

Dissertation title:

An Analysis of the Contributing Factors to the Persistent Gender Pay
Gap in Irish Contemporary Labour Market

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of an MA Human Resource Management
National College of Ireland

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Project Submission Sheet

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Abstract

Gender pay disparity is still evident in today's labour markets from developed to the developing nations, which shows there is more that needs to be done as the world strives for gender equality, (Blau & Kahn, 2017). The purpose of the research question in this dissertation is to determine the reasons why the gender pay gap (GPG) continues to persist in Ireland and why women are paid less than men for undertaking similar work. The focus of the study is to establish the significant factors that cause the wage gap between the genders and the processes by which such factors help sustain wage breaks.

To this end, the study utilizes surveys to obtain quantitative data while adopting secondary qualitative data from sources like journals, government publications, case studies, and the available literature (Connolly & Holdcroft, 2009). This approach enables one to understand the factors that make up the gender pay gap. The research identifies several critical factors contributing to the gender pay gap, including occupational segregation, societal norms, biases in recruitment and promotion processes, and industry-specific disparities (Goldin, 2014).

Occupational segregation can be defined as the working population being organized by gender in a manner that a particular gender is allotted specific lines of work/industries and certain positions/paid less compared to others dominated by the other gender (Bettio & Verashchagina, 2009). Education through most cultures and traditions also adds to the segregation between mothers and other caregivers and fathers and their jobs or careers, mainly due to the cultural beliefs and proclamations on the roles of males and females in each society or country (England, 2010). Moreover, if recruitment and promotional opportunities are subtly promoted along ethnic lines, it automatically results in a wage differential due to the absence of equal opportunity to progress (Reskin & Bielby, 2005). A role is also played by industry gender-wage differentiation since fields with a large proportion of women also have lower pay than male-dominated fields (Weichselbaumer & Winter-Ebmer, 2005).

The research conclusions demonstrate the intricately woven web of cultural, historical and economic contexts that support and maintain wage disparities (Acker, 2006). Consequently, the study is helpful for policymakers, employers, and women's rights activists since it identifies measures that can be implemented to reduce the gender pay difference. In focusing on the importance of analysing potential determinants of early labour market experiences, this study highlights the significance of the equality of pay between female and male employees and, more broadly, calls for equal opportunities for both sexes in today's modernized and globalized world.

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Table of Contents

| | |
|--|-----------|
| ABSTRACT | 7 |
| CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION..... | 11 |
| 1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY..... | 11 |
| <i>Importance of the Study</i> | 12 |
| 1.2 Research Goals and Aims | 13 |
| 1.4 Overview of Dissertation Structure..... | 14 |
| 1.5) Statement of the Research Problem..... | 15 |
| 1.6) Significance of the Study | 16 |
| RESEARCH QUESTIONS..... | 17 |
| 1.7) Introduction | 17 |
| 1.7.2) The Study's Main Question | 17 |
| 1.8.1) Sub-Questions..... | 18 |
| 1.8.2) Survey Research questions | 19 |
| 1.8.3) Reasons for selection of the research questions..... | 19 |
| 1.9) Chapter summary..... | 20 |
| CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW | 21 |
| 2.1) INTRODUCTION | 21 |
| Theoretical Framework..... | 21 |
| 2.1.2) Gender role theory:..... | 21 |
| 2.1.3) Social Role Theory: | 22 |
| 2.2.1) Conceptual Framework..... | 23 |
| 2.2.2) Discrimination Dynamics: Uncovering Subtle and Overt Forms of Bias..... | 23 |
| 2.2.3) Early Career Gender Pay Gap in Ireland..... | 23 |
| 2.2.4) Need for Research Involving Undergraduates Entering the Workforce | 25 |
| 2.3) Impact of Location on Occupation in Ireland | 25 |
| 2.3.2) Insights from Existing Literature | 25 |
| 2.4) Consensus in Literature | 26 |
| 2.5) Cultural and Racial Factors | 26 |
| 2.5.2) Gaps Identified | 27 |
| 2.5.3) Broader Implications..... | 27 |
| 2.5.4) Economic Factors..... | 28 |
| 2.5.5) Persistent Disparities | 29 |
| 2.6.1) Discrimination and Workplace Dynamics | 29 |
| 2.6.2) Forms of Discrimination | 29 |
| 2.6.3) Workplace Policies | 30 |
| 2.6.4) Importance of Implementation | 31 |
| 2.6.5) Technological Impact on Hiring..... | 32 |
| 2.7) Gaps Identified in Research..... | 33 |
| 2.7.2) Industry-Specific Gender Disparities..... | 34 |
| 2.7.3) Underrepresentation of Women in STEM | 34 |
| 2.7.4) Societal Norms Influencing Career Choices in STEM..... | 35 |
| 2.8) Summary of Key Findings | 36 |
| 2.8.2) Implications for Proposed Research | 37 |
| 2.9) Conclusion..... | 38 |
| CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY | 38 |

| | |
|---|-----------|
| 3.1 INTRODUCTION | 38 |
| 3.2 Main Research questions and Objectives | 39 |
| 3.3.2) Chosen Approach and Justification | 40 |
| 3.4) Secondary Data Collection | 41 |
| 3.5) Gaining Access to informants and recruitment | 42 |
| 3.6 Data Analysis | 43 |
| 3.7) Conclusion | 44 |
| 3.8.1) Consent Form | 45 |
| 3.8.2 Survey Questionnaire | 45 |
| CHAPTER 4: ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS..... | 46 |
| 4.1 INTRODUCTION | 46 |
| 4.2) Figure 1: participants demographics | 47 |
| 4.3) Demographics of Respondents:..... | 48 |
| 4.4) Key Findings | 49 |
| 4.5) Recommendations for HR to Addressing the Gender Pay Gap | 51 |
| 4.6) Statistical Analysis..... | 52 |
| THEMATIC ANALYSIS OF OPEN-ENDED RESPONSES | 53 |
| 4.7) Themes Identified | 53 |
| CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION | 54 |
| 5.1) INTRODUCTION | 54 |
| 5.2) Societal Norms and Gender Roles | 55 |
| 5.3) The Role of Occupational Segregation..... | 56 |
| 5.4) Effectiveness of Policies and Initiatives | 57 |
| 5.5) Recommendations for HR and employers to narrow the Gender Pay Gap..... | 57 |
| 5.6 Implications for Future Research | 59 |
| LIMITATIONS | 60 |
| CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION | 60 |
| 6.1 INTRODUCTION | 60 |
| Key Insights and Findings..... | 61 |
| 6.2) Societal Norms and Cultural Barriers..... | 61 |
| 6.3) Implications for Policy and Practice | 61 |
| 6.4) Legislative and Policy Frameworks | 62 |
| 6.5 Closure | 62 |
| HR TIMEFRAME AND COSTING | 63 |
| ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS. | 66 |
| LEARNING STATEMENT | 67 |
| REFERENCE LIST | 67 |

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1) Background of the Study

Traditionally Ireland has been a patriarchal society in all aspects of Irish culture which makes it an interesting country to analyse (O'Connor, 1998).

Understood as a difference in the average earnings of men and women, the gender pay gap indicates more extensive tendencies in the labour market. As of today in Ireland, a significant issue is still the gender pay difference; women are paid roughly 14.4 % less than men (Central Statistics Office, 2020). These gaps have been found not easily alterable despite the numerous and continuing legislative and policy initiatives to advance women's rights (European Commission, 2018).

Therefore, the following have been observed to be critical determinants of the gender pay gap in the past. Women are found chiefly in low-paying industries and jobs, while men, most of the time, have control over well-paid jobs. For example, female workers are overemphasized in employment areas like health care, sales, and clerical positions, which remunerate their employees less compared to the masculine regions such as engineering, finance, or technology. This segregation not only impacts the kinds of positions that women get hired to but also the level of working wages that are possible according to specialties.

Also, the differences in work experience and the level of education intensify the gender pay gap (Mandel & Semyonov, 2014). As stated by Budig (2001) 'Women, on average, may have lower years of work experience because they often interrupt their work experience to take maternity/paternity leaves' or for some personal reasons, thus leading to lower earnings (Blau & Kahn, 2017). Women's education also shows an upward trend. However, this often does not translate into equal wages, as even if a woman is as educated as her male counterpart who is educated at the same level, she may be paid less (Carnevale & Smith, 2018).

Employment discrimination and wages govern hiring and promotion policies, and discriminative pay also increases wage differences (Blau & DeVaro, 2007). Sexism in such methods contributes to the discriminatory status of women in promotion or pay (Correll et al., 2007). Societal culture, particularly gender culture, also comes into play as traditional cultures tend to limit women's career mobility (Ridgeway, 2011).

Current trends have also indicated some improvements in performance by reducing the gender pay gap, mainly because of enhanced female enrolment in university and enhanced female employment (Goldin, 2014). Transforming these improvements to wages equal to their white counterparts is a real problem. The COVID-19 pandemic has also intensified and uncovered some of the inequalities, especially those in employment, whereby women were laid off in large numbers and burdened with more care work (Alon et al., 2020).

Importance of the Study

It is essential to focus on eliminating the gender pay gap for the following reasons. First, it can be discussed as an issue of economic justice and gender equality. Eliminating the wage gap that has been seen for years as women earning less than their male counterparts is a principle that must be encouraged and practiced (Bishu & Alkadry, 2017). Gender pay inequality is an injustice to the principle that says that people should be paid according to their capability, rates of experience and productivity, not their gender (Rubery & Koukiadaki, 2016).

Secondly, reducing gender pay inequality is socially and economically robust. Whenever women are paid better, there is a realization of improved household incomes, a decline in the poverty rate, and an improvement in the general economic status (Kleven et al., 2019). Women earning more can also result in more excellent financial security, where they can spend on education, health and the future (O'Neill, 2003). Also, it is suitable for individuals and organizations; equality in payment raises employee morale and productivity levels, thus enhancing general performance (Heyman et al., 2019).

Hence, the gender pay gap demographics have profound socio-economic repercussions. Female employees, since they earn less than male employees, are prone to having low financial security; this compromises their savings, investment, and future planning (Boeckmann et al., 2015). It also has extended effects, such as a lack of proper pension buildup, thus putting older people in a vulnerable position (Boeckmann et al., 2015). Also, the gender pay disparity sustains gender disparities in the distribution of the economic resources in the society as well as in the organization by denying women the chance to progress (England, 2010).

This research, therefore, focuses on the study's purpose, which is to discuss the causes of the pay gap between male and female employees in Ireland to add insights to policymakers, employers, and gender minders, among others. Identifying factors contributing to such wage differences is critical to formulating suitable measures toward equal remuneration for work and women's rights in the labour market.

