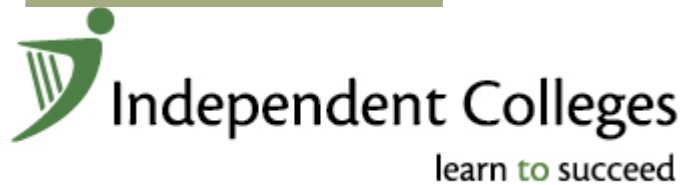

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COURSE:	MA in Dispute Resolution - Dissertation
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**“What Is the Impact of Gender Discrimination in Workplace
Negotiation Between Women?”**

Feride Gormez

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Acknowledgments

I take this opportunity to express my gratitude to my supervisor Mr Richard Brophy for believing in me and continuously supporting me throughout the duration of this dissertation work having the title “*What Is the Impact of Gender Discrimination in Workplace Negotiation Between Women?*” with proper guidance from starting till successful completion of study followed by this report. I am thankful to my parents and all well-wishers for their continuous support during this research study.

Thank You

Abstract

The presence of different kinds of gender-based inequalities at workplaces leads to the menace of gender discrimination. It is often thought that gender discrimination is preferring of men or male employees more in comparison to the opposite gender employees despite having similar credentials of due consideration. The interesting fact over here is gender discrimination is not just only happening due to men discriminating women at workplaces but women being discriminated or facing unfair treatment from their women superiors as well. The prevalence of gender discrimination at workplaces is a clear depiction of organisational culture that can be seen from the Human Resources (HR) management policies. It is observed that the women superiors often stereotype women employees and this gender bias plays a negative role during the time of yearly performance evaluation at these mid-level corporate organisations. This issue of gender discrimination deteriorates organisation work culture once a woman in senior position shows critical behavior towards junior female employees that is a sign of inappropriate behavior or sexual bullying as well.

In this regard, the main aim of this study critical analysis of gender discrimination and its impact at corporate workplaces (*of UK and Ireland*) and its aftereffects on negotiation capabilities of women employees. The qualitative (i.e. Interview strategy) is selected over here in the form of conducting interview of two women employees of UK and Ireland based corporate firms, and making use of thematic content analysis for analyzing of the collected data. It is observed that negotiations are proving ineffective for women employees due to gender discrimination quite prevalent in these firms as is seen from gender pay disparity, denied promotions or appraisals and many more ways as discussed in this study. This led to agreement of the hypothesis that gender biases which women employees are having about other women is a major cause of gender discrimination at workplaces severely impacting negotiation outcomes.

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Introduction

Background of dissertation

According to the views of Anwar and Abdullah (2021), the Human Resource Management (HRM) in an organization is related to the activities of staff and employee management in the form of imparting training, employee motivation and proper relationship management. While doing these activities it is important to ensure the employees in an organization are treated equally and no kind of discrimination is taking place to maintain a proper decorum in the organization. It is important to note the fact that present day work force has turned heterogeneous and the key to successful management of a heterogeneous workforce environment is diversity management. The aspect of diversity management is having its own importance in the present day business organization operations to provide the employees with an equitable work environment (Jaiswal and Dyaram, 2019). The aspect of diversity management is required and extremely beneficial for any organization especially in the present time when the business world has become interconnected due to globalization. Gender discrimination is something that is quite prevalent in many of the business organizations and eradication of it is extremely essential for diversity management to provide the employees with an equal opportunity to compete irrespective of their categorization or classification based on gender (i.e. *male or female*).

Gender discrimination is not happening or taking place within the business and corporate organizations in a full-fledged manner or openly but the decision making activities in some way or the other have an influence of biasness towards the male employees in a workplace with them being preferred more than that of the females (Triana *et al.*, 2019). It is observed by Dunham (2017), that the gender-based discrimination is quite prevalent in the higher category or executive cadre posts in comparison to the employees working down the order. Several studies have led to obtainment of the fact that management of an organization largely

is responsible for supporting gender discrimination by remaining silent during instances of promotions, appraisals or forcing the women employees to work long hours and various other kinds of internal and external pressures. The level of disparate treatment done by the management with the women employees is a type of gender discrimination having implications in lowering the morale of women employees, making them demotivated and severely affecting the performance standard as well.

In the business organization, the activity of negotiation is a part of regular office life for working people and engaging in negotiation at the workplaces is nothing wrong but an important step for skillful resource management and valuation for the efforts. Proper engagement in salary negotiation activities by the employees is a part of their ability to understand the long-term impact of their salary differentials. According to the views of Yanzhen (2020), the gender inequalities or gender biasness immensely contributes to the gender pay gap or pay disparity and affecting the promotion chances of women. There are several evidences establishing the fact that negotiation is one of prime factors for low representation of women in senior leadership position and their career progression-taking place at a very slow rate.

Definition of Problem

From the above detailed background description, it is observed that the existence of gender discrimination at the workplaces cannot be denied and it is still very much a reality in present time as well. The common effects of gender discrimination are high pay disparity and pay gaps among the women and men employees that ultimately lead to more number of employees engaging or looking forward to negotiation activities. Negotiation skills in an individual is considered to be an essential tool for improvement of working conditions by seeking alteration of pay structure based on performance and expertise and to bring added flexibility for a better work life balance that is needed more for married working women

(Kelliher *et al.*, 2019). It is seen that often the women are missing a fair negotiation which can be either due to lack of practice or proper application but mainly due to prevalence of gender discrimination at workplace.

A very interesting observation is made regarding workplace discrimination that it is not something that is always done to women by the opposite gender but women also have a tendency to internalize misogyny and this cultural conditioning is seen from many women being tremendously biased against other women at their respective workplaces (Agarwal, 2018). The problem of gender discrimination worsens when a woman in authority position tend to show critical behavior or treating the subordinate female employee in an inappropriate manner and to some extent instances of bullying as well. Stereotyping of women employees by their women superiors, considering men more competent, and showing biasness during performance evaluation thus promoting more gender discrimination at workplaces.

Aim and Objectives

Aim

The main aim of the study is to study and critically analyze the impact of gender discrimination at workplaces by focusing on the aspect of women biases and reaction faced by women employees from their women counterparts for understanding gender discrimination from a broad perspective.

Objectives

- To critically analyze the standard of gender discrimination taking place in mid-level corporate organizations of United Kingdom (UK) and Ireland
- To study the common gender based stereotypes that are present among the women regarding other women at workplace resulting in gender discrimination.

- To evaluate and understand the impacts of gender discrimination in workplace on the negotiation capabilities of women employees while dealing with superiors of same gender
- To recommend strategies for a change in company Human Resources (HR) policies of the mid-level corporate organizations of UK and Ireland to eradicate gender discrimination policies and result in a healthy workplace environment.

Research Questions

(RQ1) What is the extent of gender discrimination taking place in mid-level corporate organizations of UK and Ireland?

(RQ2) What are the types of gender based stereotypes present in women regarding other women colleagues or employees at workplace that is a result of gender discrimination?

(RQ3) What is the impact of gender discrimination in workplace on the negotiation capabilities of women employees while dealing with other women employees (*superiors*)?

Hypothesis

H1: The Gender biases women employees have about other women is not a cause of gender discrimination at workplace having no potential negative impact on negotiation standards.

H2: Gender biases which women employees have about other women is a cause of gender discrimination at workplace thus severely impacting negotiation standards

Dissertation Roadmap

Introduction	Background, Problem Statement, Aim, Objectives, Research Questions, Hypothesis, Scope and Limitations, Expected outcomes
Chapter 1- Literature Review	Outline of existing theories and arguments

	related to main topic and interrelating with objectives
Chapter 2- Research Methodology and methods	The procedure of data collection and techniques used for carrying out the study along with a proper justification of the same
Chapter 3- Presentation of Data	Clear and structured presentation of data in a logical and orderly manner
Chapter 4- Data Analysis/Findings	Proper illustration of findings in a reasonably descriptive manner by highlighting facts and not merely focusing on generalities
Chapter 5- Discussion	Discussion of results and evaluation of obtained facts for getting proper answer to RQs
Conclusion	Proper establishment of interconnection with the formed objectives and making some recommendations

Table 1: Dissertation Report Roadmap

(Source: Self-Made)

Scope and Limitations

The research work involves the use of structured interview analysis i.e. mono method of data collection followed by its comparative analysis with other data sources, in which no use of questionnaire surveys based analysis is used.

Major contributions of the study

The research study is expected to contribute to understanding of facts related to gender discrimination at workplaces by proper realizing of women bias that is present among many other women hindering the process of eradication of workplace gender discrimination largely. The prevalence of inequalities at workplaces is not just only because of men discriminating women but women discriminating against women as well, which is about to be critically studied and its aftereffects on negotiation capabilities of women employees properly analysed. The behaviour of women as important as men. In a smaller perspective the research will bring to the researchers to gain an in deep look and understanding about own biases as a woman and having an action by contribution of research area about the gender discrimination.

