other behaviours, like task orientated, have been taken from men (Rigg and Sparrow 1994). Gender balance in necessary in organisation to make it more stable and harmonize place to work. Teams consisting of both genders usually work better and more effective.

Next paragraph describes initiatives taken by organisations to support, promote and manage gender diversity within the business.

1.5. Initiatives to manage and promote gender diversity

With the deficiency of skills in the labour market, economy started to look for necessary knowledge from many different sources. Economy in particular concentrated on the on women to find required skills and use the pool of talent previously missed in many areas of life and knowledge. Organisations have very quickly realised the upside of gender diversity and the benefits that it can bring when it is properly managed within the business (Evans, 2013).

With the current knowledge of benefits that diversity can bring to the organisation it is important to create framework where all employees can be included in (NISHII, 2013). To exploit it in full, a well-designed diversity strategy is necessary to make sure that all the initiatives implemented within organisation are relevant to the business (CIPD, 2014). However CIPD's report reminds that every organisation should remember that managing diversity is a long term process that requires constant development and cannot be considered to be once off initiative only.

Many authors (CIPD, 2015; Wittenberg-Cox (2010) are very enthusiastic about diversity management, however the theory is often different than practice. Gröschl and Doherty (1999) are suggesting that there are many opinions in relation to mechanics and initiatives used to manage it.

Literature provides different strategies and approaches that organisations are using in order to manage diversity. CIPD (2014) proposed overall strategy for managing diversity however proposed initiatives can also be used to manage and promote gender diversity in the organisation. Pringle, Prasad and Konrad (2006) and Wittenberg-Cox (2010) give a number of different approaches taken by the companies in order to promote gender diversity particularly.

However NISHII (2013) in his exploratory study recalls one of the seminar studies carried by Elly and Thomas (2001) where authors describe organisation's approaches by using qualitative methods of study. Authors "Described the most inclusive organizations as adopting a "learning and integration" perspective that is characterized by the belief that people's diverse backgrounds are a source of insight that should be utilized to adapt and improve the organizations' strategic tasks" (NISHII, 2013, p. 1756).

Past experience had showed that HR practitioners have to take energetic role in order to develop diversity management. The key element is to understand that one approach for managing diversity does not suit everyone. Because of different needs and beliefs, different people have different expectations and demands (CIPD, 2012). Diversity is established on promising outlook, considering that differences through people can bring different experiences and ideas to organisation (IBEC, 2006).

In next part of the chapter research briefly explains initiatives that companies use in order to effectively support and promote gender diversity.

1.5.1. Open and supportive culture

CIPD (2014) suggests that it is important to establish the value system in the organisation based on respect for every individual and every minor group within the organisation. In addition to this, report suggests that only open and supportive culture of organisation will help to manage and promote diversity within organisation.

Diversity management approach can be manifested within organisation through the culture and special designed practices. NISHII (2013) suggests that establishing positive culture and climate for diversity, in turn help to introduce fair and specific policies and practices which support diversity within organisation. Although in order to build open and supportive culture within an organisation it is necessary to change its interaction patterns.

Integration patterns means an "Iintegration of differences, captures the interpersonal integration of diverse employees at work. It reflects collective expectations and norms regarding the openness with which employees can enact and engage core aspects of their self-concept and/or multiple identities without suffering unwanted consequences" (NISHII, 2013, p.1756). Author continues that kind of open and supportive environment can help develop appreciation and recognition through the employees and adapting specifically to gender diversity women will not be afraid speak as they can feel that they feel they have a "voice" to represent their needs and expectations.

CIPD (2014) supports this view and mentions that in the environment where working individuals cannot express themselves and show who they are, they will never fully engaged in the work that they do. In the working environment where employees feel that they have to hide something, they will not be involved in the organisation strategic objectives which will result in lower productivity and higher cost. Open and supportive culture means open communication for everyone, channels for feedback and open environment for everyone to discuss any topic.

1.5.2. Training

Diversity has an impact on every level of organisation, as it starts from every single individual and also affects leaders at the top of organisation. Pringle, Prasad and Konrad (2006) indicate that diversity training program can help every single employee to understand diversity and build the awareness of the phenomenon in a positive way (CIPD, 2014).

Wittenberg-Cox (2010), in her research, sees gender training as an opportunity which helps to understand the importance of the issue, although Pringle, Prasad and Konrad (2006) add that Rynes and Rosen (1995) study shows that most of the gender awareness trainings provided by the organisations are concentrated on stereotypes and prejudice. Despite that, study shows that 75 percent of respondents had a positive attitude to the course after leaving it. CIPD (2014) also sees diversity

training as an opportunity to help employees to understand it and make them aware of company's values and policies, to create better diverse environment.

1.5.3. Recruitment and selection

According to CIPD (2015) management of gender diversity has a big impact on the recruitment and selection process. Many organisations decided to undertake different initiatives in order to promote and recruit best available talents through women both internally and externally (CIPD, 2015).

CIPD (2015) points out that it is also important to make sure that all the job descriptions should be drafted with the language that avoids using stereotypes and attracts pool of candidates from different backgrounds.

One of the key initiatives that GE is undertaking is promotion of Women's Network through the recruitment process (Canadian HR reporter, 2006). Joseph (2013) suggests that redesigned company's recruitment and selection strategy, with the concentration on women and their progression within organisation helped them to increase number of women in the senior roles as well as number of women recruited in the organisation. However Panaccio and Waxin (2010) argue here that there are certain difficulties that need to be addressed in order to facilitate the process of the recruitment for minority groups. Authors continue that it is a challenge to establish the selection criteria for the position and get the candidates from the minority group to apply for the position.

Joseph (2013) mentions that company is trying to target external candidates to encourage them to apply for different roles through the Women's Network Events. Company motivates new starters to join the Women's Network to promote it internally and externally. Author underpins the value of the brand of organisation in the recruitment and selection process. Strong brand, being perceived as an employer of choice for women can attract women to apply for the positions brining necessary skills to organisation (Panaccio and Waxin, 2010).

1.5.4. Work life balance policies

Work-life balance is a term used in literature to describe zones between work and non-work (McCarthy, Darcy, Grady, 2009). Casio (2000, p.166) defines that term as "any employer sponsored benefits or working conditions that help employees balance work and non-work demands". Family friendly initiatives means working from home, times when an employee can leave early to collect kids from school and then work from home (Canadian HR Reporter, 2006), job sharing, part time working hours, start and finish time matches to employee personal schedule (McCarthy, Darcy, Grady, 2009).

"Work-life balance challenges in ways that take account of employee and organisational needs and offer suitable choices and options" (CIPD, 2014). Wittenberg-Cox (2010) suggests that recruitment and selection policy should be design to affect the gender balance internally in the company as well as company's policies should be designed in order to support work- family balance issues. Author shows at the same time a strong link between recruitment strategy and policies within organisation in order to promote gender diversity, suggesting that women wanted to work for organisations with family friendly policies more.

However CIPD (2014) argues here that all the work life balance practices and policies should be designed in the way that it gives everyone's an option in the company and will suit business requirements at the same time. CIPD views is supported by Muzio and Tomlinson (2012), suggesting that work-life balance working hours or practices can sometimes be only discussed in theory, especially in the professions like law or medicine where long working hours are required.

Pringle, Prasad and Konrad (2006) suggest that findings in Richard and Johnson (1999) investigation suggest straight link between clear and formal gender diversity practices and policies. Study findings suggest that well designed policies supporting gender diversity improve productivity and market performance and reduce turnover within organisation.