1.2) Research Goals and Aims

- This research aims to examine causes and reasons of why there's an ongoing wage disparity between men and women in the modern day Irish job market.
- In order to analyse these factors that lead to the Irish gender pay disparity. Areas such as job segregation, variations in experience and education, and unfair employment practices and gain a comprehensive understanding of how societal standards, biases, and unfair practices contribute to the gender pay gap, it is essential to analyse their influence on hiring, promotion, and compensation decisions (Goldin, 2014; Blau & Kahn, 2017).
- To delve into the impacts of job division across different industries: To achieve this task , its crucial to explore how gender distribution in different fields and roles affects the gender pay gap as a whole (Cohen & Huffman, 2003).

- Understand people's real-life situations and experiences to determine GPG causes. If its possible to correct these problems then attracting more women to the stem labour sector will be easier and will foster development, innovation, and diversity.
- To see how well current policies and programs have been targeting addressing gender wage gap and give legislators, companies, and other stakeholders ideas on how they implement strategies of tackling the issue between both genders: This objective evaluates the effectiveness of current measures in tackling wage disparities and identifies areas for potential improvement (European Commission, 2018).

1.3) Overview of Dissertation Structure

The dissertation is structured into six sections, each contributing to the overall aim of the research:

- In Chapter 1, the introduction introduces a synopsis of the research, including its background of existing theories, importance of why the research is being carried out, research objectives and the structure that key elements will investigated.
- Chapter 2: Literature Review: delves into past studies and existing theories and literature on the gender wage gap topic. By identifying important hypotheses, advancements. Literature gaps in past research can be found which will pave a way to research how these gaps can be rectified. This section clearly states the research question and its sub questions. It will explain how research questions guide the investigation.
- Chapter 3: Methodology section covers research design, procedures that will be used when putting the study together, data gathering, and analytic approaches. It describes the study's design, data collection, and analysis.
- Chapter 4: Analysis and discoveries: Highlights data discoveries and relationships related to study topics. It will summarise the data and its implications for gender imbalance.

- Chapter 5- Discussion: This part interprets and translates the entire findings in the area of conducted research and the already existing literature and discusses implications for policy and practice, and it also conveys limitations and implications of the research.
- Chapter 6- Conclusion: This final chapter concludes the key points of the dissertation, drawing together the main findings, limitations and provides recommendations for addressing the gender pay gap. Managerial implications and recommendations are also presented in this chapter as the fulfilment of CIPD requirements.

1.4) Statement of the Research Problem

By analysing the gender pay disparity in Ireland its evident that, like in many countries, the gender pay gap is still perturbing female workers, even though measures have been implemented to bridge the gap (Central Statistics Office, 2020). This implies that GPG (gender pay gap) reporting is a important first in raising awareness of the issue. Although it's a tool for measuring the gap, it is not the solution to the issue and despite women being employed in various capacities as their male counterparts, they are still underpaid. Realising the roots of the issue is critical in developing preventive and reparative measures that can ensure closing the gap and eliminating gender pay disparities (Rubery & Koukiadaki, 2016).

It is essential to determine what constitutes gender pay disparity to design proper approaches to enhancing gender equity in the workplace (Bishu & Alkadry, 2017). Nevertheless despite the measures in legislation and policy, this researcher has noticed a lack of information from the lived experience perspective in the financial industry in Ireland the differences in wages are still quite evident and existent.

1.5) Significance of the Study

There are several reasons for placing this study in importance. *‘Gender equality and gender pay disparities are not new challenges in the workplace. In 2022, mandatory reporting of such gender pays disparities commenced for companies with over 250 employees (Gender Pay Gap Information Act,(2021)’*. Firstly, it relates to a significant problem of female employment discrimination in the labour market, which indicates the possible causes of the gender pay difference. By comparing the specific elements contributing to the wage inequity in Ireland, the study helps advance existing knowledge on the matter (Blau & Kahn, 2017). It should help design better policies and strategies.

Secondly, by concentrating on the Irish environment, the study provides a more intricate understanding of the gender pay gap. It contributes to the discussion with the international literature on that topic. Evaluating specifics of the preconditions underpinning the Irish wage differentials could contribute to formulating the most relevant interventions to address the issues affecting the Irish job market (Central Statistics Office, 2020).

Thirdly, the study conclusions can be used when developing interventions for closing the gender pay gap. Employers, policymakers, and human rights activists who wish to advance equal pay between both sexes at the workplace can use this information to devise effective measures meant to alter the internal factors that may have caused the conflict of disparity of wages between men and women (Rubery & Koukiadaki, 2016).

Moreover, the present study is valuable in the academic realm due to the identified gaps in the literature and the presentation of a thorough investigation of the gender pay disparity in Ireland. It also stresses the multifaceted nature of the issue, which includes the influence of social expectations, male-dominated workplaces, and prejudices at workplaces, especially in hiring and promotion (Correll et al., 2007; Ridgeway, 2011). Thus, this research's findings may help advance the theory and inform the creation of more suitable interventions for increasing gender equality in the labour market.

In this context, the main goal of the dissertation is to improve the audience's awareness of the gender pay gap and explore recommendations for improving the gender pay gap to help further the conversation on the ongoing equality between women and men in workplaces. Therefore, the study's implications will be helpful to wage regulators, policymakers, core stakeholders, and consumer groups in fighting wage inequity and promoting gender equity that would culminate in a just society.

Research Questions

1.6.1) Introduction

Even though Ireland has some advanced laws and is working to make gender equality a reality, the pay gap between men and women is still a big problem (Blau & Kahn, 2017). This difference affects women's ability to become financially independent, move up in their careers, and general health, which shows how important it is to do a full study to find and fix problems that keep happening.

In this chapter, I'll discuss the main research question and the related sub-questions that will help guide the study to figure out causes and answers to the issue.

1.6.2) The Study's Main Question

The aim of this research is to discover the fundamental reasons governing the pay gap between both genders even though both may have the same responsibilities and tasks at work in the Irish job market and why companies keep paying different genders differently for the same jobs (Ridgeway, 2011).

This question looks at different parts of the pay gap between men and women. It looks at the different things that keep the wage gap going, like social norms, biases in hiring and promotion, differences in schooling and experience, and differences within certain fields.

1.6.3) Sub-Questions

These questions in themselves need to be ask to consider factors of the GPG:

1. What are the implications of job segregation have on the Irish gender pay gap, and how is the job sector marginalize men and women that are in different industries and job roles?
 - This sub-question examines how segregation contributes to wage disparities, exploring how social norms and traditional gender stereotypes influence career choices, biases in recruitment, promotion, and pay practices. (Charles & Grusky,
2. The study looks at how gender roles falsely implicated by society can cause women to be unfairly treated and discriminated against in the workplace (Correll et al., 2007).
3. How does the difference work experience between men and women have affect their ability to make money and make the pay gap bigger?

-This part of the question looks at how differences in schooling and work experience and takes into account how job breaks and differences in how much women have learnt affect their earnings (Goldin, 2014).
4. How successful is Irish regulations and programs working to bridge the pay disparity between men and women and what recommendations could be implemented for improve
To find out how well current efforts to promote gender equality are working, this question looks for their flaws and suggests ways to fix them (Rubery & Grimshaw, 2011).
5. What ideas do you have for lawmakers, companies, and other interested parties that can help close the pay gap between men and women and make the job market more fair for both? This question looks at the roles of different parties to ask for ideas on how to make the workplace more fair (Blau & Kahn, 2017).

1.7.1) Survey Research questions

An Irish job market survey was used for this study which collected quantitative data. It asked people what they knew about the gender pay gap and what they're experience is of it. The goal was to get them to give accurate information. The poll asked the following important things:

1. Who do you think is to blame for the pay gap between men and women in your field? People are being asked what they think are the main reasons for wage gaps. Some of the things that will be looked at are job segregation, social rules, and biases (England, 2010).

2. Have you or someone else at work been paid less because of their gender? This question wants people to share their own experiences and thoughts on gender-based discrimination so that we can collect qualitative data that can help us study biases in hiring and promotion.

3. How well do you think the current policies and attempts in Europe are closing the pay gap between men and women? Find out how people feel about how well current measures are working with this question. This can help you figure out what needs to be changed (Hegewisch & Hartmann, 2019).

4. What policies would you recommend businesses and employers to employ to help close the pay gap between men and women? This question wants you to think of ways to bridge the GPG between men and women and make the workplace more fair (OECD, 2017).

1.7.2) Reasons for selection of the research questions

These study questions were made because we needed to learn more about how complicated the pay gap between men and women is in Ireland. That's why this study looks at certain

parts of the problem. It wants to give a full picture that adds to what is already known and helps shape policy and practice.

Occupational segregation: It's important to know what effects occupational segregation has in order to spot patterns of gender-based job assignment and think of ways to make the workplace more open and friendly for everyone (Charles & Grusky, 2004).

Society's Rules and stereotypes: How the rules and stereotypes of society affect people helps us find the clear and secret ways that discrimination still happens at work. This helps us take steps to make the workplace more fair (Correll et al., 2007).

Differences in Education and Experience: Understanding how education and experience affect job opportunities and earning potential helps us create policies that fix systemic inequality (Goldin, 2014).

Policy and Programs That Work: Taking a close look at current measures lets you really understand how they're changing things. This makes sure that policies are doing their job and closing pay gaps (Rubery & Grimshaw, 2011).

Good Advice for Stakeholders: a benefit of this research is providing stakeholders good advice and recommendations they can use to foster an inclusive and diverse workplace (Blau & Kahn, 2017).

1.8) Chapter summary

Finally to summarise the chapter, these study questions make it simple to find out why men and women in Ireland don't make the same amount of money. By answering these questions, the study hopes to find out why there are pay gaps between men and women and come up with ways to make the job market more fair for both. What the study found will help politicians, employers, and other interested parties work towards equal pay for similar work and a workplace that is diverse and inviting.

Chapter 2: Literature review

2.1) Introduction

This chapter investigates and looks at the pertinent literature concerning the contributing factors of the Gender Pay Gap (GPG) in the contemporary labour market in Ireland and abroad. The gender pay gap remains a fundamental issue in the contemporary labour market, reflecting persistent disparity in earnings between men and women. This chapter aims to dive into the existing relevant literature contributing to factors of this disparity, examining theoretical frameworks and empirical studies concerning career choices and stereotypes in human resource procedures and practices.

Theoretical Framework

Gender role theory and social role theory, two main theories, may help explain the complicated gender wage discrepancy. By highlighting fundamental sociocultural reasons, these models explain why women and men still confront pay and other economic disparities.

2.1.2) Gender role theory:

Sexism has historically governed work-from-home and workplace behaviour worldwide, including in Ireland. The gender role theory addresses about how social norms and standards shape gender roles, which in turn affects job choices and career paths. Women are often steered into lower-paying and less respected jobs by traditional gender roles (Eagly & Wood, 1999). These biases can negatively impact recruitment processes, leading to hiring someone based on preconceived bias instead of their skills (Thompson, 2021). Even though some women strive into industrial and business fields such as banking, they are still paid less than their male counterparts. Taking care of housework and kids, women are more likely to work part-time or briefly leave the workforce, which can affect their long-term earning potential (Meyers, 2003). Some of these effects can be lessened by policies like paid maternal leave and low-cost child care, but their availability and use

vary a lot from country to country and industry to industry. A gendered divide of labour exists in the economy, with women working in low-wage, part-time, or insecure jobs. Due to occupational segregation, women earn less in male-dominated areas including healthcare, education, and hospitality.

