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Gender Diversity

The title of my dissertation is 'Investigating Gender Diversity organisational practices and their impact on leadership development and driving long lasting cultural change, in a multinational organisations'.

Abstract

The varying gender diversity strategies that organisations undertake to drive gender diversity and their impact on leadership and development has been explored during this research. Diversity is about obtaining innovative ideas by promoting the involvement of employees from a wide range of backgrounds working in teams (Foot and Hook, 1991).

This research was conducted with Human Resources professionals in multinational organisations with Irish bases. The researcher used qualitative research methods in the form of semi-structured interviews to gain direct insight into this organisationally delicate topic. To achieve this objective, the researcher must first express the definition of diversity, its origin, the stereotypes and preferences that can impact gender diversity and the most common initiatives currently being used to support this. The researcher concluded that whilst organisations are engaging in multiple practices that drive gender diversity in their organisation, these practices are not following through to organisational culture changes, and are not being reviewed and analysed through ally within the organisation. The factors that influence the effectiveness of gender diversity initiatives are discussed in this research.

Declaration

The work being submitted for examination is wholly my own work and that all materials consulted and ideas garnered in the process of researching the dissertation have been properly and accurately acknowledged.

Submission of Thesis and Dissertation

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Chapter I: **Introduction**

> *"Without new initiatives it would take us 30 years just to get to 30 per cent female representation, more must, and will, be done. And our 2025 aspirational goal is to achieve gender balance at all levels of the organisation over the next decade."*
>
> *- CEO Andrew MacKenzie*, bhpbiliton

Within this chapter, the researcher will introduce the concept of gender diversity in the workplace and the organisational initiatives that support this. The research will demonstrate varying gender diversity practices that exist in organisations and their potential value and impact.

1.1 Overview

Over the last couple of years, organisations have engaged in a number of varying practices to drive forward gender diversity. A survey conducted by McKinsey, with European multinational organisations, in 2016, showed that, whilst the vast majority of companies surveyed have introduced measures to increase gender diversity at the top, many are struggling to demonstrate significant results through these measures in their business (McKinsey 2016).

Studies show that strong changes in the demographics of the workforce are clearly visible in the market and where diversity has become a focus point in organisations. Initiatives to manage diversity have been implemented in many Irish organisations as a result of such noticeable changes in the general business environment and workplace (IBEC 2006). Organisations are eager to have the best talent within their workplaces and are more pro-active than ever in sourcing their talent and encouraging high potential within their organisations. The concept of diversity in the workplace was only really identified as a key area in the US in the 1990's. In Ireland, our workforce has gone through serious changes over the last fifty years. For Ireland, the journey for gender balance in the workplace operates from a background where up until 1973 the government operated a marriage ban for

women. This meant that once married, a woman, working in the public sector would not be permitted to return to work. Even up until the 1980's, the Irish government offered financial rewards to women who did not return to work, post maternity leave. Our culture has evolved over the last four decades, to reflect an Ireland, which in 2015, meant that 52% of university graduates were women (CIPD Ireland 2016). We have seen many multinational organisations locate their European bases in Ireland. One core factor for these decisions has been the availability of talent in the Irish market (GPTW 2014).

It has become important to study diversity and in particular gender diversity in the workplace. McKinsey (2016) confirmed that only 7% of the companies in their survey ranked diversity as a top three priority on their strategic agenda, even though over 80% of the participants claimed to have a strategy in place. There have been plenty of case studies on the topic (CIPD 2013; CIPD 2015; IBEC 2006; IBEC 2012; Shortland 2009), however, there is very little study analysing the practices and initiatives that exist in organisations and how they are truly affecting leadership and culture within the workplace.

A study was carried out by the CIPD (2015) that looked at the initiatives that currently exist in organisations to drive forward gender diversity at an executive level. The CIPD report showed that discussions around gender diversity has moved on, from understanding that there is a workplace gap, to implementing initiatives to help bridge this gap. This research was further supported through the CIPD (2016).

Why, regardless of the increase in the implementation of diversity initiatives in organisations, has there been slow to minimal improvement in the representation of women in the workforce, particularly in leadership roles? What are organisations doing that can review and update their strategies objectively and how do they analyse what is really making a difference? Is there a commitment at all levels of the organisation to drive these key strategies and, in particular, what are organisations really doing to affect change?

1.2 Research aim and objectives

This research will focus on the study of gender diversity initiatives in multinational organisations and their impact on leadership development and improved gender balance in the workplace. This research will lead to informing a best practice review of current gender

diversity initiatives, in multinational organisations and drive a better understanding of those practices.

The research will look into organisational practices that drive gender diversity forward, along with their effectiveness. An investigation will be carried out through engagement with senior HR and organisational professionals.

The overall aim of this research is to analyse the gender diversity initiatives being implemented in multinational organisations and to review their impact on leadership development and gender progression in the workplace.

Objective 1:

To gain insight into gender diversity initiatives in multinational organisations

- What practices are multinationals, with Irish bases, implementing to drive gender diversity?
- What initiatives are failing to influence gender diversity and those having the greatest impact on gender diversity talent progression in the workplace?
- Are metrics or data being used by organisations to gain insight into gender diversity culture in an organisation?
- Does a designated diversity budget support gender leadership balance?

Objective 2:

To identify any potential cross-generational barriers to a gender diverse workforce

- Are there practices in place to support cross-generational working for a shared diversity vision?
- Do organisations maintain fluidity around communication to support cross generational working?
- Are there variances in the generational expectation of an organisation in gender diversity?

Objective 3:

To gain insight into any impactful and embedded changes in the organisational culture based on gender diversity initiatives, considering the motivational factors of colleagues and leaders in the organisation in supporting gender diversity

- Do leaders deliver on their promises on and around gender diversity initiatives?

- Do employees feel progression is based on merit in the organisation, with full transparency?

- Has a culture of diversity focus embedded within the organisation based on the initiatives undertaken within the organisation?

Literature shows that managing diversity can be a challenge for a business (CIPD, 2015). This research aims at reviewing how multinational organisations are performing with this challenge and considers what initiatives can be measured in affecting gender diversity, on a senior level, in the workplace.

1.3 Thesis Structure

Chapter 1 of this thesis presents the research aims and their objectives. Chapter 2 is a literature review that presents current research on the gender diversity issue and its origin and reviews general diversity practices and initiatives that are in place currently in organisations. The following chapter concentrates on the methodology, the methods available to the researcher, and how the study was conducted. This is followed by the research findings and analysis. The last chapter presents conclusions in relation to the research topic.

Chapter **2: Literature Review**

The purpose of this section is to review and examine relevant literature and academic papers that are related to gender diversity, to better inform the research topic. It is imperative to understand the concept of gender diversity along with all relevant theories behind the subject. This part of the dissertation will begin with an overview of diversity, followed by a specific review of the origins of gender diversity, before moving to stereotypes around gender and women's choices, followed by a review of current diversity management initiatives that exist within organisations in order to support and manage gender diversity. A short analysis and discussion of the literature review will then close this chapter.

2.1 Diversity

2.1.1 Definition of Diversity

There are many definitions of diversity from authors over the last twenty years which vary (CIPD 2014; Miliken and Martin 1996; Prasad and Konrad 2006; Seymen 2006). The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD, 2014) states that the current workforce within the UK and Ireland has never been as diverse as it is now. In contrast to this, the definition of diversity is evolving through increasing millennial's in the workplace. A study conducted on the millennial influence on inclusion and diversity has defined a millennial view on diversity as a mix of ideas, experiences and identities pertaining to a person (Deloitte 2017). This is in contrast to traditional definitions that have been based on representation of demographics in the workplace (CIPD 2014).

Diversity, as defined through the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD, 2014), means 'valuing everyone as an individual-valuing people as employees, customers and clients'. Studies through the CIPD (2005) and IBEC (2015) add that diversity is about inclusiveness of all and celebrating the unique contribution each individual, regardless of differences, brings to the workplace. This definition and perspective is separate to Miliken and Martin (1996) that focused on the pending laws and legislative builds that would recognise opportunities to support equality and fairness for all colleagues employed within an organisation.

The United Nations (UN) gives a definition of diversity which in many ways outlines the complexity of this area: Diversity takes many forms. It is usually thought of in terms of obvious attributes; age, differences, race, gender, physical ability, sexual orientation, religion and language. Diversity in terms of background, professional experience, skills and specialization, values and culture, as well as social class, as a prevailing pattern (United Nations, 2000)

The UN perspective supports the views of the CIPD (2014), which sees diversity as an inclusive concept, encompassing a broad focus and not just an employment equality practice for the employer.

Seymen (2006) refers to diversity through its different dimensions and concludes that the term varies from person to person. Cox (2008) agrees with Seymen (2006) that elements of the management of the diversity phenomenon can have a big influence on an organisation's performance, this was also discussed through recent research (Pryzmont, 2015).

The idea of workplace diversity is that a working environment is formed by people with 'visible and non-visible differences' (CIPD 2012). As outlined through Gagnon (2002) we can consider workplace diversity as an approach to equality that focuses on the distinctiveness of employee differences rather than commonality.

Characteristics which make up the nine grounds for discrimination, such as disability, sex, marriage, family status, as a few, have been protected by legislation to help secure employees against unfair treatment (CIPD 2014). According to Foot and Hook (1999), diversity is about 'obtaining innovative ideas by promoting the involvement of employees from a wide variety of backgrounds, working in teams'. This perspective is further supported through Seymen (2006) when he discusses basic and secondary dimensions of diversity, which on a basic level includes the grounds for discrimination within an organisation and on a secondary level refers to mixed backgrounds and whether educational or cultural elements would affect diversity in the workplace. Seymen (2006) sees one of the biggest influences on workplace diversity and organisational strategies to support as the continued globalisation of how organisations work and are structured, regardless of location.