1.5.5. Women's network and forums

With the growth of globalisation people around the world are able to communicate together in order to share their experience, knowledge and ideas. CIPDs (2014) survey suggests that proper communications channels should be establish within organisation to manage and promote diversity. One of the ideas, according to Pringle, Prasad and Konrad (2006), is creation of a diversity group that gathers all the women together.

Authors add that setting up of that group creates positive outcome through organisational performance because of the protection of the members from negative stereotypes. It also gives an opportunity to all the involved women to share the information and set up good network of connections between them to share the information.

Although according to Canadian HR reporter (2006) one of the biggest challenges that women have to face at the workplace is the lack of a dedicated network that they can share relevant information through. In the article author continues, that lack of well establish network leads to the situation where women can miss a lot of different opportunities within organisation.

Joseph (2013) does not support this opinion and describes the impact of women's networking since 1997. Author provides an example of GE network- especially designed to promote gender diversity through EMEA countries, which extended across 35 countries, connecting more than 10,000 people, shares information in relation to different initiatives, events and partnership. What is more, networks have been set up to connect people at international level as well as at the local level. At leadership level networking encourage leader to participate through the sponsorship as well as take part in different seminars to share their knowledge to other members.

However author describes career network initiatives, where different women connect together through different objectives that they share: 'Commercial women' – where concentrate on retention and women's development and promotion in business management; 'Women and technology' – connecting women through new technologies; 'My connections network' – gaining women being interested to move

into leadership position through mentoring and development programs and 'External networks' – where main objective is to connect with other women at the market being experts in different industry businesses.

Joseph (2013) describes as well different channels where achievements of women's networking are being shared. Gender diversity is being promoted at internal and external level of organisation through events like: news article, internal and external blogs, roundtable events, guest speaking events or best practice sharing through connected networks.

Day (2001) highlights the benefits of networking, especially through women in the leadership positions, adding that the leadership programs designed especially for women involve helping them to build their professional networks and building their relationship with the others from the group.

1.5.6. Clear career paths and promotional opportunities

Career management and progression is a primary responsibility of the employee and the role of organisation is to support individuals (Taylor, Hall and Torrington, 2008), however support that the employee might require can differ (CIPD, 2003). The key element is to find different solutions for those differences (Taylor, Hall and Torrington, 2008) using the tools and activities important for employees (CIPD, 2003).

This research looks particularly into promotional opportunities for women where according to Canadian HR reporter (2006) "Even when there are formal processes in place for succession planning and promotion, at the end of the day, the people who make the decisions are going to look to the people they know. If a woman hasn't established and grown the right relationships, she can miss out on many opportunities". Author continues that the stereotype, which he mentions in his article, is that women always concentrate more on the family than work and do not consider any travelling or working outside the standard working hours. Employers don not consider them in the promotions opportunities because of the stereotype around women role.

Taylor, Hall and Torrington (2008) argue here that the traditional career progression stereotype has changed and employers stopped focusing only on employees being available on full time basis. Business experience increase number of approaches for all employees that have necessary skills and knowledge. However authors add that the key element is that career paths need to be well communicated throughout all the individuals.

1.5.7. Coaching and/or mentoring programmes for women

CIPD (2014) defines coaching and mentoring as "Development techniques based on the use of one-to-one discussions to enhance an individual's skills, knowledge or work performance" with the emphasis that both methods can help to identify high performers in the organization as well as establish areas of the development.

Only well-established relationship between mentor and participant can help to achieve the best results (Tolar, 2012) where CIPD (2014) suggests that some employees might not respond well to the coaching and it is important to use other initiatives for their career development.

Coaching and mentoring can be very important part of the diversity management program (Pringle, Prasad and Konrad, 2006). Authors continue that mentoring program are designed in order to enable individuals through the invisible barriers to get a promotion, where senior employee act as a mentor to the person. Advantages of mentoring program for women are described by HR Canadian Reporter (2006) who explains, and agrees with CIPD (2014), that well designed mentoring programs can identify top talents and top performers across women. Author advises that mentoring program can be very successful and help to achieve higher job satisfaction and relation throughout women staff.

Organisations in different sectors invest in different mentoring initiatives (Tolar, 2012). Author indicate that findings in his study shows that mentoring helped women to reach open path to the leadership position, where respondents described it as a critical event in their career development.

1.5.8. Female sponsorship/advocacy schemes for women

One of the elements to get women on the top of the board management is to leave traditional mentoring programs and set up sponsorship/ advocacy program (Thomson and Lloyd, 2011). Authors argue that without high level advocacy programs it is difficult to lead high potential candidate to the top even with the best mentoring programs available. Butler (2010) explains difference between mentoring and sponsorship programs. Mentors support through the advice and counselling however sponsors are usually executives who inspires people through their progress by giving them a chance to work on more advanced project in order to develop and improve. According to Thomson and Lloyd (2011) sponsorship gives around 30 percent of the benefit in relation to pay raise or promotions within organisation.

Wojcik (2012) suggests that the organisations which sponsor women at the middle management level help them to move into more senior roles internally. Adding that advocacy programs help women to assess their strength and weaknesses and trace development in order to move internally.

Many organisations, like Intel or Deloitte, move away from traditional mentoring programs and start introducing the sponsorship initiatives. Deloitte got very successful outcome after introducing sponsorship program, where paired each women with the executive member of the team. After a year of the program, 18 out of 22 women participating in the scheme have been promoted internally. However Wojcik (2012) suggest that good relationship between sponsor and participant is crucial to get benefits from the program (Thomson and Lloyd, 2011).

Sponsorship programs can help to build the relationships in the organisation which can benefit both company and the employee, by finding and promoting best available talents to the top of the organisation.

1.5.9. Leadership and other development programmes aimed exclusively at female employees

Leadership development has become one of the most important parts of Human Resources Development programs (Madsen, 2012) as there is no single definition and guide how the best leader's management and performance should look like (CIPD, 2015). UK and EU initiatives have been introduced to promote gender diversity. In UK voluntary quotas have been introduced by the government in order to reduce gender imbalance through the companies, however as CIPD (2015, p.3) summarises, there was an underlying aim in that to raise senior female progression and "promotion of the Women on Boards initiative and supporting guidance on how to build female talent pipelines could help to encourage a broader number of employers to foster a better gender balance in senior roles".

Figures show that with the feminization of global leadership (Adler, 1997) only 22.8 percent of women are on directors board positions (CIPD, 2015). This perspective required leadership programs develop especially for women to make sure that their best potential and skills are being used (Hewlett, 2007). In order to meet future demand for women in leadership roles in 1970 and 1980 most popular business school created leadership education programs designed for women (Ely, Ibarra and Kolb, 2011). Although authors continue that pedagogical theories have failed as they were not adjusted to the reality of the market place where women as a leaders have less support from the society. Authors add that most of the work practices designed within organisation do not reflect women's life and situation and are in fact not necessarily helping women to get and keep the leadership positions.

Since women have made themselves aware of those difficulties in getting them the leadership roles, they started to build their position at the labour market, making them more visible and recognisable, by expressing their needs and expectations. Especially designed leadership programs helped to raise those issues and concerns about women at the marketplace and in the leadership roles, influencing companies to introduce tolls to address those challenges (Ely, Ibarra and Kolb, 2011).