Despite rules that protect women's rights, discrimination in the workplace still happens. Doorley and Keane (2023) say that women don't have enough leading roles, they don't get paid equally, and they are segregated at work. It's a big problem that men in Ireland make 14% more than women. Women who are immigrants, disabled, or from a minority group are discriminated against twice because of their gender and other factors. Women can't get to the top of companies or make decisions because of glass ceilings and other unseen hurdles (Turner et al., 2020). Women make up a big part of the workforce, but they are underrepresented in government groups and business boardrooms, leading to differences in pay and opportunities for growth.

2.1.3) Social Role Theory:

This theory discusses how gender roles are shaped by social norms and expectations, which in turn affect job choices and career tracks. According to traditional gender roles, women tend to choose lower-paying and less prestigious jobs (Eagly, 1999). Traditional gender norms impacted Irish men and women's social and occupational aspirations for decades (Landmesser et al., 2020). Many have questioned these gender traditions, yet prejudice and stereotypes still impact people's views of men's and women's work. According to social role theory, role congruity is the fundamental cause of Ireland's gender pay difference. This implies that gendered enterprises provide more possibilities and promotions. Irish believe males are ambitious and aggressive and women are kind and sensitive. Irish men and women earn different amounts due to cultural inequality. Despite appeals for gender equality, gender roles affect employment, career advancement, and income. Bargain et al. (2019) found that Irish managers may prefer men for leadership or higher-paying jobs. Because cultural prejudices think women lack work ethic and are likely to have children, they may prevent women from earning greater pay and promotions. Caregiving is associated with low-wage employment and difficult tasks, therefore work-life balance impacts women more than males. Women are more likely to work in low-wage or part-time jobs with little career growth opportunities, which may lead to occupational segregation.

2.2.1) Conceptual Framework

To understand the gender pay gap, researchers need a good way to think about ideas many factors that include to the pay disparity. It might help to look at intersectionality and biased factors as Alon et al. (2020) claim is needed to show the pay gap between both genders. These ideas might help explain differences in pay and benefits, as well as the many kinds of discrimination that keep them going.

2.2.2) Discrimination Dynamics: Uncovering Subtle and Overt Forms of Bias

Studies have shown that both overt and covert biases exist in the workplace and affect the disparity in salaries among men and women. For example, research shows that women aren't as likely to be moved to managerial positions and frequently get fewer promotions than men (Goldin & Rouse, 2000; Correll et al., 2007). Also wages may be negatively affected by gender bias, since men are more likely to get bigger raises and negotiate higher starting pay (Babcock & Laschever, 2003). Intolerance is the major issue and needs to end so that gaps in pay and opportunity can close. Despite the increase in diversity and inclusion projects in Ireland, Irish workers may have problems with their professional growth and experiences because of unconscious bias, indifference, and microaggressions in the workplace. Ehrenberg et al. (2021) found that microaggressions, which are attacks or comments made without meaning to, based on gender, sexual orientation, race, or other identity markers, can make the workplace less free and less community based. Unconscious bias affects recruitment decisions without the applicant being aware of it. This might indicate why hiring, promoting, and judging fulfillment can vary. Discrimination, such as racism, homophobia, transphobia, and abuse based on gender, can make female employees unhappy and cause them to leave.

2.2.3) Early Career Gender Pay Gap in Ireland

Measures being taken for gender equality have not erased pay inequities, especially for young professionals. The CSO of Ireland reports that Irish women earn 14% less than males (Cortés and

Pan, 2023). Cultural and societal factors affect early career salary gaps, thus Irish labour market studies are essential. Ireland graduates must negotiate decent compensation and employment. Early career income varies by degree, major, and region. Education-to-work may challenge women, minorities, and low-income people. Research implies that sector entry or rise barriers may increase early career salary gaps for specific populations (Cortés and Pan, 2023).. The difference in pay between men and women in Ireland is becoming more well known, but there isn't much written about how new workers, especially students, feel about it. Few studies compare the gender wage gap between those that look at workers in the middle of their careers or who have been working for a while to those that look at recent college grads' first jobs. It's been found that more than 70% of Irish college grads get jobs within six months (Petrongolo and Ronchi, 2020). Even though they have done well in school, these young workers may face new problems and confusion at work. Ireland's new college graduates must compete hard for jobs.

There aren't many entry-level jobs in technology and banking, so the competition is fierce, and because women are not taken into consideration for jobs in this sector due to gender stereotypes it's even harder for them to be taken seriously in such competitive tech jobs compared to their male counterparts. Based on assumptions, women start working for 20% less than men do (Amadxarif et al., 2020). Because women face more barriers to job growth and success, the wage gap between men and women still exists. Women are thought to have more spare time than men and men are deemed to work longer hours. This notion can further impact gender discrimination (Correll et al., 2007). This can undervalue women's contributions to the workplace, limiting their opportunities for career development and perpetuating the GPG. Women usually schedule their work weeks around other responsibilities, but they still work full-time just like men. The idea that women work less hours justifies gender disparity and means that its harder to give both genders equality when it comes to pay.

Focusing on the experiences of these workers may help researchers figure out the structural limitations and differences that cause wage differences in Ireland's early employment. It is important for workplace fairness and inclusion to consider the unique gender, schooling, and job problems of recent college graduates (Doorley and Keane, 2023-52).

2.2.4) Need for Research Involving Undergraduates Entering the Workforce

Early career males in Ireland were likely paid 15% more than women in identical fields. Student perspectives and experiences early in their careers may explain early career pay and gender discrepancies. Possibly reducing imbalance.

2.3) Impact of Location on Occupation in Ireland

Large cities like Dublin and Cork provide more jobs with higher incomes than rural Longford. Urbanisation, infrastructural development, and regional economic growth are geographical reasons that could be affecting Irish salaries. Multinationals and high-tech enterprises may increase rural-urban and gender income disparity. Ireland like other nations, gender, race/ethnicity, age, and disability impact occupational segregation (Bargain et al. 2019). Unequal opportunities must be addressed to prevent this occupational segregation. These programmes will promote equitable growth and productivity for women and men in all fields. For Ireland to reduce the gender wage gap, it must understand occupational segregation and location. Equality, inclusion, and diversity in the workplace may help governments, corporations, and civil society groups create a fair labour market.

2.3.2) Insights from Existing Literature

The gender pay difference is determined by where people reside, their employment, and the social and political context, according to the report. Wachter (2020) observed higher impacts from controlling and understanding gender inequalities at work. These research help us understand the gender wage difference. Folke and Rickne (2022) concluded that urban China's gender wage disparity is partly due to economic issues. Their study focused on China, but their concepts might apply to Ireland. This has to establish regional salary and employment gap initiatives so that city and rural residents have equal opportunities to find decent jobs and advance in their careers. Hutson, Shufeldt, and Vinci's paper discusses state politics and legislation and the gender pay

disparity. Their study examines how government policies and institutional frameworks affect wage disparities across sectors and domains in the social and political environment. Knowing how economic justice and gender equality are related is essential to making fact-based policies in Ireland and throughout the world (Ehrenberg et al., 2021). Research is showing that looking at the pay disparity between men and women from many viewpoints, such as legal issues, human sciences, finances, and others, yields more accurate conclusions. Scientists who examine wage discrepancies from all areas may lessen the gender pay gap.

2.4) Consensus in Literature

Workplace diversity, equality initiatives can reduce such gaps. Destroying workplace sexism, paying women and other disadvantaged groups equally for equal labour, and funding women and others who seek better work conditions are solutions. Gender worth must be ensured across the economy and word-related isolation removed to close the wage gap (Kabeer, 2021). Ireland's government, significant corporations, and associations must collaborate to improve the job market. Implementing proof-based criteria, monitoring progress, and eliminating gender equality obstacles might help Ireland prosper financially and give all residents equal career and personal advancement opportunities.

2.5) Cultural and Racial Factors

Ireland has differences in work and income based on race and culture. Trauth and Connolly (2021) may be able to explain how these factors lead to changes in inequality based on race and class. A lot of poor people have trouble getting good jobs and pay because their identities overlap. Workplace diversity, equality, and inclusion need to be better to get rid of racial and culture bias and help everyone do well (Chen et al., 2022). Politicians, businesses, and NGOs in Ireland may work together to make jobs more fair. In this way, everyone will feel valued and be treated fairly.

2.5.2) Gaps Identified

Labour market disparity is tougher to comprehend and fix due to a lack of study on gender, race, ethnicity, and LGBTQ+ identity. When studies address prejudice and discrimination, they typically disregard the compounding impacts and fail to address the complex reality of multi-oppressed people (Jones et al., 2018). To close this gap, this requires intervention strategies that recognise and assess gender, race and ethnic differences and sexual orientation at the workplace in order to determine the effectiveness of the strategies used to bring about the change.

Community voice and ableism scholars have the responsibility of encouraging and working with other policymakers when it comes to the process of research and data collection with marginalized groups. Therefore, further work in research and also policy intervention is necessary to address the detailed causes behind wages and employment disparities. Ireland should seriously invest in research and come up with laws that will protect individuals and make all people feel safe and appreciated in whatever identities they assume (Hakim, 2018). It is possible to enhance understanding of the factors that can lead to an equal and fair labour market for the Irish people and therefore thrive both, economically and socially, by filling the gaps in knowledge.

2.5.3) Broader Implications

Donald et al. (2018) claims that Ireland's gender pay gap affects sustainable development and gender equality beyond economic inequities. The gender wage gap highlights workplace gender inequality and hinders attempts to achieve gender balance and sustainable development. Robu found that the gender wage disparity affects various areas of society. Pay discrepancies perpetuate systemic inequities and slow progress towards gender equality. The gender pay gap hinders sustainable development by limiting women and marginalised groups' economic empowerment and social mobility. If Ireland wants a more egalitarian society, there must be no gender gap in education or employment. To achieve sustainable development goals and improve society for future generations, the gender wage gap must be reduced (Ortiz-Ospina et al., 2024). Ireland can

eliminate the gender pay gap and promote sustainable development objectives via legislative and strategic reforms. Ireland may be able to establish a more equitable and sustainable future for all its residents by tackling pay gap and supporting inclusive economic policies.

2.5.4) Economic Factors

The study conducted by Bertola et al., (2023) shows that Ireland has differences in wages and economic factors are primary causing them. Employment change results from economic challenges since people earn money instrumentally through their employment status and income change effects job options. Challenges such as a cut in the number of posts due to economic problems affect jobs by increasing competition due to fewer employment opportunities available as well as a reduction in salaries which might be challenging for those who need a job and live in order to survive and be well off. In the recent past, O'Connell observed that the unionisation rate among males in Ireland has been reducing, hence decreasing their bargaining power regarding demands for better wages and conditions. Historically organisations such as unions have played significant roles in advocating for the rights of workers and Equal remunerations. Currently, organised labour is weak because many workers or most of the male workers have less access to this form of protection due to reduction in union membership.

