National College of Ireland

Project Submission Sheet

Student Name: Jaanvi Vempala

Student ID: 23342811

Programme: MA in HRM   **Year:**   2024- 2025

Module: Dissertation

Lecturer: Patrick Delaney

Submission Due Date: 15th August 2025

Project Title: Exploring the Impact of Gender-Inclusive DEI Initiatives on Work-Life Balance: A Study of Human Resources Practices in Ireland

Word Count: 15527

I hereby certify that the information contained in this (my submission) is information pertaining to research I conducted for this project. All information other than my own contribution will be fully referenced and listed in the relevant bibliography section at the rear of the project.

<u>ALL</u> internet material must be referenced in the references section. Students are encouraged to use the Harvard Referencing Standard supplied by the Library. To use other author's written or electronic work is illegal (plagiarism) and may result in disciplinary action. Students may be required to undergo a viva (oral examination) if there is suspicion about the validity of their submitted work.

Signature   Jaanvi Vempala

Date: 14th August 2025

PLEASE READ THE FOLLOWING INSTRUCTIONS:

1.   Please attach a completed copy of this sheet to each project (including multiple copies).

2.   Projects should be submitted to your Programme Coordinator.

3.   **You must ensure that you retain a HARD COPY of ALL projects**, both for your own reference and in case a project is lost or mislaid. It is not sufficient to keep a copy on computer. Please do not bind projects or place in covers unless specifically requested.

4.   You must ensure that all projects are submitted to your Programme Coordinator on or before the required submission date. **Late submissions will incur penalties.**

5.   All projects must be submitted and passed in order to successfully complete the year. **Any project/assignment not submitted will be marked as a fail.**

Office Use Only

Signature:	
Date:	
Penalty Applied (if applicable):	

AI Acknowledgement Supplement

[Insert Module Name]

[Insert Title of your assignment]

Your Name/Student Number	Course	Date

This section is a supplement to the main assignment, to be used if AI was used in any capacity in the creation of your assignment; if you have queries about how to do this, please contact your lecturer. For an example of how to fill these sections out, please click here.

AI Acknowledgment

This section acknowledges the AI tools that were utilized in the process of completing this assignment.

Tool Name	Brief Description	Link to tool

Description of AI Usage

This section provides a more detailed description of how the AI tools were used in the assignment. It includes information about the prompts given to the AI tool, the responses received, and how

these responses were utilized or modified in the assignment. **One table should be used for each tool used**.

[Insert Tool Name]	
[Insert Description of use]	
[Insert Sample prompt]	[Insert Sample response]

Evidence of AI Usage

This section includes evidence of significant prompts and responses used or generated through the AI tool. It should provide a clear understanding of the extent to which the AI tool was used in the assignment. Evidence may be attached via screenshots or text.

Additional Evidence:

[Place evidence here]

Additional Evidence:

[Place evidence here]

Abstract

With specific emphasis on its effects on work-life balance, the research analyzed the processes of implementing, apprehending, and successfulness of gender-inclusive Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) policies in Irish companies. The main objective was to research the programs currently being implemented by HR departments, gather the opinions of the employees, determine what is wrong with the implementation, and identify where policy and practice vary. The structured survey involved one hundred professionals from various industries. It was ascertained that companies possess gender-inclusive policies; still, individuals disagree about how effectively they operate and whether they are applied equally. None of the participants rated the capability of his or her organization to establish the rules on flexible work and maternity leave as one that can be rated as excellent, although the majority of the participants acknowledged that those policies could be considered to be available and equal to some level. At the same time, there was a perception among many people that having work work-life balance differed between them and other genders, and this indicates that the current policies may not be solving the causes of inequality.

Although several companies have on their part made efforts in promoting inclusion, real barriers to such efforts, as cited by staff members (44.4%), poor training (36.4%), and unclear policy directions (32.3%), are some of the reasons that would make these efforts hard to implement. Anyway, employees rated their business highly in terms of creating an inclusive environment in which individuals with different gender identities feel appreciated, which is promising in terms of further improvement. Although there have been some achievements in the DEI implementation, the study finds that Irish companies have a long way to go until their efforts become a reality, particularly the need to creating a fair opportunity to help people of all genders in achieving a balance between the professional and personal life.

Acknowledgement

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to all those who contributed to the successful completion of this research study. First and foremost, I am deeply thankful to my supervisor, Patrick Delaney, for their valuable guidance, feedback, and constant support throughout the research journey. Their expertise and encouragement have been instrumental in shaping this work.

I also extend my appreciation to the participants who took the time to respond to the survey and share their experiences openly. Without their input, this research would not have been possible.

Furthermore, I am grateful to my peers and academic mentors at National College of Ireland for their insightful suggestions and moral support. I would also like to thank my family and friends for their unwavering encouragement and patience during this period.

Finally, I acknowledge the resources and facilities provided by Library that greatly assisted my research process.

Declaration

I Jaanvi Vempala hereby declare that this dissertation entitled "Exploring the Impact of Gender-Inclusive DEI Initiatives on Work-Life Balance: A Study of Human Resources Practices in Ireland" is my original work and has not been submitted, in whole or in part, for any other academic award of MA in Human Resource Management at National College of Ireland or any other institution.

All sources of information used in the preparation of this dissertation have been duly acknowledged. I confirm that ethical guidelines have been followed, and informed consent was obtained from all research participants.

Signed: Jaanvi Vempala

Date: 14th August 2025

Table of Contents

List of Figures

List of Tables

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

Workplace policies and practices have been refined considering diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) in the past several decades. Some of the more global efforts focus on gender-inclusive DEI frameworks because they seek to improve equality approaches within workplaces. These initiatives seek to cultivate an organizational culture that is more inclusive than mere binary gender constructs, and therefore, all employees, regardless of their gender identity or expression, will be supported. Such programs include support for marginalized communities, gender-neutral parenthood leave, softer work hours, and other gender-neutral policies (Simosi and Daskalaki, 2023). Work-life balance is the degree to which a person can equally and simultaneously prioritize the demands of work and personal life (family and other non-work activities), and it is crucial to employee wellbeing. Unlike the detrimental consequences of poor work-life balance on stress, burnout, productivity, and other factors, inclusive policies cultivate employee satisfaction and retention. Especially in diverse work environments, the incorporation of gender-inclusive DEI frameworks into human resources processes can improve work-life balance (Sil and Lenka, 2024).

This relationship can be best studied from the angle of Ireland, a nation undergoing a period of intense socio-cultural transformation. Social and economic changes both at the national and international levels have incentivized Irish companies to adopt forward-looking human resource policies that foster inclusivity and constructive environments. In this context, however, little has been documented regarding the effect of gender-inclusive DEI policies on the work-life balance of employees in this region.

1.2 Background

In order to maintain a competitive edge, as well as act as a socially responsible entity, it is essential to adopt Diversity, Equality, and Inclusion (DEI) policies in a changing society. The last few years have made the development of social relations within the company a prerequisite. Embracing gender inclusivity is a foundational element of gender-inclusive DEI. This embraces a wide range of policies and practices directed at providing adequate access, appropriate representation, and fairness for every person within a given organization irrespective of their gender identification (Kannaiyan and Neelamegam, 2023). Equal opportunity employment, equitable benefits,

appropriate level of education, and telecommuting are some of the primary responsibilities of the policy makers within the human resource departments.

A person's happiness, engagement, retention, and productivity has always been associated with their work-life balance. In the past few decades, work-life balance has been considered important more than once, along with the rise in remote work opportunities. People are finding it difficult to compartmentalize work and personal life due to newer technological advancements, creating an expectation for management to comply with personal needs. The installation of family responsive workplace policies such as shared parental leave, caregiver support, and gendered attention would help a vast number of employees to balance family and work (Irim *et al.*, 2024).

Looking at social issues, Ireland has taken steps towards gender equality and the LGBTQ+ community in social policies as well as legislation. Following the recommendations issued by the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission regarding the need for inclusivity at workplaces, many organizations have started adopting diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) policies as part of their human resource frameworks (Adams, 2022). While these changes are a leap in the right direction, other issues remain that prevent the full optimization of these policies. Work-life balance about gender-inclusive DEI policies is a gap in research in Ireland.

This study seeks to address the gap that examines the gender-inclusive DEI initiatives within the Human Resources practices of Ireland and how these programs affect the work-life balance of employees. Policymakers, human resource practitioners, and business leaders may utilize the findings to appreciate the development of equity and inclusion measures within organizational settings.

1.3 Research Aim and Objectives

1.3.1 Aim

This study aims to explore the impact of gender-inclusive Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) initiatives on employee work-life balance, focusing specifically on Human Resources (HR) practices within organizations in Ireland.

1.3.2 Objectives

- To examine the current gender-inclusive DEI initiatives implemented by HR departments in Irish organizations.

- To assess employees' perceptions of how these gender-inclusive DEI initiatives influence their ability to achieve work-life balance.
- To identify challenges faced by HR professionals in implementing gender-inclusive DEI policies.
- To evaluate differences in work-life balance experiences among employees of different gender identities.
- To provide recommendations for enhancing gender-inclusive HR practices to support better work-life balance in the Irish workplace.

1.4 Research Question

- What gender-inclusive DEI initiatives are currently being implemented by Human Resources departments in Irish organizations?
- How do employees perceive the effectiveness of these gender-inclusive DEI initiatives in supporting their work-life balance?
- What challenges do HR professionals face in designing and enforcing gender-inclusive DEI policies in Ireland?
- Are there noticeable differences in work-life balance experiences among employees of different gender identities under existing DEI initiatives?
- What improvements can be made to HR practices to enhance the impact of gender-inclusive DEI policies on work-life balance?

1.5 Research Significance

This study addresses gender-inclusive Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) policies and their impact on well-being with specific attention paid to work-life balance, making it useful from both theoretical and practical perspectives. Businesses now most definitely need to create an environment where all employees, regardless of their gender identity, can participate fully and succeed. Despite the increasing prominence of gender-inclusive DEI initiatives on a global scale, there is a considerable gap in targeted research examining the impact of such policies on employees' daily activities, particularly regarding managing work and family responsibilities.

Ireland represents an up-to-date and culturally relevant case study due to the country's recent advances regarding inclusivity and gender equality. However, policies do not work the same way across different industries and organizations. Examining the practices of the HR policies in

question will reveal the actual use of gender-inclusive policies and their effect on employees' work-life balance (Adams, 2022).

The study's findings may help human resources professionals, business proprietors, and even lawmakers formulate workplace policies that improve employee morale, productivity, and retention while still meeting legal requirements. How inclusive cultures support work-life integration across gender identities is an area that requires further exploration, and this study amplifies an understanding of the nexus of gender-inclusive DEI and employee wellbeing, which has baffled scholars for decades. Ultimately, the research supports the overarching goal of designing workplaces that are just, supportive, and, socially responsible, to foster organizational sustainability in the long run.

1.6 Research Rationale

Workplace equality is trending globally which corresponds with the growing focus on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) within businesses. Although many firms implement these policies, very little attention has been given to the impact of DEI initiatives, particularly gender-inclusivity ones, on employees. There is growing concern about the impact of these activities on work-life balance, a critical area needing more attention due to its role in employee satisfaction, job contentment, and productivity (Somani and Wani, 2025).

In Ireland, legal changes and business commitments have markedly advanced the promotion of gender equality and inclusion. Nevertheless, there is a lack of employee perspective data on the practical aspects and considerable disparity in the application of gender-inclusive DEI frameworks in different organizations. As hybrid work models and complex family structures emerge, understanding the impact of inclusive human resource policies on work-life balance becomes crucial (Adams, 2022).

Altering life's scenarios, which comes as an imposition to every person, as women, men, and even the non-binary folk, affects people's capabilities to manage and balance their professional and personal lives. This highlights something crucial that requires attention. This study aims to analyze HR practices in Irish firms to evaluate if there are positive life work experiences as a result of gender-inclusive DEI policies on the experiences of employees.

There is no doubt that Irish businesses and even politicians should readjust the objectives centered around the diversification policies to level their focus on the employees' well-being, resulting in a healthy enduring balance in work environments that is uniform, diverse, and equitable. That would positively change the environment of the workspaces while also supporting sustained equality at workplaces. Hence, establishing new innovative evidence-based human resource frameworks would have equitable results advanced from is study whose aim was social equality.