For example, 360 degree feedback tool helps to collect information how one's impact others within organisation and raise manager's awareness of their self-perception (Day, 2001). What is more, author adds that 360 degree feedback is particularly used for women's development programs as according to the author they tend to receive more constructive feedback through that tool. Feedback actioned with the assigned coach can help to identify the areas of the development and improvement (Ely, Ibarra and Kolb, 2011).

1.6. Conclusion

The purpose of the chapter was to review and discuss most relevant literature relating to gender diversity, gender diversity management and initiatives that organisations undertake to promote and support gender at the workplace.

Discussed theories and debate around the gender diversity topic concentrates on the main objectives of the topic:
1. The phenomenon of diversity with particular emphasis of gender diversity.
2. The origin of diversity and its impact on gender diversity in Ireland.
3. Stereotypes around gender diversity at the market place with the discussion about women's choices in participation at the labour market.
4. Discuss gender diversity management and initiatives taken by the companies in order to support and promote gender diversity within organisation.
5. Discuss importance of gender diversity on organisational grow and development

Theories presented in the research showed that role of women at the marketplace had changed in the last years. Women start to be very active at the market place as never before, taking energetic role as a workforce. The perception of women in the society has also changed significantly. Literature demonstrates that more women are

interested in starting higher education. More women enter into work environment and start working in industries previously occupied only by men. However literature shows that despite the fact that lots of women now enter different courses, there is still disproportion between number of women and men applying for technical courses. Figures show that women are not interested in studying technical faculties due to their personal choices.

Theories presented in the research showed that women are also very keen to apply for leadership and management positions as well as participate in different international assignments. What is more, literature shows that women are also more often considered for the management role. However, figures show that only one quarter of women in fact hold higher management positions. Progress has surely been made, comparing to the previous years, however more need to be done in order to increase that number.

Theories presented show that many organisations recognise gender diversity and they are aware of the phenomenon in the labour market. Organisations that had recognised women at workplace, start seeing them as a successful leaders who can bring many benefits to organisation.

Despite many initiatives that companies use to promote gender, figures show imbalance between men and women at the workplace in different sectors of organisation. Literature argues about still existing stereotypes related to women and their participation at the labour market and suggests that women's personal choice often decides on their participation and examine different theories to support that statement.

Theories presented in the research showed that gender diversity can challenge organisation, however – if well managed - can bring lots of advantages and positives. Literature provides number of solutions and examples of initiatives used to successfully manage and promote gender at the workplace, emphasizing advantages of those initiatives showing positives sides and benefits of them. Authors suggest that gender diversity management programme, especially designed to promote gender balance within organisation, can bring positive affect for many women that

can benefit directly from it. However, the effectiveness of different initiatives often varies and not every initiative suits each organisation and each employee.

In the next chapter the researcher introduces methodology approached adopted in the research in order to answer research questions and objectives.

CHAPTER II
RESEARCH QUESTION, AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

Previous chapter analysed the concept of gender diversity and theories of the phenomenon. Theories that have been reviewed provide the structure that will be put in this particular research.

The next step of the research is to formulate and establish the research questions. Thesis concentrate on gender diversity and initiatives use by the organisation to manage the phenomenon in organisation. This research will head to better understanding of the phenomenon and initiatives that organisation use to manage and support it with the particular focus on the effectiveness of those programs.

2.1. Research questions

To extend research on the topic of gender diversity and effectiveness of the initiatives taken by organisation, there is a specific research carried by CIPD (2015) that represents the effectiveness of initiatives in improving the gender diversity of boardroom executives has been used. CIPDs research helps to investigate the topic of gender diversity and this investigation can be compared with the results from CIPD.

The main research question of carried investigation is to discover the initiatives used by the companies and their effectiveness of them in order to manage and promote gender diversity in organisation, but not only at the boardroom executives but through all the levels of an organisation.

This research analyses how multinational organisation based in Dublin deals with gender diversity in order to promote women at the workplace. The main concept of the investigation plan is to firstly describe how gender diversity is being managed in

one of the selected organisations. Research looks into organisational approaches that the company is using in order to improve gender diversity. Further the investigation will be carried through the HR professionals to understand if the initiatives are being effective.

2.2. Research aims and objectives of the study

The research aim of the study is to:

- Gain understanding of initiatives taken by selected company in order to support gender diversity internally and externally.

- Attempt to find effect of those initiatives in the organisation.

- Establish whether initiatives are seen as effective at the marketplace through other HR professionals.

As a result, the following objectives of the study are being considered:

- To understand the nature of the gender diversity climate in organisation in order to better understand the phenomenon.

- To analyse initiatives that organisation use to promote and manage gender diversity and how effective they are internally.

- To investigate the reasons of disproportion in the workforce between men and women in different parts of organisation.

- To analyse factors of low participation of women at the market place despite many initiatives used by the companies to support them based on the research carried on selected company.

The purpose of the study was to evaluate organisational approaches used by the company to support, promote and manage gender diversity. The important point was to analyse how those initiatives influence on organisation and gender balance. Literature shows that managing gender diversity can be a challenge for the business and the investigation follows the CIPD (2015) research and effectiveness of the approaches. What is more this investigation shows a view of gender diversity for multinational organisation based in Dublin and study contributes to the research in Irish market.

Next chapter analyses the research philosophy and strategies of the investigation, together with data collection and analysis.

CHAPTER III
RESEARCH METHOTOLOGY

This chapter outlines the research methodology that has been chosen in order to carry the investigation. Research methodology gives elements how study has been managed. Methodology chapter starts with research philosophy and scheme of the research, followed by collection of data analysis and limitation of the research.

3.1. Research Philosophy

Different research philosophies has been examined before the study, however considering the nature of the research and investigation – study has been carried through interpretivist philosophy based on "research onion" from Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2009). Philosophy research adopted in the study provides some expectations from the researcher about the way the phenomenon will be viewed. According to the Saunders et al, (2009, p.116) "Interpretivism advocates that it is necessary for the researcher to understand differences between humans in our role as social actors" where the meaning of the world actors is a metaphor to humans in their life and the role that they play every day. Interpretation of everyone's role depends on individual set of values and meanings. Authors continue that interpretivism concentrate on situation's attributes, explaining that heritage of the interpretivism comes from two traditions: phenomenology, where people try to make sense of the situations around and symbolic interactionism, where people are in the control of everything that is happening around them.

The main element of the interpretivism philosophy is that researcher is required to be emphatic in order to understand situation around, where the biggest challenge according to the authors is to be able to see the world from others point of view.

In relation to approach used in this study, in this research combining research approach was used. Elements of deduction and induction theory have been used within the same piece of research.

Research claims to be inductive as the purpose was to understand reasons behind the study hypotheses from the gender diverse organisation and understand meanings of people attached to the hypotheses, which is one of the main characteristic of inductive approach. In order to support that approach qualitative primary data has been collected.

However there are elements of deductive approach as well. Research has moved from the theory about hypotheses to relevant data of phenomenon together with collection of quantitative data for the research, which is one of the main characteristic of deductive research approach.

According to the Saunders et al, (2009) using both methods in the same research gives advantages to explore the area of study.

3.2. Research design

In this research different techniques and analysis have been reviewed and implemented in order to answer the research questions. Bryman and Bell (2011) indicate that research design is directly linked to the norms that are used when research is evaluated. However according to Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2009) there are three main elements that should be considered in research design: research strategies, research choices and time horizons.

The purpose of the research is a descripto-explanatory study. Saunders et al, (2009) indicate that in management and business research description element have place which usually link to explanation. This research studies the situation of the phenomenon and describes the relationship between different factors.