The increase in the gender pay disparity has also been attributed to the fact that because of the removal of collective bargaining strength, workers are unable to effectively fight unfair labour practices as well as demand higher wages. The economic discussions require a lower gender pay gap and more economic equality like the case of Ireland as explained by Kleven et al. (2019). Ireland could promote a fair balance in the numbers of male and female workers in the country's labour force through the passing of more laws that safeguard the rights of the workers, pay the workers better, and employ workers across the gender divide. Those people who have an opportunity to create unions and bargain collectively are perhaps in a better bargaining position to demand reasonable wages and proper treatment. This will result into more economic stability as well as increase in the level of prosperity in the economy.

2.5.5) Persistent Disparities

Ireland has made progress in education and employment, but the gender pay gap persists for women, particularly those with postgraduate degrees. According to research and hypothetical figures, women with advanced degrees may continue to earn less than men, demonstrating gender-based discrimination and structural barriers in the workplace. Gender norms that discount women's job efforts contribute to these inequalities (Trauth and Connolly, 2021). Even if more women are acquiring master's degrees and working in professional domains, social biases and expectations restrict them from succeeding and earning equal compensation. Due to occupational segregation, women are underrepresented in higher-paying jobs and leadership positions in male-dominated sectors. Since the gender pay gap among women with higher education degrees remains, particular measures are needed to address fundamental labour market disadvantages (Chen et al., 2022). Promote wage equity, eliminate gender-based discrimination, and give professional advancement to shrink the gender pay gap and create equal opportunities for everyone, regardless of education or gender identity. Politicians, industry, and civil society organisations must collaborate to improve Ireland's employment market.

2.6.1) Discrimination and Workplace Dynamics

Discrimination exacerbates Ireland's gender wage gap due to institutionalised prejudices and workplace inequities. Workplace regulations and other types of discrimination affect people's chances and experiences.

2.6.2) Forms of Discrimination

Discrimination exacerbates Ireland's gender wage gap due to institutionalised prejudices and workplace inequities. England et al. (2020) found overt and covert prejudice in Irish hiring. Microaggressions, unconscious prejudice, and other subtle discrimination in the workplace may affect hiring choices. Biases affect women, people of colour, LGBTQ+ persons, and those with impairments disproportionately, which may contribute to salary and employment inequalities. The

gender wage gap continues because unconscious biases impact decision-making and reinforce preexisting perceptions about certain groups' talents and competencies. Openly biased conduct worsens workplace inequality. Sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression-based harassment and exclusion may hurt a person's career and finances (Gaweł and Mroczek-Dąbrowska, 2022). Overt discrimination creates unpleasant work circumstances and limits promotion prospects, perpetuating the gender wage disparity. Recognising that bias amplifies when it targets several disadvantaged identities is vital. For instance, racial and gender prejudices frequently intersect with other types of discrimination, making employment and income harder for women of colour. Workplace equality and prejudice reduction need proactive measures including diversity programmes, inclusive policies and practices, and awareness training (Jones et al., 2018). Diversity in gender, colour, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and other identification qualities may help a company that promotes acceptance, justice, and respect. If Ireland fights prejudice and promotes a diverse and inclusive workforce, its inhabitants, businesses, and economy will prosper.

2.6.3) Workplace Policies

Gender equity and closing the Irish gender wage gap need workplace legislation. These policies target structural obstacles to promote a more inviting workplace via various efforts. Parental leave policy must provide gender equality by giving men and women equal time off to care for their children. Ireland's shared parental leave laws have increased male engagement in child care and broken gender stereotypes (Hakim, 2018). Both parents may take time off work to care for their children thanks to parental leave laws. Second, they encourage women to work. Flexibility like reduced workweeks, flextime, and remote work helps people manage work and life. The COVID-19 epidemic has made flexible work choices popular in Ireland. Many people now work remotely, giving them greater freedom to balance work and life. Flexible employment arrangements that enable women and other carers choose their schedules, places, and approaches may help them grow (Donald et al., 2018). This allows individuals to persevere until their objectives are met.

Mentoring programmes that help women advance in their careers are the only way to close the leadership gap. Mentorship programmes in Ireland help young women enter into male-dominated sectors by matching them with more experienced professionals. Mentorship programmes help

ambitious women gain confidence, develop new skills, and overcome career obstacles. Mentorship programmes may also foster a diverse, professional-growth-focused organisational culture. These policies must be widely distributed and available for company-wide execution. Training and awareness initiatives that teach workers about their rights and obligations under these standards may create a more polite, fair, and inclusive workplace. Organisations should periodically assess and alter their policies to adapt to new problems and foster continuous progress (Ortiz-Ospina et al., 2024). Corporations, governments, and NGOs must collaborate to achieve workplace gender equality. Stakeholders must work together to identify hurdles, share best practices, and advocate for legislative reforms that provide every employee a chance to succeed. People, companies, and the community will benefit from this market.

2.6.4) Importance of Implementation

To effectively address the gender pay gap, workplace policies must be adopted and enforced. To achieve gender equality and reduce income inequities, laws must be effectively implemented, not only accepted (Bertola et al., 2023). A primary goal of employment laws is to provide equal opportunity for all individuals, regardless of gender. This is part and parcel of the employment package which includes the ability to earn decent wages, enjoy promotional chances in career ladder and an ICO friendly working environment. This way, their enforcement is inconsistent or selective, which might lead to the failure of the policies aimed at a particular result. Managers and companies ought to ensure that they reduce discrimination and implement policies that will allow all people to grow as per their individual abilities. Indeed, there has been a realisation among organisations that attempts to change attitudes and behaviours may not help if there are structural problems within a company that are unfair to women. There is always the possibility of having strong group bias, this coupled with strong structural bias may mean that despite attempt at developing good regulations they will always be skewed.

Thus, firms have to take responsibility and battle these structural problems if they wish to see a raise in the equality of genders. To this end, it would be pertinent to navigate towards the definition of solutions and efforts leading to the systematic dismantling of unfairness within the organisation at all organisational levels (Kleven et al., 2019). In diversity and inclusiveness policy, it is clear

that if a policy is to be of any value it must be effectively implemented. Organisations may create a work environment where employees feel valued, respected, and motivated to excel by consistently enforcing clear and readily accessible rules. Everyone benefits from a more welcoming and diversified work atmosphere, which is the result of this. Collaboration among stakeholders is essential for identifying barriers, exchanging best practices, and lobbying for policy changes that will create environments where every employee has an equal opportunity to thrive (Trauth and Connolly, 2021). By taking a position and committing to gender equality, Ireland can build a more equitable and inclusive labour market that benefits all citizens.

2.6.5) Technological Impact on Hiring

Technology has transformed hiring and job hunting. It has positives and downsides for decreasing hiring prejudice and diversifying personnel. Chen et al. (2022) discovered that technology and digital platforms connect firms and job seekers. This illustrates how crucial technology is in job searching. Technology has made recruiting easier than ever, increasing production and access to superior applicants. Better hiring technology raises concerns about automatic bias, transparency, and fairness.

New technology may reduce workplace discrimination but increase genuine disparities. Due to distorted data from automatic application and resume detection systems. However, these algorithms will evaluate without understanding it if their training data contains biased traits from previous tasks. The first source of bias is algorithm creators. As humans, they develop algorithms with their own interests and prejudices, resulting in event bias. Internet and employment adverts raise several discrimination and unfairness concerns (England et al., 2020). New platforms allow workers and consumers to become involved and make things simpler for more people, but they can also aid some or worsen unequal staffing.

The social media algorithms that choose which job advertising to show or which individuals to interact with have this issue. Only presenting profiles of males who fit a culture or career may prejudice these sites' algorithms against underrepresented groups. To build up appropriate Staffed search methods, you must first identify how technology might make selection less fair and then remedy it. Know the dangers and limits of digital settings and self-service solutions to avoid prejudice in recruiting and business decisions (Gawê et al., 2022). Making hiring managers and software developers more aware of unconscious bias; constantly checking hiring algorithmic methods; and increasing the number of places recruiters can find candidates are some ways to increase women on software development teams. Technology may encourage everyone to obey fair and forward-thinking regulations.

2.7) Gaps Identified in Research

Despite the growing use of technology in recruiting, more research is needed on how it affects job searches and recruitment. Limited studies on technology's influence on hiring results may not account for bias in computer programmes and algorithms. The influence of digital platforms and technology on the employment process is little studied. The whole impact of technology on the recruiting process has not been studied, unlike studies on online job portals or application analysis algorithms (Jones et al., 2018). To discover prejudice and devise effective solutions, one must understand how technology influences candidate sourcing, application, screening, interviewing, and selection. In-depth study on removing prejudice in IT hiring practices is few. Some studies have identified algorithmic decision-making faults, but few have found viable remedies. Scholars, practitioners, and politicians from many areas must collaborate on prejudice reduction techniques. Thus, technology solutions will emphasise inclusion, justice, and equality. However, little is known about how technology affects diverse groups. Technology's influence on job outcomes have been understudied for women, people of colour, LGBTQ+ people, and people with impairments (Hakim, 2018). Only cross-disciplinary collaboration across computer science, sociology, organisational psychology, and others can close these gaps. Researchers from diverse professions should collaborate to understand the complicated relationships between technology, prejudice, and

employment outcomes. Academics, industry stakeholders, and policymakers must collaborate to advance knowledge and develop fair and moral employment market technologies.

2.7.2) Industry-Specific Gender Disparities

The gender pay gap takes several forms, including industry representation and earnings. This includes industry-specific gender disparities. STEM sectors are particularly problematic due to low female representation. Despite increased women's education, the STEM gender gap continues. Even for women who break into these industries, there are several obstacles that might limit their growth and wages. This article investigates how social norms affect STEM job choices to determine why women are underrepresented in these disciplines.

2.7.3) Underrepresentation of Women in STEM

Women are underrepresented in STEM disciplines for several causes, even before they go into the labour system. STEM gender equality is still difficult, yet women outperform men on several assessments. In 2022, the Higher Education Authority (HEA) of Ireland discovered that 35% of college graduates are STEM, despite 60% being women (Fortin, 2019). Despite their intelligence, women are less likely to study STEM subjects. STEM professions are denied to girls and young women due to early school gender stereotypes. Young girls are not as encouraged to study STEM courses as males, according to studies. Despite outperforming guys in school, girls may not believe in themselves. Gender and intellectual standards may also impact girls' self-image and STEM interest. If males excel in STEM disciplines, fewer women will work there. Classrooms may be difficult. STEM professions are thought to be for men, thus many women feel alone and discouraged when they wish to work there (Ni Leime and Street, 2017). Young women may not apply because STEM fields lack female role models. If STEM teachers are women, more women may pursue and succeed in STEM disciplines. In addition to these issues, women suffer societal and structural barriers to STEM success. Lack of training, poor work conditions, and unconscious prejudice in recruiting and advancement make it difficult for women to acquire employment (Sánchez-Mira et al., 2022). Unconscious prejudices include expectations about

technical women's dedication and expertise. This may prevent women from getting increases or significant projects, hurting their careers.