Miliken and Martins (1996) supports Seymen (2006) with the view that the implementation of diversity strategies designed to support inclusiveness of colleagues in the workplace can bring many benefits to an organisation.

This research looks particularly at gender diversity and its impact on leadership talent within an organisation, along with the effectiveness of current practices built to promote a gender diverse workplace.

2.1.2 Origin of Diversity

The origin of diversity recognition in the workplace started in the US, when from the 1960s, American society started to observe changes within the workforce (Allard and Harvey, 1995). This was visible through the increase of women within the workforce, along with an influx of workers traditionally excluded based on race and ethnicity. This evolution of the American workforce had been greatly impacted through diversity legislation, namely the civil rights act of 1964.

Allard and Harvey (1995) outline a 'three phase diversity programme', the first being mainly focused on changes to policies and procedures within an organisation that meet legislative needs. The second stage was focused on understanding general differences within society, based on beliefs, values, and experiences. These authors add that Human Resource leaders had started utilising talent across diverse colleagues within the workforce leading to the third and current phase of diversity, which is based around pro-active management of diversity through detailed internal strategies. Many authors now support that learning and optimising diversity can bring advantages and organisational profit to a business.

A study conducted through the Hudson Institute in 1987 'Workforce 2000' focused on the expected diversification of the likely workforce within the US. The study showed how the US workforce would be completely re-shaped based on increased demographic participation. When reviewing Europe, theoretical studies have been limited when reviewing diversity. The most recognised publication when studying diversity impact in Europe came from Kandola and Fullerton in 1994, and further publications have come from this research. This work has also been referenced substantially in any Irish academic research published.

In relation to Ireland and the UK, the demographic of society has changed substantially in recent years (CIPD 2005). Increased migration and reduced border controls across Europe has changed the shape of the Irish and UK workforce. The Employment Equality Act, 1998 and Equal Status Act, 2000 have helped regulate the Irish diversity framework for employers (IBEC 2006, 2015). Having reached a peak through the Celtic tiger period, work permits have increased across the Irish market (Figure 1), with the Irish economic situation seemingly encouraging diversification.
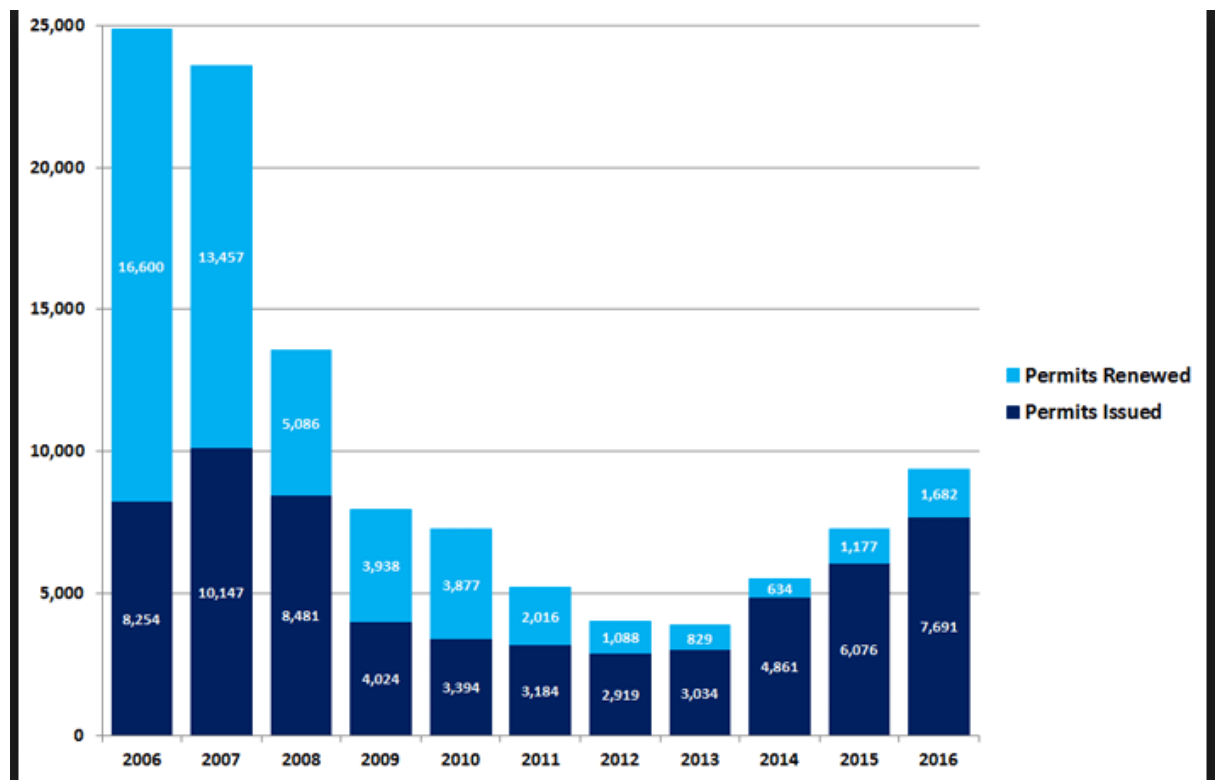
Figure 1: Work permits issued and renewed across Ireland

Data from the department of Enterprise, trade and employment

This can be further seen through some statistics from the Irish workforce. According to the Central Statistics Office (CSO) Ireland's immigrant population increased by 853,500 between 2004 and 2014 greatly impacting permit requests and the workforce demographics.

In Ireland, the workforce gender demographic began its transformation through the conclusion of the marriage ban in Ireland in the 1970's and Ireland's participation in the then EEC in 1973, which drove a need for EEC practices to be aligned to. Prior to this period within the Irish workforce, women could not return to work post marriage in Ireland. According to the CSO, 60% of the Irish employed workforce is male (2015).

2.2 Gender Diversity

2.2.1 Definition of Gender Diversity

As a protected characteristic in Irish and European legislation, gender, and in particular, gender diversity has had a public and legislative focus globally. Through employee policies, maternity legislation and employer anti-discriminatory policies, gender diversification in the workplace has been the most visible workplace change between 1960 and 2000 (Pringle, Prasad and Konrad 2006). This is further weighted when referenced against the general population, which currently sits at 51% female across Europe.

According to Aoyama, Hanson and Murphy (2010, p157-159), gender refers to "perceived differences between women and men and to the unequal power relations that are based in those perceived differences". The concept of gender diversity has changed in the labour market over the last number of years. There are varied definitions of diversity that, in particular, focus on gender diversity in the workplace (CIPD 2014; Pringle, Prasad and Konrad 2006). This is further discussed through the study by the CIPD (2014), which conveyed that the current Irish workforce is the most diverse it has ever been. This increased diversity requires innovation around an organisation's approach to equality and inclusiveness. This expands the expectation on employers beyond legislative requirements. When looking at gender diversity in its specifics as part of diversity at the workplace, the concept has changed in the workplace over the last ten years in particular (Stein and Martin, 2016). Women's participation in the workplace has evolved over the last forty years, as seen through the increase in elected female leaders, particularly across Europe (Lewis, 2009). We can see this in the current leadership across Europe with two of the larger nations being currently led by females in Theresa May and Angela Merkal. In the last year alone we also saw the first nominated female candidate to run for US President in Hillary Clinton. The labour force participation rate for males "decreased from 71.9% 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, p4).

Currently within Ireland, women occupy almost half of the workforce, however, studies have shown that women at the top, and in board positions, are not proportionate to their presence in the workplace; less than 10% of women sit at a board level (IBEC 2010).

While women occupy this presence within the workforce, without the progression to senior leadership, they also are considered to be generally better qualified, with continued further learning being 8% higher in women than men in Ireland (CIPD 2012).

2.2.2 Women's Choices and Stereotypes

Given the wide variation in percentages of women and men in the workplace, various research has been carried out in different countries to understand this status quo and the results have been mixed. Some of the earlier studies do demonstrate a connection between female participation in the workforce and local politics and culture of a territory. A recent study (McKinsey 2016) shows that this local and cultural influence is still an influencing factor in female participation in the workforce outside of the larger and more commercial cities.

Over the last decade, there has been a greater focus on gender diversity within the workplace, with discussion building at a senior level with organisations around gender balance in leadership (Agustin and Siim 2014). Organisations see gender diversity as an important part of business strategy and objectives; "Hiring and promoting talented women is the right thing to do for society - and it's an economic imperative" (Carlos Ghosan, Chairperson Renault-Nissan Alliance 2014). There are factors that influence female participation in certain sectors of the industry, due to personal choices or role of international needs (Shortland 2009). Shortland discusses further how female choices can be influenced by learned behaviour impacting female decision making.

Early studies further emphasise the nature differences between women and men and how this influences workforce participation. Sparrow (1994) outlines that the distinction between women and men at work is natural based on their different biology. This is a view that had not been maintained in recent research; it is considered generalist in nature (CIPD 2015). Recent studies through both McKinsey (2016) and the CIPD (2015) have emphasised the connection of organisational wellness strategies, that support gender diversity practices, as key indicators of employer selection, by female colleagues.

2.2.3 Women's Choice Theory

The most detailed recent research on women's choice theory has been conducted by Shortland (2006), where she analyses all the literature theories around gender imbalance in organisations. Mostly, the author focuses heavily on indicators of work-life balance and the

impacting factor of wellness attributes in driving workforce participation. The author particularly focuses on the theories that influence talent progression of female colleagues within the workplace.

2.2.4 Family Power Theory

This theory focuses on the view that female progression within an organisation is limited due to the balance of their family planning and leave from the workplace. The core of this theory rests on the power balance within a home and family, with the view that the most powerful member of the family is more likely to achieve their career goals (Harvey and Wiese 1998). The challenge with this theory is that it has traditionally been given as an explanation for male progression in the workplace. Shortland (2006) argues that the assumption the males will hold the key power in a family dynamic are now no longer relevant, post millennium.