Chapter-1

1.0 Review of Literature

Title 1- Gender Discrimination and its effect in workplaces

1.1 Gender Discrimination

SteelFisher *et al.* (2019) stated that the aspect of gender discrimination is referred to the unequal treatment in the form of priority and privilege given to someone particularly on the basis of gender aspect. Gender discrimination is also termed as gender inequality and it is the discrimination of an individual on the ground of sex i.e. gender making them enjoy privileges and prioritizations in comparison to peers, colleagues, friends, and other individuals. The aspect of gender equality is actually a fundamental human right and discrimination on the ground of gender results in violation of this fundamental human right. Batra and Reio Jr, (2016), stated that the beginning of gender disparity usually occurs from a very young age especially from childhood that results in limiting of the potential standards of the children and in most of the cases affecting the girls in a disproportionate manner. The impact of gender discrimination is seen in almost every aspects of life starting from different treatment of females when compared to the males with minimum importance given to individual's capability or skill standard. The effects of discriminatory activities on grounds of gender are quite often seen among the peers, friends, relatives, family places and mostly in workplaces.

There are several aftereffects of gender discrimination with instances of sexual harassment and catcalling are some of the prime examples in which women's rights are restricted. The inaction of bystanders and limited action by the authoritative bodies to address these issues has normalized these kinds of activities promoting gender discrimination and severely affecting the freedom of women (Helgert, Eimler and Arntz, 2021). Ellemers (2018)

mentions about the stereotypes that have immensely contributed to gender discrimination in the form of societal norms and regulations that have been followed since ages strictly based on the aspect of gender. Some of the common gender based stereotypes promoting gender discrimination is restricting the girls to just childcare and housework duties and not allowing them to be the bread earners of the family, and being judged afterwards based on adherence standard to gender stereotypes. The poor representation and objectification of women is a common societal practice that is still prevalent in present days, which means treatment of women merely as an object or commodity (Morris, Goldenberg and Boyd, 2018). The gender discrimination is strictly prohibited under every human rights treaty with international laws mentioning about gender rights for equal treatment of men and women. The prevailing gender prejudices result in gender discrimination in the form of lowering the expectation of girls, limiting their accessibility to opportunities and resources which results in difficulties in the later stage at their workplaces in a certain manner having lifelong consequences.

1.2 Gender Discrimination in Workplace

According to the views of Batool (2020), the presence of gender inequality within the organisations is an obvious fact and at the same time, it is a complex phenomenon as well. The biasness in the attitude of the Human Resources (HR) manager or executive within the organisations is one of the prime reasons for the cause of gender discrimination at workplace. The gender discrimination is not just only restricted or limited to a particular gender but it is an obvious fact that the women face the heat of gender discrimination at workplaces more than that of the men. Cavaletto, Pacelli and Pasqua (2019), states that some of the harmful gender inequalities that are most commonly seen in the corporate organisations are due to the rules and regulations as per the company HR policies. The HR practices constitute recruitment policies for organisational decision-making and their enactment for carrying out of the hiring activities, training process, pay structure fixation, appraisals, and promotions.

The gender inequality in workplace is seen from the variations commonly taking place in promotional hikes, appraisals of the women employees in comparison to the male employees.

According to the views of Kunze (2018), the workplace is considered inhospitable for women due to the presence of different kinds of gender inequalities like that of less total earnings of the women and the prevalence of gender wage gap. In most of corporate organisations operating globally it is seen that there is dearth of women leadership as one move up the order towards executive rank and the rate of progress of women in their career advancement is categorically less than that of their male counterparts. It is also seen that the downfall of socio economic status of women is quite common for the ones that have been facing gender discrimination at their workplaces and has remained unaddressed since for a very long time. As opined by Stumbitz, Lewis and Rouse (2018), the discriminatory HR policies and biased decision making have been a real cause for the women to be deprived of their basic recognition and pay disparity at workplaces. It is also a common occurrence in many of the Small and Medium sized Enterprises (SMEs) and globally reputed organisations that once the employees facing gender discrimination at workplace tend to seek a solution or reason of this behaviour from their employer or HR department then they face more discrimination in the form of sexist comments (*especially the women employees*) (Werner, 2021). Some of the common forms of discrimination faced by the women employees are lowered payment structure, no change in their promotional status, fewer opportunities for them to grow and experience of being stigmatised even if they speak about their difficulties and ordeal. The continued effect of gender discrimination at workplaces is lowered job satisfaction, lessening of organisational commitment and gradual depletion in their working standards as well as performance level.

1.3 Gender Bias at Workplace

The concept of bias is quite prevalent in almost every aspect of human lives because the human brain is hardwired and configured in such a way for categorization of the common things, which are encountered for solving the complicity present in the workplace environment (Grogan, 2019). The biases are the result of prejudices, which a person is having against another person that results in egregious inequalities being created among the people of certain demographics. As per the views of Powell (2018), gender bias is termed as the tendency prevalent among the human beings for preferring of one gender over another and it is a type of implicit or unconscious bias. The gender bias results in unconscious attributing of a particular type of attitude with a separate or group of persons and largely stereotyping of the same.

As per the present societal norms, the use of the term gender bias is done for referring to the preferential treatment that is commonly received by the men over women and this is in the specific category of heterosexual and white men (Carrillo and Hoffman, 2018). The common prejudice against the women is commonly termed as *Sexism* and this type of prejudice is very prominently visible as a part of the professional atmosphere that is one of main reason for gender discrimination. The prevalence of performance support bias cannot be denied within the corporate organisations in which there is a tendency among the employers, managers and workers/colleagues for providing of the opportunities and resources to a particular gender (*mostly men*) over the other (Heilman and Caleo, 2018). In sales based organisations, it is often seen that performance of women employees are recognized and rewarded not on the basis of their efficiency or productivity standards but on the basis of unfair tasks assignment that was initially allocated to them to prove their inability in obtainment of results of same standard in comparison to their male colleagues.

Guillen, Mayo and Karelaia (2018), mentions about the presence of performance review bias among the employers, managers and HR departments while reviewing of the performance standard of one employee (*particularly belonging to feminine gender*) instead of focusing on the evaluation standard to be merit-based. The performance evaluation in most of the instances is inherently biased despite of all the efforts done by the companies and organisations for removal of bias to make the evaluation standards more open-ended. Many organisations considered making use of structured evaluation for reducing of gender bias for performance evaluation in workplaces but it has categorically failed to address the basic stereotypes related to gender bias with merit based performance evaluation still far from reality.

Critical analysis of statistics related to Gender bias and discrimination at workplace

From the statistics as presented in Reiners (2021), it is seen that 42% of the women working in corporate sector and organisations have been experiencing or have experienced some kind of gender discrimination at the workplaces. As per the 2017 statistics, 25000 sex based discrimination claims have been filed by the women employees working in some of the reputed corporate organisations. The most common barriers, which the women face in workplace hindering their career growth, are due to gender discrimination in work assignment and gender bias is performance evaluation (Reiners, 2021). The chances of hiring of the women candidates by women representatives of HR department is varying within the range of 25% to 46% but the promotional statistics are not yielding the same trend with double standards followed at the time of appraisal or promotion of the women candidates (Reiners, 2021). The rate or frequency of both men and women employees at their respective workplaces asking for increment is the same but the difference is observed in women employees on an average receiving 5% less than the actual which they deserve.

1.4 Women and Salary Negotiation

It is stated by Silva and Galbraith (2018) that men tend to achieve better results in terms of gaining good outcomes from their negotiation skills while seeking for a salary increment or performance appraisal than that of the women. The gender discrimination is clearly visible in case of widening of the pay structure gap among the men and women. It is observed that the men are much more capable of making use of their negotiation skills for increasing their salary and keep on doing negotiations in an assertive manner till they receive positive results but on the contrary the women are unable to do so or face difficulties in making the authorities understand about their increment to be justified.

As opined by Recalde and Vesterlund (2020), the societal gender roles have been a cause of increasing gender gaps often faced by the women during the time of salary negotiations, with men having the quality to gain an upper hand in getting favorable outcomes whereas the women are much more accommodating in adjusting to the modified salary package or increment given to them. The men are able to negotiate properly and place their demands in a much organized way than that of women because in most of the cases the latter is taken for granted and even face backlash for seeking an increment or questioned for getting benefits termed on unrealistic grounds and not on merit grounds.

While considering the case of women it can be stated that they are able to negotiate quite well when doing for their employers because the art of negotiation is considered to be communal behaviour having relevancy and consistency with feminine gender role but the same is not the case when negotiate for their self-case. In many instances it is also seen that the result of gender discrimination at the workplaces is not just due to men discriminating women but women discriminating women as well (Bilan *et al.*, 2020). The women HR executives or managers make good use of their negotiation skills to prevent the women employees from seeking a good hike by pointing organisational needs as a part of their negotiation process.