1.7 Problem Statement

Irish workplaces have seen many new Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) programs including women, but it is hard to know if they truly help workers' work-life balance. Quite a few studies consider the results of gender-inclusive DEI and workplace gender equality, but few discuss the effect of gender-inclusive policies on employees' daily struggle to combine work and home responsibilities. Additionally, current HR practices are usually centered on the idea of just two genders and not on the special needs of those who identify as non-binary. This explains why there's not much information on how gender-inclusive DEI efforts help achieve fairness at work and home. If the evidence is lacking, businesses can end up developing diverse-sounding policies that failed to make a difference when they were carried out. The study tries to address this issue by examining how gender-inclusive DEI efforts that include gender impact the work-life balance of HR practices in Ireland.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

The chapter examines the various studies that concentrate on gender-inclusive DEI and their impact on work-life balance in Ireland's organizations, from an HR perspective. Considering significant concepts, frameworks, and outcomes from former studies, the authors wish to introduce the theoretical and practical basis for this research.

It is explained in the first part of the chapter what gender-inclusive DEI is and why it matters a lot for fair workplace treatment. After that, a distinction is made by introducing gender-neutral DEI programs that encourage equal treatment of people of any gender. There is also an analysis of work-life balance, and how it influences the health of people and their company's output.

After reviewing the problems that come up while implementing gender-inclusive actions, the literature study looks into human resources' role in fostering inclusion and flexible work schedules. Once the review is complete, it underlines the key gaps in the existing studies and discusses the situation in Ireland in terms of governmental actions and what organizations are doing.

This section of the study prepares for the following analysis by studying important literature. This research seeks to look into the impact of having gender-inclusive HR policies on employees' work-life balance in Irish companies.

2.2 Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) in the Workplace

The review of peer-reviewed articles and reports conducted by Kiradoo (2022) offers effective solutions that can be applied to enhance diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) in the workplace. Nevertheless, the method, based on the use of electronic health databases in the first place, provokes concerns related to the richness and topicality of the context. In industries where the extent of DEI implementation differs significantly, there is a danger of overlooking subtlety with this approach. Kiradoo (2022), recommends the promotion of a diverse and equal workplace, but it does not show any data on how these recommendations are applied and experienced by real workers. Its generalizability finds that the findings cannot be applied to certain cultural contexts such as Ireland.

While, Raimi *et al.,* (2022), apply a more theoretical perspective by basing DEI on such frameworks as structural integration and social identity theory. Although this provides a strong theoretical element, localized institutional mechanisms can become lost within the emphasis placed upon global labour differences. Their suggestions of a liberal, radical, and revolutionary model of DEI integration are useful but not the most appropriate steps to take and tried to find out that whether all-out plans feasible in the case of small and medium-sized businesses. The broad framing can also reduce the prominence of gender-specific experiences, particularly of non-binary or marginalized ones, even when they emphasize that DEI addresses both primary and secondary issues in the workplace.

Whereas Olusanya, (2023), who interviewed 500 employees at various workplaces. The gap between diversity representation and actual inclusion has been outlined by the reality that 73 percent of the individuals interviewed view their organizations as varied, although most of them believe that their colleagues share no mutual backgrounds. The report however does not

sufficiently look into whether these companies indeed have structures to ensure they achieve fair outcomes or whether they are simply hitting purely diversity goals. Olusanya presents a strong argument in favor of diversity with such examples as more invention and more productivity yet it might be too naive to believe that variety necessarily implies inclusion. Whether their opinions are being heard fairly or whether they are being heard at all is determined by power dynamics and decision-making hierarchies that have not been looked at.

Compared to the well-grounded and experienced opinions of Olusanya (2023), the perspectives of Kiradoo (2022) and Raimi *et al.*, (2022) are theoretical and strategic. Nevertheless, even the findings of Olusanya do not delve into the real difficulties that employees experience when attempting to achieve a balance between work and life within the confines of DEI model. To give an example, does an organization that is actively engaged in promoting gender equality offer its staff members better leaves, flexibility, and a feeling of psychological safety? The connection between gender-inclusive DEI programs and work-life outcomes is not directly covered in any of the three studies.

Moreover, the Irish setting is not presented in any of the three research papers, or their geographical scale is too extensive. Such a localized study is significantly wanting, given the fact that there are alterations in labour legislation in Ireland, in as far as gender equality and inclusion are concerned. The actual impact (if any), meaning, and experience of DEI work in Irish workplaces remains unknown at this point.

This research fills that need by analyzing the effects on work-life balance of gender-inclusive DEI policies in Irish HR departments. It delves deeper than surface-level debates to find out if, specifically for gender identities that are under-represented in Ireland's employment, inclusiveness in theory actually results in inclusion in practice.

2.3 Understanding Gender-Inclusive DEI Initiatives

Kannaiyan and Neelamegam, (2023), propose several strategies for building a gender-inclusive workplace, advocating for the revision of traditional gender roles and proactive training to combat unconscious bias. The practical tasks of their methodology can be represented by staff seminars and awareness training but the study is not deep in its concepts. The authors tried to find out whether these programs have enhanced inclusion or equity, and in most cases, give normative justifications (what should be done) instead of data demonstrating the actual outcomes. As an

example, they state that open recruiting and promotion procedures could lead to gender equality, yet they do not examine the structural barriers that could confront marginalized gender identities in accessing these opportunities, even in highly regarded equity institutions. One of the most significant blind spots of the contemporary, gender-inclusive discourse on DEI is the fact that it takes place in a binary context, thus excluding non-binary and gender-diverse individuals.

Whereas, Apicella *et al.,* (2023), take a different route, examining gender disparities through the lens of financial policy and longevity, highlighting how women receive less value from annuity-based benefits due to longer life expectancy. The authors give a persuasive example of how systematic inequality can be manifested in seemingly neutral financial systems, although it operates beyond the traditional workplace DEI model. The Gender Gap Ratio applied by the study in various countries does deliver some helpful comparison statistics, nonetheless, it does not put the spotlights together in relating the statistical observation with the policy implications of the issue on the workplace. It is a missed opportunity to not research the possible implications of gender-based pay gaps on perceptions of employee support in the workplace and long-term employment prospects, factors which are contributors to work-life balance and employee retention, especially among female workers.

In contrast, Gill *et al.*, (2018) view workplace diversity as a larger concept requiring inclusive team cultures, which emphasize representative sampling but cannot be reduced to it. Gender inclusion cannot be addressed isolated, and their emphasis on the intersectionality- acknowledging gender, ethnicity, ability, education, etc. further complicates this acknowledgment. Overall, the paper is effective in outlining the DEI strategies that were effective in the healthcare context, yet its conclusions may not be relevant to other industries. Besides, the authors failed to critically analyze whether the DEI initiatives translate to sustained behaviors or they are mere window dressing that fails to translate to actual inclusion. Ability to estimate the performance of these measures over time is minimal because it is not evident how the measures monitor or track employee perceptions on inclusion.

Even though each study has its boundaries, when considered altogether, they demonstrate that gender and diversity are gaining their recognition in the context of organizations. Apicella *et al.*, (2023), illustrates the impact of gender inequality without referring empirically to workplace practices, Kannaiyan and Neelamegam, (2023), offers prescriptive advice without subjecting it to

empirical testing, and Gill *et al.,* (2018), balances inclusion with a non-critical approach to outcome evaluation. It should also be noted that none of the three research papers directly explored the effects of gender-inclusive DEI initiatives on the work-life balance, particularly through the actual experiences of the employees. That is why the current study is significant as it attempts to explore the concept of gender inclusion in the context of DEI through the lens of how Irish organizations are addressing the topic of employee well-being and work-life integration.

2.4 Work-Life Balance: Definitions, Dimensions, and Significance

Brough *et al.,* (2022), examined the evolution of work-life balance (WLB) from various perspectives. This distinction matters because it stands for the individual's obligations extend beyond familial obligations to education and leisure activities as well as caring responsibilities. One of the disappointments in this broader conceptualization is that the study lacks empirical evidence and relies on theoretical debate alone. Moreover, focusing on individuals leads to the assumption that psychological capital may have a bearing on WLB, which risks minimizing the impact of structural or organizational factors such as rigid inflexible schedules and unsupportive management. While it is a creative suggestion that mindfulness and wearables could be used to measure WLB in the future, such an approach would ignore the realities of those working in lower-income or resource-poor settings who do not have these tools.

Whereas, Bulger, (2024), reinforces the conceptual complexity of WLB, noting that there is no universal definition. Illustrating this complexity are the three opposing conceptions of balance as: equitable time allocation, reciprocal enrichment of work and life, and alignment of values between work and home. While this divergence demonstrates that WLB cannot be a one-size-fits-all solution, it also complicates employers' efforts to formulate policies aimed at enhancing the health and wellness of their workforce. Emotions and values integration can be challenging to realize with policies offering time-flexible work arrangements that promote balance but assist only with time-based equilibrium. A particularly striking example is Bulger's examination of the impact of financial security on work-family compatibility; however, it raises the issue of whether WLB is a privilege of certain socioeconomic groups. This line of reasoning risks overlooking the gendered, classed, or caregiving-positioned ways in which uneven structures of 'balance' are achieved without a robust analysis of systemic inequalities.

Examining the relationship between work-life balance (WLB), job satisfaction, and turnover intention, Gautam *et al.,* (2025) conducted a study using a Likert-scale questionnaire on 386 nurses. The authors refine methodological rigor by employing SEM and Smart PLS 4 for their analysis. The study discovered noticeable interrelated patterns, like the increase in turnover intentions due to work interfering with personal life, and how personal life enhancing work improves job satisfaction. There is a limitation in representativeness of the sample as it only consists of nurses from private hospitals. The unique work-life balance faced by healthcare employees, due to systemic structures such as institutional hierarchies, emotional labor, and unpredictable hours, might differ from corporate or remote work environments. Furthermore, the study did not explore whether DEI or gender policies, if any, directly impact WLB outcomes.

Overall, the studies analyzed show that while there is a growing understanding of work-life balance on a theoretical level, empirical research is often quite shallow and overlooks important factors such as identity, organizational culture, and policy implementation. There is no literature that directly answers the question of what WLB effects gender-inclusive DEI policies have, which this study aims to address. This is why the current research examines the relationship between gender-inclusive HR policies and work-life balance in Irish organizations.

2.5 Intersection of Gender-Inclusive DEI and Work-Life Balance

Chiwuzie and Oloukoi (2022) explore the growing institutional demand for gender and social inclusion frameworks, particularly in sectors such as construction where funding increasingly depends on demonstrable equity standards. The report has predominantly provided a prescriptive report rather than the result-oriented era, and the authors emphasize the importance of incorporating gender issues into the formulation of projects and their execution as has been advocated by organizations such as UN Women. Even though their argument that the principles of gender and inclusion should be implemented in every architectural structure is truly convincing, they do not examine properly how the mentioned principles ought to be implemented in the actual practice or whether there is an appropriate level of training of professionals in their implementation. Moreover, in a male dominated kind of industry such as construction employment where inclusion on project level does not consider the possible effects of gender inclusive employment within the work place on the organizations culture and the employment wellbeing.

In contrast, Johnson (2018) provides a more intersectional analysis by examining the work-life balance of Black women in educational leadership because of the multifaceted impact of race and gender on their lives. The interaction between gender, leadership duties and race in relation to making the work-life balance harder can be thoroughly investigated in terms of this theoretical framework. On the one hand, this study is an excellent exercise in highlighting the truth about the lives of those not-so-big names in leadership. On the other hand, the study is weak in the context of evaluating the usefulness of institutional support mechanisms or in giving specific solutions on how to change the system. Besides representation, the two papers emphasize the necessity of considering the real experiences and support available to diverse identities when creating an inclusive framework. This study aims at addressing the gap in the literature as they explore the impact of gender-inclusive DEI policies on the overall experiences of employees including their work-life balance.

2.6 Role of Human Resource Management in Driving DEI

Chukwudi and Eusebius, (2023), investigated the role of Human Resource Management (HRM) in promoting Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) within Nigerian institutions. The studies prove that in interconnected countries, DEI is potentially able to contribute to the development of a more innovative and sustainable workforce; however, there are social, cultural, and economic obstacles to the implementation of DEI in Nigeria. They introduce contextual depth based on the use of a case study method; however, the findings cannot necessarily be used beyond Nigeria due to geographical peculiarities. Moreover, the authors do not elaborate on how such practices impact the employee metrics and job satisfaction or work-life balance, although they address such topics as theoretical frameworks, workforce diversity, and best practices. Though the fact that most of DEI literature is focused on the West cases, one would be more disappointed with the suggested changes in the HR policy that similar developing countries need to adopt to accommodate DEI more appropriately.