2.2.5 Rational Choice Theory

The core of this theory is based on the traditional and biological view that women are by nature more focused on family life than a male partner (Becker 1981). The first clear research that challenged this theory on female participation in the workforce was seen through Crompton and Harris (1998) who outlined that women can achieve both family and career goals, thus giving way to the modern iteration of the 'women can have it all' philosophy. CIPD (2005) further supported this view by discussing the traditional stereotypes that have developed through society and are still influencing organisational practices and succession decision making. The CIPD (2005) further discussed that these stereotypes are influencing unconscious female decisions when considering industries to participate in through further education and in the workplace.

2.2.6 Preference Theory

This theory as discussed through Hakim (2000) heavily suggests that female participation in the workforce is based on a genuine preferred choice to stay at home and that by not supporting this choice for our female population we are not recognising this valid choice. Both Shortland (2005) and the CIPD (2005) criticise this view and believe that the historical and cultural impact factors have on female career decision making are not considered through this theory.

2.3 Gender Diversity Management

Managing diversity refers to the systematic and planned commitment "on the part of organisations to recruit and retain employees from diverse demographic backgrounds. As discussed in Prasad et al (1998) managing diversity can also imply active recognition of the evolution of cultural variance in the workforce of organisations. The first practices of gender diversity management have come from the US as a result of key socio-economic and political factors that, like the definitions of diversity, have also driven initial diversity management strategies. In an early US survey, fewer than ten percent of the 445 U.S. organisations surveyed provided diversity training for line managers (Fullerton and Kandola 1998).

One of the first key authors to review diversity management practices and their impact on a diverse workforce was Thomas Roosevelt Jr (1999). Through his research, Roosevelt emphasised the importance of driving diversity at each stage of a colleague's employment within an organisation. The key focus in this article was the differentiation between tactical and strategic and cultural diversity practices, the varied approaches between those organisations that build gender diverse policies, and practices that are then not reflected in the culture within an organisation for the entire workforce (Roosevelt 1999). Diversity management is about maximising all the talent within a workforce so that all individuals are reaching their optimum potential (Roosevelt 1999). Most academics have concluded that in order to effectively manage diversity within an organisation it must be strategically managed (Basset and Jones 2005). Through the supportive inclusiveness and encouragement within an organisation of varying differences amongst colleagues, an organisation can in fact achieve a competitive advantage (Foster and Harris 2005). In the case where diversity practices are implemented but not supported within the organisation, there can be a detrimental impact on colleague engagement within the organisation and a lack of trust can build between colleague and leadership (Basset and Jones, 2005). Some academics have concluded, however, that there is no perfect recipe for managing diversity and that it can be fundamentally down to the individual behaviours of managers in an organisation (Wheeler 1997).

Through a survey conducted by the CIPD in 2015, only 49% of organisations acknowledged that they monitor gender diversity and gender progression stats within an organisation. According to the CIPD (2015), HR practitioners believe that there are wide ranging benefits to having a gender diverse boardroom, given that 51% of Irish graduates entering the workforce in 2014 were female, an organisation cannot ignore the abilities of half of their

potential workforce. This view is further reflected through the summary that female colleagues in the last decade have become more ambitious than ever before (CIPD 2015).

One of the key recent drivers of reviewed diversity practices has been the legislative review that has begun in varying degrees across Europe. In 2003, the Norwegian government passed legislation requiring that 40% of organisational boards must be women. This has been followed through in other organisations naturally that were not tied to the legislation initially. When you consider that, in spite of the US leading the initial diversity management practices globally, less than 20% of their board directors are currently women (Wittenberg-Cox, 2010). However, the CIPD (2015) views mandatory quotas may encourage employers to simply reach a correct number, rather than understand the behavioural and cultural reasons behind slower female progression within the workforce. In the UK and Ireland, the Equality Act of 2010 forbids hiring future colleagues on the grounds of gender (CIPD 2015). Given further change can be seen through very recent legislation on the gender pay gap review, which will have all UK employers having to publish their gender pay details by April 2018, the role of legislative measures in diversity management is further developing.

A diverse workforce is more agile and better able to react to a consistently changing environment (Wheeler 1997). More employers are participating in policies that support gender balance in the workplace, focusing on 'family friendly' and flexible working practices over recent years (Lewis 2009). However, in general, these practices have not statistically delivered increased representation of women in leadership roles in an organisation (CIPD 2015). While there is no theory that a male management style is more effective than that of a female, the traditional view of a manager is of a man. According to some recent research, female leadership traits, including a people-centred and coaching orientated approach, can build a great team bond (Wittenberg-Cox 2010). Teams consisting of both genders are more likely to be more effective.

2.4 Current Initiatives to manage gender diversity

Organisations have become increasingly focused on creating and implementing initiatives in the workplace that will support gender diversity. Employers are beginning to accept that there are true benefits to an organisation with increased diversity (Evans 2013). The last decade has seen a strong move to these strategies being built as part of business-as-usual practices; the challenge is in the effectiveness of the implementation of key initiatives and

their alignment to the particular colleague demographics within an organisation's workforce (CIPD 2014; IBEC 2016).

Some of the key bodies for organisations have begun to recognise employers based on their diversity approaches. As an example, CIPD publicly recognise organisations, through award processes, that are leaders in diversity and inclusion. Accenture Ireland had their strategy recognised in 2016; "We embrace diversity as a source of creativity and competitive advantage, as we work toward 50/50 by 2025, our goal is to create a truly human environment where people have a real sense of belonging" (Ellyn Shook, Chief Leadership & Human Resources Officer, Accenture).

These changes are reflected in organisations, not only in moving to build diversity strategy initiatives, but in also wishing to embed the best practice that can be shared internally and externally by the organisation.

This next part of this chapter will review the varying approaches currently developed within an organisation's diversity strategy that are aimed at promoting gender diversity.

2.4.1 Organisational Culture

Studies have shown that the presence of an organisational culture is consistent in every organisation; it is a commonality through which all employees are impacted and participate in creating (Line, 1999). In order to support gender diversity in the workplace, it is important to have a system that facilitates diversity as part of its core organisational values and its driven culture (CIPD, 2014). With values of an organisation acting as a framework for workplace culture, organisations have evolved traditional values over the last decade to include words like trust, respect and inclusive, helping to embed a culture that includes diversification (Mc Kinsey, 2015).

Over the last number of years, we have seen an increased drive for employers to be considered an employer of choice. This has been visible through initiatives like Great Place to Work (GPTW) and the CIPD award accolades. In 2016, in Ireland, GPTW "received more applications than any previous year" (John Ryan, CEO GPTW, Ireland). All of these new mechanics for employer recognition have strong attachments to both the organisational culture within the company and the diversity strategies that have been created for employees to be supported through. Organisations drive diversity management through the practices it creates and through its culture (NISHII, 2013).

Studies have shown that creating cultures, where women are comfortable to share their voice within an organisation, will support diversity and an awareness of needs women may have within the workplace (CIPD 2014). There are a number of factors that influence a colleague's attitude towards their job e.g., poor management, lack of inclusion, lack of job diversification (Pryzmont, 2015) These factors are further visible through what is known as the 'feminisation' of the workplace (Robbins and Judge 2015). This 'feminisation' is described as an "emphasis on teamwork, empathy, work-life balance and nurturing relationships" (Jackson, et al. 2014 p 18.). These cultural changes within the workplace can further support an inclusive and diverse workforce.

An inclusive culture will mean open channels of communication which drive greater diversity and employee voice. Through this, organisations have started to create initiatives that manage and promote gender diversity; however, there needs to be an organisational commitment to managing the long term approach that is needed to foster a diverse working environment (CIPD 2014).

2.4.2 Work-life balance initiatives

Work-life balance (WLB) has become a core focus in all sectors and industries and can be defined as the ability to distribute time and energy among different aspects of work and life and having an understanding and awareness of this (Irfan and Azmi 2015). Initiatives such as working from home, job sharing, part time working, and flexible working have been considered common initiatives to support WLB (McCarthy et al. 2009). Friends, Family, work, self, and health are the five factors that form WLB (Irfan and Azmi 2015). The idea of WLB will vary for each individual based on their personal needs and their current stage in life, it can be very individualistic and therefore challenging for an organisation to support consistently for all employees (Chandra 2012).

Given the consideration of women's choice theories and their acceptance through academic research, it is understandable that an increased focus in WLB practices, to support female continued participation in the workforce, has grown. General wellness policies have increased over the last decade and have been drafted within organisations in line with their diversity proposals. The CIPD (2014) argued that employers need to be mindful in the design of their WLB practices so that they support all colleagues within a workforce and not simply females. This focus can be seen through legislative changes across Europe that support both

gender's family status. In 2015, the UK introduced Shared Paternal Leave (SPL) allowing a family to split traditional maternal leave between both parents. This legislative change is already building organisational WLB practice changes; Rolls Royce UK increased their paid paternal leave for all male colleagues off the back of this legislative change and offered increased flexible working, to post paternity leave, returning to work, male and female colleagues.

A pro-active organisation, with focused WLB practices, will build loyalty and trust in their workforce (Irfan and Azmi 2015). This increased trust will support colleague motivation and the strongest talent is retained from both genders within the workplace (Cegarra-Leiva, et al. 2012). A further positive effect is the reputation of the company and its employee focus improves and this supports strong candidate attraction for the organisation. This can also be seen through the recognition bodies that award strong WLB initiatives; these include, CIPD, GPTW, Retail Excellence Awards, HR Excellence awards and IBEC.