The reasons for difficulties faced by the women in the negotiation table is lack of confidence and comfort ability in tackling of competitive situations than that of their male counterparts and this is due to the fact of extra anxiousness pertaining to interlinking of negative consequences with their standard of competitive achievement. Hyland, Djankov and Goldberg (2020), stated that there is a common tendency that is observed among the women with them being excessively more critical of success or growth of their women colleagues and this is a sign of their non-settlement approach that tends to hamper their negotiation skills as well. Many women have even mentioned the fear of humiliation of losing out on their jobs in comparison to other female workers in their organisation that leads to increase of non-settlement approach which in turn hampers their negotiation skills.

According to the views of Pradel, Bowles and McGinn (2006), gender should not be considered to a good predictor of overall negotiation performance of an employee but the presence of ambiguous situations often triggers different types of behavioural traits among men and women with their separate style of response accordingly. The gender pay gap exists and it specifically impacts the moral of women employees and development of good negotiation skills by the women is a promising step towards neutralising of the differences and reduction of inequities.

In performance oriented settings, the male employees are able to convey their message with much more confidence than that of women with most of them self-doubting their own capabilities thus providing the HR managers to lower their increment percentage in comparison to the male cohorts (Dworkin *et al.*, 2018). The dwindling confidence level of the women employees is clearly visible from their negotiation skills that results in increased pay disparity with overvaluing of the male success and correspondingly undervaluing of female success rate.

1.5 Different type of Gender Discrimination practices at workplace

Plickert and Sterling (2017), states that despite a great deal of progress in organisational management for promotion of gender equality it is observed that the changes have not yet resulted in yielding of positive results in solving the problem of gender discrimination that is quite prevalent in workplaces. As per the latest statistics, it is observed that 42% of working women in United States (US) have faced some kind of gender discrimination or the other during their tenure of working. The categorization of gender discrimination is based on the ground that whenever the office workers or colleagues are facing issues due to their gender and this is happening in a continuous manner during their overall employment process right from job interview to the time of their exit interview.

Some of the common examples of gender discrimination that is quite prevalent in corporate sector organisations are like women employees being deliberately failed in their performance assessment and denied promotion, unfair treatment during the job tenure and during the evaluation process. The women workers in most of the corporate organisations are usually earning lowered wages with the reason given for these are assigning of less demanding tasks and getting less support from supervisors which are a sign of gender biasness (Amis, Mair and Munir, 2020). The gender discrimination at the workplaces is something that is faced by both men and women but it is frequently faced by the women employees.

The chances of women employees getting harassed is very much high in male dominated corporate offices or industries with them becoming the victim of sexual harassment at work which is an aftereffect of gender discrimination. The problem is that due to job pressure and internal management pressure the women shy away from filing harassment complaint thus these matters remaining unnoticed and increasing the chances of further victimization as well. Joksimovic (2020), states that it is not always necessary for categorization of gender discrimination to be sexual in nature but gender non-conforming and transgender employees

have also been victim of this. The use of derogatory terms for addressing of the women employees or other minority group employees are a type of verbal harassment taking place frequently in the offices which is a perfect example of gender discrimination at workplaces.

The disparity in pay structure of women and men employees irrespective of their merit, educational qualification, and technical expertise is a sign of gender-based discrimination as stated by Castagnetti, Rosti and Topfer (2020). It is often seen that most of the corporate workplaces do not maintain transparency regarding their salary structure and there is no fixed law followed for deciding of the payment structure increasing the chances of discrimination among the male and female employees. Another form of gender discrimination that usually occurs at the workplaces is lack of women representation in senior management of workplaces. It is observed that the condition of mid-market companies have improved with senior management roles given to women employees but the same progress has been missing in some of the large companies that is an also an example of gender discrimination at workplaces. The prevalence of gender discrimination at workplaces is a very serious issue if unaddressed and proves to be damaging for the company because of the employees being discriminated on gender ground.

1.6 Need of Gender Equality in workplace

Gender equality is needed in an organisation as it is the ground for equal treatment of both men and women employees and getting rid of gender discrimination is necessary for change of the longstanding company culture so as to provide an inclusive atmosphere within the workplace as mentioned by Keynejad *et al.* (2018). Some of the common characteristics of an overall non-discriminating office culture specifically on gender grounds are equal payment structure and similar benefits for comparable (*performed by both men and women*) roles. The company needs to be considerate in understanding of the facts about the employees and their respective needs with no discrimination on gender basis and making way to provide equal

opportunities for promotion and progress of employees irrespective of gender based differentiation. It is important as per present market needs and scenario for the companies to eradicate the existing problem of gender inequality at the workplaces and for this initiation, steps can be taken by introduction of modifications in the training and hiring process with no discrimination as per categorizing of *Men's Only* or *Women's Only* work.

Based on the present dynamic market conditions and as per business requirements the organisations need to emphasise on the fact of talent and expertise for which removal of gender discrimination is utmost important. Some of the common steps in this regard are formal training and educating of the workers on the points related to gender bias and ensures not applying it during the course of work. There is a need for reviewing and regular scrutinising of on-going recruitment and hiring process to remove any sort of discrepancies on the grounds of gender factor (Hardacre and Subasic, 2018). Proper and timely evaluation of pay structure with removal of anomalies in it on the ground of gender discrimination is one of the most crucial steps adopted by many organisations for addressing the issues of gender based pay disparity. Proper mentoring program for all employees and flexible working option for women employees on the ground of their motherhood and maternity aspects can go a long way in serving the purpose of eradication of gender bias in workplace with improvement of work culture and beyond.

Title 2- Gender discrimination at mid-level corporate organisations

1.7 Gender Discrimination in mid-level corporate organisations of UK

According to the views of Nanda, Nayak and Goldstein (2020), as a part of SDGs (*Sustainable Development Goals*) the organisations and corporate sector firms have started focusing and giving emphasis on the aspects of gender equality and empowering of women at

their respective workplaces. This trend is not just limited to the corporate sector organisations but the level or standard of unpaid care and domestic work done by the women in public sector organisations and infrastructural services are recognized as a part of promoting women equal right to economic resources (Britishcouncil, 2017). There has been a common trend in the corporate sector organisations globally to emphasize on the aspects of women equality by focusing on making modifications and changes for better promotion of women equality at workplaces in terms of reduction of gender pay gap and providing them with the equal opportunities. There was a tendency among the small and mid-level corporate organisations of UK to fix the salary structure of the women in such a manner considering them as supporting earners with their male counterparts considered as the main breadwinners of the family (Piscopo and Clark Muntean, 2018). There has been a cultural shift in this with more number of women joining the UK corporate organisations are considered a part of the main workforce and their payment structure fixed accordingly as per their educational qualification and not based on gender characteristics.

According to some important statistics it can be seen that there is presence of vertical and horizontal segregation of the UK labour market in which 69% of women in working age group were paid in comparison to 79% of men belonging to the same working group (*2016 statistics*) (Britishcouncil, 2017). The rate of part time jobs in the UK based corporate organisations are done or allocated to the women mostly as a part of added flexibility but the main point is varying pay structure of the women in comparison to male counterparts. Irrespective of Equal pay legislation the hourly rate for payment of women freelancers or contractual employees on an average is £11.17 (*Part-time basis*) but it is £16.79 for the men (*Full-time*) basis (*2016 statistics*) (Britishcouncil, 2017). Regarding the point of gender pay gap in the existing corporate organisations of UK it is very clear from the fact that top

earning men are earning an average of 55% more than that of same category women employees.

The poor rate of representation of the women in decision making process of the UK corporate organisations is still a common trend even after making modifications as can be seen from less women representation in executive decision making or governing body of an organisation (Kirsch, 2018). Birkett and Forbes (2019), states that initially there was a trend quite common in corporate sector organisations where women were discriminated due to their feminine characteristics like that of unpaid leaves and wage deduction during the period of their motherhood that made them feel insecure and was also a kind of discrimination quite common at the workplaces. Many social protection acts and forums have come up recently in UK of which women are a part of thus ensuring equal participation and no violation of human rights (*in the form of gender discrimination*) at workplaces. Depending on the prevalent circumstances, an observation has been made by Holbeche (2018), stating that most of the corporate organisations (*small and mid-level ones*) of UK are open to adapting of an agile work system for eradication of horizontal (*Stereotypes related*) and vertical (*Status-related*) issues at the workplaces that have been a common cause of discrimination among the workers on the ground of their gender characteristics.

1.8 Gender Discrimination in mid-level corporate organisations of Ireland

As per the views of Grimson and Grimson (2019), many of the corporate organisations in Ireland have been falling short in proper implementation of anti gender discrimination policies as can be seen from comparative less representation of the women as a part of executive leadership or a member of the governing body. From 2019, statistics it can be seen that almost 15 Irish based companies belonging to the large or SMEs category have nil women representative or directors in their governing body, which is a clear sign of gender discrimination. All male board in both the executive and non-executive category of the Irish organisations is an alarming sign of the trend of gender discrimination at the Irish corporate sector organisations. Horan and Mulreany (2020) stated that a balanced team having equal representation of both men and women as a part of the governing body of Irish corporate sector organisations is necessary for adding an emotional quotient and enhancing the standard of balanced decision-making process. The aspect of addressing the issue of gender discrimination at workplaces is more of a necessity for the organisations to turn responsible in meeting of the sustainable targets, which is the need of the hour especially for the Irish mid-level corporate organisations.