Whereas, Khan and Khan, (2023), adopt a more theoretical lens, exploring the evolution of DEI within HRM and its growing importance in enhancing organizational innovation and performance. There is no evidence to support the statements of the authors since the research lacks a background section and does not include the discussion of the potential benefits of DEI technics. Their assertion regarding the importance of HR in the strategic insertion of DEI in the corporate culture is valid,

although one can barely know how it is put to practice in the real world due to the insufficient evidence coming out of the field. To entities seeking practical guidance, this implies that the study is not very helpful. The report provides certain decent findings regarding the system of organization functioning, yet it does not examine how the DEI policies would influence personal experience of the employees, and particularly the feeling of being included and well taken care of.

In an effort to contribute to this discussion, Reina and Scarozza, (2020), examine human resource management in government organizations, where HR professionals should be the key players that introduce change. Although it was a study that acknowledges the issues associated with HRM in bureaucratic institutions, the study identifies principles such as meritocracy, openness, and transparency. This perspective satisfies one of the gaps in corporate-resource-oriented DEI discourse in that a sense of the practice with the lens of public administration is added, yet remains eminently descriptive. Any conversation of the way the HR operations in the public sector execute DEI goals is lacking. Even more restraining its applicability to the real senses of inclusion is that it lacks empirical data concerning employee perceptions or organizational outcomes.

Similarly, Di Stefano *et al.*, (2019), in their turn, analyze the data of 954 employees of both the public and the commercial sectors to identify the effect of organizational culture and personality traits on WDB. They confirm the effects of the organizational culture on behavioral outcomes (in particular, in the culture of the clan and adhocracy) through the use of hierarchical linear modelling (HLM). As much as a proper procedure is carried out in the study, it narrows our knowledge of work-life balance by viewing it through the lens of antisocial behaviors. Such positive consequences, as employee engagement or employee well-being, or how inclusive HRM can shrink unproductive behaviors and foster harmony remain unconsidered.

The exact study of the effects of gender-inclusive HR policies on work-life balance of the workers is not conducted in any of these studies, but with implications of HRM changing aspects when it comes to promoting DEI. Based on this, the need to fill a major gap of knowledge that exists in terms of contextual analysis in organizations in Ireland is the target of the current paper.

2.7 Gender-Inclusive DEI Policies in the Irish Workplace

Explaining the presence of the lack of women in the leadership of high-tech companies in Ireland, Molloy (2022) points out the factor of psychological safety as a supportive and an impeding factor. In all of these cases, where education is at its peak, research is lacking with regards to systemic

and perceptional barriers that stand in the way of letting women climb the career ladder. To address this, the study by Molloy employed a quantitative survey to seek the correlation between biases against women in power and attitudes of psychological safety. Issues related to self-selectivity; representativeness of the sample occur when the surveys are distributed with the help of social media. Nonetheless, the research contributes to the knowledge of this study as it determines the relationship between psychological safety and leadership outcomes which is an unexplored area to study in Irish landscapes. The findings correlate with global research which associates gender-diversified leadership with better organizational performance, lower risk-taking, and increased creativity. Invalidating information about what practices in HR, in particular, facilitate a psychological safety could become a limitation in future useful research.

Directing the attention back to the school system, Arnold and Fox (2025) discover that the opposition to gender equality lessons in Irish secondary schools is not new. In their qualitative study which is premised on the GEMINI project, they found that conservative school culture, inadequate preparation of teachers, and increasing influence of sexist media characters are the barriers to gender mainstreaming. The information about the social opposition as obtained at the macro-level may influence the workplace in the longer run in an indirect way because this would shape gender perceptions early enough. The study is however compromised by the absence of student perspectives and sampling of a limited number (12 teachers) which limitation makes the study not generalizable. As stressed in both studies, gender equality in leadership will only be a dream but not a reality in the Irish context unless it is institutionalized in a way that ensures it, e.g., in inclusive education or psychologically safe workplaces.

2.8 Work-Life Balance in Ireland: Trends and Challenges

The current research article is a significant but several years ago unexplored area, with a study carried out by Griffin (2022) exploring how COVID-19 mandatory work-from-home (MWFH) arrangements impact work-life balance (WLB) among employees. The current study entails cross-sectional quantitative research and is based on a pack of valid scales, such as the GHQ, WFCS, IPS, and Financial Scale (Cronbach Alpha > 0.7). Although the statistical rigor could be increased due to MANOVA and hierarchical multiple regression application, the problems related to the representativeness and generalizability emerge, since the research relies on non-probability sampling. The research may find it beneficial to contextualize variables, examined as making up

to the global context of WLB, including organizational support, a role of the caregiver, and gendered expectations, but the study can provide useful information on what determine WLB and mental health under remote conditions. It is also very quantitative in nature thus may have failed to appreciate the more real-world situations encountered by workers as they tried to balance between their home and work lives. Nevertheless, as a contribution to the discussion on human resource management following the occurrence of a pandemic, the study highlights that a greater degree of longitudinal studies and intersectional studies should be conducted.

2.9 Summary

Table 1: Summary of Literature Review

Author(s) & Year	Focus of the Study	Methodology	Key Findings	Limitations / Critique	Relevance to Current Study
Kiradoo (2022)	DEI solutions via secondary data	Review of reports/databases	Suggests generic DEI strategies	Lacks empirical data; not context-specific	Highlights need for localized studies (e.g., Ireland)
Raimi et al. (2022)	Theoretical models of DEI	Conceptual/theoretical	Introduces liberal/radical models	Too broad; lacks gender specificity	Indicates theoretical base but not practical DEI impact
Olusanya (2023)	Employee perception of DEI	Interview of 500 employees	Diversity ≠ Inclusion; identifies performance benefits	Does not explore structural DEI support	Highlights gap between DEI policies and actual inclusion
Kannaiyan and Neelamegam (2023)	Strategies for gender inclusion	Prescriptive (normative)	Training, inclusive hiring promoted	Lacks empirical evaluation; binary view of gender	Reveals normative focus, not lived impact

Apicella et al. (2023)	Gender pay gaps in annuities	Comparative quantitative	Identifies gender-based financial inequality	No workplace linkage; lacks DEI context	Suggests long-term economic impact of inequality
Gill et al. (2018)	Inclusive team culture in healthcare	Case-based analysis	Promotes intersectionality	Limited cross-sector application; lacks tracking metrics	Recognizes intersectionality but lacks outcome assessment
Brough et al. (2022)	Conceptualizing work-life balance	Theoretical	Expands WLB beyond family domain	No empirical evidence; tech-focused suggestions unrealistic	Points to broader WLB needs, not DEI connection
Bulger (2024)	Complexity of WLB definitions	Theoretical	Defines time, enrichment, and value alignment models	Ignores class/gender inequities	WLB is complex and context-sensitive
Gautam et al. (2025)	WLB, job satisfaction, turnover	Quantitative (386 nurses)	Links job satisfaction with WLB	Healthcare-focused; no DEI analysis	Suggests job-WLB linkage; needs broader application
Chiwuzie and Oloukoi (2022)	Gender inclusion in project planning	Prescriptive review	Suggests inclusion across construction projects	No implementation or training review	Highlights need for policy-to-practice transition
Johnson (2018)	WLB for Black women leaders	Qualitative (BFT framework)	Exposes race-gender balance struggles	Lacks practical solutions or support mechanisms	Stresses real-world inequalities, needs systemic fixes

Chukwudi and Eusebius (2023)	HRM role in DEI (Nigeria)	Case study	Identifies implementation barriers	Non-generalizable; lacks outcome data	Reveals global disparity in DEI practice
Khan and Khan (2023)	DEI in HRM evolution	Theoretical	Links DEI with innovation	No field evidence or outcome analysis	Lacks practical insight on HR-employee connection
Reina and Scarozza (2020)	HRM in public sector	Descriptive analysis	Notes meritocracy and transparency	No DEI policy evaluation or metrics	Adds public context but lacks depth
Di Stefano et al. (2019)	Culture, personality & WLB	Quantitative (HLM, 954 people)	Organizational culture affects behavior	Focuses on deviance, not inclusion	Misses positive WLB outcomes or DEI relevance
Molloy (2022)	Women in Irish tech leadership	Quantitative (survey)	Links psychological safety to representation	Sampling bias; unclear HR practices	Contributes Irish-based DEI gap exploration
Arnold and Fox (2025)	Resistance to gender equality education	Qualitative (12 teachers)	Shows macro resistance and media influence	Small sample; lacks student perspective	Suggests early social influences on workplace DEI
Griffin (2022)	WFH impact on WLB in Ireland	Quantitative (cross-sectional)	Identifies predictors of WLB, gender/workplace differences	Non-random sample; lacks contextual depth	Adds Irish data; recommends longitudinal and intersectional research

2.10 Literature Gap

Although there is substantial research on work-life balance and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) as separate concepts, there is practically no quantitative evidence connecting gender-inclusive DEI programs to improvements in employees' work-life balance. Many studies operate with a binary understanding of gender and do not analyze DEI frameworks, which ignores the lived experiences of non-binary and gender-diverse individuals. The impact of HR's implementation of DEI frameworks with an operational focus on gender within the concrete outcomes delineated in the literature for employee wellness and balance is equally underexplored. 'In comparison to other countries and Western contexts, there is insufficient attention to the specific legal, cultural and social dynamics in the Irish workplace which undermines the existing body of literature.' Using gender-diverse frameworks to evaluate the impact of inclusive HR policies on work-life balance reveals a significant gap in the literature that addresses work-life balance. This study aims to address these gaps by assessing the impact of gender-diverse DEI policies on the work-life integration of Irish employees. A part of the lack of quantitative data connecting gender-inclusive DEI projects to better work-life balance lies in the fact that the majority of studies have been carried out with the help of qualitative research methods that can be very effective at discovering personal experiences, which is not applicable to the large-scale population. There is also poor availability of standardized instruments that can measure DEI inclusiveness and work-life outcomes simultaneously. As much as this is being positively reflected in the rhetoric of gender equality in the Irish policy circles, there has been a dry spell on observing the real impact of these policies with references to the workplace. This discloses both contextual and methodological gap because quantitative research concerning the specifics of cultural and legal dynamics of Irish workplaces remains in early stages.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter explains the methods utilized in the research to evaluate the impact of gender-inclusive DEI initiatives on the work-life balance in the HR practices of the Irish context. The research is quantitative and objective to guarantee empirical rigor from a positivist epistemological standpoint. The quantitative method allowed this study to obtain the measurable results that comply with the research objectives.

To retrieve the primary data, Irish firms delivered a closed-ended questionnaire (they used Google Forms as the questionnaire was structured and had a closed form) to 100 workers. Purposive sampling of the participants was done to ensure the relevance of the research. Informed consent of all the participants was obtained, and statistical analysis of the study by using the closed-ended questions was possible through numerical responses. The framework of ethical principles of the National College of Ireland (NCI) and GDPR was used to provide anonymity, voluntary engagement, and processing of data in safe conditions.

Descriptive statistical analysis was carried out with Microsoft Excel and consisted of frequency distributions and visualization of a trend. The selection of Excel was based on its ease of access and suitability for both summarization and presentation of data, but it lacks the advanced analysis than SPSS and R. This choice would suit the exploratory nature of the study and the application of the descriptive statistical model instead of the inferential models.

The quantitative structure and the measurable information of this method provide a forceful and objective foundation to evaluate the impacts of the gender-inclusive DEI work on the work-life balance of the Irish HR people.

3.2 Research Onion

The research onion model, written by Saunders, describes the process of developing a sound research method (Iovino and Tsitsianis, 2020). It possesses six interconnected levels that assist researchers in making critical decisions regarding the design of a study. Deepest is the worldview of the researcher, or research philosophy (e.g., positivism, interpretivism). The second level is research strategy, followed by which the theory is applied (deductive or inductive). The third involves the methodological approach, which is multi-method, mixed-method, or mono-method. The fourth layer is research methods, including experiment, survey, or case study (Alharahsheh and Pius, 2020). At the fifth level, there are the temporal horizons, which can be longitudinal (all through time) or cross-sectional (at a point in time). The main focus of the bottom layer is data gathering and analysis processes. The model will secure academic rigour and methodological consistency through its systematic research planning, rationale, and implementation.