2.4.3 Mentorship Programmes and Coaching

Coaching is about developing a person's skills and knowledge so that their job performance improves, "hopefully leading to the achievement of organisational objectives. It targets high performance and improvement at work, although it may also have an impact on an individual's private life. It usually lasts for a short period and focuses on specific skills and goals" (CIPD 2009).

Within organisations, one of the key initiatives being used by leaders to support gender diversity is a combination of informal and formalised mentoring programmes and coaching practices (CIPD 2014). Researchers have shown that the absence of mentoring practices in an organisation have had an impact on female progression within organisations (Paludi 2013). Mentoring programmes are designed in order to enable individuals to be successful for progression with a senior leader mentoring the colleague for promotion (Pringle, Prasad and Konrad 2006). The CIPD (2014) agree on the effectiveness of some mentoring programmes, as they can facilitate the identification of female top talent across an organisation and increased female talent retention through recognition of inclusion on a mentoring programme. An example of this is seen through the 'Accenture Ireland diversity report' 2016, which saw an increase of 8% female leader progression through their 'getting to equal' mentoring programme.

2.4.4 Leadership Development Initiatives

Throughout the last decade, organisations have further enhanced their learning and development strategies to include bespoke leadership development for female talent within their organisation (CIPD 2015). Some of the leading business schools began developing leadership programmes aimed at women in the 1980's based on the expected need for increased female talent in the workplace (Ely et al. 2011). These initial programmes centered on being part of the workplace rather than the skills to fully progress within it; this study continues to say that most of the work practices within organisations at this time did not reflect the challenges for the working woman, which varied from male colleagues, and so initial female talent development was not built for true success.

Since women have grown in their own awareness of their challenges progressing within the workplace, they have become more forthright in expressing their needs and organisations have internally and through external partner support designed female talent development programmes aimed at supporting these challenges (Ely et al. 2011). These development programmes have included a focus on language of leadership, adapting leadership styles, 360 feedback, behavioural physcometrics and body language suggestions (Ely et al. 2011). All while working from a backdrop in Ireland that in 1981 had 55% of the Irish female working age population staying at home, to just 17% in 2011.

2.4.5 Recruitment, Progression, and HR Metrics

The aspiration of becoming known as an employer of choice shows itself particularly weighted in attracting talent from both genders to an organisation (Panaccio and Waxin 2010). Understanding what talents are needed within the company and how to recruit these diverse leaders to an organisation has become a key driver of company strategic success (McKinsey, 2014).

Studies show that one of the key focuses an organisation will examine through their analytics, around diversity, will be their employee journey in its entirety, the start of employment through to their exit from the business (McKinsey, 2014). Are we advertising to attract the gender diverse talent we need, as researched; are the simple propositions of the job role specifications written in a way that supports gender diverse attraction? (CIPD, 2015).

Studies have shown this can also be particularly key in the recruitment of internal applicants to progression opportunities, with studies showing the need to review the selection strategies within an organisation (Joseph, 2013). Joseph continues that organisations are using women's networking events to engage female talent and encourage them to apply for different roles. Organisations are endeavouring to make sure the best talent is recruited within their organisation so that progression can be based on merit and not gender (CIPD, 2015). Organisations are also looking at all stages in the employee journey that can affect the progression of a diverse workforce (CIPD, 2014).

The further consideration, in terms of development of the workforce for the progression of gender diverse leadership in an organisation, is a growing piece of organisational diversity strategy (McKinsey, 2014). The primary focus of career management lies with the colleague directly but must be supported through the organisation (Taylor et al., 2008). When considering application for a promotion internally, male colleagues will review a job description and if they conclude they have 25% of the skills required, they will apply for the position; in contrast, women will wait until they have 80% of the skills needed (McKinsey, 2014). To support diversity in progression, employers are also challenged with driving applications from female talent, which their mentoring programmes can help support. The development of high potential identification models such as Kolb (1984) and Egon Zehnder (1996) are being used as part of progression, and recruitment review has increased weighing of 'feminisation' behaviours in talent review.

2.4.6 Senior Executive Engagement

Engagement is a key aspect of any colleague and employer relationship (CIPD, 2014). Given our changing workforce and the increase of the millennials within organisations, the expectations on executive leadership to engage in new strategies that meet diverse and new generational needs has become imperative in an organisation's success (Dhawan 2015). Having an engaged workforce is likely to decrease turnover and drive talent retention (Rama Devi 2009). The executive level within an organisation needs to directly support and sponsor core employee propositions that can deliver gender diversity.

Studies have shown that, where organisations implement a portfolio of gender diverse programmes aimed at driving diversity in progression, these fall short if the executive

leadership within an organisation does not adapt a diversity driven perspective overtly (McKinsey 2014; Stein and Martin 2016).

One of the approaches organisations take to demonstrate senior leadership visibility in driving gender diversity is through sponsoring activities for female talent. Butler (2010) outlines the difference between mentoring programmes and sponsorship of senior leaders in female talent. While mentors can support through coaching and advice, sponsors can be executive colleagues who can give opportunities to female talent to work on advanced and challenging projects to help their development. Many organisations like Deloitte, Accenture, and Vodafone have moved nearer to sponsorship initiatives to help drive their diversity strategies. Accenture, in particular, have seen that over 20% of female talent supported through sponsorship have been successfully promoted within a year of their sponsorship.

2.5 Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to discuss and review the most relevant literature relating to gender diversity, gender diversity management and the current initiatives that organisations are undertaking to help support gender diversity and gender balanced progression within the workplace.

Through this research, it is clear that the theories showed how much the role of women has changed within the workplace over the last few decades. When you consider that prior to 1973 a marriage ban existed in the public sector in Ireland that prevented women returning to the workplace, post marriage, the pace of evolution of gender diversity has been rapid and is still in its infancy.

The theories on gender diversity have included:

- The origin and phenomenon of diversity and in particular gender diversity
- Legislation changes impacting gender diversity in the workplace
- Women's choices and stereotypes that exist and affect gender balanced workforce participation
- Gender diversity management and the current initiatives that exist across organisations to support female talent progression

The research showed that more women are actively participating in the workplace than ever before, participating in industries that traditionally were only occupied by men. The key differential between women and men and their participation in the workplace seems to

weigh heavily, not on their general participation, but on their position within the workforce. While women are active and present members in the workforce, they are not represented in boards or senior leadership positions in a balanced way.

The recent research shows that progress is clearly being made to support increased retention of female talent within the workplace; initiatives are being continuously updated by leading organisations and gender balance, gaining popularity in being a key company focus. The most frequently used initiatives have been varied and have supported both internal talent through development and mentoring, along with work-life balance policies to support colleagues in recruiting without gender bias.

The challenge is that, while gender diverse initiatives have been in place in organisations for the last number of years, the statistics for increased female representation, at a senior level, in an organisation, still shows a strong imbalance. However, the effectiveness of different initiatives varies and each employee may not engage with the particular initiative that an organisation uses.

Chapter **3: Methodology**

3.1 Introduction

The overall aim of this research is to analyse the gender diversity initiatives being implemented in multinational organisations and to review their impact on leadership development and gender progression in the workplace.

The research aims to validate two hypotheses:

- Firstly, that while there are a number of initiatives and strategies engaged in by organisations to drive gender diversity, there is no confirmed 'best practice' approach to truly balance the disproportionate imbalance between men and women in senior leadership roles in multinational organisations.
- Secondly, those organisations that are implementing initiatives, are not reviewing the outcome of these practices heavily enough in their metrics to improve their insight, which shows itself through the organisational culture not evolving with the practices in place.

The methodology chapter is divided into the following sections:

1. Research philosophy including approach, which outlines the author's philosophical rationale behind choosing the qualitative research approach, adopted for this research.
2. Research strategy outlines the diverse options available to the author and discusses the how the author chose to conduct interviews.
3. Participants section provides a background on the participants who were included in this research by the author
4. Data collection discusses how data was collated and coded
5. Ethical considerations and considerations of key privacy processes used by the author in collating this detail.

3.2 Research Philosophy

There is no one singular preferred research philosophy that is agreed as the best and preferred approach. There are two main philosophical approaches which are Ontology and Epistemology or positivist/interpretvist research philosophies (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2012). The author must select the right research approach based on the objectives and insight sought and each stage of their research must be appropriate to the chosen philosophical framework the research adheres to. Saunders et al. (2009) encourage researchers to use their research question as a guide when choosing the appropriate philosophical approach. The philosophy approach undertaken by a researcher provides expectations of how the research aim and findings will be viewed.

Quinlan (2011) provides details on these philosophical approaches. Ontology relates to the study of being, the nature of being and our ways of being in the world, while Epistemology constitutes knowledge and the processes through how knowledge is created (Quinlan 2011, pp.94-97). Ontology is focused on what is true, while epistemology is engaged in methods to gain further insight and understanding on those truths. The philosophical approach of epistemology includes three key aspects to the approach: interpretivism, positivism, and realism.

3.2.1 Interpretivism

Through the interpretivist approach, the researcher can work to understand differences and variances in human behaviour. This approach allows for weight to be given to situations, individual circumstances, and symbolism. A researcher will choose this approach if they view that the subject and objectives are too complex in nature to be summarised through data, (Saunders et al. 2009).

3.2.2 Positivism

When researching through the positivism method, the researcher will take on the role of an objective analyst. The positivism method will refer to personal experiences and lead to very direct concrete proposals off the back of these experiences. The key aspect with this approach is that the researcher must have no bias in their research. Given the author's connection to the research objectives, this approach would not be appropriate for this

research; in practice, the author needs to be impassive to the research when using positivism. This research can be supported through quantitative observations (Gill et al. 1997).

3.2.3 Realism

A researcher using a realism approach believes that there is a reality that can be summarised separate to behaviour and human action (Saunders et al. 2009). A researcher who follows a realist approach recognises that there are social influences on people and their behaviour that mould their reality.