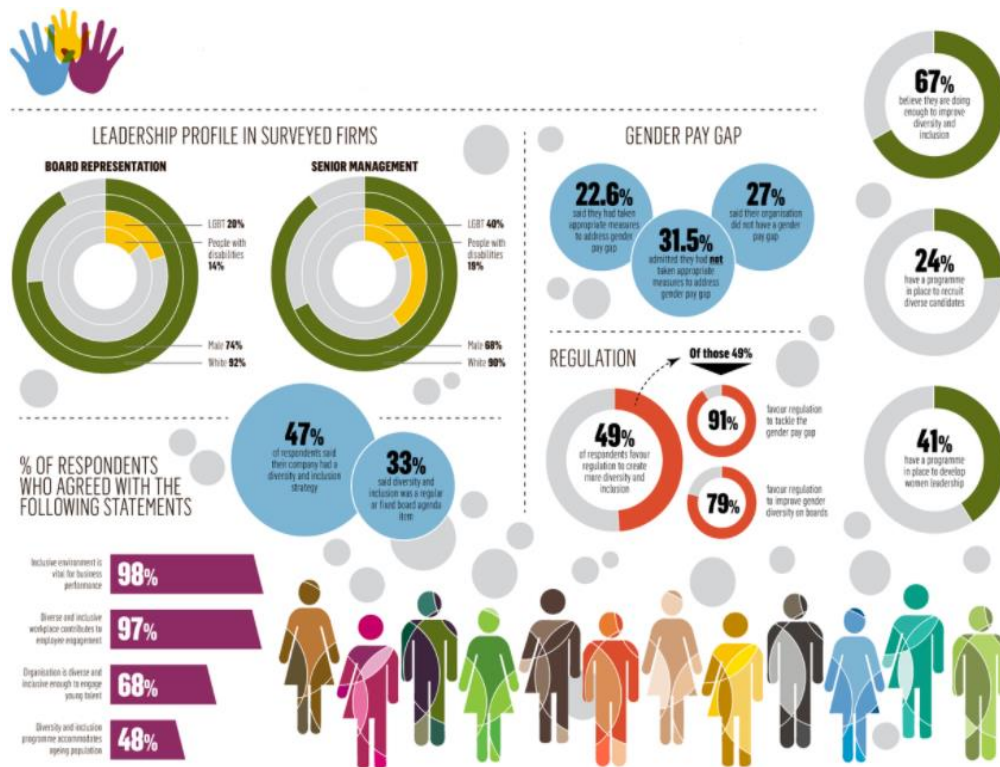


Fig 1: Attitude to workplace diversity in Irish corporate sector organisations

(Source: Donnelly, 2018)

According to Slattery (2019), the representation of women as a part of the board or governing body is considered to be a performance indicator for improvement of organisational standards because it does have a trickle-down effect on the combined workforce (*inclusive of both women and men employees*). It is important and at the same time necessary for the organisations to initiate measures for breaking of stereotypes involving the women with allowing them the permission to take decisions and granting them promotions on the ground of merit and not gender as a consideration factor.

It is observed by Cullen and Murphy (2018), that in the Irish corporate sector organisations, there is prevalence of gender discrimination in the form of women being denied raises or appraisals due to biased decision-making from their immediate superiors or managers that act as a barrier in the path of their career progression. The lack of women representation in

governing body or executive core committee of the Irish corporate organisations limits the scope of professional imagination and organisations getting deprived of good decision-making skill of technically sound and able women workforce. As opined by Froehlicher *et al.* (2021), more number of women as board members plays a crucial role in instigating of cultural change and symbolizing the ability standards of women to be effective leaders.

It is a well-known fact that the women have been facing discrimination in making an entrance in the Irish corporate workplace with the most common reason given about lowered standard of their experience but less representation or denying participation in governing body hinders the process of attainment of legitimate gender equality at workplaces (Donnelly, 2018). There is prevalence of the negative stereotypes at workplaces resulting in the perception of male workers considered to be superior to their female counterparts that hampers the mental strength of the women workforce and hinders the aspects of gender inclusivity (Lucifora and Vigani, 2021). The mid-sized corporate organisations of Ireland have still not been able to attain the required gender diversity as a part of their organisational standards on a mandatory basis thus establishing the fact that Irish organisations are lacking gender inclusivity and needs a lot of reformation.

Title 3- Difficulties faced by women at workplaces due to gender discrimination and ways for overcoming it

1.9 Challenges faced by women at workplaces while indulging in negotiation practice

According to the views of Williams *et al.* (2020), there is need of good negotiation skills for the women at their respective workplaces because it is needed for ensuring optimum utilization of work resources, overall professional development and for gaining of proper work-life balance. The negotiation skill of women depends largely on the standard of interaction with their women counterparts and seniors that in most of the cases is the HR manager or executive of the organisation. The women employees often find it quite

challenging when receiving training for a new position or responsibility within the organisation inclusive of the activities like restructuring of team, changing of reporting lines/order, extension of the handover period, which all are a part of overall system upgrading (Kray and Kennedy, 2017). Schneider (2017), states that the need of negotiation is felt by the women at the time of taking care of their overall professional development standards in performing the activities related to conferences attending, relaxation in work days meeting for study purposes and to get actively involved in executive level meetings. It is important for the women to develop strong negotiation skills because it is going to be helpful in adjustment of work arrangements, position restructuring, seeking assistance during maternity leave and adjust with the situation post returning from such leave and lastly for making the organisation accept request phased retirement request.

Some of the commonly occurring challenges in workplaces while carrying out of negotiation among two of the women employees are due to lack of clarity regarding the information or detail that is going to be the main agenda or point for carrying out of negotiation. As opined by Bridges *et al.* (2020), there are chances of failure of the core competencies of negotiation at such instance when the HR representative or manager of the organisation is completely biased and differentiates between male and female employees of same designation. The women often face resistance to their demand at the workplaces, which is itself a sign of discrimination at workplaces with their legitimate demands or requests for pay hike categorically denied on the ground of them being women and not on the grounds of merit. These types of situations justify the need for proper negotiation skills in women for responding to the denial with additional information and ensure to make rectifications in the approach for their betterment of their career (Brown, 2017). One of the biggest drawbacks for the women in terms of negotiation is the overflow of emotions that adds as a negative factor

when interacting or dealing with their immediate superiors or HR manager even if belonging to the same gender.

It is necessary for the women employees of an organisation to remain prepared for any kind of eventuality and unprepared situation (*as an after effect of gender discrimination*) and take the steps accordingly to gain the benefit out of the situation making good use of negotiation skills and obtainment of results for their favor. According to the views of Kray and Kennedy, (2017), there is a trend of women HR representatives or executives to have biasness against the woman employees and thus it makes it extremely important for the women employees to properly audit their negotiating skills, raise standards on efficiency grounds while seeking a salary revision. The women employees need to remain extra cautious while accepting salary revision as per performance reviews, carrying out of compensation discussion and express their dissatisfaction if any (inclusive of grounds of gender discrimination) in an organized manner.

1.10 Need for eradication of gender discrimination at workplace for healthy workplace environment

According to the views of Bruckmuller and Braun (2020), gender inequality or gender, discrimination is quite a complex yet common phenomenon at almost every workplace and so is the case for corporate organisations as well. The reason for gender inequalities in the workplaces is due to the fact of errors and clauses favoring inequalities among the employees on the basis of HR policies becoming the guiding factor of activities like that of training, payments and most importantly promotion of women employees. The HR decision-making activity favoring gender inequalities at first place tend to deteriorate the overall organisational climate. It is also observed that the presence of institutional discrimination within the

organisational structure is also a major cause of promoting benevolent sexism and hostility within the organisation that is highly discriminating for the women employees.