3.3 Research Philosophy

To identify how gender-inclusive DEI initiatives in Ireland have impacted the HR practice concerning work-life balance, this study adopts the positivist approach to research because it

implies paying attention to collecting objective, measurable data. Philosophical positivism is based on the belief that by observing, examining, and quantifying empirical facts, human beings can make discoveries that are reproducible as well as free of human bias; in short, being able to see, measure, and assess reality with empirical evidence (Kaushik and Walsh, 2019). This technique is consistent with the purpose of the study to offer academic information and practical applications of HR based on clear and data-driven findings.

The perceptions of the employees towards diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) practices and work-life balance can also be measured using rigorous surveys, observed and supported by positivism. The study remains bound to observable trends and associations, which can seemingly be comprehended by the objective method as per descriptive statistical analysis on this notion.

This approach avoids subjective analysis and reaches the point of reliable, valid results through a focus on quantifiable facts. Its structured approach allows it to test hypotheses far better and view patterns and data more effectively. Such a philosophical orientation is appropriate to research related to human resources, which potentially has an impact on policy and practice in organizations, through quantifiable outcomes.

To make the research on the effect of gender-inclusive DEI practices on work-life balance in the Irish workplace comprehensible and unbiased, the study will follow one of the tenets of positivism and reset its intentions, data collection, and analysis.

3.4 Research Approach

This research study, conducted through a quantitative methodology with a deductive research strategy, examines the impact of gender-inclusive DEI programs on the work-life balance of HR practices. Basing the research on a foundation of existing ideas and propositions based on prior literature, deductive methodology then formulates structured questionnaires to collect empirical data to be tested (Osman *et al.*, 2018).

It can be more prudent to interpret the relevance of DEI in supporting work-life balance based on a deductive approach, which enables one to establish definite research goals and assumptions. To test these assumptions, a sample of 100 of the Irish firm employees was quantitatively analyzed in regard to their responses. To conduct an objective and systematic study, the aim was to determine whether the witnessed trends in the data are consistent or in contrast to theoretical considerations.

By doing so, this will provide the study process a form of structure and control, and it is less probable that researcher bias and subjective interpretation would influence the findings. The study is a very consistent and replicable analysis because it solely focuses on numerical and statistical data. Excel descriptive statistics give convenient albeit valuable data concerning patterns, trends, and correlations that are relevant to the research objectives.

Deductive nature, quantitative research design allows the study to be relevant to real-life HR policy and decision-making, and at the same time possesses scholarly quality.

3.5 Research Strategy

This research uses a quantitative study approach through surveying employees of Irish companies to determine the impact of gender-inclusive DEI policy on the work-life balance of workers. As survey enables the collection of systematic, measurable, and comparable information from numerous individuals, the surveys fall in line with the positivism and rational manner of research.

The key instrument under the study was a standardized questionnaire that focused on uncovering valuable data in relation to the way the employees perceived and the manner in which they received the DEI practices, work-life balance. The survey design ensured that the information was clear and in line with the study objectives, given that the closed-ended questions were aligned accordingly. Researchers employed a cross-sectional method of surveys because it involves collecting data at a given point in time, to know what is applicable at the moment.

The strategy applied was because it provided us with the ability to gather information effectively regarding a broad sample (100 employees), enough that it permits us to create generalizable interpretations within the limitations of the research. The survey method also provides a cost-effective method of examining the relationship between variables and lowers the chance of bias of the researcher.

This will suffice when studying the HR policy and employee experiences, given that there is a need to measure both. It supports fact-based judgment and provides a structured method through which theoretical hypotheses can be tested using real circumstances.

3.6 Data Collection and Analysis

The Google Forms survey that was used to collect data in this study involved sending a questionnaire to 100 participants (representing various industries) in Ireland. A purposive sample

strategy was deployed in selecting the participants. We were particularly focused on the individuals with some experience or exposure to HR policies, and particularly HR policies related to diverse elements of equality and inclusion (DEI). With strict compliance with the rule of participant anonymity and confidentiality in line with the norms of ethics research and GDPR law, all study participants provided their informed consent.

To gauge the perceptions of respondents regarding the issue of gender-inclusive DEI projects and their impacts on the work-life balance, the survey operated closed-ended questions where there was the use of Likert scale was used. The study featured the use of a quantitative approach; hence, there were no free-form questions.

We analyzed the responses using Microsoft Excel and performed descriptive statistics analysis. This involved computation of percentages, frequencies, and representation of the graphical accounts of the information. The decision to use Excel was based on the fact that it is simple to operate and provides decent basic statistical summaries. It is true, though, that the paper makes a note of this in the section about limitations, where it mentions that it will lack the capacity of performing inferential statistics.

By applying this method of analysis, we were able to determine significant trends, correlations, and patterns in the data. The insights that were obtained aided in the drawing of practical implications of HR practices in Irish firms, which directly assisted in the evaluation of the study questions.

3.7 Ethical Consideration

As described by the NCI ethical framework and GDPR, all possible care was taken during the study regarding the scholarly, professional, and ethical standards. Before initiating the collection of data in the quantitative section, we obtained ethical approval. Each of the one hundred participants was provided with an informed consent letter, which describes the objectives and methodology of the given study, the right to terminate participation at any time, without any penalty, and the intended use of the data. It was ensured that there was full anonymity and secrecy since only a complete voluntary process was carried out, and there was no collection of information that could be personally identifiable. Any information could be stored in a secure environment and could only be used when there were educational purposes.

The study adhered to GDPR through data anonymization, encryption of data in storage, and adherence to the European data protection rules. The participants enjoyed the respect, privacy, and dignity at all times.

In assigning and referencing all secondary materials properly, the markers of Ethical standards were upheld in the qualitative aspect. In order to eliminate the risk of plagiarism and intellectual cheating, we selected only the peer-reviewed literature that was published between 2018-2025 and thoroughly followed the rules of references.

On the whole, the study was honest and open, and dignity and respect were shown to the participants and the secondary data. The steps ensured compliance with the institutional and legal ethics obligations, as well as supported the validity and dependability of the study.

3.8 Limitations

This study illuminates gender-inclusive DEI programs and work-life balance in Irish HR practices, though it has many shortcomings. First, 100 participants would be enough to conduct an exploratory research study, but it does not encompass the entire population of HR in all businesses and proportion in the Irish business as a whole, hence it can be considered as limited in generalizability. Second, the information was obtained by self-reported questionnaires, so conclusions might be influenced by the subjective impression or the social desirability bias. The paper is too superficial since no qualitative data are used to present useful background information concerning personal experiences. The absence of refined motives, attitudes, and interpretations forms a barrier in comprehending the effect of gender-inclusive DEI programs on the balance of work and life in diverse organizational contexts that could have given a broader impression.

Microsoft Excel was used to process the data because it is available and suitable when it comes to descriptive analyses and visualization. Excel is not able to perform thorough inferential statistics as SPSS or R, and one does not get a deep statistical analysis in the study. Time limits also affected longitudinal approaches, where it is possible to have changes over time.

Overall, the literature review selected only 2018 to 2025 peer-reviewed sources. This contained current and relevant studies, yet it might have omitted early basic works. Notwithstanding the described limitations, the study is academically valid and has a strong basis on which related research can be conducted.

3.9 Summary

The chapter explained the methods of study in researching gender-inclusive DEI initiatives and their influence on work-life balance in Irish HR practices. The method was a quantitative approach that involved planned-out questionnaires with 100 HR experts. An explanatory research stance and deductive methodology were involved in generalizing with respect to facts that were observable and measurable. Informed consent and confidentiality of data were followed by GDPR. In order to play it safe, the scholarly sources used were indicated accordingly. Although the technique was executed utilizing Excel as a tool of general description and has avoided the input of qualitative data, relevant patterns were achieved concerning the objectives of the study. The approach verifies the fidelity of the data and its transparency, which forms the foundation of the analysis and interpretation of the following chapter.

Chapter 4: Data Analysis and Findings

4.1 Introduction

A standardized questionnaire was used to obtain primary data, and the results and analysis are provided in this chapter. This chapter aims to address the study questions by exploring the links between the WLB policies of Irish companies in connection with their Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) initiatives, which are meant to be gender-inclusive of women. The experience of employees regarding gender-inclusive HR policies and their attitudes and perceptions of this policy could be learned more through the information gathered about a diverse group of individuals.

At first, the study examined the demographics of the participants with the help of descriptive statistics. Thereafter, the study elaborated their responses in critical areas of thematic concerns that are pertinent to the research objectives. The adequacy of the answer to the question of whether there exists any statistically significant relation or distinction between gender identity, perceived inclusion, and WLB outcomes is evaluated with the help of entailed inferencing measures of statistical significance when the circumstances allow them. The chapter also gives a summary of the patterns and trends that have been observed, which can be of help when trying to know more about the strengths and weaknesses of the current DEI techniques.

4.2 Descriptive Statistics

Table 2: Demographics Summary

Variable	N	Unique Values	Top	Freq
What is your gender identity?	100	2	Female	51
What is your age group?	100	5	25–34	39
What is your employment status?	99	3	Full-time	59
What sector do you work in?	100	3	Private	44
What is your current role/position?	97	5	Mid-level	43
Are you aware of any gender-inclusive DEI initiatives in your organization?	100	3	Yes	57
Which of the following DEI initiatives does your organization currently implement? (Select all that apply)	100	50	Other	19
Who is responsible for DEI implementation in your organization?	100	5	DEI task force	27
What challenges does your organization face in implementing gender-inclusive DEI policies? (Select all that apply)	99	32	Other	24
How would you rate your organization's ability to enforce gender-inclusive policies?	99	5	Good	42

Table 3: Likert Summary

Statement	N	Mean	SD	Min	25%	50%	75%	Max
The gender-inclusive policies in my workplace positively impact my work-life balance.	100	3.53	1.149	1	3	4	4	5
I feel supported in balancing work and personal responsibilities due to inclusive HR practices.	99	3.737	1.0746	1	3	4	5	5
Flexible work and parental leave policies are equally accessible to all employees regardless of gender.	100	3.73	0.9519	1	3	4	4	5
My workplace creates an environment where people of all gender identities feel included and respected.	100	3.8	1.005	1	3	4	5	5
I believe my experience of work-life balance is different from that of other gender groups.	100	3.75	1.1753	1	3	4	5	5
Gender-inclusive policies are applied equally to employees of all gender identities.	99	3.869	1.0463	1	3	4	5	5
Employees of marginalized gender identities receive equal support in balancing work and life.	100	3.85	1.0384	1	3	4	5	5

The results of the descriptive statistics of the survey (N=100) shed some light on the evaluation of the Irish firms of the impact of gender-inclusive DEI (Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion) policies on work-life balance (WLB). Most of the individuals were women, and they were between 25-34 years old. All of them worked in the private sector and had regular jobs; most of them were middle-

level workers, however. By using this demographic categorization, one can place the opinions of people about DEI initiatives and work-life balance within the context.

Most respondents gave them a high score when it comes to the effects they had in facilitating their management of work and personal life when they were asked about gender-inclusive policies. A slightly positive one was stated by the statement The gender-inclusive policies at my workplace have an encouraging effect on work-life balance with an average score of 3.53 (SD = 1.15). Above average agreement is shown on equal leave rules (M = 3.73), inclusive work environment (M = 3.80), and the comments that assess aid when it comes to integrating work and personal life, and bringing them together. One of the segments of positive attitudes was the extent to which people believed marginalized genders are equally supported in striking a balance between work and life (M = 3.85) and applied gender-inclusive policies equally (M = 3.87), which recorded the highest mean scores.

However, the qualitative responses provide evidence that 32 unique factors were preventing the DEI adoption, which means that the barriers are quite complex and diverse within the companies. The ability to enforce diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) policies was also different (M = 3.75, SD = 1.18). These numbers are not perfect, particularly concerning the impartiality of an equal application of the DEI procedures; however, in general, it looks like quite a helpful environment.

4.3 Data Visualization

What is your gender identity?