3.3. Research Strategy

Research strategy has been selected to this study in order to answer research questions and meet the research objectives. According to Saunders et al, (2009) there is no research strategy that can be simply linked directly to one approach. Authors continue that the most important task is to through selected strategy enable tools to answer research questions and achieve set up objectives. In the previous chapter research question have been established as follow: Gender diversity: needs for gender-balanced workforce practices? And in order to answer this questions strategy will be linked to inductive and deductive approaches.

Case study approach, which is linked directly to explanatory research, have been defined as investigation based on real life context of the phenomenon using different roots of proof Saunders et al, (2009) Authors continue that case study strategy is particularly useful to understand deep meaning of the situation and factors around the phenomenon because can generate answers for raised questions like "why", "what" or "how?" which are often linked to explanatory research. In the result case study matches to the purpose of the research investigation. However (Yin, 2006) explains limitations coming with this strategy. According to the author because of deficiency of rigor comparing to other methods, case study approach can be criticized.

Survey approach, according to Saunders et al, (2009) is linked directly to deductive approach. Authors continue that survey is a popular form used in study research as it allows for the explorer to collect large amount of information from fairly large amount of population. Saunders et al, (2009, p. 144) "The survey strategy allows to collect quantitative data which you can analyse quantitatively using descriptive and inferential statistics. In addition, the data collected using a survey strategy can be used to suggest possible reasons for particular relationships between variables and to produce models of these relationships". However limitations should be considered using that type of strategy. Data collected through the survey is not wide as there is a limitation in number of questions that can be asked through the questionnaire.

3.4. Data collection and analysis

According to Yin (2006) collection of the data technics for the case study can be very different and mix of different technics can be used to analyse it. "They may include, for example, interviews, observation, documentary analysis and (as if to emphasise the dangers of constructing neat boxes in which to categorise approaches, strategies and techniques) questionnaires" (Saunders et al, 2009, p. 146).

The primary data collection for this investigation was through the combination of qualitative and quantitative research. Saunders et al, (2009) argues that terms of qualitative and quantitative can be used in both ways: for data collection as well as data analysis methods. The main difference between those two methods is that qualitative is used for non-numeric data and quantitative for numeric. In this research more than one data collection has been used to answer research question. Authors advise that mixed methods research, which uses combination of both qualitative and quantitative techniques used in the research, can be used at the same time or one after another. However the restriction with this model is that quantitative data needs to be analysed with quantitatively and qualitative data analysed qualitatively.

Curran and Blackburn (2001) advise that combination of both technics together with primary and secondary data is highly recommended in business or management research. Multiple methods can give more opportunity to answer research questions as well as assess findings. Saunders et al, (2009, p.156) support this point of view and add that "Different methods can be used for different purposes in a study". In the result this data collection technics match perfectly to this research.

At the exploratory stage, in order to get a better understanding of the topic and case, interview has been carried, which allows to identify key challenges. During the interview different practices like interviewing and observing have been used to get a better understanding of the phenomenon. Questions that have been used during the interview were open in order to give the interviewee possibility to provide all the details. Saunders et al, (2009) explains that in semi structured interviews process allows the interviewer ask a list of questions in order to cover the area of the research. Yin (2009) suggest that interviews are good source of case study proof

where Saunders et al, (2009) argues that because of lack of standardization interviews are not very reliable.

However questionnaire has been send to sample population in order to collect descriptive data for the research. Quantitative practices used in the research were a questionnaire. Questionnaires were used in order to collect wider data for the research and support the hypothesis states in the thesis. Such a combination of the techniques and collection of both qualitative and quantitative data give trust that the main issues have been addressed.

Secondary data has been also used in the research which according to the Saunders et al, (2009) is often utilized with the case study approach in the research. Secondary data used in the research comes from company's documentation, email communication and internal reports. The challenge with the secondary data is difficulty to access information to organisation's report. However the advantage of secondary data is the fact that it is a good source of relevant information that can be compared with the previous investigations. The secondary data in this research was also collected through the note taking process, which together with the primary data helped to construct finding for the research.

Data collected through the interview has been analysed in order to achieve the aims and objectives of the investigation. Interview notes have been put into written form after interview meeting. Notes that have been taken have been analysed, where Bryman And Bell (2011) add that notes taken during the interview does not contain only the information what the interviewee said but also how he said, which can be important source of information. The analysis from the interview has been put into case study report, where Yin (2009) suggests that matching logic is one of the best techniques used to evaluate it. However Milles and Huberman (1994) recommend using literature in order to detail essential information and then link the data collected through the interview with the review from the literature.

Data collected through the survey was analysed using the SPSS tool, which effectively can be used to analyse data collected through the surveys (Quinlan,

2011). Data has been divided into variables which have been testes against each other. Different SPSS tools have been used to produce statistics.

The questionnaire has been set up based on scale previously used by CIPD (2015): Very Effective, Effective, No Effect, and Negative Effect. The results have been compared with the outcome from CIPD.

3.5. Reliability and validity

The importance of the research is to consider reliability and validity of it. This is a mixed methods research, where quantitative and qualitative quality of the methods needs to be examined.

The qualitative data as the researcher mentioned before, Saunders et al, (2009) argues that because of lack of standardization interviews are not very reliable. In this research interview has been carried in order to investigate the aims without trying to force the answers. Questions have been carefully designed to achieve investigation aims and objectives.

The quantitative data the validity of the data has been carried through SPSS tool tests. Cronbach Alpha procedure has been used in order to establish reliability of data. The results of reliability and validity data can be seen in chapter four.

3.6. Sample population

According to Bryam and Bell (2011) sample is a chosen part of population which is examined by the researcher in order to answer research questions and meet research objective. Authors continue that approach of selecting sample population for qualitative and quantitative research is different. The quantitative research needs more mathematical process, however qualitative does not define the size of the population and do not give any understanding of big size population. For the qualitative research semi structured interview have been carried with Program

Manager for Diversity and Inclusion. The main reason why he was selected for the interview was the fact that person was fully aware of all initiatives within organisation and was able to provide sufficient and wide data in relation to those initiatives.

For the quantitative research approach survey has been performed. Survey have been based on study performed by CIPD (2015) however it was developed in order to identify effectiveness of practices designed to promote gender diversity through the different levels of organisation. Population chose for the survey were HR professionals and they were asked to rate the effectiveness of each initiative taken in order to promote gender diversity. The survey composed of 8 questions which were scaled from very effective, effective to no effect and negative effect. The main part of the survey has stayed the same as CIPD (2015) however there were some adjustments. Question in relation to mandatory quotas has been removed as it doesn't apply to the Irish market together with the question in relation to voluntary targets set up by the government as it seemed to be unnecessary for the research.

Questions chosen from the CIPD (2015) research seemed to be useful and important for rectify information in order to assess hypotheses. These questions were linked directly to effectiveness of initiatives introduces by multinational organisation in order to improve diversity at the workplace. However CIPD (2015) survey was referred only to women in boardroom. This research has been extended to effectiveness of gender diversity programs for women at different levels of organisation.

The research instruments used in order to get in touch with the respondents and collect data were through the LinkedIn and Google drive. Sample population were contacted through LinkedIn HR Professionals Group where email containing link to the survey have been send to them. Request in the email was to take part in the survey used as a part of Master's dissertation project.

The main reason why HR Professionals have been asked to answer questions from the survey was the fact that researcher was looking for answers from HR representative similar to the CIPD (2015) study.