The author can choose to combine interpretivism and positivism for their research method (Fisher 2004). Given the objectives and aims of this research, the most appropriate philosophy to follow is epistemology, using interpretivism to support the research approach undertaken on the gender diversity strategies being researched.

3.3 Research Strategy

Prior to the researcher conducting any research, a full review of research methods must be carried out by the author. When reviewing the varied research methods that are available for this study, there are traditionally three methodologies: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-methods (Creswell, 2014). Given the research and objectives, the researcher had also considered a Delphi research approach.

3.3.1 Quantitative Research Method

When a study is going to be heavily orientated around data gathering and statistics, a quantitative approach works well, as outlined by Creswell (2014). When using a quantitative approach, the researcher relies purely on the data that is gathered to inform study findings. With this in mind, the approach is incredibly impartial. The goal through the qualitative approach is to gather factual information and conclude findings based on this data. Gathering metrics and data are part of the common process of quantitative research, as are the use of surveys in quantitative research.

The author did initially consider the option of quantitative research to support this study, as it has the benefit of a larger sample size to inform the research. Given the nature of this research and the need to potentially probe participants for increased detail, a qualitative method was more suitable.

3.3.2 Qualitative research methods

This research approach is heavily orientated around experiences that can be personal in nature and are focused on the experiences that a person may have had. In the case of considering this approach as part of this study, it could be the experience of a female CEO and their perspectives on the objectives outlined. Creswell (2014) discussed that there are a number of varying approaches of qualitative research that can range from observation, to focus groups, a case study, or to interviewing participants. The objective is to gain knowledge from verbal and at times nonverbal contributions of the participant. The qualitative approach provides an opportunity to probe and understand perspectives in further detail; this can be done through open questions or continued observation. As the process is not data centric, it has fluidity in how the research can be investigated.

For the purpose of this research, the author considered the semi-structured interview approach, having also considered a Delphi interview process. The difference between a formalised and semi-structured interview approach is that the author can have a set of questions but probe the interviewee based on the answers given. The benefit of interviews is that the semi-structured approach can encourage the participants to voice their own views and opinions; however, the process can be lengthy for the researcher to complete and not all participants will be open in the process, therefore causing a potential research limitation (Creswell, 2014). This benefit was further emphasised through Anderson (2011), as the approach enables the interviewer to build on the detail gathered using the semi-structured interviews to allow the interviewer greater flexibility in the order of questions being asked.

3.3.3 Mixed Methods Approach

A further research method considered was to combine the elements of both qualitative and quantitative research, benefitting from the potential benefits of both approaches. This approach is considered the mixed methods approach, combining three different approaches in its options, Convergent Parallel Mixed Methods, Explanatory Sequential Mixed Methods,

and Exploratory Sequential Mixed Methods. The variances included in the options here include the choice the researcher needs to make as to when each stage of their research takes place. As an example, in the convergent parallel approach, the qualitative and quantitative data is gathered at the same time, where as in the explanatory approach the quantitative data is gathered first, then the qualitative approach is undertaken to drive interpretation and further insight. The final option here of the exploratory method, is in its basics a reverse of the explanatory approach. The researcher conducts the qualitative research first followed by data analysis in quantitative research.

3.3.4 A Delphi Approach

Since its introduction as a research method in the late 1940's, the Delphi research approach has been used in over 1500 published studies (McKenna, 1994). This approach is aimed at maximising the judgements of experienced professionals and facilitates decision making that can support best practice solutions. The Delphi technique can be defined as a method used to obtain the most reliable consensus of a group of experts (Dalkey and Helmer, 1963).

The key characteristics of the Delphi technique include (Whitman 1990):

- The use of a panel of 'experts' for obtaining insight and data. It is essential to the method that participants do not meet in face-to-face discussions.
- The use of sequential questionnaires and/or interviews.
- The emergence of a judgement/opinion.
- The use of frequency distributions to identify patterns of agreement. The use of two or more rounds between which a summary of the results of the previous round is shared and evaluated by the panel participants

The fourth characteristic of the minimum two rounds with each panellists between sessions, and the challenge of facilitating this with the appropriate 'experts' led the researcher to the chosen qualitative research method.

3.5 Research Design and Participants

The qualitative research method will combine an interview list of cross-functional senior leaders in multinational organisations. Participants were chosen from a number of

25

multinational organisations to gain a comprehensive view of diversity practices and initiatives in use across industries. The author did fail to gain enough insight from a particular age demographic, having fewer participants between the ages of 55-65.

The participants were selected at random but with an awareness of their seniority in an organisation and with the objective of attaining a gender and age diversification in the study. Participants were invited to partake in the research in person and this took place across a number of organisational offices in the UK and Ireland. Some interviews were conducted through phone and video conference. 15 participants were invited to take part in the research, with 10 completing the process.

Given the nature of the research, the gender balance in interviewees was a key consideration, while the seniority was also a factor in order to evaluate active gender diversity focused practices. The gender balance of those interviewed was 70% female to 30% male. One limitation of the approach was the lack females in high seniority within multinational organisations selected available for interview; as such, the researcher adjusted the initial aim, engaging senior managers who are not at director level as part of this research.

In order to protect the research and support fair interpretation in the process, the researcher ensured that all data collated through both research methods was anonymous. The data and findings were collated as a collective piece of work, with references rather than interviewee's personal details.

The interview process started through an official request to the Chief People Officer or HR Director of these multinational organisations included. The interview format, while remaining open, was structured. Interview time allocations were given thirty minutes for each interview. The interviews were anonymous and the participants had the option to conclude the process at any stage.

3.6 Data Collection

The researcher used both primary and secondary data collection. Primary data collection was gathered through the qualitative research of semi-structured interviews. The secondary data

was collected through academic journals and internal data shared by interviewees in support of the research.

3.6.1 Primary Research Data

The main source of primary data used in this research were semi-structured interviews. This approach was selected based on the access the researcher had to senior leaders who had driven gender diversity initiatives within their organisation. Saunders et al. (2009) describe how the semi structured interview process allows the interviewer to ask a list of questions in order to cover the area of the research. All interviews with participants were confidential and each interview was recorded so that the researcher could focus on the interviewee and not key notes being taken. The recording method was the researcher's smartphone and a back up was available should this have failed. The interviewees were aware of this recording. All recordings were transferred to the researcher's laptop and stored privately.

3.6.2 Secondary Research Data

The researcher used academic journals and available data from participants as secondary research in this study. This research helped contextualise and support the research themes that evolved after the interview process. The main data reviewed in support of this research was based around gender diversity initiatives that have been implemented by organisations over the last decade. This included published case studies and articles from recognised multinational organisation gender diversity 'leaders'. The primary data collected determined the direction of secondary data review. Participants interviewed also shared internal data on their gender diversity metrics and case studies, in confidence to the researcher.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

The author is responsible for protecting the identity of the participants in this research and in sharing full visibility with the participants on the purpose of the research being conducted and their contribution. It is imperative that the participants are aware of what will be done by the information provided to them (Bryman and Bell 1993). Saunders et al. (2009) also confirm how the confidentiality message needs to be communicated clearly to participants and that when using semi-structured interviews the participant was not pressurised to attend.

For this study, the researcher followed the following ethical guidelines:

- Each participant was emailed with the topic of the research for this study

- Detail was given to the participants in writing on how the information provided would be used and a consent form shared, see Appendix 1

- The researcher was granted approval for the interviews to take place in confidence by each organisation, through the HR Director,

- Participants confirmed back in email that they were happy to proceed on this basis, example

- The researcher outlined the confidentiality of the research at the beginning of each interview and gave the participant the opportunity to not answer a question in the session

- All ethical administration outlined by the National College of Ireland was completed

- The researcher ensured through the interview stage that all questions were free from personal information or detail so that the participants could not be identified

- Once the final grade of this research has been confirmed, all files will be deleted.

As a number of participants were senior leaders within their organisation who had driven gender diversity approaches or been part of gender diversity initiatives, there was some concern around confidentiality. A number of participants disclosed information regarding their role and all confirmed job titles, which would make their identity knowledgeable to a reader. With these circumstances in mind, the researcher has omitted the majority of transcripts. Transcripts will be available to the examiner upon request. The length of the interviews ranged from eleven to forty-two minutes long.

3.8 Limitations of the Research

There are limitations associated to all types of research. Despite roots in sociology and psychology, the use of qualitative research as the sole research method has been overlooked in a business setting previously, as it can be considered too subjective in its findings (Cooper and Schindler, 2014). Despite some of this negative perspective on qualitative research, it is clear that this approach can serve a strong purpose in gaining more personal insight of participants and can provide less generalist information. The researcher did need to be particularly aware of the limitations around semi-structured interviews as the chosen method in this research.

One key limitation in a semi-structured interview is the control of bias and objectivity in the interview process by the researcher. Jankowicz (2000) suggests that bias can be controlled by the researcher, prior to the interview taking place. This can be facilitated by designing interview questions that are open and not leading to the participant. In this study, the researcher reflected after the first two interviews that one question had been leading in nature and looked to exclude probes made on this question from the themes discovered through the research.

It is also difficult in semi-structured interviews to ensure that information given by the participant is fully honest and transparent. With the subject of gender diversity, there is a potential 'correct' perspective to be taken by a participant, as the topic is delicate in nature and passionately interpretive. Given that senior leaders who had influenced and participated in gender diversity driven initiatives were being interviewed, there was the limitation in the participant pool on their individual objectivity to the initiatives discussed.

A further limitation in the research was the original desire of the author to complete the research using the Delphi method. A further review with senior leaders to support research could have further confirmed the findings in this study.

Chapter **4: Research Analysis and Findings**

4.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to present the data collected through the semi-structured interviews with senior HR leaders across multinational organisations with Irish bases. The researcher will use quotes and diagrams to make it easier for the reader to analyse.