100 responses
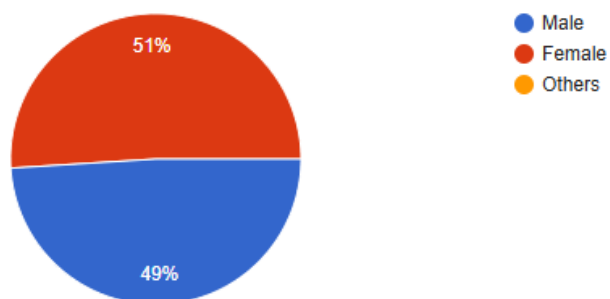
- Male
- Female
- Others

51%

49%

Figure 1: Gender Identity

The pie chart shows that the gender identification of the respondents is 51 percent female and 49 percent male. The fact that the sexes are almost equally represented allows us to take a look at how individuals perceive work-life balance and gender-inclusive DEI programs confidently. Individuals with a non-binary gender are not likely to be well represented in the sampled organizations due to the lack of such a gender-related identity in the self-identities of the respondents. Such underrepresentation can indicate the issue with existing DEI practices, including the absence of self-identification or a general problem of inclusion. The disparity between men and women is equal in gender divide, however, and hence we can compare the lives of both men and women in workplaces in Ireland effectively.
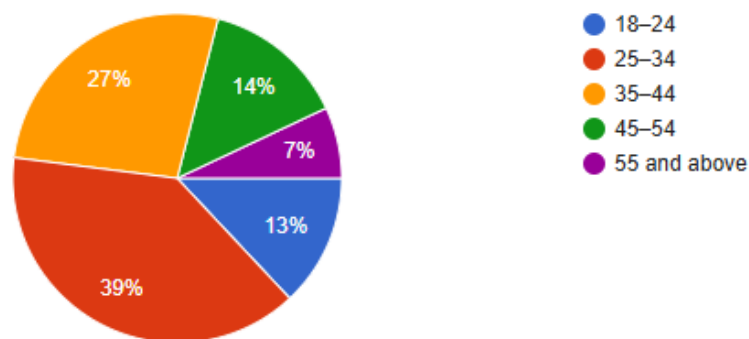

Figure 2: Age Group

The age distribution of survey respondents is depicted on the pie chart. The majority of this workforce are young professionals, with 39 percent of them falling in the age bracket of 25-34 and 27 percent falling in the 35-44 age bracket. The percentage is the lowest among the 45-54 year (14%), 18-24 year (13%), and 55+ (7%). As of this distribution, it seems that the early and mid-career professionals are the ones giving the most comments regarding the DEI efforts and work-life balance. This difference between the level of participation of the young and the old in the workforce through Irish firms could be attributed to the changes in demography. Due to the diversity of ages involved, we will be able to analyze the way the members of various generations perceive the effectiveness of DEI and the issue of balancing work and life.

What is your employment status?
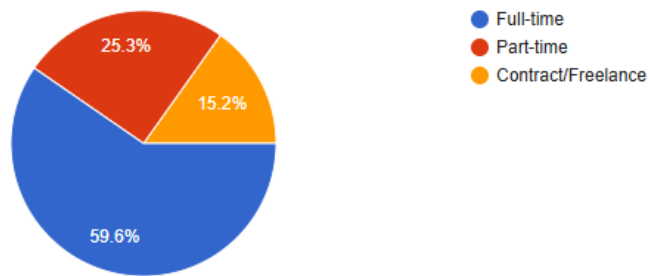
99 responses

Figure 3: Employment Status

The chart shows 59.6, 25.3 and 15.2 as full time, part time, contract/freelance respectively. This allocation indicates that the full-time workers lead the responses. The type of employment has an influence on the HR policy and on DEI activities, particularly on work-life balance. Although the full-time employees might be allowed more organized programs, the data allows a more extensive trend to be examined regarding DEI practices using employment types.

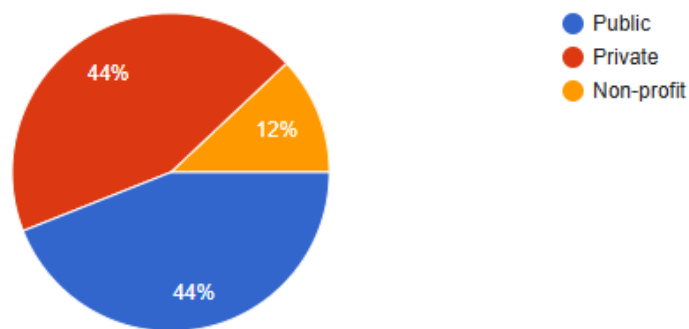**What sector do you work in?**

100 responses

Figure 4: Sectors

Among the total of 100 respondents, 44% represent the public sector practitioners and 12% attributed to the private sector; the remaining 12 % deal with non-profit activities. It is due to this equitable representation by the general and business sectors that we are in a position to compare the gender-inclusive DEI initiatives in various kinds of organizations. Under-representation of the

non-profit workers is a source of unease about how the industry could offer useful and applicable information to other environments. Nevertheless, this distribution is a decent starting point concerning the addresses of the problems that are industry-specific and views of the people on how the DEI rules have impacted the quality of work-life balance.

What is your current role/position?

97 responses

- Entry-level
- Mid-level
- Senior management
- Executive/Director
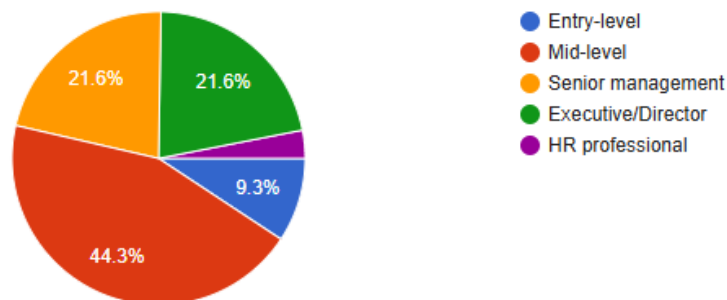- HR professional

21.6%   21.6%

9.3%

44.3%

Figure 5: Role or Position

Based on the job title of the respondents, the vast majority (that is, 44.3 percent) are middle-level professionals. The total population of people working in management and executive/director job categories is 21.6% and only 9.3% are entry-level workers. The smallest segment is the human resources professionals. Such distribution brings insight to the process of how work-life balance perceptions and DEI policies that admit gender tend to be different at various levels of a business. The results on the implementation and management of policy are more precise due to the high numbers of mid to senior positions; however, it could be necessary to explore the topics in greater detail, focusing on entry-level experience and the experience of the HR professionals, since there were fewer of them participating.

Are you aware of any gender-inclusive DEI initiatives in your organization?

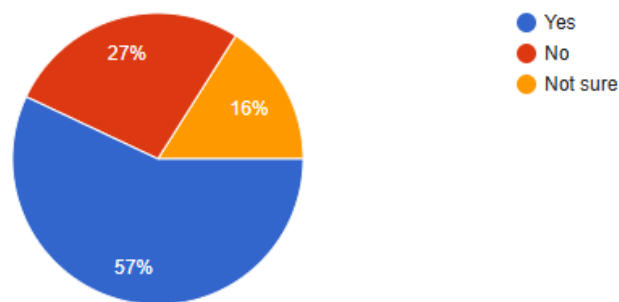100 responses

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

27%
16%
57%

Figure 6: Awareness of Gender-Inclusive DEI Initiatives in Organizations

The figure indicates the level of awareness of the people about the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) programs that were explicitly designed to include women and girls in their places of work. Encouragingly, there is a development towards an increased inclusive policy in the workplace, and 57% of 100 participants replied that they were conscious of such attempts. However, 27 percent of the people said they did not know, and 16 percent of them said they were not sure. This indicates that the DEI activity of certain businesses is not clear or evident, which can be caused by communication or execution failure. Regarding the data, it is essential to have the inclusion policy and ensure every company employee is informed about it and engaged. The initial step of involvement, acceptability, and organizational change is through awareness, so that DEI initiatives take off successfully. There is a long way to go before companies that wish to establish an inclusive culture, due to increased open and honest HR procedures, get within the range of the combined total of the respondents that are either ignorant of the subject or do not know how to answer it, which happens to be 43 percent.

Which of the following DEI initiatives does your organization currently implement? (Select all that apply)

☐ Copy chart

100 responses

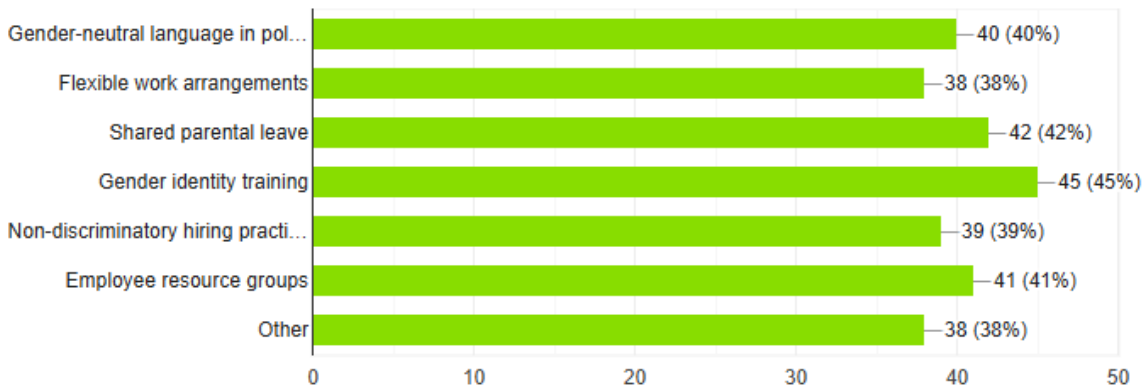| Initiative	Value
Gender-neutral language in pol...	40 (40%)
Flexible work arrangements	38 (38%)
Shared parental leave	42 (42%)
Gender identity training	45 (45%)
Non-discriminatory hiring practi...	39 (39%)
Employee resource groups	41 (41%)
Other	38 (38%)

Figure 7: Implementation of DEI Initiatives in Organizations

The horizontal bar chart displays the diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) actions of one hundred organizations and their frequency and spectrum. Gender Identity Training is by far the most frequent project, with 45 percent of people reporting that it is at their company. ERGs (41%), Gender-Neutral Language in Policies (40%), and Shared Parental Leave (42%) follow right after. Two additional indicative factors are flexible working schedules (38%) and non-discriminatory staff selection (39%). Notably, 38 percent of those who participated in the survey chose the option of Other, which could imply that various companies possess varying DEI policies.

Those findings indicate the existence of a multi-faceted strategy of DEI since the progress is observed in numerous companies regarding the implementation of inclusive policies, but the distribution of the data is rather balanced between the categories. It seems that the attempts to influence both behavior and structural inclusion are provided as the focus on training and the wording of policies can be seen. However, based on the statistics, there is an opportunity to expand and normalize these programs in any other place, as far as business is concerned.
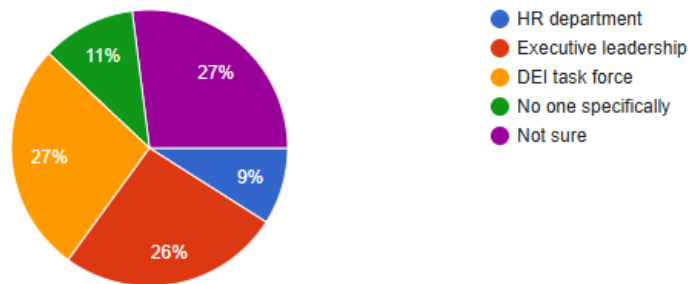
Figure 8: Accountability for DEI Implementation in Organizations

According to the responses of 100 individuals, this pie chart demonstrates how organizations feel accountable in terms of implementing the DEI programs. Some of the significant departments and roles that contributed to the total are HR with 9 percent and Executive Leadership with 26 percent. Interestingly, a quarter of survey takers do not know who addresses diversity, equity, and inclusion at the workplace, 27 percent; the same amount said, there is no dedicated person. More so, 11 percent of respondents have a DEI task force in charge.