3.7. Pilot Survey

The pilot survey has been carried in order to evaluate any issues and gaps that have been missed during the planning stage of the questionnaire. Test pilot has been send to the HR department to one of the multinational companies asking participants to complete the survey and provide feedback in relation to the survey. Saunders et al, (2009) suggest that the main purpose of the pilot questionnaire is to make sure that all questions are simple to answer to the respondents and data can be collected completely. Responses received where all positive. Survey officially has been shared on the 19th July and responses were gained for the next two weeks through the Google share Forms.

3.8. Development of the interview

The interview process has been started when official request has been send to the Diversity and Inclusion Manager. Time and day of the interview were planned with the availability of the interviewee. Interview took 30 minutes and it was held in Microsoft Building office. Interviewee was asked open ended questions. Interview questions have been set up in order to achieve investigation aims and objectives.

Interviewee was informed that interview is anonymous and participant can leave at any stage. Interview sample shows Appendix 2.

3.9. Ethical issues

Number of steps has been taken in order to consider ethics within the research. Firstly before the questionnaire has been build up all the personal data required from sample population were kept to minimum. Respondents were not asked to provide a name and informing all the participants of the purpose of the research.

When respondents clicked the link to the survey they were informed at first stage in relation to the confidentiality message. Saunders et al, (2009) underpin that

confidentiality message needs to be included to inform all the participants what the research contains, what role the respondent plays in the study as well as the study is private and confidential and respondent can leave the questionnaire at any moment. All the participants were informed about the survey with the following message: "The following survey is being conducted as a part of MA in Human Resources Management course at the National College of Ireland. The purpose of the research dissertation is to establish the effectiveness of inactive taken by the companies to support gender diversity within organisation. Please note that all the data collected through the research will be analysed, however name of the organisation will not be required as a part of the research. All the information collected is anonymous and it will be used for the purpose of this particular study. It would not take longer than 4 minutes to fill out the survey and you can withdraw from the survey at any stage".

When an interview has been conducted ethical issues has been considered as well. Confidentiality for the responded has been provided as well as participant was not pressurised in order to attend an interview Saunders et al, (2009). Author suggests as well that interview questions should be neutral with the respect to all the answers given by the interviewee.

3.10. Limitations

This research is a subject to limitations. Time to submit dissertation had an impact on methods that were chosen for the research.

Research is based on qualitative and quantitative methods in order to minimalize those limitations. As the researcher mentioned in research strategy section each of the methods give some restrictions. Data collected through the survey approach is not wide enough and limited to number of questions that the researcher can ask. What is more, survey did not allow to ask respondents some deeper questions and to get a better understanding of respondent's attitude. However, many authors argue that interviews give limitations as well, due to lack of rigor (Saunders et al, 2009).

CHAPTER IV
RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS FINDINGS

The aim of this chapter is to present all the data collected through the interview with the Infusion and Diversity Program Manager at Microsoft and through the survey. The researcher used diagrams, charts and graphs in order to make it easier for a reader to compare or analyse.

Responses collected through questionnaire from HR Professionals have been presented and analysed. Findings from the questionnaire and interview have been presented and discussed.

4.1. Case Study

The methodology chapter discussed that data collected through the interview has been collected in order to build a case study for a company. Data collected through the interview is linked to the theory that has been discussed in literature review.

4.1.1. Background

Microsoft is a high technology multinational company specializing in computer software and electronic services. Company has been funded in 1975 by Bill Gates and Paul Allen and through the years has developed most dominant and popular computer operating system for business and individual customers. Mission of the Company is to "Empower every person and every organization on the planet to achieve more" (Microsoft Website, 2015). The strategy of the company is to "Maximize the business impact of global diversity and inclusion to empower our people, transform our culture and delight our customers".

Microsoft has always been passionate about promoting diversity through the different groups to get best talent and skill from the workforce. They are many different initiatives undertaken by the company to recruit and retain best talent available in the world.

One of the largest employee resource group set up by the company is Gender Group. The main aim of the group is to support and develop women through different initiatives inside and outside the company.

The interview has been conducted with Diversity and Infusion Manager for Microsoft in order to learn about the approach that the company use to manage and promote gender diversity in organisation.

4.1.2. Gender Diversity at Microsoft

Diversity and Inclusion have been a critical part of the success of the organisation. Company always welcomes new experiences, capabilities and talents from different people in order to innovate and develop the company.

Microsoft research shows that demographic of gender workforce in the company depends on the sector that they work in. Statistic shows that overall 71.6 percent of workforce is being represented by men and only 28 percent are women. However in operation sector it is almost equal (56 men, 46 women). The biggest difference between working men and women is in technology sector, where 83 percent of workforce is men and 16.6 are women.

Part of the company's strategy is to enhance women to participate at the labour market and try to find best skills available through that minor group.

Company's business research shows that women control $20 trillion in annual consumer spending and make nearly 85% of all consumer electronic purchases, where purchase $55 billion in consumer technology products. Through the research and statistic business have realised that it is crucial for organisation to reach that

particular group and create strategy of initiatives that helps support and promote women in the market place and internally in the organisation.

Interviewee underpinned that women representation at the IT workforce varies and it is important to encourage women to enter information technology sector.

In the last number of years organisation tries to promote women however there is another issue behind that. Interviewee stressed that it is very hard to find what the right thing to do is. Not all of the programs that the company set up have been always successful and effective. However through the different initiatives company tries to support and promote of gender diversity on each level of organisation.

4.1.3. Gender Diversity Initiatives at Microsoft

4.1.3.1.   Open culture of organisation

Interviewee stressed that company's culture plays significant role in managing gender diversity within organisation. Excellence through the diversity is the aim to make everyday experience for every employee in the organisation. Company promotes inclusive behaviours in organisation which are mainstreamed into employee's work experience.

Company shares many international stories of female employees through the websites showing how company supports women diversity in the business. Seminars and videos set up on the websites are to promote the company as a brand and become the employer of the choice for many women in the world. Stories have been shared through the social media, networks and women's group set up to promote gender diversity internally and externally.

Organisation wants to make sure that company is well known as a best place to work in for innovative people open to every dimension of diversity.

In order to make all the women valued within organisation and help them to network together through the different events company celebrates International Women Day.

Event helps to build and support open culture open and women diversity at the workplace and help to link many women together.

Interviewee stressed that it is a long time process to establish open and supportive culture and effectiveness can be measured in the long time period. However from the interviewee point of view this is a fundamental part of program.

4.1.3.2. Investing in next generation

Microsoft supports different programs that give an opportunity to young people to interact with newest technology available on the market. Kids at school can learn skills in programming and how to start a career in technology sector.

Literature review discussed that one of the reasons of disproportion between men and women in technology sector is the fact that very little women enter technical and IT courses. Microsoft research shows that if trend continues only half of the jobs available in information technology sector would be filled. Company being fully aware of the situation is trying to change the current situation by setting up programs especially designed to attract young girl to progress their career in Information Technology sector.

DigiGirlz is a Microsoft Youth Program, which allows girls from secondary schools to discover career opportunities in technology participate in Microsoft Workshops and get their hand on most advanced technology in the world.

CoderDojo Project- which as well encourages and teaches young people explore technology through the different activities. Project is also directed to the young girls in order to promote them in technology and IT sector and encourage them to work in the industry in the future. There is also additional element of the program-youth mentoring and help with the self-led learning.

Microsoft partners with many universities around the world to develop their skills. Part of that program is a 12 weeks summer internship scheme in order to attract women and people from other minor groups to try to work in technical field.