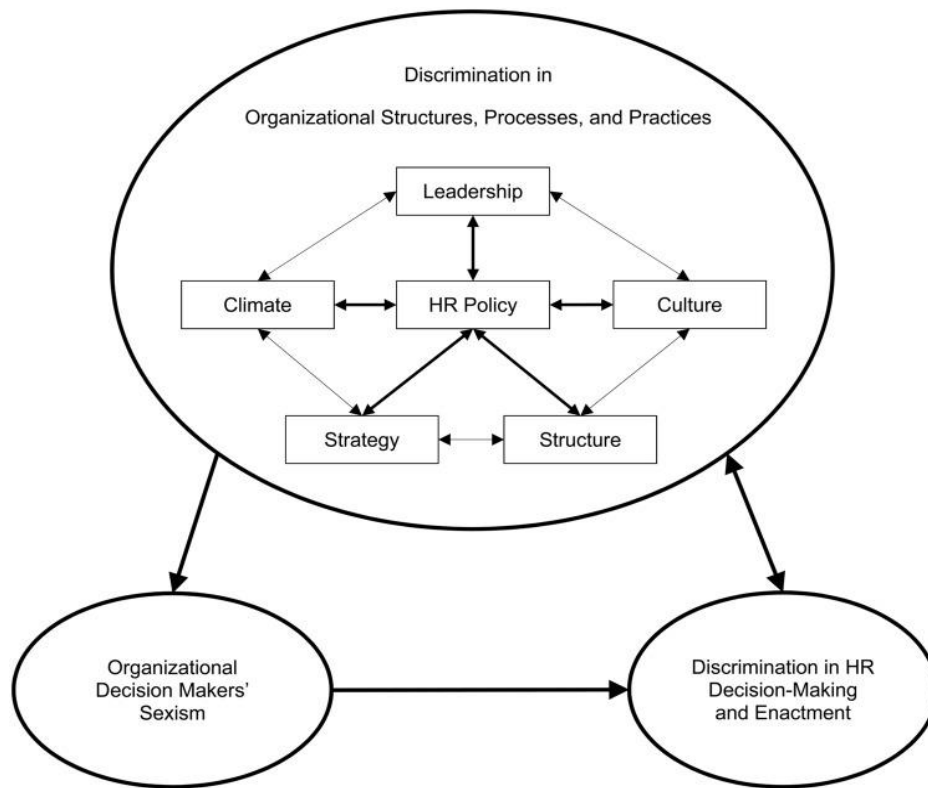


Fig 2: Root cause of gender discrimination in HR policies

(Source: Stamarski and Son Hing, 2015)

Stamarski and Son Hing (2015), specifically mentions about the excessive presence of institutional discrimination that is due to HR policies inherently biased against a particular sect of people irrespective of their department, skill set and ability. This commonly occurs against women due to the loopholes in HR policies pertaining to hiring process, task assignment, pay structure fixation, promotion, or termination based on the factor of performance evaluation. In many of the UK based mid-level corporate organisations, the women are under-represented either intentionally or unintentionally and it severely affects the process of availing of the organisational rewards (Mitsakis, 2019). The organisational decision makers most commonly promote the aspect of gender discrimination knowingly or

unknowingly when always favoring men over women at the time of job performance evaluation and giving promotion.

According to the views of Mullany and Yoong (2017), there is a direct interconnection among proper implementation of diversity initiatives within the corporate organisations with that of improving the operational standards and improving the standard of workplace environment. As a part of diversity initiatives if implemented by organisation, the number of employees (*men & women*) is given equal opportunities and performance evaluation is done on the grounds of merit and not on gender or by following of any kind of favoritism. The new employee selection criteria need to be more diverse, this change in organisational functioning is visible from its modified, and restructured diversity enabled promotional policies (Pochic and Chappe, 2019). The organisations that is good in incorporating of all the diversity-based criteria as a part of its modified HR policies proves to be helpful eradicating of women employees discrimination with it ultimately resulting in improving the standards of workplace environment. The reduction of gender discrimination at corporate workplaces is possible only on adoption of diverse HR policies that is inclusive of reshaping of the overall organisational structure and indulges gender equality as a practice among all the existing as well as new employees at workplaces (Sepulveda, Paladin and Rawson, 2018). The increase in women representation in every department and at every level of decision-making is a definite step towards improvement of diversity climate of organisations and modification of the organisational culture.

Literature Gap

From the detailed literature study, it is seen that gender discrimination is a common phenomenon that occurs in many of the large and medium sized corporate organisations based in UK and Ireland and still exists despite the firms taking certain measures for bringing an improvement in conditional standard of the situation. Discrimination takes place is almost

every factor like that of promotion, appraisals and while doing of salary negotiations with most of these happening due to the faults or discrepancies present in the company HR policies or practices that have went unnoticed. The matter of fact is that women employees of an organisation are not just only discriminated by their male counterparts or superiors but the tendency of over-biasness against women employees occurs from other women employees or superiors as well. The negotiation effectiveness of women is not up to the mark with not yielding positive results because of their lack of skill in presenting their expectations or expressing their views in a tactical manner. The financial requirements of men are considered a necessity whereas for the women it is considered a luxury or overly accommodating requirement that is an outcome of gender discrimination. It is understood that negotiation bias is actually taking place from faulty intuition and it tends of hamper the judgments standard related to decision-making process hampering the career progress rate for the women. It is also observed that if the women are engaged in a very high ambitious negotiation practice then the biased decision makers, negatively influence the negotiation process outcome with male employees benefiting from the same, which is an example of women discrimination at the corporate organisations. The general tendency of women is to negotiate lightly, including from fewer requests for monetary increment but promotion in designation that often turns out to have a negative impact on their career progression at corporate level workplaces and these issues have still not been addressed properly in corporate firms of Ireland and UK.

Conceptual Framework

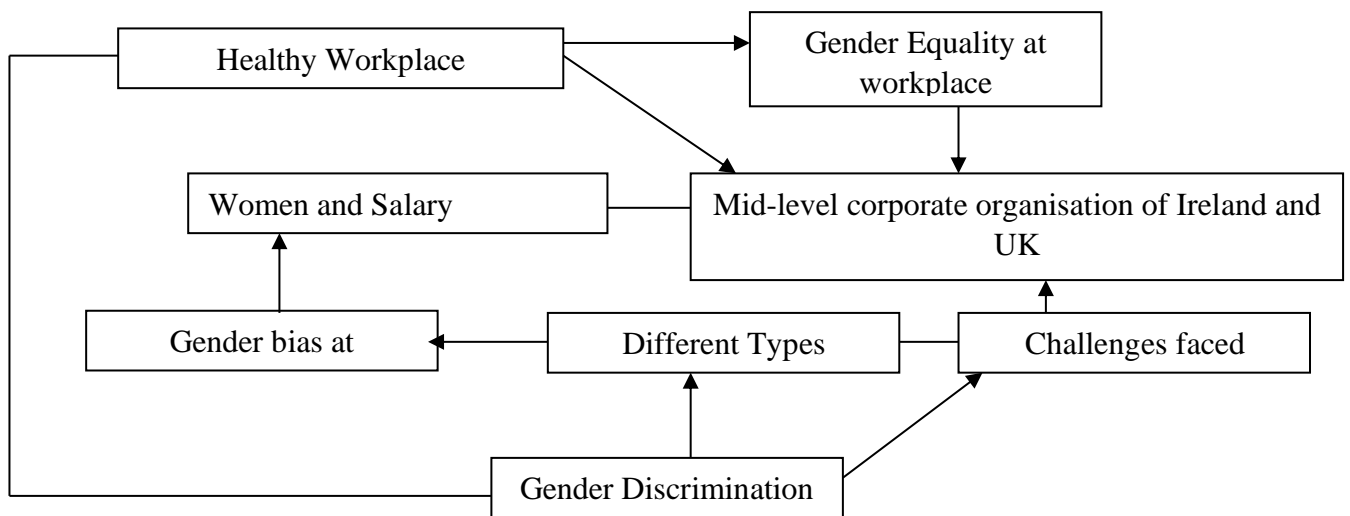


Fig 3: Conceptual Framework

(Source: Self-Created)

Chapter 2

2.0 Research Methodology and Methods

2.1 Introduction to methodology chapter

According to the views of Snyder (2019), the overarching strategy that is about to be followed by the researcher for doing the research study and meet the rationale of the research study is termed as research methodology. The process of formation of a proper methodology depends on studying of the available research methods and selects the relevant one in accordance to the research objectives. In this chapter, the methods selected for adding overall reliability and adding validity to the ongoing study in the form of data collection and analysis process followed by the justification of the same is properly presented.

2.2 Research philosophy

According to the views of Zukauskas, Vveinhardt and Andriukaitiene (2018), the concept of research philosophy, actually deals with the process of knowledge development based on source factor, characteristic nature of study and is the definition of the process for data collection, its analysis, and usage in context of research study. The correct philosophy selection paves the way forward for a data collection process as is about to be used in the study. There are several types of research philosophies namely Positivism, Pragmatism, Interpretivism, and Realism (Abu-Alhaija, 2019). The characteristic feature of Interpretivism research philosophy from among these is based on interpreting of basic study elements while integrating human interest to be a part of the study. The interpretivism research philosophy emphasizes on qualitative analysis aspects over the quantitative aspects with making use of multiple procedures for getting concepts clear about different associated aspects of an issue.

Justification

The interpretivism research philosophy is selected over here in this study because the characteristic feature of interpretivist philosophical approach is proper integration of all sorts and types of human interest to be a part of the study (Alharahsheh and Pius, 2020). As mentioned earlier that the characteristics feature of interpretivism philosophical approach proper assumption of accessibility to reality by the help of gaining of a proper understanding of consciousness as a part of social construction which is used as an instrument for obtainment of shared meaning. The intention of the researcher is to do a qualitative study and for that purpose, the selection of interpretivism research philosophy is justified in this case where the aspect of gender discrimination at workplaces faced by the women while carrying out of the negotiations is critically discussed. The feature of interpretivist approach that is used over here by the researcher is having a direct interrelationship with the concept of idealism where a diverse approach is used for addressing of the gender discrimination issues quite often faced by women at workplaces (Zukauskas, Vveinhardt and Andriukaitiene, 2018). The different points or aspects of the issue i.e. gender discrimination at workplaces is properly highlighted and analysed by making use of a multiple approach to clear concept about the factors that are responsible for the issue.