Based on the statistics, not all of the companies seem to have a proper understanding of DEI, or even tend to have someone responsible under their care. Not sure, and no one in particular is similarly distributed, which can be a sign of communication or organizational failure. To make sure that DEI initiatives are made progressively and successfully, clear structures of responsibility and leadership that can be promoted by HR or specific task groups are the most important.
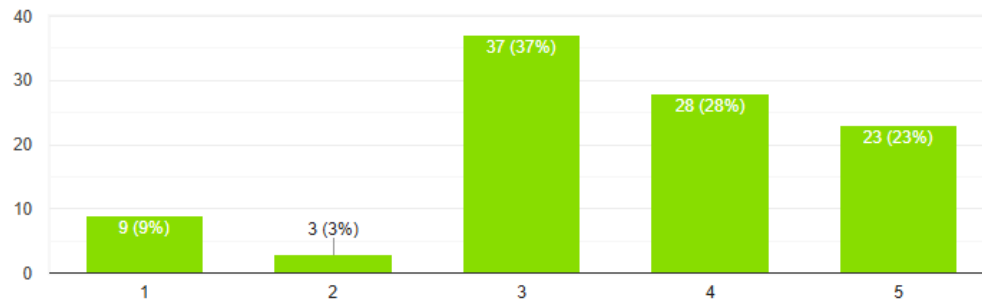
Figure 9: Perceived Impact of Gender-Inclusive Policies on Work-Life Balance

This bar graph represents the findings of a questionnaire that was administered to 100 individuals to rate, out of 1-5, the impact of gender-inclusive policies on their workplace life balance. A third of the individuals who rated the impact, 37 per cent or so, rated it as neutral 3, which means mixed or moderate in opinion. Conversely, 28 percent rated it as 4, and 23 percent as 5; thus, 51 percent of the people believe that such policies assist them in having a better work-life balance. Conversely, a low proportion of the population do not feel affected positively; 3 per cent rated 2 and 9 per cent 1.

As much as gender-inclusive policies are assisting many, this distribution indicates that most workers are not enjoying them or are even unaware of their existence. To be able to impact more and consistently across the business, there possibly needs to be expansion of the reach of these policies as well as an advancement in their delivery.

I feel supported in balancing work and personal responsibilities due to inclusive HR practices.
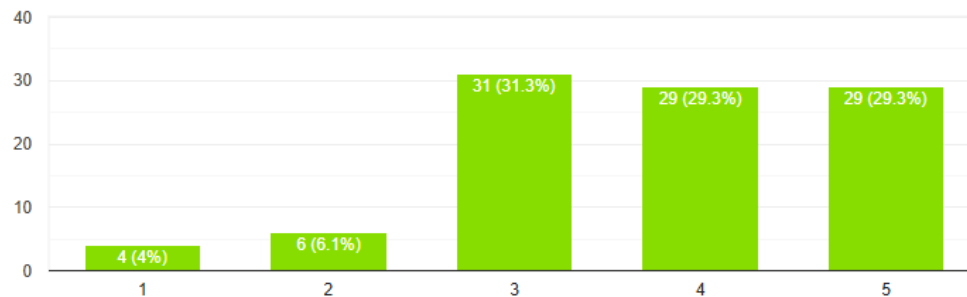
99 responses

Figure 10: Employee Support for Work-Life Balance Through Inclusive HR Practices

The bar chart shows the feelings of 99 people on the inclusive HR strategies that assist them in striking a balance between their commitment to work and to their home. It is nearly 59 percent of participants say that they feel strongly supported by their organizations, with the majority of responses rated in the mid-to-high range: 31.3 percent chose a neutral value of 3, 29.3 percent said 4, and another 29.3 percent said 5.

Nevertheless, a slight proportion, 6.1 per cent gave 2 and 4 per cent 1, showed very weak agreement or disapproval. These figures indicate that not all of the employees feel included and relevant in spite of the fact that most of them report their inclusiveness in the workplace.

This shows organizations in Ireland need to have more concrete strategies to attract and support every employee on board, though such graphic demonstrates that, all in all, people are friendly with inclusive HR initiatives which aim at inclusiveness in the workplace in favor of work-life balance.

Flexible work and parental leave policies are equally accessible to all employees regardless of gender.

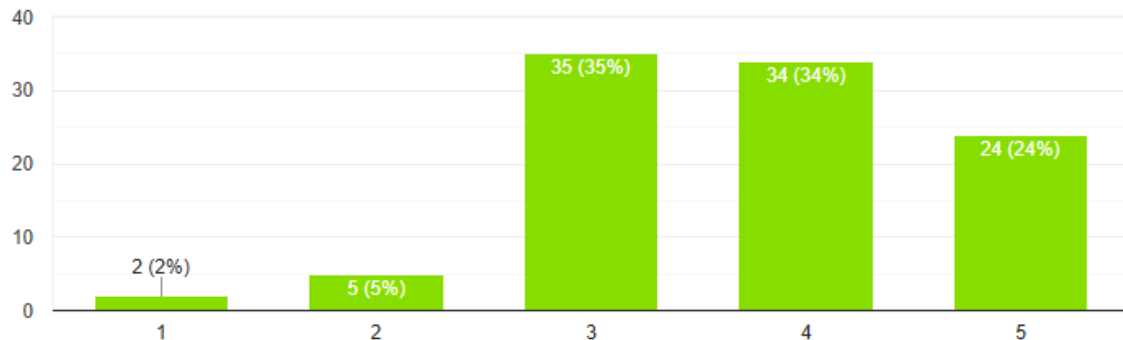100 responses

⎘ Copy chart

Figure 11: Perceived Gender Equality in Access to Flexible Work and Parental Leave Policies

This bar graph displays a survey carried out on 100 individuals, where the respondents were asked about the availability of the policies that would allow working flexible time and maternity leave depending on their gender. The vast majority of the people who did the survey had either a good or indifferent experience: The above figures that 35 percent of individuals selected a neutral point of 3, 34 percent at level 4, and 24 percent at level 5 demonstrate that 93 percent of people feel that such policies are available to a certain degree.

Few respondents were unfavorable towards the accessibility of the policy, and only 5 percent and 2 percent, respectively, gave 2 and 1 as the answer. To come up with an inclusive and friendly workplace environment, it is important to enact laws that are gender inclusive, and according to this study, the majority of employees believe that they equally have access to such policies. Even a small fraction is not satisfied, which is an indication that policy communication, enforcement, and implementation can do a better job to ensure that everyone participates and knows about it.

My workplace creates an environment where people of all gender identities feel included and respected. ⧉ Copy chart
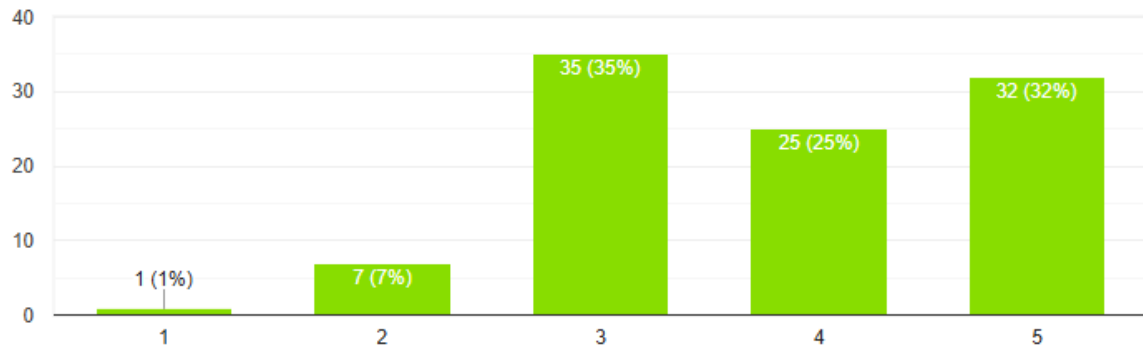
100 responses

Figure 12: Perceptions of Inclusion and Respect for All Gender Identities in the Workplace

Overall, there was a positive sentiment towards the aspects of inclusion in the workplace, and 92% percent of respondents rated the aspects of inclusion in the workplace, with 35% between 3, 25 percent between 4, and 32 percent between 5. Most people will tell you that they felt welcomed and appreciated at work; a very small percentage (7% selecting 2) of them will note that they are dissatisfied with what happened to them. This indicates that there is still a possibility to feel excluded or disrespected despite the fact that most people perceive that they were supported. According to this study, the companies are yet to go a long way before they can truly embrace and accommodate every employee, irrespective of their gender identification. We should continue fighting towards that objective. Employers can bridge the gap over the rest of the holes by improving DEI activities, training, and communication.

What challenges does your organization face in implementing gender-inclusive DEI policies? (Select all that apply)

99 responses

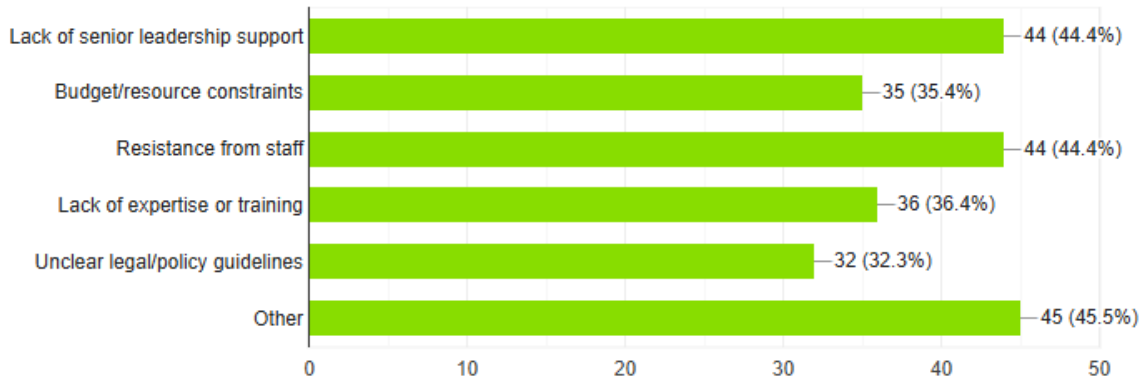| Challenge	Value
Lack of senior leadership support	44 (44.4%)
Budget/resource constraints	35 (35.4%)
Resistance from staff	44 (44.4%)
Lack of expertise or training	36 (36.4%)
Unclear legal/policy guidelines	32 (32.3%)
Other	45 (45.5%)

Figure 13: Challenges in Implementing Gender-Inclusive DEI Policies

This bar chart indicates the key obstacles that companies face during efforts to implement Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) gender-inclusive policies, based on 99 responses. Almost half of the responses were found in the Other category, which indicated the possibility of the existence of other, more complicated, or company-specific barriers, which were not exactly stated. Lack of cooperation by top leadership and staff opposition are two noted systemic challenges, with 44 respondents (44.4%) mentioning each. These instances indicate the significance of a powerful company culture and top-management buy-in on the effectiveness of DEI programs. Other important factors had been a lack of money or resources (35.4%), a lack of required knowledge or training (36.4%), and unclear policy or legal guidelines (32.3%). All the data indicate that the struggle against cultural resistance and structural constraints is just two sides of the same difficult coin. The firms may need to invest in leadership buy-in, proper training, and a more transparent policy structure to overcome these challenges.
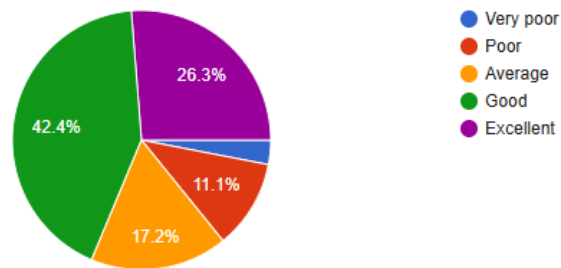
Figure 14: Perceived Organizational Ability to Enforce Gender-Inclusive Policies

This pie chart features tallying the responses given to 99 employees in a survey that queried their views on whether they think the gender inclusion policy of their company was effective or not. Forty-two-point four percent of those who participated in the survey believed that their company was doing well regarding the topic of DEI, with a rating of Good.

Simultaneously, a fraction of interviewees (particularly, 26.3%, or, to be more exact, held an impression as positive of efforts undertaken by their organization, and assessed it on the scale "Excellent." A large minority expressed concern, but 17.2 percent identified the enforcement as Average, 14.1 percent as Poor, and 11.1 percent as Very poor (2 percent).