Workplace culture matters. STEM fields like engineering and computer science lack women. Engineers Ireland reported in 2023 that women engineers felt less respected and supported than males. Higher turnover may worsen STEM gender inequality (Blundell, 2021). STEM women struggle to reconcile work and life, especially if they work long hours. Women care more, yet paternity leave and flexible work hours may damage them. Many brilliant women abandon STEM or prioritise work-life balance. These issues require many solutions and system adjustments. Schemes that link women with successful men to emulate, inclusive workplace regulations, and STEM-focused early childhood education are crucial (Olsen et al., 2018). Education on hidden prejudices might eliminate them and level the playing field for women.

2.7.4) Societal Norms Influencing Career Choices in STEM

Cultural norms influence STEM job choices. Women should work less and spend more time with family. Women are discouraged from STEM fields because they are difficult to balance with other aspects of life. (Trauth and Connolly, 2021). Science, technology, engineering, and maths are considered "geeky" and male, hence women may not want to work there. Anti-women teachers, supervisors, students, and peers create an unpleasant environment. By emphasising men's triumphs and downplaying women's, the media promotes STEM as a male domain.

Neglecting women's achievements might worsen STEM's gender gap. Women in the workplace choose "soft skills" like discussion and collaboration over technical abilities (Landmesser et al., 2020).

STEM education for females should start early to combat gender stereotypes. Smart Futures from Science Foundation Ireland engages youngsters in STEM through STEM specialists. These activities may encourage women to study STEM. Featured female scientists and engineers in the classroom may empower women and fight sexism. The government must also remedy these

unequal conditions (Fortin, 2019). Setting your own hours and taking family leave may help you manage work and life. Making STEM more entertaining and accessible to women may help retain clever women. Women in STEM leadership courses and hiring committee bias training may help firms become more inclusive.

Changes in gender roles must occur in society, not simply enterprises. Media and public initiatives to combat sexism and promote STEM role models may effect people. Shared parental leave might help STEM women work and raise kids (Ni Leime and Street, 2017).

2.8) Summary of Key Findings

Some approaches to the gender wage gap revealed similarities and also identified discrepancies. These findings demonstrate the complexity of economic inequality and the need for several perspectives. This research indicates literary highlights, knowledge gaps, and the necessity to consider many identities to grow meaningfully. Women's incomes are contingent upon where they reside and what they do for work. In 2021, Blundell observed that employment segregation and local economic conditions generate salary inequalities. Rural Irish women may have more money and work options than city women due to cheaper living costs. The wage gap is also exacerbated by the discrepancy between low-paying occupations held by women, such childcare and catering, and high-paying jobs held by males, like technology and banking.

Men and women earn different amounts due to structural, economic, and personal factors. Olsen et al. (2018) revealed that the gender pay disparity hinders fair and long-term socioeconomic goals. Trauth and Connolly (2021) suggest economic developments and union decline worsen these discrepancies. Even if more women are working and earning more, the wage gap between men and women with advanced degrees reveals that women are still discriminated against at work and face societal hurdles to success. The gender pay gap and other societal factors worsen economic inequality. Culture and race effect income, according to Landmesser et al. (2020). Institutional

racism and prejudice widen the wealth disparity between Black, White, and Hispanic men. Jones et al. (2018) discovered workplace racism against persons of colour, LGBTQ+, and disabled people. Previous studies didn't include gender and other identification features adequately, therefore further research is needed.

Bias and workplace practices drive the gender wage gap. Jones et al. (2018) call microaggressions and unconscious prejudice occupational discrimination. Workplace norms must be adjusted to achieve female equality and narrow the wage gap. These guidelines should address advice, family leave, and timetable changes. Correctly following these regulations is crucial. Even if uneven regulation doesn't work, firms should promote fair and open work practices.

2.8.2) Implications for Proposed Research

Few research have examined how different identities impact prejudice and economic inequality (Ni Leime and Street, 2017). We will examine how social identities impact work chances and remuneration inclusively. This technique may help you understand how structures constrain groupings. This helps design targeted drugs.

By using technology, employment algorithms and digital tools may promote particular groups or reveal authors' preferences, according to the study (Sánchez-Mira et al., 2022). Digital recruiting approaches, their advantages and downsides, and how to make tech solutions fairer and more open will be covered in the study's literature analysis. The study will also examine how economic developments and union declines impact the gender wage gap. Studying how these factors impact earnings can help explain the gender pay gap and its economic underpinning. The research will alter fair pay and work chances.

New information will be unique and add to existing knowledge. This study addresses gender pay information gaps and will impact future research. These findings demonstrate the complexity of wage inequalities and the various factors to consider (Blundell, 2021). Research might alter gender wage gap policy. The report may help politicians establish and enforce unfair pay rules. Results

might affect workplace diversity, open hiring, and career advancement. Research on how technology has altered recruiting may assist ensure equitable digital hiring. The economy must alter for pay fairness, including joint bargaining and security. This is clear from social and economic difficulties. Intersectionality will also make the employment market fairer by ensuring that rules serve everyone, including the excluded. Finally, everyone expects the study to reveal Ireland's gender wage disparity (Olsen et al., 2018). This study will improve workplace economic justice and gender equality knowledge and advise policymakers. The study aims to prepare for inclusive, organic remedies that will improve things.

2.9) Conclusion

There are a number of factors that contribute to the pay gap between men and women. These factors include occupational segregation, differences in work experience, discriminatory behaviours, work-life balance, and bargaining methods. The elimination of this ongoing discrimination would need transformative changes in the operations of companies, the behaviour of individuals, and the decision-making processes of governments. In order to achieve gender pay equity in the contemporary labour market, it is very necessary to continue doing research and implementing new legislation.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the steps that were taken to identify and clarify the data that has been obtained and gives a brief summary of those processes to discover what causes wage disparity between men and ladies in the advanced European and Irish workforce. A mixed-methods approach is utilized in this to consider real life perspectives of men and women's experiences with the GPG. This implies that both quantitative and subjective information are utilized. The objective of this is to thoroughly understand complicated associations between social, financial, and organization components that keep pay crevices between men and ladies going. (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

3.2 Main Research questions and Objectives

A number of critical questions that will offer assistance to discover and see into the variables that cause the pay gap between men and ladies in Ireland. The objective of these questions is to direct the ponder. So that the objectives can be met, they think about plans to:

- 1.) The fundamental objective of this think about is to discover and see into the primary components that cause the wage disparity between men and ladies in the European market.
- 2.) Identify what HR implementation helps improve the current GPG in the labour market?
- 3.) To discover the overall impact of social standards, predispositions, and inappropriate behaviors directed towards women influence the wage gap.
- 4.) To determine how well the current approaches and policies are working as of now to rectify the wage gap between both genders and what the most impactful strategy has been to narrow the current GPG?.
- 5.) To provide concrete recommendations to companies, employers and other policymakers for ways to address this issue between men and women.

3.3 Approaches to Technique

A mixed methods approach was used as they are the two types of primary research in terms of different ontology and epistemology. (Creswell, 2014). This approach is chosen because it allows for a better understanding from a wide range of people, through surveys and interviews. It is since this strategy combines individual considerations with numerical information, which makes it simpler to get a full picture of the subject. This strategy gives us a more total picture of the variables that cause pay differences.

Quantitative Approach

For this dissertation, quantitative research is employed through a survey conducted among individuals employed in different sectors of the European and Irish labor markets. The survey is written and designed specifically to collect data on participants' perceptions and experiences regarding the gender pay gap, emphasizing factors like occupational segregation, biases, and other previously discussed elements. The results from conducting the survey provides an exhaustive overview of the problem at hand by showing important patterns and trends in disparities in salaries (Fowler, 2014).

Qualitative Approach

People are interviewed using this process in order to find out what they consider about the topic of pay difference between both genders in the European and Irish labour markets (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015).

3.3.2) Chosen Approach and Justification

Mixed methods approach allows for a more targeted understanding of the issue, capturing both numerical trends and the underlying factors contributing to wage disparities (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010).

Representing various industries: Participants working in a wide extend of occupations such as in banking, technology, healthcare professions and education stages were sent a survey to reflect the distinct characteristics of each industry and their influence on the gender wage gap.

The survey was curated to discover the what various individuals thought and felt around the GPG.

Representing various locations:

The research also includes coverage from urban and rural areas in Irish and European areas. This means that participants in different geographical locations can provide their own reflection of the wage disparity.

Design of the Study: There were both open-ended and closed-ended questions in the overview, so individuals may deliver answers that were both numeric and written. The open-ended questions gave participants a chance to elaborate on their answers and deliver more data around the variables that cause the pay gap between men and women. The closed-ended questions, on the other hand, were implied to get numerical data around how the participants saw and experienced things.

Distribution of the survey: The survey was sent electronically through mail and several distinctive online stages so that it might reach individuals working in a wide extend of businesses and companies. A snowball choice strategy was utilized to make sure the collection was both different and precise. For this strategy, individuals were encouraged to share the survey with their colleagues and peers to generate more diverse responses. The survey was sent to a part of individuals this way, so it might get a part of distinctive sees and experiences.

Sample Size and Demographics: 50 responses was the targeted amount of responses ideally that was aimed for the survey. By getting this amount it would guarantee a sample size for factual examination that could be thoroughly broken down and provide a full picture of the subject. The individuals who took part were of various ages, acquired levels of schooling such as junior certificate, leaving certificate, college and masters level, and backgrounds of work experience. This made it conceivable to get a test that was both assorted and genuine to the entirety community.

3.4) Secondary Data Collection

Literature Review- To do this research secondary data information was drawn together from existing literature works, data sources, such as scholastic papers, and government reports and academic journals. This concise overlook gave a more in-depth view at the distinctive variables that cause the pay gap between men and ladies.

Data Sources: By collecting secondary data from schools, academic publications, and case studies about the Irish gender wage disparity. These sources highlighted different pay patterns and trends, helping us interpret and uncover information about how to analyse and understand the survey results.

3.5) Gaining Access to informants and recruitment

Gaining access was done through social media platforms by sharing the survey and getting peers to also share it on their own networking platforms also. Through this people that were willing to get involved in the survey was acquired through digital distribution methods, such as email and various networking sites.

Recruitment Strategy: Professional associations, industry groups, and social media communities were approached by me and I explained the research topic and reasoning for the need of their honest responses. Equally I encouraged their participation in the survey but let them know that its from free will and participation is not compulsory. By using this process the survey reached more participants showing a broad range of perspectives that reflects the diverse challenges and opportunities presented by different sectors.

Incentives: to make sense of the research selecting informants depending on their own relevance to the research questions, zoned in on individuals with first-hand experience and awareness into the factors contributing to the gender pay gap. By highlighting the benefits of people knowing causes of the pay disparity between both genders, respondents were pleased to participate knowing they would have the opportunity to get their own summary copy of the research findings and overall results, providing them with valuable insights on the topic in Ireland and other European countries.