2.2 Research approach

According to the views of Alase (2017), the term research approach is used for explanation of the procedural plan that consists of the steps inclusive of making broad assumptions and arriving at a conclusion for selection of a proper data collection process followed by its analysis and interpretation. The selection of the research approach is done in accordance to the problem statement and prepared research question. The characteristic feature of the research approach is such that it is divided on the grounds of data collection and or data analysis approach. The relevance of the hypothesis that is formed in this study in turn forms the base for a deductive and inductive approach. In simple terms, it is seen that there are three

types of research approaches namely deductive, inductive and abductive (Van den Berg and Struwig, 2017). The usefulness of the deductive approach is for proper testing of validity standard of assumptions (i.e. hypothesis or theories) whereas the inductive approach properly contributes to the obtainment of all sorts of new theories in a generalized manner. Other than these two, the abductive research approach is used for getting the concepts clear about surprising facts in relation to theoretical explanation.

The actual purpose of research approach is to understand the process of conducting of participant meeting by focusing on the phenomenon, adding personal value to the study and validating the accuracy standard of findings as stated by Disman, Ali and Barliana (2017). The selection of a proper research approach proves to be helpful identification of the variables directly as well as indirectly related to the research study and integrating the data for clearing different stages of inquiry in an unbiased manner.

Justification

The inductive research approach, which is also termed as inductive reasoning, involves the process of making use of observation points and theories as a part of the research process for arriving at the observation results. The feature of the inductive approach involves searching of a pattern from the results obtained from observation followed by following of the pattern and then explanation of theories. While making use of the inductive approach, simple disregarding of the theories during formulation of research objectives and questions is not the only thing done but obtainment of meaningful insights to build a theory directly related to the pattern (Walter and Ophir, 2019). The reason for making use of the inductive research approach for this study is obtainment of similarities and dissimilarities in behavioral approach of thought process of women while carrying out of workplace negotiation depicting the prevalence of gender discrimination in corporate organisations.

2.3 Research Strategy

The term research strategy according to the views of Clark and Bryman (2019) is actually a stepwise action plan serving the purpose of giving proper direction to the researcher for conducting of the whole research work in a systematic manner and perform all the activities as per schedule for production of quality outputs. The selection of a proper research strategy is extremely important for a researcher because it helps in quality enhancement of research work, saving time and optimum utilization of the available resources. In simple words, the term research strategy is used for detailed explanation of the processes involved in the research study and to ensure avoiding of any type of repetitive research efforts to minimize the chances of resource wastage and obtain the project or research deliverables in a proper manner (Krause-Sohner, 2021). Data collection process of a research is based on the selected strategy emphasizing on the point validation of the research variables in accordance to the objectives in a proper manner.



Fig 4: Different types of Research Strategies

(Source: OpenLearn, 2021)

There are mainly four different types of research strategies, which are case study, quantitative survey strategy, qualitative interviews, and action-oriented research strategy. The case study serves the purpose of carrying out of an in depth investigation by collection of the information from various kinds of authentic sources and analyzing of the documents (Krause-Sohner, 2021). The quantitative survey is a type of research strategy that is applicable for different kinds of business researches and for analyzing data response of large number of human participants. The qualitative interviews are a separate type of research strategy in which structured, unstructured or semi-structured interviews are conducted for the purpose of gaining to access to rich source of information and resulting the development of a proper structure of the dissertation report post data recording and its analysis.

Justification

The importance of qualitative interviews strategy is such that it is best applicable in this research study in which as per the dissertation topic the women employees of mid-level corporate organisations based in Ireland and UK are the targeted respondents from whom the raw and unfiltered data is about to be collected. Proper gathering of detailed information and understanding of the social processes (*which in this case is gender discrimination at workplaces*) can be best attained by the help of qualitative interview strategy. The reason for selection of the qualitative interviews strategy is to ask the women employees about the types of experiences that they have faced in their workplaces at the time of promotion, appraisal, or even recruitment (Roberts, 2020). The reason for selection of structured interview is to carry out small talks with respondents (all women) and gather experiences from them about their status and position in company in context of the dissertation topic.

2.4 Research Design

The term research design is used for describing a framework that is to be used for doing of a proper research study and hence it can be termed as the research blueprint. According to the views of Dannels (2018), the procedures that are necessary for obtainment of information to structure the research in a proper manner and directly address the research problems constitute the general characteristics of research design. In the research design, the procedures and methods are properly specified and mentioned in an orderly manner that have been used for acquiring of the necessary information from the available data sources. It is important for the research design to be based on prepared research objectives, proper data inputs for research problem solution and the appropriate method of analysis that is required or have been used for targeted obtainment of research variables. The formation or development of a research design depends on the actual need of the researcher depending on which the research project planning is actually done (Tobi and Kampen, 2018). The needs of the researcher form the main criteria for the selection of a research design that either can be a detailed statement or can be explained furnishing the minimum level of information. The smooth sailing of all the activities of a research largely depends on the selection of a proper research design that adds to efficiency standard of the research to gain maximum information in a cost effective manner.

Justification

The characteristic feature of a good research design is said to have a significant impact on making the research results more reliable and strengthening the foundation standard of entire research (Rahi, 2017). For the purpose of doing the present research study the use of the descriptive research design is selected because the main purpose or rationale of the research is to cast light on the prevailing problem of gender discrimination occurring at mid-level corporate workplaces of UK and Ireland. The proper determination, description and analysis

of the factors responsible for weakening of women negotiation skills or depreciation of effectiveness of negotiations among two women colleagues is very well attained by the help of descriptive research design. The use of descriptive research design in this research study is for the purpose of describing, explanation, and validation of research findings pertaining to gender discrimination at corporate sector organisations (workplaces).

2.5 Data Collection strategy

According to the views of Atmowardoyo (2018), the process of data collection is defined as the procedure for proper gathering and measurement of information and data directly related to variables of interest as per the dissertation topic. The data is required to be collected in a systematic and orderly manner, which is one of the main requirements of a research study for answering of the queries and set research questions. There are numerous reasons for collection of data but the focus is given over here is for meeting of the objective requirement. Proper data collection is necessary for collecting demographic information from targeted audience, varying opinions or responses based on varying circumstances enabling the researcher to make proper decision about preparation of recommendations for resolving of the issues and addressing of the gaps that have been obtained from literature review. There are various types of data, which are applied in a research, but mainly divided into two types i.e. *Primary and Secondary* (Abutabenjeh and Jaradat, 2018). The primary data is termed as raw data because of 1st hand collection directly from source and forming conclusions from it making its interpretation quite challenging. On the other hand, secondary data collection represents the data that has been already collected and structured by another researcher but critically analysed in context of present study.

The data types is further divided into Quantitative and Qualitative, in the 1st type the things are properly measurable and parameters are expressed in figures or other quantity collected by making use of questionnaire survey because of huge data whereas the 2nd type is more

descriptive in nature instead of numerical as details collected from answers of interview questions.

Justification

The selection of the interview strategy which is a type of qualitative data collection is done in this research study for gaining more detailed insights from the human respondents. It is very important for the researcher to stimulate interest among the interviewees about the present topic of study, make them understand its relevance and then ask questions to get their proper responses. The use of open ended interview questions is done in this study because the actual intention is to give ample space and opportunity to the employees (participants) to express their opinions and feelings in an elaborate manner (Weller *et al.*, 2018). The reason for selection of open ended questions for conducting the interview is for gaining unlimited responses without any restriction or limitations that has proven to be beneficial for delivery of even unexpected insights resulting in enhanced validity standard of the research. Deeper qualitative data can be obtained from the opinions and sentiments of employees facing discrimination at workplaces on gender ground post following their whole work journey as expressed by them.

2.6 Data Analysis strategy

As mentioned in the previous section that the use of qualitative research is done in this study and it is required to kept in focus that interview strategy is best suited for business and academic reports especially related to research study or while writing of dissertation reports. The interview transcripts are considered the best of the available qualitative analysis resources and it is used as a strategy over here successfully (Ivancic *et al.*, 2019). The selection of interview strategy of two women employees of mid-level corporate organisations of UK and Ireland have helped in obtaining even the less measurable data that would have

not been possible from these direct sources if quantitative strategy were applied. There are two types of strategies for doing analysis of qualitative data from interview transcripts, which are inductive, and deductive from which thematic content analysis is selected which is a sub-type of the former one (Castleberry and Nolen, 2018). The thematic content analysis is applied over here in removing all sorts of biases to create an overarching data impression. Researcher took special care in identification of common themes instead of approaching the study with a predetermined framework, which resulted in finding of common patterns or reason of continuous gender discrimination at workplaces, across dataset.