This distribution shows that, although most people approve of the enforcement of gender policy, a decent proportion of them think that it is possible to do better. Some of the interventions to focus on the needs of individuals in the group that ranked negatively are the following namely, enriching the training so that the inclusion practice is modeled and accessed effectively, refinement of enforcement methods, as well as distilling the policies.
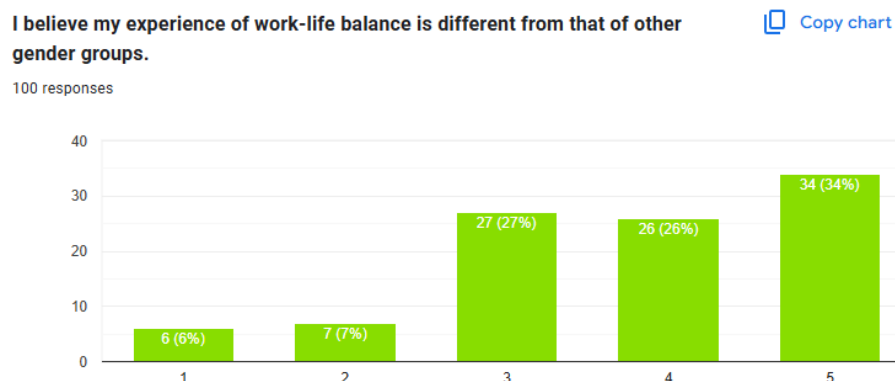
I believe my experience of work-life balance is different from that of other gender groups.

100 responses

Figure 15: Perceived Work-Life Balance Differences Across Gender Groups

Of the represented genders, 34 percent hold the strong opinion that their experience is unique, and 26 percent hold it, but to a lesser extent. On their part, 60 percent of the survey respondents believe that there is a wide divide between the shallow perception of work-life balance in terms of gender. The other 27 percent are ambivalent, which is perhaps an indicator of an ambiguity in the work setting or different opinions. Only a small share of 13% (7%+6%) believe that their experience is similar to that of other people, regardless of their gender. These results raise an issue of possible gender gap in the workplace regarding the regulations and support system that affect workers in different ways. To accommodate a more inclusive work-life balance and fair support of the people irrespective of their gender identities, organizations are advised to research deeper into these disparities and consider the solutions that could help address them more directly.
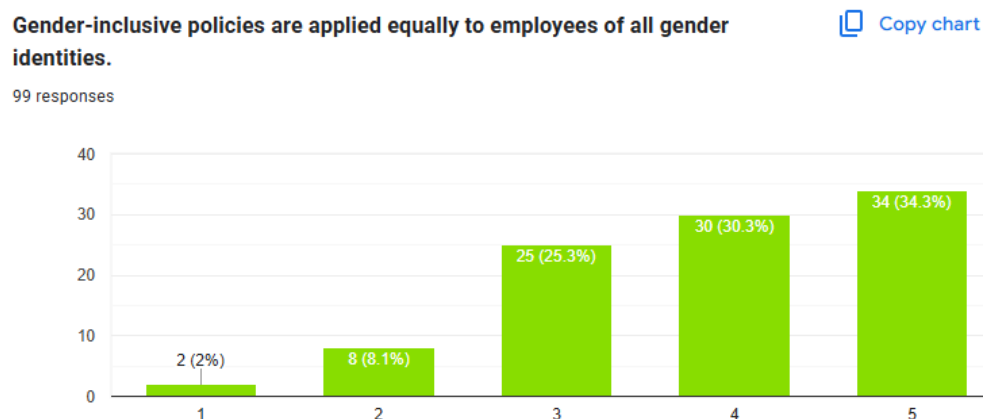

Gender-inclusive policies are applied equally to employees of all gender identities.

99 responses

Figure 16: Equality in Application of Gender-Inclusive Policies

50

A great majority of 64.6 percent (30.3 percent + 34.3 percent), indicating a widely held view in the fairness in treatment, indicates that they are in agreement or strongly agree that such policies are being implemented fairly. A quarter of the respondents being undecided might not be constructive, meaning that they are probably ill-informed or experiencing an unequal experience between departments. The levels of discontent or concern over equality in policy implementation seem to be low, as only 10.1% (8.1% + 2%) dislike the statement. Although the majority of the population considers things to be fair, it is best that organizations are made more open and ensure that everyone is on the same page through consideration of neutral and disagreeing responses.

Employees of marginalized gender identities receive equal support in balancing work and life. Copy chart
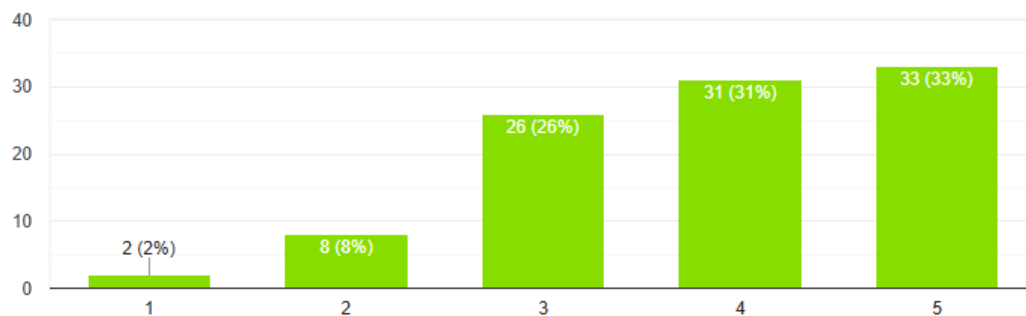
100 responses

Figure 17: Perceived Support for Marginalized Gender Identities in Work-Life Balance

A greater part of the respondents (64%, even of those who strongly agree) believe that organizations need to contribute to more to help gender identities, which are marginalized. The statistic that 26 percent of workers are agnostic means that a few of them lack the background knowledge or exposure to properly consider equality in assistances.

The 10 percentage point is also a good indication that there is minimal cause of concern even though it could be better. In general, the distribution identifies that the majority of the employees perceive the company as diverse and inclusionary-friendly, yet the unconfirmed perception expressed in neutral answers might be resolved through additional communication and introduction to the inclusionary policies.

4.4 Findings

Research Question 1: What gender-inclusive DEI initiatives are currently being implemented by Human Resources departments in Irish organizations?

Based on the results, it can be seen that a big proportion of Irish organizations are adopting gender diversity through the adoption of relevant HR policies and procedures. Indicating that the majority of the respondents revealed that their organizations in which they work are doing well (42.4%) or doing exceptionally well (26.3%) in putting in place policies that are gender inclusive is valuable. The idea to equally apply policies to all gender identities is also embraced by 34.3 per cent of the respondents, meaning that there are widespread inclusive behaviors. The mass adoption of some policies like flexible work and parental leave, which were rated by 58 of the respondents as very accessible and also reflects the active adoption of DEI policy.

Research Question 2: How do employees perceive the effectiveness of these gender-inclusive DEI initiatives in supporting their work-life balance?

On being questioned, 58.6 percent of the workers rated it 4 or 5 on how inclusive HR processes allowed them to maintain work/ personal life balance. In addition to that, when employees of the marginalized genders were questioned whether they are equally assisted in including work and life in their life, 64 percent stated that they do. According to these evaluations, employees consider the power of DEI efforts to be moderately or highly effective in offering work-life balance.

Research Question 3: What challenges do HR professionals face in designing and enforcing gender-inclusive DEI policies in Ireland?

The most commonly reported challenges include:

- Lack of senior leadership support (44.4%)
- Resistance from staff (44.4%)
- Other issues (45.5%), which likely include specific contextual or cultural barriers not captured in predefined options
- Budget/resource constraints and lack of expertise/training were also cited by over one-third of respondents, indicating structural and educational limitations in policy enforcement.

These findings point to both organizational and cultural obstacles that hinder broader and more effective DEI policy implementation.

Research Question 4: Are there noticeable differences in work-life balance experiences among employees of different gender identities under existing DEI initiatives?

There seems to be a set of perceived differences according to the outcomes of the survey. Strong agreement and moderate scores indicate that 34 and 26 percent of the respondents, respectively, feel that their work-life clinical picture is not the same as that of other genders (using a scale of 5). The fact that close to 60 percent of the respondents feel that they experience some form of inequality indicates that we have a long journey to go before we can point to people who identify with a different gender as having equal access to services.

Research Question 5: What improvements can be made to HR practices to enhance the impact of gender-inclusive DEI policies on work-life balance?

To maximise the effect of gender-inclusive DEI policies on work-life balance, human resource strategies ought to emphasize leadership involvement, targeted training, and uniform expansion of policies. Moreover, as per the survey results, 44.4 percent of them mentioned that a lack of support from senior leadership was a huge impediment. Cultural change and strengthening responsibility can be attained by increasing leadership involvement. The need to conduct elaborate education programs whereby the information on how to use inclusive practices is created and handed down to HR teams and employees is also brought about by the fact that 36.4 percent of the respondents cited about lack of knowledge or training. Enhanced communication and the use of uniform structures will facilitate clarification and delivery of vaguely entailed legal or policy demands, which have been reported by 32.3 percent of the population. This shall assist in making sure that there is consistency in the application of policies. Regular auditing of equal treatment and a feedback system should also be implemented, as only 34.3 of the individuals who took part in the survey believed that equal policies were applied to all gender identities. All these shifts can culminate in a friendlier working environment, which keeps a better balance between the needs of its diverse workforce.

4.5 Limitations

In this analysis, limitations are to be tackled. The results could have been influenced by the bias of response since the participants could have responded to socially desirable questions. Limitation may also come in the form of failure of the sampling technique to incorporate diversity among the target populations. A limit to survey instrument and data collecting platforms may have jeopardized the accuracy of the data. As explained in Chapter 3, these variables could have resulted into variability and holes in the analysis. The study, in spite of these drawbacks, gives insight into the influence of DEI on the work-life balance.

4.6 Summary

There are gender-inclusive DEI initiatives that are adopted in Irish companies, and a large proportion of workers report that they enhance the work-life balance. Absence of leadership encouragement, opposition by the staff, and little training inhibit full uptake. Nevertheless, there is still gender inequality even though most people rated the measures as somewhat or highly advantageous. The involvement of leadership, the implementation of policies around the clock, specialized training, and regular audit enhance DEI effect. To resolve structural and cultural obstacles is a way to introduce the inclusive workplace where all employees receive equal support in performing personal and work responsibilities.

Chapter 5: Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusion

The investigation in this study reflected on gender-inclusive DEI activities in Irish companies and their effects when managing work-life balance. The research questions guided the work throughout its course with a focus on DEI programs, employee perception of their efficacy, HR professional barriers, the lack of work-life balance, and areas of growth. The evolving aspects of inclusion within Irish companies were uncovered after a profound analysis of the responses given by employees. First of all, this paper examined the existing gender-inclusive DEI initiatives that are currently in progress. A significant number of companies also offer family-friendly working arrangements and parental leave policies, and most workers are accepting them. It is important to note that 69 percent of the respondents rated flexible work and maternity leave policies as 4-5 on a scale of 1-5 (slightly satisfied-very satisfied). The same 66 percent responded that gender-inclusive policies were equally implemented for the employees of the other gender. These numbers

indicate the optimistic initiatives of HR departments to adopt inclusive structures. However, some lapses in the implementation of their use among the population are present.

Although the employees are fairly satisfied with their sense of inclusion in the workplace, they can be better. Approximately 57 percent of the respondents believed that their business created an inclusive and respectful environment for all gender identities, but only 42.4 percent gave gender-inclusive policy implementation as good, and only 26.3 percent as excellent. The findings indicate that the company culture can encourage an inclusive attitude; however, it is hard to implement it. The paper analyzed the HR barriers towards the establishment and implementation of DEI policies, including the lack of support via senior leadership (44.4 percent), employee resistance (44.4 percent), financial/resource constraints (35.4 percent), inexperience or insufficient training (36.4 percent), and ambiguous legal or policy platforms (32.3 percent) as the six largest barriers. The existence of such huge obstacles proves the notion that structural and institutional problems make most DEI efforts ineffective. These results prove that companies should invest in leadership participation, cultural change, and capacity development beyond policy writing.

The research revealed that 34 percent of participants were very confident that their work-life balance was distinct from the others among various gender categories, despite 60 percent affirming that minority gender identities received the same level of support. That means that the illusion of impartiality cannot always be felt. Allocation of things to do, leave, and supportive practices could continue to be unequal, particularly to the non-conformists. The participation of leadership, DEI training of HR and staff, standardization of policies, and checking of DEI outcomes are some major shifts that are dependent on the input of the respondents and interpretation of the data. Such transformations will help bridge the policy-practice divide and guarantee the promotion of gender-inclusive policies that enhance the well-being of employees and their work-life balance. Finally, the Irish organizations are more aware and are willing to engage in gender-inclusive DEI practices, yet their effectiveness is hampered by organizational and cultural limitations. As the implementation of inclusive ideals needs better leadership, targeted training, and demonstration. Companies should always interact, analyze, and rework to ensure work-life experiences are gender-free among all employees.