The sections within this chapter will reflect the findings of the research and split these findings into the key themes identified.

The Primary Themes identified were:

- HR Leaders believe in the necessity and value of an organisational diversity strategy and large multinationals are using a number of diversity initiatives to support gender diversity in the workplace,
- The use of metrics and data to inform diversity strategies and the support of a dedicated budget to support gender diversity initiatives is inconsistent in organisations,
- Majority of HR leaders interviewed did not believe that initiatives were driving organisational cultural alignment to gender diversity,
- Organisations are being challenged with different expectations from varying generational groups, on gender diversity, within their organisation,
- Leaders are not confident that the business advantage of gender diverse leadership in an organisation is being weighted enough in key strategies.

The researcher had focused on multinational organisations, with Irish bases, that had engaged in diversity strategies in their business. Through the semi-structured interviews, HR leaders who represented organisations, who had been recognised through organisational bodies for their gender diversity and inclusion practices, participated in the research. The semi-structured interview approach supported the researcher in adding additional questions based on the detail provided by the participants. In a couple of examples, the participant chose not to answer a particular question and this option had been outlined by the researcher at the start.

All those interviewed were senior manager, Head of, or Director Level within their organisation. All participants were informed prior to the interview that the insight and data obtained during the research was for a masters dissertation in HRM and that all the information was fully private and confidential, held in confidence by the researcher, that it would not be discussed or circulated outside of the dissertation submission. Verbal and written consent was also attained before the interviews commenced.

4.2 Research Objective 1

The first objective of the research was to gain insight into gender diversity initiatives in multinational organisations and their effectiveness.

Themes:

- HR Leaders believe in the necessity and value of an organisational diversity strategy and large multinationals are using a number of diversity initiatives to support gender diversity in the workplace
- The use of metrics and data to inform diversity strategy and the support of a dedicated budget to support gender diversity initiatives is inconsistent in organisations

4.2.1 HR Leaders belief in the need for a diversity strategy and large multinationals are using multiple diversity initiatives in the workplace

One of the key themes that came through in the research was the consistent alignment from all the participants that it is essential to have a gender diversity strategy within their organisation. All ten of the participants agreed that a strategy should be in place and all participants were using more than one initiative to drive diversity.

Every participant expressed the use of mentoring and formal development programmes for high potential female talent as part of their gender diversity strategy.

There was variation in some of the additional initiatives used but all aligned to multiple approaches.

Mentoring Programmes

> *"Each colleague, from manager level upwards, has a designated mentor and a separate leader that acts as their sponsor. The mentor acts as a coach, meeting their*

mentee a minimum of three times per year. They help inform the personal development plan for the colleague and the employees self development focus level is included in their review for progression. The sponsor acts as the champion of the colleague in succession planning decisions and connects with the mentor for detailed feedback", Participant 5.

While participant 5 discussed the detailed mentoring and sponsor programme in their organisation, other participants spoke of ad-hoc mentoring approaches based on talent and succession tools in their organisation.

"As part of our review process we use the nine box grid to review potential. Employees have become more focused on their placement on the nine box grid then their general review score. The reason for this is that we use the grid to indicate what female talent we should invest in and who should receive a designated mentor from the business", Participant 8.

"We recently asked our mentors how they approach their mentoring sessions and the answers were incredibly varied. This really concerned us as we wanted all our talent to get equal opportunities for development through their mentor relationship. We never created a proferma for our mentors on how to truly mentor employees and maybe we should have". Participant 3.

Female Leadership development programmes

One of the initiatives that all of the respondents engaged with, was the need for bespoke female leadership development programmes that supported female talent and their progression. While all respondents aligned to the approach, some had concerns over the balance of providing for these initiatives within their general learning and development budgets.

"Over the last number of years we have engaged female high potential colleagues in our business and supported them by involving an external trainer to run female leadership programmes", Participant 1.

"While we have implemented female leadership programmes annually we have noted that this has now become a substantive part of our annual training budget and I am not sure whether this is the right step going forward", Participant 7.

Respondents had varying approaches on how to identify female talent for these programmes and how visible to make their bespoke development to the wider business.

" We want to support female succession in our business and their development needs but we don't want to disengage our male employees who are also on our progression plans, so we tend to identify the female talent and invite them to the session but not publicise it on our internal communication channels", Participant 10.

Some of the respondents shared their internal data with the researcher post interview, helping inform the secondary research. This data demonstrated that internal analysis of the cause of slower female talent progression had identified low confidence in female colleagues, regardless of their personal performance data. This internal data was then used to inform the formal training needed by the organisation.

"Through focus groups with our female talent we identified that there was a pattern of low confidence that was nearly reflective of each employee we spoke to in this pool. Given this insight we engaged an external trainer to focus purely on female confidence and using their employee voice", Participant 1.

Work-Life Balance Initiatives (WLB)

Through the research, 60% of the respondents confirmed the use of work-life balance initiatives in their organisations, built to drive gender diversity. The respondents had mixed views on the impact of work-life balance practices in supporting female talent progression.

*"While we understand that an employee's circumstances will change during their employment we do not believe in weighting our diversity initiatives with work-life balance practices. We believe in wellness but this is a general view for all our employees and not something we feel is appropriate to focus on for a demographic on its own",*Participant 2.

Some respondents felt that having a flexible approach in the workforce with numerous WLB initiatives built trust between female colleagues and the organisation, as it demonstrated understanding from the company in the needs employees may have in particular moments in the career.

"We combine a number of wellness initiatives that are aimed at supporting our female employees. These include flexible working; working from home on request, a family need day added to their annual leave entitlement and extended pay on maternity. Maternity in particular is one we have really looked at, paying full salary for all female managers for up to nine months. We have then balanced this with additional leave for new fathers also", Participant 9.

4.2.2 The use of metrics and data to inform diversity strategy and the support of a dedicated budget to support gender diversity initiatives is inconsistent in organisations.

One of the themes that became clear in the research was the inconsistency from the respondents on the use of metrics and data to review or inform their diversity strategy and on whether there was then a need for a budget to support these key diversity initiatives.

The use of metrics in particular to review gender diversity statistics was low, with only 30% of respondents actively doing this as part of their strategy. Some respondents had just not moved into pattern of using data analytics, whereas others used HR metrics diligently in any annual review of the success of the strategy.

> *"When designing our gender diversity approach we created a metrics dashboard which captures a number of different statistics. It tells us how many women are applying for a new role and how what our gender turnover is. It really helps us in understanding whether we are succeeding in our approach",* Participant 5.

> *"We purposely decided not to look at ratios and data when reviewing our campaigns; we didn't want people getting obsessed with our stats like a normal business KPI"* Participant 6

When looking at what, if any, dedicated budget should be allocated in an organisation to gender initiatives, there was some inconsistency amongst the respondents. Some were of the view that diversity initiatives should be reflected in cultural behaviour and should be incorporated into general budgets in the organisation.

> *"I don't think it should have its own budget, if you separate it, it's almost like it shouldn't just be the way things are. I have worked in companies with departments that are wholly set up to driving diversity and have their own budget. I don't think it works as it's not by its nature the accountability of all",* Participant 6.

Alternatively, 70% of the respondents felt that a budget was needed in order to be able to implement some initiatives that would truly support gender diversity.

> *"In our organisation we allocate 50,000 a year to training, confidence building and career sharing. This is used on our high potential female employees, based on their review stats"* Participant 1

4.3 Research Objective 2

The second objective was to identify any potential cross-generational barriers to a gender diverse workforce

Themes:

- Organisations are being challenged with different expectations from varying generational groups, on gender diversity, within their organisation.

4.3.1 Mixed Expectations of varying generational groups in the workforce

All of the respondents mentioned challenges with varying approaches from the different generational colleagues in their organisations. Respondents had different views on these challenges.

Some respondents emphasised the different experiences employees have and how this affects their view, which can be seen through their generational grouping.

> *"When we look at our senior team, most of the current occupants are from a certain background and have partners that either work part time or not at all. They have not gone through their working careers balancing two careers within their home and this has to impact how connected they are to the next generations experience coming through, they know what they know", Participant 8.*

One of the consistent themes that came through respondents was the variance between the expectations of millennials in their workforce around gender diversity, to Generation X and the older generations.

> *"We have a lot of young employees, with over 64% of our workforce under the age of 25 simply just expect a diverse leadership. They look at our board and see 9 men and one woman and they don't get it and they are very vocal about that not meeting their expectations", Participant 10.*

Some respondents felt that the employees between thirty and forty five offered the greatest challenge to ineffective gender diversity initiatives.

> *"For us, we understand that our employees who are now thirty or so are just as educated as their male colleagues and very ambitious but the leaders in senior roles who can mentor these guys are men. They don't see their hopes reflected in who decides their careers, "Participant 7.*

Other respondents emphasised the need to consider cross-generational working groups to help drive their initiatives with greater insight of each demographic when working together.

> *"Something we've thought about over the last few months is whether to get a diversity team together that has a good cross-generational mix. One of the things we've seen is that we try to have our directors drive the initiatives but they represent a narrow representation of our employees. We could do with bringing people together to share their perspectives more", Participant 4.*

4.4 Research Objective 3

The third objective was based on gaining insight into embedded cultural changes in the organisation based on gender diversity initiatives, considering also the motivational factors of colleagues and leadership behaviours in the organisation in supporting gender diversity.

Themes:

- Majority of HR leaders interviewed did not believe that initiatives were driving organisational cultural alignment to gender diversity,
- Leaders are not confident that the business advantage of gender diverse leadership in an organisation is being weighted enough in key strategies.

4.4.1 HR Leaders not believing initiatives are driving embedded diversity rich cultural change

Through the research respondents supported the need for initiatives but only 30% felt that a gender diversity driven organisational culture was present. Most of the respondents did not view the practices to be fully engaged with, in their organisations.