Justification

The use of thematic analysis strategy is justified in context of the research study because it is the best for analysing of the interview transcripts that have been obtained post following of qualitative data collection strategy (Belotto, 2018). It is important to mention over here that thematic analysis is more of a flexible approach for doing analysis of qualitative data and it is proves to be extremely helpful in enabling the researcher to obtain new insights and thus concepts as derived from the collected data. For a 1st time researcher, the thematic analysis has proved to be beneficial for qualitative dataset analysis proving it to be an accessible approach.

The tactics which are applied over here for thematic representation of data available from interview transcripts are familiarisation of data by creation of codes as represented in the form of themes and collating them with supporting evidences. These codes are formed into themes which are reviewed and presented as revised themes (Castleberry and Nolen, 2018). This has helped in specific and accurate analysis of factors responsible for gender discrimination faced by women employees at Irish and UK based corporate organisations. Its

certain other advantages are it being unsupervised from the advanced level not requiring categories to be formed and thus easy capturing of unknown unknowns.

2.7 Ethics and Accessibility issues

There are many women employees who have been facing some kind of gender discrimination or the other at workplaces and it is considered to be a common occurrence in corporate sector firms and hence it was initially decided to make use of mixed data collection strategy i.e. both quantitative survey and qualitative interviews. However, due to prevailing restrictions and for avoiding gathering of many respondents at work with many even remote working, the plan for making use of questionnaire survey was dropped due to large number of respondents being inaccessible. Instead the use of qualitative open-ended interviews was done and it yielded positive results and detailed insights regarding the issues.

Regarding the ethical factor, it is necessary to mention over here that ethics are important for any research work and mostly in the ones that involve human participants for data collection like the one in this case (Mertens, 2018). The researcher acting as the interviewer needs to be completely unbiased and simply act as a data collection instrument. The voluntary participation of the interviewees is ensured along with full confidentiality pertaining to their identity. It was done as such because ethical issues are of crucial importance through all stages of qualitative study for keeping a proper balance between research risks and its benefits.

Chapter 3

3.0 Presentation of the data

3.1 Categorization of qualitative (interview) data

As per Linneberg and Korsgaard (2019), the qualitative data that is collected in this case is perfect to be stated as the one that approximates and characterizes the behavioral traits of women who have faced discrimination in their workplaces and the indications that they have felt like discriminating towards them. For this purpose selection of 2 female employees working at high designation of mid-level corporate SMEs (each from UK and Ireland) are selected, permission sought and 11 open ended questions have been asked (to both) respectively. The interview is conducted over the online mode and data collected is non-numerical in nature. One-to-one online interview is the mode applied over here and the conversation, which took place over the oral mode, is presented as interview transcripts (*Refer Appendix for the same*). From the data, a common pattern is obtained and categorized as per the themes pertaining to factors of gender discrimination and negotiation at workplaces, which are stated as under.

The questions as asked to two women employees of UK and Ireland based SMEs along with their respective answer to the asked questions (*i.e. Transcript*) is provided in the *Appendix section* arranged in a logical and orderly manner.

Chapter 4

4.0 Data Analysis/Findings

4.1 Introduction to the section

The term findings are used to represent the facts that are obtained or collected from different sources of data (*in this case only a single or mono source*). According to the views of Mertens (2014), the process of data analysis is simply a logical technique for proper description, illustration, and evaluation of collected data. It is very important while doing this chapter to have an essential component for ensuring of complete data integrity to gain data accuracy and correct analysis of the data findings. Here, an attempt is made for showing the actual meaning that is present within the data and paving the way forward for appropriate analysis of the research findings. The data analysis has helped to back up and approve or disprove the hypothesis based on critical analysis of the new knowledge.

4.2 Representation of Qualitative data as response from UK women employee

This was an online interview that took place over the online mode (Google Meet) and lasting for approximate time duration of 35-40 minutes. The name of the respondent and the company is kept is not disclosed due to meeting of confidentiality clause and proper following of research ethics.

The real intention of the researcher who is also the interviewer in this case had the actual intention to know about the level of gender discrimination which is prevalent in UK based organisations (*both large and SMEs- with focus over here given on the SMEs*). All the 11 questions are directly related to the research topic and the responses to all the 11 questions have been analysed over here in a brief manner.

Analysis of

Question 1

In response to the 1st question asked question, the women employee acknowledged the fact that there is division existing in their workplace and the one, which is most commonly observed or felt by her, is based on the grounds of gender factor. On being further enquired about the same some of the common examples have come up that according to her are a mark of gender driven equality, like improper allocation of tasks or major projects not being given to women employees and male employees preferred over them.

Question 2

In response to the 2nd question a little bit of frustration was observed in the respondent because she was seeing that despite giving the same effort and working for same time duration or sometimes even more, the preference is given to the male employees during appraisal season. It seems like that gender is the deciding factor for it but the respondent stated about being clueless about the actual reason.

Question 3

The respondent while answering the 3rd question states that there was a common sense in her that gender discrimination is present in large MNCs but the concept changed due to inequality seen and felt by her on the grounds of gender, literally every day in her organisation. She expressed her concern that this types of inequality prone culture if further persists in the organisation then it not going to good for the growing company's brand image.

Question 4

In response to the 4th question, the respondent credited the female HR present in their company as a person who is very easy to reach and many times the employee has raised her concerns whenever felt discriminated to her in an open manner. Till this everything was fine

but the real issue is that after letting her concerns know to the HR manager the employee expected modifications to take place but all in vain.

Question 5

From the answer received to a question it can be seen that the employee is not having any type of ill feeling towards the female HR manager and even praised her to be always available to listen to her complaints or issues. The challenge or difficulty faced by the respondent is during the time of carrying out of salary/hike negotiation during appraisal season when like all past years male employees are preferred over the female counterparts as is observed by her during the professional stay of 2.5 years in this office.

Question 6

In response to this question, the female employees highlight one of her incident when she felt totally discriminated and relates it with gender discrimination by the help of a personal example of hers. She considered herself or rather thought about receiving of Best Employee of year award as a mark of recognition of her hard work but she was disheartened when she not received the award and it was given to someone else of opposite gender. She sounded quite unsatisfied with the reason given to her and stressed on prevalence of gender discrimination.

Question 7

This was a type of straightforward question, which was asked to the employee about to get her reaction and properly understand her actual viewpoint. Interestingly, the respondent not made any direct allegations against her organisation related to her experience when she faced discrimination. It sounded as such that she self-satisfied herself with a self-consolation about the terms followed by her organisation for issuing promotional hikes. In the end, she still reminded about her concern regarding gender discriminatory policies followed by her firm.

Question 8

While giving answer to this question the respondent in a certain manner expressed her dissatisfaction and loss of trust on the management body because post letting her issues, known to the HR she is keeps on anticipating for a positive change but surprisingly that has not been the case for past 1 year. In no way she denied about ease of communication with HR but kept on mentioning about management's closed ears in addressing her concerns and point of worries.

Question 9

A very interesting take as mentioned by the respondent over here regarding question of gender pay disparity in which her low pay structure in comparison to her fellow colleagues is not considered by her as Gender Pay disparity. This is because she agreed to a salary structure during the time of her joining 2.5 years ago but her main point is related to hike % that keeps on varying in her case when compared to a male employee of similar designation.

Question 10

The respondent while responding to the penultimate question states that she was asked to work more professionally and give more efforts to up her chances of getting appraisal in the coming year. It is evident from the response that she is gradually losing faith and has accepted the fact that nothing is going to change and gender discrimination is going to continue at workplace.

Question 11

This was the last question asked to the female employee to express her overall feelings to which she highlighted her continuous observing of the office happenings for past 1 year. She

kind of has taken the decision that if changes are not taking place and gender discrimination continues then she would opt for quitting the organisation.

4.3 Representation of Qualitative data as response from Irish women employee

The rules and regulations for conducting of the online interview is same as that which was followed in case of UK employee (*For details refer previous section 4.2*)

Analysis of

Question 1

In response to this question, the respondent sounded not so amazed by the discrimination present in their Irish SME firm and rather stated that this is something, which has been existing since prehistoric times. Gender discrimination is present in every sector and no difference is there for the respondent's firm as well and sounded not so surprised in expressing the inequality faced by her while working in the office.

Question 2

While responding to the question, the types of discriminatory attitude faced by her while working in the firm as highlighted. These include non-granting of leaves, male employees preferred for new projects and hike % after every year being more for them in comparison to female employees. These types of policies are promoting inequality among the employees on the basis of gender.

Question 3

The respondent somewhat hesitated to clearly state about her existing company's existing culture due to some reasons better known to her as can be seen from her skipping the 1st part of question. An interesting point is mentioned over here that is matter of concern, which is about nil representation of women employees or members in both governing body, and

executive core committee of the firm that gives a proper idea about the organisational culture existing in the firm.