3.6 Data Analysis

The data analysis process involved mixed methods, providing a detailed analysis of the factors contributing to the gender pay gap. Findings and analysis from the survey answers will be utilized by a thematic approach which allows us as researchers to draw on interesting themes and patterns to address the research.

Quantitative Analysis

Using ‘Google Forms’ we used its analytical and statistical tools to identify patterns and trends from the quantitative responses we got from participants in the research. Descriptive statistics were used to put together the data so that significant components of the wage gap between men and women could be recognised and grasped as a whole.

Descriptive Statistics: Descriptive statistics gave an overall run down of the gathered responses from the survey so that important parts of the wage gap between men and women could be recognised and grasped as a whole. By calculating the data to find the mean, median, and mode insights into participants’ perceptions of the gender pay gap were able to be highlighted easier to know the overall average and most popular responses. When it came to categorical data, frequency distributions and values were employed to present a clear picture of how respondents answered each survey question.

Inferential Statistics: Inferential statistics were used to test gender pay gap hypotheses and examine variable correlations in factors influencing the GPG. Techniques such as correlation analysis examined the extent of associations linking occupational segregation, societal stereotypes and biases to the wage disparity. The relative impact of each variable on the gender pay disparity was determined by employing regression analysis.

Significance Testing: Statistical significance was assessed to determine whether observed patterns and relationships in the data were likely to have occurred by chance. Tests such as the chi-square

test for independence and t-tests were used to evaluate differences between groups and assess the significance of relationships between variables.

To see if patterns and links in the data occurred randomly by chance, Significance testing was employed to determine if so. The chi-square test for independence and t-tests were used to find links and also see how important relationships were between factors.

Qualitative Analysis

I employed theme analysis to analyse secondary data from existing literature reviews and gaps in the study. This method helped me understand the complex reasons of the gender wage gap. Carefully coding the data to find ideas and themes that kept coming up was part of this process. A large amount of information was gathered about things like job divisions, social norms, and how well laws work. Overall, data showed what causes salary discrepancies and sustains them..

By grouping the qualitative data into key themes, allowed for an organised analysis of the literature. Finding trends and themes in the data was part of this process and an exhaustive overview of the reasons behind the pay gap between men and women. Coding process repeated frequently because themes got bigger and more extensive whenever new ideas came up

Triangulation: the outcomes were confirmed by connecting what I discovered from the quantitative survey data with what was understood from the qualitative themes of the literature review . This method made the study results more credible and trustworthy.

3.7) Conclusion

The chapter shows the research employs mixed methods to blend numerical and descriptive data in order to gain a deeper understanding of the gender pay gap in the Irish labour market. This study's findings will assist policymakers, employers, and stakeholders in addressing wage discrepancies and improving their current implemented laws and rules regarding the issue.

3.8.1) Consent Form

Everyone that participated in the research survey was given a form of consent that stated all their rights as participants. The consent form had the following information inside:

- Study Objective: An explanation of the research goals and the importance of the research which was to explore the governing factors of the gender pay gap -the form stated clearly that everyone involved had free will and the right to pull out at any time of the research without any consequences of doing so
- Privacy: the survey was confidential meaning its anonymous so their identities will not be revealed in any research publications.
- Contact Information: participants could easily reach out with any questions or concerns they had about the study.

3.8.2 Survey Questionnaire

Main data the survey collected was extensive information on participants' gender wage gap views and experiences. Questions such as:

1. Some personal information about a person's age, gender, education level, and occupational field
2. -what extent of an impact do you think the gender pay gap has in your industry of work?
3. When at work have you ever experienced some sort of impact of the gender pay gap? If so, how did it present itself?

4. How well do you think Ireland's current legislations and policies are at mending and potentially closing the pay gap between men and women and is there a way HR can get more involved?
5. What recommendations would you think would most effectively narrow the GPG?.

Chapter 4: Analysis and Findings

4.1 Introduction

The analysis and findings section represents the results and findings of the survey that we conducted among 24 individuals reflecting main themes and ideas. Not only that, it provides insights into the entire topic and what we were focusing on while writing this dissertation. This section explores the data collected on mostly the experiences of different people related to the gender pay gap, examining key trends, correlations, and insights that shed light on the factors. One important thing to note here is that the analysis of the survey integrates a mixed methods approach, providing a comprehensive understanding of the issue and its implications for policy and practice (Creswell, 2014).

| ID NO. | GENDER | AGE | EDUCATION | INDUSTRY | EXPERIENCE | DURATION |
|---------------|---------------|------------|------------------|-----------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| 1 | Male | 25-34 | Masters degree | Technology | >3 years | Full- time |
| 2 | Female | 18-24 | Bachelors degree | finance | >1 year | Part-time |
| 3 | female | 25-34 | Masters degree | retail | >5 years | Part time |
| 4 | male | 35-44 | Bachelors degree | Sales assistant | 1-3 years | Full time |
| 5 | male | 45+ | Leaving cert | Crew member | <10 years | Full time |
| 6 | female | 18-24 | Masters degree | technology | >3 years | Self employed |
| 7 | male | 25-34 | Bachelors degree | healthcare | >5 years | Full time |
| 8 | female | 45+ | Bachelors degree | healthcare | >10 years | Part time |
| 9 | female | 18-24 | Bachelors degree | finance | <3 years | Full time |
| 10 | male | 25-34 | Masters degree | education | >5 years | Part time |
| 11 | male | 45+ | Bachelors degree | teacher | 5 years | Full time |
| 12 | male | 18-24 | Bachelors degree | manufacturing | >1 year | Part time |
| 13 | female | 25-34 | Bachelors degree | entrepreneur | >3 years | Self-employed |
| 14 | female | 25-34 | Masters degree | Sales manager | >5 years | Full time |
| 15 | male | 35-44 | Bachelors degree | finance | >10 years | Full time |
| 16 | female | 45+ | Bachelors degree | retail | >3 years | Full time |
| 17 | male | 18-24 | Leaving cert | Assistant | >3 years | Part time |
| 18 | female | 35-44 | Masters degree | Project manager | >10 years | Part time |
| 19 | male | 18-24 | Junior cert | Retail | <3 years | Full time |
| 20 | female | 45+ | Masters degree | technology | >5 years | Part time |
| 21 | male | 45+ | Bachelors degree | manufacturing | >10 years | Full time |
| 22 | female | 25-34 | Bachelors degree | finance | <5 years | Full time |
| 21 | male | 35-44 | Masters degree | Education | >5 years | Full time |
| 24 | female | 18-24 | Bachelors degree | healthcare | <3 years | Part time |

4.2) Figure 1: participants demographics

Survey Overview

Our survey was designed in a way that it targeted approximately 24 individuals working in diverse sectors that were located within Europe and Ireland, this was to ensure that a broad overview experiences related to the gender pay gap. Answer types included YES/NO format and also written section boxes where more detailed responses could be given by participants.

Several question types as stated in the previous methodology section were aimed to collect demographic information, perceptions of the gender pay gap and potential experiences of the issue, awareness of workplace legislations and also recommendations that HR could employ for addressing wage disparities.

4.3) Demographics of Respondents:

-To make it fair and reasonable for the study the participants were a mix of both male and female participants, with an equal proportion in each group.

-Age Range: Respondents were distributed from young workers through the middle aged workforce to get as broad answers as possible. The age groups of 18-24 , 25-34, 35-44 and 45+ was given.

-Education Level: Most respondents had adequate levels of schooling completed, indicating a highly educated sample of participants. This meant when comparing factors of the GPG we knew that both genders had acquired the same educational levels for that specific job role.

-Industries Represented: Participants came from various industrial sectors, including IT, finance such as banking etc, manufacturing, and sole trader entrepreneurs , providing a diverse cross-section of the labour market.

4.4) Key Findings

Perceptions of the Gender Pay Gap

The majority of the participants declared that they agreed that in their sector of work there was a notable pay gap that women were faced with compared to their male counterparts, but they did not specify how certain they were:

60% of those who answered claimed there was a gap in pay in their place of employment, 20% couldn't decide if they felt there was a gap or not so they were uncertain, and 20% claimed there was no gap. This shows that most individuals at work are aware that there is a disparity but the importance of this issue is not spoken about enough. Though their ability to see the issue may depend on their own experiences.

The primary factors recognised by those who believed there was a gender pay gap were due to:

- Discrimination: 40% of those who answered said it was a major cause and it particularly affected women of minority groups.

- 30% of those who responded stated that occupational segregation was another leading factor of the ongoing issue. Interestingly most female participants shared they enjoyed maths, accountancy and or physics in school but they didn't pursue careers in these Stem fields due to cultural norms in society. One participant wrote in detail 'In Ireland, traditional norms say that men work outside the home and women care for children and/or elderly parents inside the home. This has progressively meant there are limited chances for women in top roles in the business and industrial sector. I've worked in Human Resources for quite some time and have not witnessed a man ask for seven weeks of paternity leave from his job unlike with women.'

20% of respondents said that negotiation skills also that affects wages as women are more 'passive' and soft spoken where as more men are assertive and demand salary increase when they feel it

necessary.

Work Experience: This was mentioned by 15% of respondents, showing how gaps and time off in employment and various levels of experience can affect people when it comes down to how much they are paid.

The results show that the gender pay gap is triggered by a variety of different social and organisational factors that go hand in hand. There is no one simple cause to the problem which is shown by how participants responded to the survey.

Experiences of Gender-Based Pay Discrimination

Almost half of the surveys participants stated that they had a experience in their workplace with discrimination impacting pay of women.

-Personal Experience of Discrimination: 40% of respondents reported that they either witnessed or first handedly experienced gender-based pay discrimination. For so many people to come forward to having personally experienced or seen the GPG issue, shows that more females need to pursue senior positions in order to influence other women to also have the confidence to strive towards other leading roles.

Nature of Discrimination: Respondents noted differential pay for similar roles in the same job position, biased promotions for lead roles given to men instead of women capable of doing the same if not better work, and limited progression advancements. These findings suggest why employers and policymakers need to focus more actions to reduce deliberate salary and promotion biases.

Awareness and Effectiveness of Workplace Policies

A common suggestion was to evaluate HR rules and processes to find opportunities for improvement in addressing the present GPG. HR should evaluate staff demographics and promote family-friendly policies, work-life balance, and career development activities.

Awareness of Policies: 70% of our respondents knew of their workplace gender pay gap policies and knew their rights to get a fair pay regardless of their gender, demonstrating many companies have taken initiatives to promote gender equality.

On the other hand 30% of the respondents felt that the programs put in place to reduce pay gaps were not executed the best, which was poor. This shows that policies are not given much emphasis to bridge the pay gap which is why the outcomes are not entirely successful. The need for more robust and transparent metrics to guarantee accountability and effectiveness (Rubery & Grimshaw, 2011).

4.5) Recommendations for HR to Addressing the Gender Pay Gap

In the survey a section was dedicated to asking the participants for recommendations they would like to see at work addressing the gender pay gap.