5.2 Recommendation

Irish firms should take their HR strategies beyond mere compliance to culture change as a way of enhancing gender-inclusive DEI policies on work-life balance. First, the highest executives must demonstrate their support of DEI publicly. The effect of the inclusion of top executives on the work of middle managers and corporate culture is developed. Second, staff should be provided with high-frequency DEI training concerning unconscious bias, intersectionality, and inclusive communication. Such attempts will enhance empathy, reduce the resistance to change, and enhance policy. Thirdly, HR is recommended to enforce DEI through standardization through the use of KPIs and audits. Another important consideration is to represent unrepresented views in policy-making by using feedback surveys and diverse panels. Lastly, belonging and emotional well-being can be created through mentorship networks and employee resource groups for underrepresented genders. These solutions attempt to bridge the gap between ideal and practitioner ideals in the working environment. Within the context of an Irish company, incorporating the above practice into conducting organizational routines, Irish firms can create an additional level playing field, in which gender-inclusive DEI policies are associated with increased professional satisfaction and well-being between work and life balance among all employees.

Chapter 6: Future Work

This research illuminates' gender-inclusive DEI practices and their effectiveness, although diversity in approaches and opinions could enhance future studies. Such qualitative interviews with HR experts, top management, and the gender outsiders can show obstacles and motives that would otherwise be overlooked by the surveys. Also, to be investigated in subsequent research is the issue of whether gender identity, race, age, disability, and socioeconomic status influence work-life balance. Longitudinal research on the implementation of a DEI policy in many enterprises and long-term results is another critical topic. It indicates the lifetime impact of persistent efforts on the culture of a company, employee retention, and output. Comparative research can also indicate the best practices in the world that Ireland can initiate. Future research may include theoretically-informed investigation on how AI-driven DEI analytics systems can be used to assist HR as it tracks, assesses, and enhances gender inclusion. Such research would advance the body of knowledge on policy development and help organizations look beyond the topical initiatives to lasting and meaningful inclusion. The new strategies adopted in the future will widen the academic

discourse and establish powerful models of inclusion in the workplace environment that celebrate different identities and equal work-life balance.

References

Adams, T., 2022. *Exploring LGBTQ+ Workplace Experiences in Ireland to Inform Human Resource Management Approaches* (Doctoral dissertation, Dublin, National College of Ireland).

Alharahsheh, H.H. and Pius, A., 2020. A review of key paradigms: Positivism VS interpretivism. *Global academic journal of humanities and social sciences*, *2*(3), pp.39-43.

Apicella, G., De Giorgi, E.G., Di Lorenzo, E. and Sibillo, M., 2023. Gender-inclusive financial and demographic literacy: lessons from the empirical evidence. *Swiss Finance Institute Research Paper*, (23-02).

Arnold, S. and Fox, I., 2025. Challenges and opportunities in teaching gender equality in Irish secondary schools. *Gender and Education*, pp.1-17.

Brough, P., Timms, C., Chan, X.W., Hawkes, A. and Rasmussen, L., 2022. Work–life balance: Definitions, causes, and consequences. *Handbook of socioeconomic determinants of occupational health: From macro-level to micro-level evidence*, pp.473-487.

Bulger, C., 2024. Work-life balance. In *Encyclopedia of quality of life and well-being research* (pp. 7834-7836). Cham: Springer International Publishing.

Chiwuzie, A. and Oloukoi, G., 2022. Gender and Social Inclusion in the Practice of the Built Environment.

Chukwudi, O.A. and Eusebius, A.C.H.U.G.O., 2023. Diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI): Exploring the effectiveness of human resource strategies and practices in fostering diversity, equity, and inclusion in the workplace and understanding the benefits of a diverse workforce in Nigeria. *Journal for Studies in Management and Planning*, *9*(9), pp.1-22.

Di Stefano, G., Scrima, F. and Parry, E., 2019. The effect of organizational culture on deviant behaviors in the workplace. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, *30*(17), pp.2482-2503.

Gautam, P.K., Gautam, D.K. and Bhetuwal, R., 2025. Work-life balance, job satisfaction and turnover intentions among nurses. *International Journal of Organizational Analysis*, *33*(3), pp.538-557.

Gill, G.K., McNally, M.J. and Berman, V., 2018, September. Effective diversity, equity, and inclusion practices. In *Healthcare management forum* (Vol. 31, No. 5, pp. 196-199). Sage CA: Los Angeles, CA: SAGE Publications.

Griffin, N., 2022. *The impact of mandated work from home on employee work-life balance in Ireland* (Doctoral dissertation, Dublin, National College of Ireland).

Iovino, F. and Tsitsianis, N., 2020. The methodology of the research. In *Changes in European energy markets* (pp. 79-95). Emerald Publishing Limited.

Irim, S., Salman, M. and Rauf, N., 2024. The Role of HRM in Promoting Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) in the Workplace. *Siazga Research Journal*, *3*(2), pp.221-237.

Johnson, J.M., 2018. Life in balance: The work-life balance stories of Black female school leaders.

Kannaiyan, S. and Neelamegam, A., 2023. Towards a De-Gendered Workplace: A Concept Note for Promoting Gender Equity and Inclusivity. *Ushus Journal of Business Management*, *22*(2).

Kannaiyan, S. and Neelamegam, A., 2023. Towards a De-Gendered Workplace: A Concept Note for Promoting Gender Equity and Inclusivity. *Ushus Journal of Business Management*, *22*(2).

Kaushik, V. and Walsh, C.A., 2019. Pragmatism as a research paradigm and its implications for social work research. *Social sciences*, *8*(9), p.255.

Khan, A.A. and Khan, N.A., 2023. Exploring Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (Dei) in the Context of Human Resource Management.

Kiradoo, G., 2022. Diversity, equity, and inclusion in the workplace: Strategies for achieving and sustaining a diverse workforce. *Advance Research in Social Science and Management, Edition*, *1*, pp.139-151.

Molloy, R., 2022. *Women in leadership: Are levels of workplace psychological safety related to bias towards women's authority and the number of women in visible leadership roles, within Irish technology organisations* (Doctoral dissertation, Dublin, National College of Ireland).

Olusanya, E.O., 2023. Workplace diversity, equity, inclusion. *The Journal of Business Diversity*, *23*(4), pp.14-23.

Osman, S., Mohammad, S., Abu, M.S., Mokhtar, M., Ahmad, J., Ismail, N. and Jambari, H., 2018. Inductive, Deductive and abductive approaches in generating new ideas: A modified grounded theory study. *Advanced Science Letters*, *24*(4), pp.2378-2381.

Raimi, L., Tariq, M.U. and Kah, J.M., 2022. Diversity, equity, and inclusion as the future workplace ethics: Theoretical review. *Mainstreaming diversity, equity, and inclusion as future workplace ethics*, pp.1-27.

Reina, R. and Scarozza, D., 2020. Human resource management in the public administration. In *Organizational development in public administration: The Italian way* (pp. 61-101). Cham: Springer International Publishing.

Sil, N. and Lenka, U., 2024. Strategies for gender inclusion in organizations. *Strategic HR Review*.

Simosi, M. and Daskalaki, M., 2023. 02. Challenges and opportunities: DEI regression/s and the new world of work. In *BOOK OF ABSTRACTS* (p. 16).

Somani, P.P. and Wani, P., 2025. Breaking Barriers Redefining Gender Roles in the Digital Age Workforce. In *Support Networks for Entrepreneurs: Social Capital and Strategic Collaborations* (pp. 25-54). IGI Global Scientific Publishing.

Appendix

Participant Consent Form

Research Title: Exploring the Impact of Gender-Inclusive DEI Initiatives on Work-Life Balance: A Study of Human Resources Practices in Ireland

Researcher Name: Jaanvi Vempala

Institution: National College of Ireland

Supervisor: Mr. Patrick Delaney

Contact Email: Patrick.Delaney@ncirl.ie

Purpose of the Study

This research seeks to explore how gender-inclusive Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) initiatives are implemented by HR departments in Ireland, the perceptions of their effectiveness, and their impact on work-life balance across different gender identities.

Participation and Procedure

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary. You will be asked to complete a survey comprising questions related to workplace DEI policies and personal work-life balance experiences. The survey will take approximately 10–15 minutes to complete.

Confidentiality

All responses will remain confidential and anonymous. No identifiable information will be collected, and data will be used solely for academic purposes. The findings may be published or presented but will not contain any information that can identify you personally.

Your Rights

- Participation is voluntary, and you may withdraw at any time without giving a reason.
- You may skip any question you do not feel comfortable answering.
- You may request that your data be removed before final analysis by contacting the researcher.

Consent Statement

Please read the statements below and tick the box to indicate your agreement:

☐ I confirm that I have read and understood the information above.

☐ I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I can withdraw at any time.

☐ I understand that my responses will be kept anonymous and confidential.

☐ I agree to participate in this research study.

Participant Signature:

Date:

Researcher Signature: Jaanvi Vempala

Date: 14-Aug-2025

Questionnaires

Survey Questionnaire

Exploring the Impact of Gender-Inclusive DEI Initiatives on Work-Life Balance in Irish Organizations

You are invited to participate in a research study exploring the impact of gender-inclusive Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) initiatives on employee work-life balance within Irish organizations. This study is part of an academic thesis and aims to understand how inclusive HR practices are perceived and experienced by employees of all gender identities.

The survey will take approximately 8–10 minutes to complete. Your responses are completely anonymous and will be used solely for academic purposes. Participation is voluntary, and you may exit the survey at any time without penalty.

Section A: Demographic Information

What is your gender identity?

Male

Female

Others

What is your age group?

18–24

25–34

35–44

45–54

55 and above

What is your employment status?

Full-time

Part-time

Contract/Freelance

What sector do you work in?

Public

Private

Non-profit

What is your current role/position?

Entry-level

Mid-level

Senior management

Executive/Director

HR professional

Section B: Gender-Inclusive DEI Initiatives

Are you aware of any gender-inclusive DEI initiatives in your organization?

Yes

No

Not sure

Which of the following DEI initiatives does your organization currently implement? (Select all that apply)

Gender-neutral language in policies

Flexible work arrangements

Shared parental leave

Gender identity training

Non-discriminatory hiring practices

Employee resource groups

Other

Who is responsible for DEI implementation in your organization?

HR department

Executive leadership

DEI task force

No one specifically

Not sure

Section C: Perceived Effectiveness of DEI on Work-Life Balance

(Use a 5-point Likert scale: 1= Strongly Disagree | 2 = Disagree | 3 = Neutral | 4 = Agree | 5 = Strongly Agree)

The gender-inclusive policies in my workplace positively impact my work-life balance.

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Neutral

Agree

Strongly Agree

I feel supported in balancing work and personal responsibilities due to inclusive HR practices.

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Neutral

Agree

Strongly Agree

Flexible work and parental leave policies are equally accessible to all employees regardless of gender.

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Neutral

Agree

Strongly Agree

My workplace creates an environment where people of all gender identities feel included and respected.

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Neutral

Agree

Strongly Agree

Section D: DEI Policy Challenges (HR Professionals Only)

What challenges does your organization face in implementing gender-inclusive DEI policies? (Select all that apply)

Lack of senior leadership support

Budget/resource constraints

Resistance from staff

Lack of expertise or training

Unclear legal/policy guidelines

Other:

How would you rate your organization's ability to enforce gender-inclusive policies?

Very poor

Poor

Average

Good

Excellent

Section E: Differences in Work-Life Balance Experiences

(Use a 5-point Likert scale: 1= Strongly Disagree | 2 = Disagree | 3 = Neutral | 4 = Agree | 5 = Strongly Agree)

I believe my experience of work-life balance is different from that of other gender groups.

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Neutral

Agree

Strongly Agree

Gender-inclusive policies are applied equally to employees of all gender identities.

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Neutral

Agree

Strongly Agree

Employees of marginalized gender identities receive equal support in balancing work and life.

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Neutral

Agree

Strongly Agree