> *"We have a large volume of initiatives, it's almost as if we have a menu of different options. But I've had feedback from employees that while we have the practices in place they don't feel any weight to these diversity streams at work, they don't believe that there is any personal initiative taken to support the streams outside of what's in our confirmed plan, which really disappoints me",* Participant 4.

> *"We don't publicly talk about what we are doing and why we do it. On our careers website we don't talk about our diversity aspirations or vision, we simply have initiatives that we hope work, but don't measure them",* Participant 1.

For those that did feel the organisational culture had evolved to be reflective of an aspiration of a gender diverse leadership and management teams in their workforce, there was a also a lot of optimism around what this evolution meant within their organisation.

> *"If you had asked me five years ago whether we could remove some of our formal diversity strategies and still have our employees fight passionately for us to have a gender diversity focus then I'd have said no. But in the last couple of years we've seen our teams get passionate about supporting our campaigns and now, regardless of what new ideas we have, we have enough people in our organisation who continue to keep the questions going and thinking of our women and their progression, when appropriate that is",* Participant 5.

" I now trust our guys that they want to see a difference, that they get why it matters and that they now challenge themselves and their decision making more than ever before really", Participant 9.

4.4.2 Leaders are not confident that the business advantage of gender diverse leadership in an organisation is being weighted enough in key strategies.

One of the themes that came up that has a strong impact on organisation culture and the third objective in the research is the connection of the value of a gender diverse leadership group to an organisation's financial benefit.

A number of respondents felt that the culture had developed from realising the organisation needed an initiative or approach to diversity, to building an approach but that this had not yet been connected to the organisational value as to why.

> *"One of the aspects that I would completely change if we started again is how we talked about why we are doing what we are doing and why it is important. We just told the business we need to do this and its morally correct etc., but we didn't say what value this then gives our business and what advantage it adds to our perspectives, we just said we need to do this. That was a mistake",* Participant 8.

> *"We don't share any details with our business on what is the value of gender diversity in our leaders; we just talk about wanting to help our talent women in our company",* Participant 3.

Some of the other key comments coming through here, and impacting the cultural attachment to these diversity practices, was shown through the respondent's commentary around leadership visibility and commitment to initiatives.

> *" In our first year of our campaign our MD was all over our plan and did some introductory videos, showed up at training events and mentored a leader himself, over the last couple of years post launch the energy for this has changed",* Participant 1.

While other respondents discussed the impact the value male champions in their workforce have had on culturally driving these initiatives in the business.

> *"We began by making sure our most influential male leaders in the organisation were involved and passionate about changing the top tables in our company. We knew that if our most charismatic and influential leaders got passionately behind our campaigns then we would have a higher likelihood of success. We targeted who we needed and we set a lot of hope on them. People who already followed these leaders adapted their behaviour and our culture began to change"* Participant 9.

Chapter **5: Discussion and Conclusion**

In this final chapter, the researcher will review in further detail, the findings and themes outlined in the previous chapter. The researcher will also analyse the limitations of the research and recommend proposals for future research. The researcher will recommend what best practice options an organisation should consider when implementing a gender diversity strategy and how an organisation can embed this strategy and review its impact. The researcher will outline guideline costs with these recommendations. The final part of this chapter will be the personal learning statement from the researcher, outlining learnings and personal challenges faced during this research thesis.

5.1 Discussion of key findings

The aim of this research was to analyse the gender diversity initiatives being implemented in multinational organisations and to review their impact on leadership development and gender progression in the workplace. This section will link the researching findings with the research in the literature review and discuss similarities and potential conflicts.

The research aimed to validate the two hypotheses:

- Firstly, that while there are a number of initiatives and strategies engaged in by organisations to drive gender diversity there is no confirmed 'best practice' approach to truly balance the disproportionate imbalance between men and women in senior leadership roles in multinational organisations.
- Secondly, those organisations that are implementing initiatives are not reviewing the outcome of these practices heavily enough in their metrics to improve their insight, which shows itself through the organisational culture not evolving with the practices in place.

5.1.1 HR Leaders belief in the need for a diversity strategy and large multinationals are using multiple diversity initiatives in the workplace

Data collected through the semi-structured interviews and the secondary data shared by some participants confirmed the view that multinational organisations believe in the need for a defined and clear organisational strategy on diversity. Most of those interviewed were using a combination of a number of different initiatives in their organisation, as referenced through the literary review.

Mentoring Schemes

The use of mentoring schemes to support gender diversity of female talent was an approach that all respondents were using. As mentioned in the literature review, this is an approach fully supported through the CIPD (2014) and IBEC (2016). All respondents saw value in these schemes, with one particular participant explaining the role of sponsors and mentors in their organisation to both coach and verbally promote internally

WLB Initiatives

The literature review outlined that WLB initiatives are common practice for organisations when building gender diversity practices (McCarthy et al. 2009). In this research, just 60% of the respondents supported the view that work-life balance initiatives truly supported gender diversity strategies, offering some variance in perspectives within the respondents and when compared to previous research.

Female Leadership development Programmes

One of the most widely supported initiatives from the respondents was the use of female leadership programmes to support female talent in the organisation. This had been outlined in the study by the CIPD (2015) and referenced in the literature review from organisations that have further enhanced their learning and development strategies to include bespoke leadership development for female talent. The respondents referenced how in some cases this is now becoming a key part of their general annual learning and development budget and so impacts development generally in the organisation. Other respondents had focused on making the training as bespoke as possible for the employees included, having used insight gathered on root causes of slower progression, and built this into the development provided.

Chart 1: Answers per respondent on agreement

The below diagram captures the respondents' consensus when reviewing the degree of alignment to initiatives used and to the need for a diversity strategy. All respondents clearly supported the strategy requirement, the use of mentoring to support gender diversity and female leadership development programmes, with some mixed perspectives of success using WLB practices for gender diversity. In some cases, respondents struggled with the full employee balance of WLB initiatives.

Proposition	Consensus		Answers per respondent									
	Against	Agree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Agree there Should be a Diversity Strategy in Organisations												
Uses mentoring programmes to drive Diversity												
Uses formal female leadership development programmes												
Have found cross-generational challenges in driving diversity strategy												
Agree there Should be a dedicated budget to support Diversity practices												
Use WLB to drive diversity												
Senior Leaders Visibly engaged in Driving Gender Diversity												
Believe Iniatives are working												
Feel Driving gender diversity, progression on merit is embedded in org culture												
Uses Data Metrics to analyse diversity												

5.1.2 The use of metrics and data to inform diversity strategy and the support of a dedicated budget to support gender diversity initiatives is inconsistent in organisations

Through the research with the respondents, it was clear that only two of the participants were actively using the metrics to review their gender diversity strategies and practices. In some cases, this seemed a purposeful part of an organisations strategy not wanting to be driven purely by needing to achieve certain ratios in order to demonstrate a successful strategy. However, for some respondents they had purposefully gone to a lot of effort as part of the framework of their strategy to track metrics for further insight. This organisation was then in a position to identify whether applications for promotion were gender balanced and progression was not or whether performance review data showed gender imbalance when reviewed. Some respondents had not even thought of how to fully use metrics to support this insight. As mentioned in the literature review, understanding these indicating factors can be factor in the strategy's overall success (McKinsey 2014).

When considering budget, 70% of respondents saw the value in a dedicated financial amount in order to support some of the key initiatives, with one respondent being unsure. The mixed views here were based on the aspiration from the respondents for gender diversity to be embedded in culture, in the way in which an organisation is and behaves, rather than needing the dedicated budget to drive these initiatives for their needed impact.

5.1.3 Mixed Expectations of varying generational groups in the workforce

All of the respondents were aligned in the view that there were mixed and varying challenges in driving gender diversity when there are different generational groups within a workforce. A number of the respondents referred to the varying expectations some generations have. The millennial generation that is now joining the workforce have zero understanding of any justification for non-gender diversity leadership representation. On the counter side of this, a lot of the older generation, who would have grown up through periods of high volume of women at home, rather than in the workplace, are coming from a different perspective. Aligning these different perspectives to engage in supporting gender diversity initiatives seemed a challenge for these HR leaders who participated.

5.1.4 HR Leaders not believing initiatives are driving embedded diversity rich cultural change

One of the key variances was that while all respondents supported gender diversity initiatives and believed in this need for a clear strategy, most did not believe this was reflective in their culture and that the strategy was needed as driving gender diversity was very far from a business as usual practice. As referenced as part of the literature review, in order to support gender diversity in the workplace, it is important to have a system that facilitates diversity as part of its core organisational values and therefore its driven culture (CIPD, 2014). The fact that in this case only 30% of the respondents feel this cultural impact to have aligned in the organisation forms an interesting part of the research study.

5.1.5 Leaders are not confident that the business advantage of gender diverse leadership in an organisation is being weighted enough in key strategies.

One of the interesting parts in the research was the views that some of the respondents shared around the senior executive leaders in their organisations. Only 50% of the respondents believed that senior leaders were fully engaged in driving gender diversity in their organisation. This came through in some of the respondents' comments in how gender

diversity strategies are communicated in the business. One respondent particularly referenced wanting to change how they had internally communicated their initiatives. Rather than emphasising the value of a diverse senior table can provide an organisation, the focus was on it being the 'correct' thing to do. For some of the respondents, this approach and these concerns threatened the value impact and weight given to the practices and therefore the potential effectiveness of their implementation.

As discussed through the literature review, failure of senior leaders to be overt in the implementation of gender diverse programmes aimed at driving diversity in progression, will result in these schemes falling short (Mc Kinsey 2014; Stein and Martin 2016).