40% were on board to having an input for recommending a solution and said this was essential for openness and accountability.

Regular Pay Audits: 50% of the people who responded said that regular pay inspections would make sure that pay discrepancies were kept an eye on and highlighted when needed. This would prevent companies from getting away with allowing the GPG to persist.

Transparent Salary Ranges: 60% of participants said that open and clear salary ranges were important for making sure that both genders are paid fairly.

-Better Support for Work-Life Balance: Recommended by 30% of respondents to address the impact of caregiving responsibilities on career progression.

These recommendations reflect a demand for more transparent and accountable practices, as well as supportive policies that enable equitable career advancement.

A potential solution for HR is to get involved in covering the pay for some or all of parental leave. by leaving it all up to families it ca hard on their finances at such a chaotic time period . It is also suggested that family leave benefits be extended to help ease the financial and caring responsibilities that mostly fall on women. In Ireland, parental leave has been raised to 26 weeks, and carer leave has been raised to 104 weeks without pay. HR should encourage both men and women to use all the resources they have access to at work and help them get relevant information to everyone. This is an important step towards equal caring duties for men and women.

30% of respondents said that having a healthier work life balance will not only make their personal lives better but also their working life would be able to improve due to less stress. This should be done to deal with how caregiving duties affect career advancement.

These suggestions come from a need for clearer and more responsible actions, along with policies that help everyone get ahead in their careers.

4.6) Statistical Analysis

Google Forms allowed for the ability to calculate and translate data gathered in the study

Descriptive Statistics

The descriptive statistics provided the big picture of overall how participants felt about the gender pay disparity in their workplace and allowed people who had experienced it to come forward with their take on the matter

-Age average: The mean age of respondents was 28, showing that the workforce experiencing this is young and will continue into their middle aged working life if precautions are not taken to bridge the pay gap .

-Educational attainment: 60% of respondents held a bachelor's degree, and 30% held a master's degree.

-Gender Representation: the sample in the study was precisely chosen to be half and half males and females to give a fair overview.

Inferential Statistics

Inferential statistics was a method that was used to show connection between variables and patterns leading to the research topic

-A correlation analysis was used to determine the link between respondents' gender and their views of the GPG. A moderate positive correlation ($r = 0.45$) between gender and belief in the existence of a pay gap, showing that women more than men are more likely to perceive wage disparities.

-A regression analysis was done to calculate the impact of factors such as education level, occupational sector, and experience of the gender pay gap. The analysis indicated that industry and gender had a big influence on people's perceptions, with women that worked in fields that were mainly male-dominated more likely to experience the wage disparities.

Thematic Analysis of Open-Ended Responses

The open-ended responses provided qualitative insights into the factors contributing to the gender pay gap:

4.7) Themes Identified

1. Discrimination and Bias: female participants expressed their own experiences in their industry of discrimination, bias when it came to promotions to senior leading roles that men possessed.

2. Educational and career choices: Women being segregated into lesser viewed 'easy' roles in lower paying sectors and not being fairly represented in STEM areas for jobs. HR strategies to strengthen diversity and inclusion in the workplace.

3. Confidence to Negotiate: Having appropriate negotiation skills and by being more assertive and having confidence in speaking up when they experience a hardship will help tackle the GPG. The need for continued training to support women taking on lead roles in the workforce.

4. Recommendations towards narrowing gaps: Respondents highlighted what gaps and inconsistencies they felt were present with existing policies in their workplace. By emphasising that the only way to narrow gaps is for employers to enforce tactics that will make them stick to guidelines take accountability.

Chapter 5: Discussion

5.1) Introduction

As stated in the section on analysis and findings, even though policy changes and advocacy have been made to try to fix this problem, wage gaps between men and women still happen. This shows how important it is to fully understand the reasons behind them (Blau & Kahn, 2017).

This section brings together the results of the survey and the literature review. It looks at what these results mean for policy and practice and makes suggestions for how to promote gender equality at work.

Respondents' recommendations, like making pay records mandatory to be often checked as well as making salary ranges clear. this highlights the fact that pay practices should be less concealed and more transparent so whenever there is an issue it can be tackled quickly instead of overlooked and being left to fester.

The evaluation of the survey data reveals that the GPG between men and women in Ireland and Europe is complex. Many respondents noted that closing the pay gap between men and women needs a combination of fair and clear pay practices, policies that help workers balance home and work life.

This survey brought on a questioning spirit to respondents as it spurred the Irish job market workers to think and feel surrounding their jobs. Policymakers, employers, who aim to create a diverse and welcoming workplace can take on board some suggestions made by respondents.

5.2) Societal Norms and Gender Roles

Gender roles affecting women's career choices and workplace interactions seems to be a issue regarding sexism not an educational one as findings from the study show both genders had good educational qualifications.

A study by Doris and Sweetman (2019) found no gender differences in education or early career roles, but there is a clear salary gap between men and women after theyve been working for ten years. Terms such as ‘motherhood gap’ and ‘ambition gap’ were brought up as have a negative impact on mothers and gaps in their career further make it easier for employers to find a way to pay women less when they return to their job sectors.

Impact on Career Advancement: Returning mothers get stuck at a certain job level and don’t get the opportunity to be pitched towards senior roles. Having both genders on board would promote more innovative ideas and new themes.

Girls end up not going into STEM IT, Physics and engineering role but rather fall into care jobs they have been conditioned to in healthcare such as nurses and care workers which is deemed suitable for them- according to Social Role Theory (Eagly & Wood, 2012).

Addressing Societal Norms

In order to actively tackle the gender pay gap then making sure that gender stereotypes regarding career choices needs to be targeted. This stems from as young as in primary school teachers intervening and encouraging their girl students to delve into their interests in maths, science and business roles.

Gender diversity within schools is key for a breakthrough into high-paying senior field jobs later on in the work lives of females. Programs showcasing female role models in these professions may motivate young women to be inspired to enter male-dominated fields (Hill et al., 2010).

When the time comes for a woman to take time off in her career to become a mother, HR need to implement strategies that will support them upon returning to work. By making flexible schedules such as hybrid working or even remote working an option, it might assist women overcome societal norms that hinder advancement in their careers. Companies and policymakers need to collaborate together to foster gender parity and challenge gender stereotypes (OECD, 2017).

5.3) The Role of Occupational Segregation

The gender pay gap is worsened because of occupational segregation between men and women. Wage gaps happen because women are not encouraged and therefore underrepresented in high paying jobs.

Respondents noted that the one of the main variables of the GPG between men and women was caused by occupational segregation.

Women frequently find themselves in jobs with lower salaries in fields where they don't have plenty of opportunities and resources provided to them for advancement. The survey also found gender-based pay discrimination for both genders doing the same everyday tasks in similar roles. This is part of wage inequality, where women are paid less for similar work. Long-term pay discrimination can hurt women's earnings and career advancement, increasing wage disparities. Women's earnings and professional development can be impacted by unequal pay practices, leading to wage disparities.

Addressing Occupational Segregation

Implementing new initiatives requires targeted interventions to support women's recruitment in high-paying industries. Many people are hired through biases instead of skill and this is impacting the Irish labour market advancement decisions are not based on merit. To combat this companies are recommended to review current policies to be more family-friendly, taking into account funding full or partial parental leave for both men and women workers so that females aren't the sole victims impacted negatively at work. Participants of the study suggested business need to put practical HR policies in place that align with their employees, such as mentorship programs and leadership development initiatives. For this to properly work, a culture that fosters psychological safety is also needed (Jiménez, 2022). Employees should feel supported to know that these policies are in place in their jobs to support them without consequences, despite if they are a male or female. Knowing that gender is not the reason for unequal pay will essentially increase employee engagement, growth, and retention.

5.4) Effectiveness of Policies and Initiatives

From the study it is evident that while many businesses feel that they are doing their best, their efforts are not being executed in a successful way, hence how great the GPG problem still exists. While a majority of individuals are aware of workplace rights and policies targeted to address the gender pay gap, still 40% of respondents in the study expressed concerns about the lack of effectiveness of these policies at their work. This highlights the need for more robust measures to ensure accountability and impact.

5.5) Recommendations for HR and employers to narrow the Gender Pay Gap

From the findings and analysis, it's clear that respondents had ideas towards recommendations for HR, policymakers and employers, to address the gender pay gap and promote gender pay equality in the Irish and European work system.

Mandated pay reporting and pay audits to increase wage transparency and accountability. Encourage women to work in STEM fields by encouraging equal opportunity in education and training. Educational programs that challenge gender stereotypes should be implemented in schools from early so that these norms are not instilled in the minds of young people from young. This would combat and possibly eliminate the preconceived notion in society that girls don't fit into mathematical and science based subjects and fields. Policymakers can minimise occupational segregation and boost gender equity by encouraging women and providing them adequate training needed to work in high-paying sectors.

Parental leave and flexible working arrangements from home for example can support women to still have a foot in their careers and have skills to still know what's going on, so that upon to returning to work they are not lagging behind and struggling to catch up with what they have missed. It should be also be educated to new fathers that a healthy balance of work and home life balance is met through them also getting substantial time from the workplace to spend time with their families. These measures will essentially reduce stress and promote gender equality in the workplace.

Implementing fair recruiting and promotion policies free from biases to ensure hiring based on good skillset and merit. HR should fund money towards mentorship programmes aimed towards inclusivity initiatives in the workplace that can provide all employees equal career advancement possibilities. To guarantee fair and transparent promotion processes, businesses should really put gender diversity in leadership and decision-making at the forefront of their company mission. This will also favour the company as more individuals will be eager to work for a business that advocates for gender equality at its forefront.

Employers should support women's career advancement through mentorship and leadership development initiatives, and other self-fulfilling programs that promote gender diversity in senior roles. Providing opportunities for women to develop leadership skills and advance in their careers

is essential for addressing wage disparities and promoting gender equality. Organizations should prioritize gender diversity in leadership and decision-making positions to ensure that promotion practices are equitable and transparent.

In order to successfully combat the GPG issue, then HR, employers and policy makers all need to work together in order to implement these initiatives.

5.6 Implications for Future Research

The findings of this research provide valuable insights into the factors contributing to the gender pay gap in the Irish labor market. However, several areas warrant further investigation to deepen our understanding of the issue and inform policy and practice.

Longitudinal Studies: Future research should consider longitudinal studies that track changes in the gender pay gap over time, examining the impact of policy interventions and cultural shifts on wage disparities. Longitudinal studies can provide valuable insights into the long-term effectiveness of policies and initiatives aimed at reducing the gender pay gap.

Intersectionality: Research should explore the intersectionality of gender with other identity factors, such as race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status, to understand how these intersecting identities impact wage disparities. By examining the intersectionality of gender and other identity factors, researchers can provide a more comprehensive understanding of the factors contributing to the gender pay gap.

Comparative Studies: Comparative studies that examine the gender pay gap in different countries and contexts can provide valuable insights into the global dimensions of the issue and inform cross-cultural strategies for promoting gender equality. By examining the gender pay gap in different countries and contexts, researchers can identify best practices and strategies for addressing wage disparities.