Organisation offers Scholarship, especially designed for women- called Graduate Women's Scholarship Program, which is designed for best women graduate students in order to promote women pursuing a PhD.

4.1.3.3. Women's networking

Company invests in different women communities in order to support gender. Microsoft has set up women's group in order to link together women being interested supporting gender diversity within organisation. However company set up additional groups linking together women with the same interests: Codess (Women coders), Women Think Next (Women professionals across sales, marketing, services, IT and operations),

The main purpose of the groups is to network women all together through the different forums and social media channels that can be able to share information between the groups, support and promote each other and organisation.

Microsoft set up Facebook page especially designed for women and LinkedIn group to help the network.

Microsoft's internal research shows that women's networking has been very successful in the last number of years. It is linked directly to the recruitment and selection process of organisation as networking helps company to promote vacancies on organisation's brand as an employer of the choice.

4.1.3.4. Recruitment and selection

Training for the all the recruiters and Hiring Managers has been provided in order to create and establish more open culture. Recruiters have been trained to ask behaviour questions during the interview process to make sure that the candidates match the company's open culture.

Company invests in new software that can help to identify more diverse talent of pool. Interviewee stressed that networking helps here a lot as through different

events women hare their experience, promote organisation externally and encourage many women to apply for jobs. The fact that Microsoft brand is well recognised through the market also helps to attract more diverse talent of people.

4.1.3.5. Flexible practices

Interviewee explained that flexible working hours are not officially approved through company's policies and procedures. However it is well known through open culture that it is all about work that needs to be done, not the hours to person needs to spend in the office. Management is very flexible in relation to working hours although approval of it is discretion of the line manager.

Company is aware that flexibility around working hours support many women through their daily tasks. Technology used in the company allows employees to work from home or work from any place in the world. Management is open for those practices and does not require from employees to be physically in the office if their family situation does not allow them.

4.1.3.6. Mentoring and Coaching

Company provides mentoring and coaching programs especially designed for women in organisation. Initiatives are exclusively designed for women looking for career advice and development support.

For the moment organisation has around 30 mentors and coaches especially selected to support women in organisation. Company notices high interest from women who would like to participate in the program. This level of interest in the program has been an indication for the organisation that this very initiative, promoting gender diversity, is in fact effective.

Mentoring is different from coaching. Mentoring program is usually set up for a period of twelve months and helps to achieve specific goals designed at the beginning of the partnership.

Career coach program is a short term initiative which helps women to learn about specific roles and progress within organisation.

4.1.3.7.   Sponsorship Programs and leadership development programs

Part of the Diversity and Inclusion Initiatives are Sponsorship and leadership development programs. There are three main executive sponsors available in organisation in order to run the program however company recognise additional "chapter leads" being a support through the program as well.

Part of the sponsorship program is to show women that work in Microsoft how to be successful in organisation and how to develop their leadership career position. Executive sponsors teach how to ask for promotion and promote through women applying for higher position.

Interviewee suggests that the effectiveness of this program is quite low. Company's research shows that despite sponsorship program many women do not show initiative to apply for higher management position. According to the interviewee, organisation had identified two reasons behind that. Firstly if a women has a family and dependants to look after and if her spouse/partner is progressing well in his career , it is usually a women who steps back from career progression and decides not to apply for the higher management role.

The other factor identified by interviewee is that some of the women a frightened to apply for higher management roles, where most of the team members are males.

4.1.3.8.   Clear career path and promotional opportunities

All the employees are always encouraged to promotion discussion through the performance review program. This applies to all the employees within organisation. However interviewee stressed through the mentoring/ coaching and sponsorship programs women can learn how to ask for promotion in order to progress in their

career but at the same time stressed again that sometimes it is extremely difficult to find the right solution. Many women despite promotion opportunities decide not to apply for the roles and stay at the same level of their career.

4.2. Survey Results

This part of the research shows the results of the survey that has been carried out to establish the effectiveness of the approaches used by organisation to manage gender diversity. 104 surveys were completed and returned to the researcher. The aim of the survey was to target HR professionals from different sectors of the business. The copy of the questionnaire can be found in Appendix 3.

4.2.1. Scale validation

The reliability of the subscales that have been used through the survey was evaluated through the Cronbach Alpha Statistic. The results have been presented in Table 1 below.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.721	.718	8

Table 1. Reliability Statistics

Value achieved through the Cronbach Alpha Statistic was greater than 0.7 which indicates acceptable consistency of gathered data.

4.2.2. Survey results statistics

In this section the researcher shows key characteristics of survey results.

	Open and supportive culture that supports gender diversity	Recruitment and selection practices are designed to attract diverse talent pool	Good work–life balance policies (for example flexible working) that support female staff with caring responsibilities	Clear career paths and promotional opportunities in middle and senior management roles	Coaching and/or mentoring programmes for women	Female sponsorship/advocacy schemes for women	Women's networks and forums within the organisation	Leadership and other development programmes aimed exclusively at female employees
N **Valid**	104	104	104	104	104	104	104	104
Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mean	1.55	1.30	1.37	.66	1.04	.83	.80	.50
Median	2.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	0.00
Std. Deviation	.637	.681	.624	.972	.723	.689	.768	.824
Variance	.405	.464	.389	.944	.523	.475	.590	.680
Minimum	0	-1	-1	-1	-1	-1	-1	-1
Maximum	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2

Table 2. Results statistics

4.2.3. Survey results frequency distribution

Open and supportive culture that supports gender diversity

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No Effect	8	7.7	7.7	7.7
	Effective	31	29.8	29.8	37.5
	Very Effective	65	62.5	62.5	100.0
	Total	104	100.0	100.0	

Table 3a. Question 1- frequency distribution

Recruitment and selection practices are designed to attract diverse talent pool

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Negative Effect	2	1.9	1.9	1.9
	No Effect	7	6.7	6.7	8.7
	Effective	53	51.0	51.0	59.6
	Very Effective	42	40.4	40.4	100.0
	Total	104	100.0	100.0	

Table 3b. Question 2- frequency distribution

Good work–life balance policies (for example flexible working) that support female staff with caring responsibilities

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Negative Effect	1	1.0	1.0	1.0
	No Effect	5	4.8	4.8	5.8
	Effective	53	51.0	51.0	56.7
	Very Effective	45	43.3	43.3	100.0
	Total	104	100.0	100.0	

Table 3c. Question 3- frequency distribution

Clear career paths and promotional opportunities in middle and senior management roles

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Negative Effect	13	12.5	12.5	12.5
	No Effect	33	31.7	31.7	44.2
	Effective	34	32.7	32.7	76.9
	Very Effective	24	23.1	23.1	100.0
	Total	104	100.0	100.0	

Table 3d. Question 4- frequency distribution

Coaching and/or mentoring programmes for women

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Negative Effect	1	1.0	1.0	1.0
	No Effect	22	21.2	21.2	22.1
	Effective	53	51.0	51.0	73.1
	Very Effective	28	26.9	26.9	100.0
	Total	104	100.0	100.0	

Table 3e. Question 5- frequency distribution

Female sponsorship/advocacy schemes for women

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Negative Effect	1	1.0	1.0	1.0
	No Effect	32	30.8	30.8	31.7
	Effective	55	52.9	52.9	84.6
	Very Effective	16	15.4	15.4	100.0
	Total	104	100.0	100.0	

Table 3f. Question 6- frequency distribution

Women's networks and forums within the organisation

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Negative Effect	3	2.9	2.9	2.9
	No Effect	34	32.7	32.7	35.6
	Effective	48	46.2	46.2	81.7
	Very Effective	19	18.3	18.3	100.0
	Total	104	100.0	100.0	

Table 3g. Question 7- frequency distribution

Leadership and other development programmes aimed exclusively at female employees

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Negative Effect	10	9.6	9.6	9.6
	No Effect	44	42.3	42.3	51.9
	Effective	38	36.5	36.5	88.5
	Very Effective	12	11.5	11.5	100.0
	Total	104	100.0	100.0	

Table 3h. Question 8- frequency distribution

CHAPTER V
DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSSION

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss research key results and findings and linked them with the reviewed literature in Chapter 2.