5.1.6: Chart 2: Weight of Consensus

The below graph reflected the answers from all the respondents. In this graph, we can see that the challenges around cross-generational colleagues are consistent for all the HR leaders who participated. The graph also reflected that for respondent five and nine, who have aligned to all sections in the research, there is strong leadership visibility, along with effective practices, with cultural change and progression on merit also embedded. Likewise for respondents 1, 2, 3, 6, and 7 there was no alignment to senior leadership visibility and no cultural cascade. The final key piece in this graph is that only three respondents believed that the initiatives they were using are working and all three had the view that senior leaders showed overt support for their diversity practices.

Proposition	Consensus		Answers per respondent									
	Against | Agree		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Agree there Should be a Diversity Strategy in Organisations			🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢
Uses mentoring programmes to drive Diversity			🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢
Uses formal female leadership development programmes			🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢
Have found cross-generational challenges in driving diversity strategy			🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢
Agree there Should be a dedicated budget to support Diversity practices			🟢	🔴	🟢	🟡	🟢	🔴	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢
Use WLB to drive diversity			🟢	🔴	🔴	🟢	🟢	🔴	🟢	🟢	🟢	🔴
Senior Leaders Visibly engaged in Driving Gender Diversity			🔴	🔴	🔴	🟢	🟢	🔴	🔴	🟢	🟢	🟢
Believe Iniatives are working			🔴	🟡	🔴	🔴	🟢	🔴	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟡
Feel Driving gender diversity, progression on merit is embedded in org culture			🔴	🟡	🔴	🟢	🟢	🟢	🔴	🔴	🟢	🟢
Uses Data Metrics to analyse diversity			🔴	🟡	🔴	🔴	🟢	🟢	🔴	🟢	🟢	🔴

5.2 Conclusion

The overall aim of this research was to analyse the gender diversity initiatives being implemented in multinational organisations and to review their impact on leadership development and gender progression in the workplace

In order to truly implement gender diversity strategy, there needs to be full alignment within the organisation to the strategy, its value, and its impact. The organisation needs to feel the weight that leadership places on the strategy in order to fully support it. This needs to be further supported through metrics and methods of data gathering in order to analyse the impact the initiatives are truly having.

Within the research, we can see that while organisations were committed to implementing a strategy that supported gender diversity, this was not necessarily followed through in the belief that these practices were making a difference or that they feel supported by senior leaders. Organisations need to evaluate how they recruit, promote, and develop their talent in order to support greater gender balance in leadership levels.

5.3 Limitations of research

The researcher had a number of limitations to the research. The researcher originally considered using a Delphi research method to conduct this research. This research approach would have had numerous HR professionals working on the guidance of a best practice diversity approach. The semi-structured interview approach allowed the researcher to still gain senior HR leader insight but the researcher needed to memo and code these outcomes, identifying the key themes but without a review by the HR leaders interviewed.

The researcher had a further limitation when the number of candidates invited to participate in this research were not all available and many had extended leave, which further tightened the researcher's timeline for analysis. Given the seniority of some of those interviewed, it was not possible to conduct the research with each respondent in person and so a number of the interviews took place via conference call. These calls offered a further limitation, as the opportunity of interpersonal interaction between the researcher and some participants was reduced, which is generally strength in semi-structured interviews.

5.4 Opportunity for future research

The researcher suggests that in order to gain a deeper understanding of the long term impact of gender diversity initiatives and their effectiveness, there is a gap open for more future qualitative and quantitative research. Some organisations who participated in this research are less than five years engaging in full gender diversity driven strategies and so a review of the cultural and organisational effectiveness of these practices is still ongoing. Thus, conducting research that uses both quantitative data and qualitative data over the next few years to fully research the demonstrated and measureable impact of these practices in multinational organisations would add real value.

5.5 Recommendations and Cost of Recommendations

Having reviewed the findings and the secondary research in this study, there are five key pillars that stand out to support a best practice approach for an organisation in driving this strategy.

- HR Leaders need to support the implementation of a diversity and inclusion strategy by connecting the value back into the business in all of the strategy practices. HR leaders need to demonstrate the value a gender diversity leadership team can bring. **Cost Consideration**: This is a minimal cost, as it is based around leadership project implementation strategy. There would be a cost in some organisations if they do not have a HR metrics or data analyst who can support this review in their organisation.

- Have some good basics as part of the gender diversity strategy, so include the leadership and mentoring programmes that hold value, but follow these up with analysis and review of their impact. Project managing the outputs of the investment, therefore maintaining a clear focus. **Cost Consideration**: L&D budget allocation would be based on the organisational headcount and would need to maintain/or support a diversity development budget. This can be started with low cost investment, if only focusing on middle level managers who are high potential initially. In an example organisation with 400 middle managers, 10% of which are high talent potential, 50% of which are women, €300 per high talent female on mentoring and leadership development would be a €6,000 investment in this group on this organisation example.

- Set an aspirational aim for the organisation that can build strategy engagement. The respondents in this survey had a number of standardised practices but very few had a big aspirational aim. The participants, who did have this aim, also had their strategy embedded in their culture.

  Cost Consideration: This should fall part of a 5 to 10 year strategy depending on the organisation. Weighted budget could be added to L&D and communications.

- Consider the varying generational groups within the organisation and support wide approaches needed in strategy build and implantation.

  Cost Consideration: Depending on the organisation size, demographic, and scale this could include social communication builds, and organisational app approaches.

- Embed initiatives and aspirations in the culture of the organisation. Whether through values, over communication or shared goals, colleagues need to be on this journey in partnership with the employer.

  Cost Consideration: Investment in engagement initiatives to support campaigns and approach. In an organisation of 5,000 colleagues, €45,000 per annum would be the cost. This is based on the average cost of engagement and survey suppliers and rollout iniatives costs to multi sites making this headcount.

5.6 Personal learning of the researcher

I found this thesis, and conducting the research, an incredibly challenging piece of work from start to finish. Having worked as a HR professional for nearly ten years within Ireland the UK and across Europe, I began this process with confidence. My perspective was that researching a topic in further detail that I can professionally connect to would be a nice and in some ways familiar experience. That was not my experience. I also wanted to solve the question, achieve my objectives, and have a best practice solution I could share. Researching this topic challenged my perspective on the gender diversity itself and my views on how organisations should implement certain HR strategies around diversity completely evolved through this research. Beginning with some access to key HR leaders, whose corporate experience I respected, drove some false optimism, and fundamentally the research and the topic itself became a lot more challenging than intended. What really held strong with me was how truly lost some HR professionals are in driving gender diversity and how apprehensive they have become in really facing this business and talent challenge in our current modern day workforce. I had expected more through my research - more advancement in success, more passion to knock down barriers, and more commitment to

achieve diversity objectives. The contrary was what, I in reality experienced. This made me really reflect on the industry I work within and in the real advancement of my function in this millennial working environment.

Having grown up with a mother who worked full time my entire life, returned to work within short weeks of my birth, and turned down her financial offer from the government in the 70's to not return to work, I found myself reflecting on real disappointment that we are not as far along this path as we might believe, in our first world economic cities.

I did, in spite of these challenges, learn a lot through this experience. My view is that I am fundamentally only tipping on what we can review in this space and that organisations are still a few years away from having the metrics and data to really help research and insight. Fundamentally, and shocking myself with this admittance, I almost want to keep going and research even more.

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Appendices

Appendix One:

Dear Interviewee,

I am currently completing my dissertation for my Masters in Human Resource Management in the National College of Ireland.

The title of my dissertation is 'Investigating Gender Diversity organisational practices and their impact on leadership development and driving long lasting cultural change, in a multinational organisations'.

The main objective of my dissertation is to gain insight into varying diversity practices being reviewed and the impact, if any, of diversity practices on talent progression and retention.

All information is completely anonymous, no names will be revealed and the only people with access to the information will be myself and my supervisor in National College of Ireland. Your employer, management or colleagues will not see any of your information. I expect interviews to last approx 30 minutes and will be held in the office or via phone at a time convenient to you.

I thank you in advance for your cooperation.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at zarahdoyle@gmail.com or phone 00353876214837

Kind regards,

Zarah Doyle

Appendix 2

Gender Diversity Interview Questions

As part of dissertation research for MA in HRM

Question One:

Describe your role in your organisation?

(Question <u>aim:</u> To confirm seniority of colleague being interviewed)

Question Two:

Describe your experience working with diversity in your organisation?

(Question <u>aim:</u> To understand firsthand experience of the respondent)

If descriptive:

- Pro-active
- What has this involved?
- Cultural change that followed?
- Impact in business?

Question Three:

What is your view, on the role that organisational senior leaders should play in driving diversity?

(Question <u>aim:</u> To gain insight into the senior leadership impact on strategy in the organisation)

Question Four:

Is there a particular area within gender diversity strategies that you believe should be primarily focused on?

(Question <u>aim:</u> To gain insight in to what has worked well for the participant)

Question Five:

Do you believe we need to build leadership capabilities to support gender diversity?

(Question aim: To understand L&D general implications)

If yes, what would this include?

Question Six

From what you have observed, what have the best diversity organisational practices been, that you would now support?

(Question aim: Build understanding of initiatives that are working for organisations)

Question Seven

Have you observed variances within cross generational colleagues in driving or supporting to diversity strategy proposals?

(Question aim: To understand the perspectives of varying generational colleagues in diversity practices)

If Yes, detail

Question Eight:

What do you believe the number one challenge in the implementation of a diversity strategy is?

(Question aim: to gain insight into what challenges for impact ly ahead)

Question Nine:

In your opinion, what is not working in some programmes on diversity, that you have experienced/observed?

(Question aim: general observations on why some practices may not be landing in an organisation)

Question ten:

Do you believe there should be dedicated budget to driving diversity strategy?

(Question aim: view on weighting of financial support for strategy impact)

If so, on what scale