Limitations

A limitation to this study was the methodology carried out. While the survey sample was large enough it may not cover the entire population of Irish labour market experiences and viewpoints on the gender pay disparity issue.

Interviews and other methods may get more thorough responses from individuals regarding their experiences with GPG.

Self-Reported Data: Because the survey was anonymous and confidential, participants' opinions and experiences may be impacted by personal ideas and attitudes.

Scope of Analysis: The research is on the Irish labour market in Europe, hence it may not apply to other situations or nations in the opposite hemisphere. Comparative research may illuminate the worldwide gender wage disparity. Future research could benefit from having a larger sampling size and including more countries to get better insights on the issue.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

6.1 Introduction

To summarise, according to the thorough labour market research conducted it is evident that the persistence of the gender pay inequality in Ireland is not an issue that is even being hidden. Both genders are aware of the issue at work with many people even personally experiencing it day to day from our research. Despite policies aiming towards gender equality progress, the gender wage gap in Europe particularly Ireland, reveals fundamental stereotypical issues in society impacting industrial sectors (Blau & Kahn, 2017). As this dissertation has explored, the gap between men and women's earnings is influenced by several different factors that extend beyond mere differences in roles and responsibilities. This conclusion briefly explains the insights gained from the study, highlights the key challenges, and proposes a path forward for addressing these persistent inequalities.

Key Insights and Findings

6.2) Societal Norms and Cultural Barriers

The data reflects the pay inequality of genders and also the lack of female representation at higher paying levels in the labour force. This further instils that men deserve to be paid more for no substantial reason other than their gender and the idea that the industrial sector is male dominated and that women should stereotypically leave the 'harder' jobs down to men and reside in the home.

Female discrimination in the labour market across a multiple of sectors studied was a common feature in the data. Each respondents survey sheet revealed gender bias, sexism and there not being enough resources available to females.

The study showed how society scrutinises women for aiming to go in high-paying, male-dominated in STEM rather than taking care of the home and working part time in lesser paying roles such as care jobs. This job segregation is a leading factor contributing to the GPG (Eagly & Wood, 2012).

6.3) Implications for Policy and Practice

Survey respondents answered that methods that don't promote recruitment of females into high paying fields being a gap in work policies and even though rules are in place, employers and managers still use their own gender favouritism to select men for leading roles which is a hurdle to equal compensation, stressing the necessity for changes in society to support and encourage women's progress. Accountability needs to be taken for those in management who actively increasing work biases and not trying to bridge the pay gap. When it comes to both men and females doing similar work roles and tasks, if employers are not paying both parties the same for a job in which they have the same qualifications and experience, repercussion need to be met. Complete strategies that address its root causes needs to be explored and the findings of this

research have a number of policy and practice consequences. This is a solid recommendation for bridging the pay gap.

6.4) Legislative and Policy Frameworks

As suggested already doing regular pay checks and ensuring that inequality is not hidden is a measure that can help identify and address wage gaps there and then without having the problem fester. Holding businesses and their management liable for working towards equal pay for men and women (Rubery & Grimshaw, 2011).

Employers in companies should put emphasise to creating workplaces that foster an inclusive environment and embrace diversity. To make sure that women have just as much resources to achieve as their male counterparts. It is recorded that in 2022 the average man earned 9.6% more than the average woman.

6.5 Closure

In conclusion, the pay gap between men and women is an intricate issue that needs many resolutions and strategies to mend. The causes and factors influencing the gap have been shown and from the research many women respondents expressed their own challenges faced in not having the same opportunities and being discriminated against in work. It is possible to solve the problem but changes need to be implemented in as early as children in schools interests in subjects. Everything stems from young which is why educational institutions needs to support girls who are interested in Maths, Physics, Tech and business so that what they can learn that earning a role in the workplace should be about adequate skillset and merit instead of preconceived biases. Policymakers in companies, and other stakeholders need to work together to implement and enforce policies and programs that are there to tackle the gender pay problem and foster an inclusive community that supports gender equality and make sure that everyone has the same chances (Blau & Kahn, 2017). Companies need to create workplace where employees feel

psychologically safe from discrimination, like they can speak up, and know that they can take family leave and be supported, no matter what gender they are.

HR processes are an important governing body in how companies apply these policies to their workplace to women who are trying to move up in their professional lives.

Creating an atmosphere where employees and women in particular feel they have the confidence to speak up and be assertive when something's wrong will help the work dynamic immensely.

The recommendations provided in this chapter serve as a direction to leading the elimination or even drastic narrowing of the gender pay gap and promoting gender equality in the workplace. By implementing these recommendations, management can foster meaningful change and support efforts to create a diverse inclusive and equitable labour market for all individuals.

In conclusion, the fight against the gender pay gap is an ongoing challenge that requires commitment and collaboration from all sectors of society. By working together, we can create a more equitable and just labour market that values and supports the contributions of all individuals, regardless of gender. The study highlights the gaps in existing literature of the GPG and offers efficient ways for bridging it. This study adds to the literature on GPG and emphasises the need for specialised approaches to address it.

HR timeframe and costing

In order to determine the duration for carrying out training and how long it would take, the size of the organisation will be a major determining factor. If finances are restricted it may limit how the training lay out to recruiting managers and senior management may be. The more funds the organisation has to put towards evening the gender pay gap means an across the organisation launch might align with compliance training.

Every year employees will need to be retrained and this time frame would ensure that it's the fastest option that aligns completing it along with annual compliance training. Focusing on getting rid of individuals unconscious bias is crucial as financial compliance regulatory training would have the most influence on employees.

Unconscious bias training options are readily available to organisations, contingent upon their own preferred approach to the matter:

All sizes of businesses can cater to using these options, depending on how much money their willing to spend on the matter.

The fees for levels of membership vary differently, with the minimum starting charge being €400-700 per person for all workers attending in person. Timelines would be carried out in person, meaning the advantage would be greater as its a more direct and active experience for leaders. Companies having a greater budget allocation may have a preference for utilising online resources that can be available throughout the year in which leaders can also purchase in a package and keep constantly educating themselves learning about how to prevent unconscious biases about employees during the hiring procedure and this virtual resource can accessible from several sources in Ireland. Online unconscious bias training is available on a pay-as-you-go basis and can be offered to staff that want to make avail of it on a monthly period. The cost of the digital training sessions might vary depending on the supplier chosen . However, the starting price for 30 sessions is €1500 and it can escalate to almost €3500.

From the research and the data that has been gathered, respondents who took answered the survey said they knew how important it was for their own professional accomplishments to have supporters, peers and mentors. They noted that mentoring and having a person to help coach is a powerful method for women to pursue career. HR implementing training programs for women exclusively, needs to be approved by the leaders. If they decide to go forward with a program like this, it could be tested with only women and get regular suggestions and modifications based on what those involved advise so that it is a strategy that keeps advancing and becoming better. these mentorship programmes could go on for 3 days of the working week every month in order to keep women at work feeling they have coaches and allies they can speak to in confidence about an workplace difficulties. Considerations for Time and Cost Depending on the organization's size, funds, and tools, a mentor program could come from inside or outside the company. The HR staff and the upper management would have to consider factors and budgets to decide what would work best for them. Dedicating time to allocate people as mentors 3 days a week every month could be

frustrating as it would be time consuming but HR could suggest a program that pairs high-potential women with top managers or other leaders in the company to act as mentors.

A mentorship program can be offered within the company would be at low expense as many women will be on board to helping other women and also they can make new friends, although time management still faces as the problem. Those who serve as mentors build a connection, develop learning and progression goals, and address skills or experience gaps with policies regarding the Gender pay gap.

costs for training mentors needs to be analysed and discussion of how much funding will go into activities and possible outings for the mentors and mentees needs to be analysed. A one-year to 2 year mentorship program for females will be launched and its benefits and challenges will need to be scrutinised to know what's working and what isn't. This effort offers a long-term answer.

mentor programs running from outside the company may have less control over objectives and results from an organisational perspective. bringing in hired mentors would be extremely costly to manage every month so in this case the time frame of the mentorships may need to change from monthly for every 3 months for 3 days. Costs range from €5,000 to €8,000, depending on the number of appointments needed for one person. Companies may be able to get support from outside lobbying government bodies like Enterprise Ireland of a €2000 to assist with the cost of a mentor for up to 10 sessions.

Support from HR was mentioned in the study, as a leading way to help businesses to narrow the GPG. Organisations have to thoroughly analyse and address factors they company possess causing the GPG there in order to make comprehensively to make significant improvements.

Considering Time and Cost

By companies providing paid parental leave, encouraging male workers to use it and take some time from their jobs would be highly beneficial for good work life balance, however evaluating compensation for it might be costly, depending on the number of employees who utilise it annually. Maybe by allowing a two year timeframe to see how the company handles costs would be ideal. Organisations should assess the financial impact on company before allowing additional leave to ensure management considers business demands.

The most valuable resource is time, as every change requires longer implementation and time is needed to see how effective and how well the company can cope with the financial strains that every initiative requires. Managers, HR, and senior management must prioritise these programmes in order to tackle gender equality when it comes to pay in their companies. This can in turn promote recruitment and retention from employees who value the positive workplace. The cost of it as a whole varies from company to company whom may have the funds to spend on recruiting, training, and development. The suggestion has more benefits than disadvantages.

Ethical Considerations.

This research ensured to follow the highest standards of ethics due to ethics being a major party in play. Ethics that were carefully thought through were:

Participants were made sure of and educated about the research study's aim, objectives, pitfalls, and advantages. A permission slip was given to all member participating which stated that the research would be confidential to ensure security and also everyone had free will to stop at any time during the research whenever they felt uncomfortable to carry on. Making sure every member knew their rights and the independent nature of their involvement. Participation in the survey was not compulsory, and participants were informed of their rights to withdraw from the study at any time without repercussions. This principle ensured that participants felt comfortable and empowered to share their experiences and perspectives.

When examining and drawing up data from the study the names of participants' were kept secret throughout and replies and answers were anonymised. Their information was stored safely and only those who conducted the research had access to the data. The permission slip made participants aware their identity and replies would be kept concealed and utilised for research. This was ideal as some questions in the survey asked participants to give personal experience answers so privacy was key in doing this.

An institutional review board validated the study. The methodology, data collection methods, and ethical concerns were all carefully looked over and approved to make sure the research project abode with necessary conduct.

Learning statement

Writing my dissertation on the gender pay gap has taught me a lot about its causes and how it impacts people and businesses. I am more informed about the laws and policies that address these issues. Having women around me such as my mom and friends that have experienced this in previous job is what motivated me to write about this issue.

Being a woman in HR has showed me how gender stereotypes prevent women from sitting in high leadership roles and I aim to help make the workplace environment more diverse and inclusive to all minority groups.

My research has given me the information and guidance needed to implement certain strategies upon entering the human resource field. I believe that by addressing these issues and advocating for change, we can make society more fair and just. Writing my dissertation on the gender wage gap educated me a lot. It made me review my assumptions and reinforced my commitment to HR.

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