5.1. Discussion

The objective of this investigation was to discover approaches used by the multinational company in order to promote and support gender diversity within organisation and then establish the effectiveness of these initiatives through the survey research questions answered by HR professionals. Finally the results of the effectiveness of the programs will be compared with results from CIPD (2015).

The research was to validate the hypothesis addressed in methodology and research aims and objective chapter that, despite many initiatives and approaches taken by the companies, there is still disproportion between men and women at the workplace.

Data collected from the interview showed that multinational organisation like Microsoft manages high level of diversity and inclusion programs with the particular emphasis on gender diversity. Interview with the Diversity and Inclusion Manager explained different initiatives used by organisation, their approach and perception of the phenomenon. All the data collected through the interview have been supported in the literature review through the different authors. Microsoft main focus is to transform the culture of organisation, promote inclusive behaviours that can attract best people. Through the culture of organisation company wants to build strong brand that will be recognised as a great place to work in, open for diversity.

Microsoft is fully aware of gender diversity at the workplace and tries to manage it in order to get benefits from it. Company includes diversity as a part of their strategy

for the business, stressing that business relays on diverse skills and experiences from different backgrounds.

However as the literature and interview show that not all of the initiatives bring the same effectiveness and suit all the people in organisation. Data collected from the survey showed the effectiveness of those approaches. The analysis of research data suggests that HR professionals, based on a sample group who provided answers to presented survey, find those initiatives to be collectively effective (Table 2 - Results statistics). However, according to data analysis (Table 2 - Results statistics), first and last question from the survey are outside the norm. First approach – "open and supportive culture that supports gender diversity" has been found as very effective while last approach – "leadership and other development programmes aimed exclusively at female employees" is considered to have no effect.
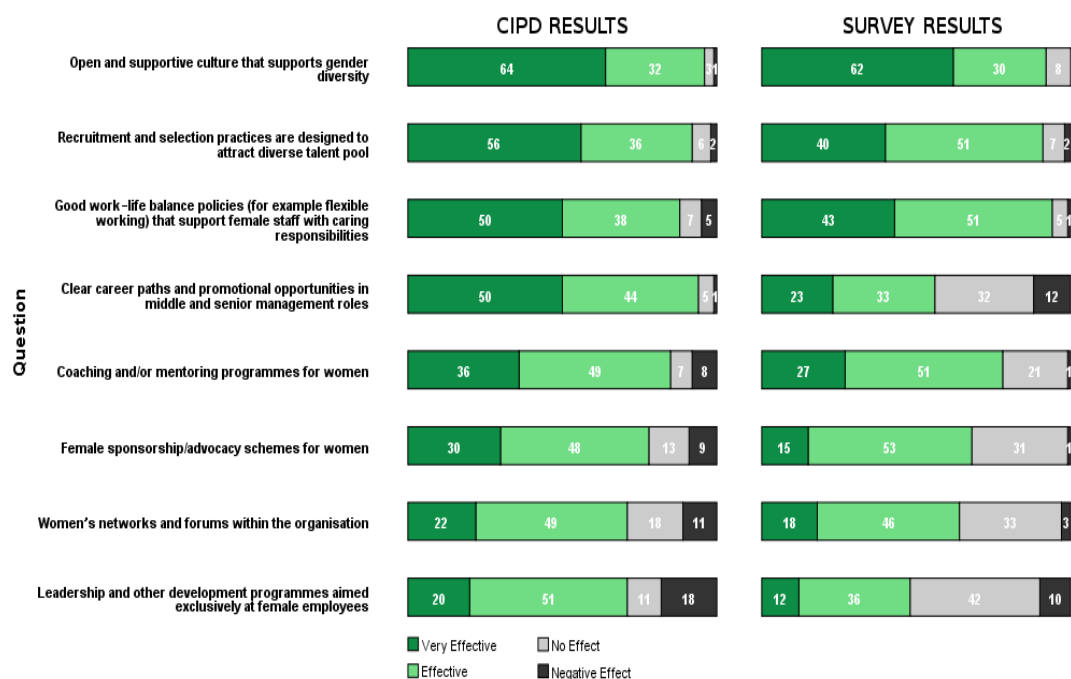
Chart.1 – CIPD vs Survey results

Results from the survey have been compared with the results carried by CIPD (2015) although survey conducted by CIPD dealt with the initiatives of gender diversity of boardroom executives (Chart.1). The results has come back very similar with CIPD

except question 4 – "Clear career paths and promotional opportunities in middle and senior management roles" and 8 – "Leadership and other development programmes aimed exclusively at female employees". Results from the survey performed by the researcher have been less optimistic than CIPD's (2015).

5.2. Conclusion

The aim of the dissertation was to examine the initiatives undertaken by organisation to manage and support gender diversity and examine the effectiveness of those initiatives. The objective was to answer the hypothesis that despite many initiatives there is a still disproportion in gender balance at the workplace. Literature, related to the topic, has been reviewed to support the hypothesis. Data has been collected through the interview with Diversity and Inclusion Manager to establish the approaches used and through the survey to check the effectiveness of those approaches.

Findings from the interview showed that they are many initiatives undertaken by organisation to support gender diversity. Organisation selected research has a high degree of gender diversity and is fully aware of the advantages coming from it. However the challenge for organisation is to manage it properly through the different initiatives to get a maximum benefits from it. Each approach does not suit every individual.

Despite many initiatives taken by organisation the participation of women at the labour market is still low. HR professionals have ranked most of the initiatives as an effective however there are many reason that literature suggest of this disproportion which are supported by the data from the interview. Both statistic and data from the interview shows that not many women decide to study technology courses. Lack of women qualified in the field cause lack of talent pool available on the workplace market.

Both literature and data collected through the research suggest that there are other reasons why women do not participate at the labour market. Literature and data

collected from the interview suggest that women resign from professional career due to family reasons and family role model established throughout the centuries. Other suggested reason of that disproportion, especially in the technical field is the fact that very little women entering technical studies.

Both data collected through the interview and survey have confirmed that open and supportive culture that supports gender diversity is the most effective approach in order to promote and manage gender diversity. Despite the CIPD (2015) research which recognises "Leadership and other development programmes aimed exclusively at female employees" (approach number 8) to be overall effective, both survey and interview showed that this particular initiative does not give as effective results.

Progress in recognising and managing gender diversity has been visible in the last number of years. Companies use different approaches to support and manage the phenomenon, however different approaches mean that the outcome can be different for each organisation. Findings suggest that view of the HR professionals on initiatives have a positive implications and phenomenon of gender diversity has been seen as a benefit and advantage of organisation.

5.3. Recommendations for further study

The researcher suggests that in order to gain deeper knowledge of the phenomenon and effectiveness of the initiatives, there is a need for more qualitative data collection and analysis. Future studies should concentrate on other organisations to examine the initiatives and their effectiveness. More results of qualitative data through different businesses can give overview of the phenomenon and initiatives from different perspectives and different sizes of organisation.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1
Interview Guide

Interview questions

- Interview is conducted as a part of MA in Human Resources Management at National College of Ireland.

- The study is about gender diversity.

- The participation at the interview is optional

- Would you like to be anonymous?

- Is it ok with you if I record and takes notes from this interview?

Background Information:

- How long have you been working for the company?

- What is your role in the organisation?

Questions:

Why is Gender Diversity important to Microsoft?

What are the Microsoft approaches to promote and support gender diversity?

How do you invest in women in organisation?

How you support women within organisation?

How about the promoting women in the boardroom and for leadership position?

Appendix 2
Interview sample with Diversity and Inclusion Program Manager

How long have you been working for the company?

I have been working in the company for the last year.

What is your role in the organisation?

I am Diversity and Inclusion Program Manager, who looks after Diversity and Inclusion Program in Microsoft Ireland.

Background Information

Why is Gender Diversity important to Microsoft?

Steve Ballmer, previous CEO of Microsoft said that diversity and inclusion are critical to the success of economy and society. Microsoft is open to different experiences and capabilities that I think brings innovation and creatively that is needed now more than ever. The mission of the company is to "Empower every person and every organization on the planet to achieve more". Company's research shows that women represent more than 40 percent of the workforce and control 20 trillion dollars of consumer spending annually. We absolutely cannot ignore it. We can see huge potential in that particular diversity group and as a business we try to be diverse enough to our current and new markets and engaged enough to deliver excellent performance.

Women are especially needed in technology sectors. Research shows that 71.6 percent of our workforce is being represented by men, where in technology field women hold only 16.6 percent of jobs. If the trend continues by 2018 technology industry will be able to fill only half of the jobs available on the market.

What are the Microsoft approaches to promote and support gender diversity?

We have discovered that culture plays crucial role in connecting people from different background to work together. Our goal is to enhance the everyday experience for all people employed with the Microsoft, not only for women. We promote behaviours that are expected from the employees and mainstream them into daily tasks. We try to educate employees about diversity, gender- lots of different training is available through the SharePoint to make people aware of the topic. Although we try to organise things specially designed for women, for example- to make fell women valued in organise and celebrate National Women Day.

We provide competency training for our managers to share with them practices that can help to manage and recognise diversity within organisation.

We promote women through their stories and we celebrate their success by advertising it through the social media and Bing videos. We highlight stories of women who broke barriers, went outside their comfort zones and changed their carriers and world. Those successful stories can be encouraging for other women that want to change something in their life.

We want to be recognised as a best place to work in which all dimensions of diversity are being recognised. We always try to attract the best available talent in the world through the recruitment, retention and career development process. Our goal is very clear- to recruit more from diverse pool of candidates. However I know that this is a long process, not something that you can build overnight that is way Microsoft actively looking for a better lever of diversity and ways to improve it.

In the last couple of years we have developed programs specially designed to promote gender diversity and hire more diverse talent. We start to use new software allowing to search for more diverse talent in the world.

Microsoft offers and partners with several programs that provide an opportunity for young girls to learn and experience a career in high technology sector. Company did the research to find out why it is difficult to find women specialising and working in high technology sector. We looked into Higher Education Authority statistics and we realised that not many women decides to study engineering or Information Technology courses. This is probably one of the reason why we get not many application for technical jobs within organisation. Company decides to change this situation that basically affects future business of organisation, and starts actively being involve in many initiatives. What we do is we run DigiGirls Program- which is designed to give girls from secondary school attend different workshop here onsite and learn about most advanced technology available in the market. Net very popular Project is CoderDojo- design again to learn about latest technology. This project is open for everyone, not only to the girls, however we got big response from young girls being interested to build her knowledge about technology and IT. I particularly like this project as there are elements of mentoring for all those young people to teach them learn themselves.

We also establish good relationship with many universities here in Dublin. We offer many internships designed especially for women -12 weeks summer internship program for women, where the purpose is the same- promoting young women in Information Technology and High Technology sector or Graduate Women's Scholarship Program- in order to promote women in PhD studies.

How do you invest and support in women in organisation?

We work very closely with different minor groups within organisation and that is why Diversity and Inclusion Group has been set up. Part of that group is gender and women. The reason of setting up this particular group is to give women opportunity to network and connect together. They set up their own Facebook and LinkedIn group where they can share information about different things. Internal network helped them to expand externally. They linked with many women outside organisation setting up different groups like Codess (Women coders), Women Think

Next (Women professionals across sales, marketing, services, IT and operations) that share the same interests. This is especially good for the business. Initiatives like that can help organisation to promote vacancies and company as a brand through different diverse groups, which is not always the easiest task.

We also organise mentoring and coaching programs for many women. We have around 30 mentors and coaches that support this particular group in organisation. In the last number of years we noticed increase number of women joining it. Looking for advice, support. Through the programs we are trying to show them how to build their career with Microsoft, how to ask for promotion and how to be successful here in organisation.

What do you mean by that?

It is difficult for the business to reach particular talent of pool and recruit it. We gave training to Hiring Managers and recruiter to help them recruit and attract talent but to reach out for those people in extremely hard. Through the networking and networking events women can attract other to join us.

And how you support women within organisation?

We offer for example flexible working time hours and flexible working agreements. This is not in officially in our policies and procedures however this is culture of this organisation- we always say that this is not about how many hours you are sitting in the office, it is about to have your work done. We provide everyone a possibility to work from home or any place in the world to achieve work life balance. Of course you have to be available during the business hours however you do not need to be physically in the office because the company provides you tools and equipment that allows you to work from any place.

How about the promoting women in the boardroom and for leadership position?

This is part of our strategy Diversity and Inclusion Program- Sponsorship and leadership programs. For the moment we have 3 executives' sponsors however we have also "chapter leads" that supports sponsors through the program.

Unfortunately this is not very popular program and participation through women is low and even if the go through the program they decide not to progress later on. It is sometimes very hard to find what is right to do. We realised that lots of potential women do not want to apply for higher management positions from many different reasons. Sometimes due to dependants that they need to look after they decides not to progress in their career. Sometimes they are too scared to apply for higher position as they think they will not be successful. The other fact is that if their spouse or husband progressing well they usually step back to have more time for family and children.

Appendix 3
Questionnaire (HR Professionals)

Questionnaire: Gender diversity- effectiveness of organisational approaches

Questionaire: Gender diversity- effectiveness of organisational approaches

*Required

I agree to take part in this survey and understand that I can withdraw at any time *

⃝ Yes

⃝ No

*

	Very Effective	Effective	No Effect	Negative Effect
Open and supportive culture that supports gender diversity	⃝	⃝	⃝	⃝
Recruitment and selection practices are designed to attract diverse talent pool	⃝	⃝	⃝	⃝
Good work−life balance policies (for example flexible working) that support female staff with caring responsibilities	⃝	⃝	⃝	⃝
Coaching and/or mentoring programmes for women	⃝	⃝	⃝	⃝
Female sponsorship/advocacy schemes for women	⃝	⃝	⃝	⃝
Women's networks and forums within the organisation	⃝	⃝	⃝	⃝
Leadership and other development programmes aimed exclusively at female employees	⃝	⃝	⃝	⃝
Clear career paths and promotional opportunities in middle and senior management roles	⃝	⃝	⃝	⃝