Question 4

In every organisation, there is a proper and systematic channel for complaint lodging and its addressing system but the same is quite complicated as known from the response to this asked question. The complicity and presence of too many layers up the hierarchy has made it quite challenging for female employees like the respondent to raise their matter related to gender inequality.

Question 5

The respondent mentions about the presence of a male HR and highlights this to be a cause in her case to be unable to get good yearly hike due to the negotiation turning unsuccessful, with whatever tactics applied by her. The HR implemented policies are discriminatory for the women employees because there is no tendency in the HR manager to listen or understand their plight thus making action-oriented decisions taken by him to be ineffective on long run.

Question 6

In this response, the female employee clearly mentions about the types of gender-based discrimination faced by her. Her hike % in the present year during the appraisal season was unequal to that of male employee belonging to same designation and same working experience. This emotionally hurt the employee because she did not expect this and the condition was such that she not even bothered to seek explanation for the same from the HR manager that simply denoted her helplessness.

Question 7

The was a straightforward question asked to the female employee about her point of view regarding the HR and employee policies existing in their SME to be highly discriminatory and state the reason for it. The employee not responded in a straight manner but a hinted with a twisted reply about the unchanged HR policies being discriminatory and on implementation treating male and female employees in an unequal irrespective of their capability and work delivery efficiency standards.

Question 8

In response to the asked question the respondent this time sounded quite unhappy and expressed her dissatisfaction over the matter that despite pointing out specifically all her issues and problems to the competent authority i.e. HR executive, she is yet to receive benefits of a positive change as per her expectation. The problems of gender discrimination faced by her in workplace and going unnoticed is a matter of serious concern and her giving up on any positive expectations are not at all a good sign for organisational culture as well.

Question 9

This question was intended to get a proper and detailed response about the nature of gender pay disparity prevalent in the Irish firm. It seemed like that the questions angered the respondent to a great extent as she was more than willing to express her views regarding the mentioned topic in the question. Gender pay disparity is a reality in case of this Irish firm as can be observed from the respondents reply regarding the variable remuneration structure in comparison to a male employee despite the joining date being the same.

Question 10

Promotion, appraisals, and hikes are three of the most common things in which most of the after effects of gender discrimination in corporate sector, SMEs are visible, and the reason for asking the question was to get a view from a current employee of this Irish firm. It is

observed that twisted HR policies, terms, and conditions are stated to be responsible for declining of well-deserved promotion to the female candidate and unsurprisingly the reason for the same was not explained to the respondent. She was simply asked to work in accordance to new modified organisational objectives and keep working on upping of her performance standard.

Question 11

The respondent while responding to the last question sounded affirmative in expressing her concerns regarding the presence of gender discrimination at her respective workplace. She while concluding the interview session expressed her displeasure over the matter of fact that the issues have been remaining in the firm for a very long period of time, continue to remain unaddressed and is a major problem for many women employees like her who are unwilling to or are not able to express their plight.

4.4 Short Summary of the Qualitative data (Interview) responses

From the interview responses received and its critical analysis done in a thorough manner it is observed that gender based stereotypes resulting in gender discrimination at workplaces are very much prevalent in mid standard corporate sector organisations of both UK and Ireland. The female employees of the small start-up firms or enterprises are not being paid well or their promotional offers being withheld either intentionally or unintentionally in name of company policies. The HR policies of these companies are not contributing in any manner to employee satisfaction (specifically for the female ones) and their concerns are highly being ignored. This is a trend that is prevalent irrespective of HR executive or manager of a firm being of same gender as that of the respondent (*in case of London based firm*). The negotiations are proving to be highly ineffective for women employees, their promotions denied, salary structure not similar to male counterparts, only abstractive assurances for HR

departments and open discrimination in hikes % have added to employee dissatisfaction and gradual deterioration of organisational culture. Both the respondents unfortunately in their interview session expressed displeasure over continuing with their present firm over the issues of gender discrimination at workplaces.

Chapter 5

5.0 Discussion

5.1 In reference to the data findings

For the purpose of discussion of the findings, the use of thematic analysis is done over here and the themes are formed as such so that they are relatable to the objectives and the conceptual framework that is formed by the end of the literature study.

Gender discrimination in UK mid-sized corporate workplaces

There has been a boom in the numbers of UK mid-sized companies in recent years that have been hiring many new employees irrespective of their gender and only based on their technical expertise. This gives a very good message to the business world about the image of the UK companies but the actual statistics speak for themselves and from analyzing the qualitative (*interview responses of UK employee*) it is revealed that UK firms are paying the male employees more than the female employees that is type of gender pay gap. From the interview response of the female employee, working in the UK firm it is seen that during the time of joining every employee are given the same salary structure (*difference only on the grounds of experienced or fresher candidate*). The real problem starts afterwards when the women employees are to face different kinds of problems, like that of denied promotion, less hike % and not gaining much benefit in yearly appraisal in comparison to the male employees of the organisations. The UK companies and SMEs have started investing in improvement of their HR policies for ensuring there is gender equality at workplaces but the sorry state of matter is that it is only available in paper and documented form but rarely implemented. From the case of the present UK firm, it is seen that the HR manager of the company is a female, which to a great extent has helped the other female employees to share their views and

problems in a much more elaborated manner. The respondent states that she has not been that much successful in carrying out of the negotiations with the HR manager with outcomes favoring the male employees mostly. This shows that inequality is very much prevalent in the organisation irrespective of reputation management activities initiated in the form of modified HR policies and hence gender discrimination at workplaces need to be controlled for adding to business success and employee satisfaction.

Gender discrimination at Irish mid-sized corporate workplaces

The mid-sized corporate firms that are present in Ireland have taken several steps and initiatives for embedding a positive culture within the organisational domain like worker retention and rise or organisational productivity by implementing changes to bring equality among the employees at workplace. The instances of differentiating between male and female employees irrespective of their level or standard of work but just on the basis of their gender leads to a type of unequal treatment that is present in the Irish firms. Taking reference from the replies given by the respondent who happens to be a female employee of the Irish firm it is seen that women employees have to face discriminations of various types. These include rejection of their leave requests, cancellation of approved leaves and not getting expected promotion or hikes on a yearly basis. The difference in the Irish company with that of the UK based company is the presence of a male HR manager instead of a female one. From the response of female employee interviewed, a sense of apprehension can be viewed in her communication and interaction activities with the male HR that has added to more complexities gradually increasing the gender issues. The reply tone of respondent depicts the fact that she is not at all satisfied by the existing HR policies and initiatives because according to her views those are discriminatory. Taking reference from the answer to the last question given by the respondent, she in a certain manner stated that many other women employees like hers are also the victim gender pay disparity but are not able to voice their

concerns because of complexities in selecting a proper channel and make it work appropriately.

Gender stereotypes present among the women about female employees at workplaces

From the detailed literature, study and facts collected from qualitative data it is observed that gender stereotyping is one of the main and prime causes of gender discrimination taking place at workplaces. The overgeneralization of characteristics and attributes of a particular gender group often adds to biases and results in generation of a notion that these behaviors are binary in nature. The gender stereotypes are very dangerous as this result in disoriented perceptions among working personnel and severely affects the overall negotiation process. The women employees often face tough situations and circumstances at workplace when their seniors belonging to the same gender start treating them unequally once not conforming to their point of view being a main cause of unequal treatment. There is a general tendency among the senior women employees to treat junior women employees or colleagues differently, which can be either due to sense of competitiveness or jealousy. An interesting fact as observed while relating the literature content and data findings is that women having stereotypes about women turn out to be pernicious resulting in women being treated negatively by women just because their gender expression or way of conduct in workplace environment. From the case of the UK firm, it is observed that the female HR manager engages in repeated interaction with its employees (*especially the female ones*) but the rate of problem solution is considerably on the lower side or not as per expected standards. The hikes and promotions given to male employees of both UK and Irish firms are more by a significant range when compared to women employees that is an outcome of gender stereotypes. The women in senior positions have a common perception about junior employees (girls) not having interest in STEM (*Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics*) subjects thus reducing their chances during promotions or even during

undertaking of recruitment activities. The chances of women employees getting promoted or good hikes drastically reduces on their announcement of marriages or getting pregnant as it is perceived that these incidents play a major role in decreasing of their efficiency standard at workplaces.

Gender discrimination affecting workplace negotiation capabilities of the women

The matter of negotiation has become a common part of everyday life because individuals often tend to engage in rigorous negotiation activities at their workplaces related to their salary, hikes, and yearly promotions. It is observed that male employees often benefit from the negotiations that is seen from a positive impact on their range of salary variations but the similar often does not get reflected in case of women employees. The inequalities that commonly take place during negotiation results in of gender pay gap or pay disparity, about which both the respondents have raised their concerns in the interview. The poor skills of negotiation have contributed to lack of women representation in senior leadership positions and a comparatively slower rate of their career progression as well in respect to the male employees. From the responses of both the women employees it is seen that they have been holding back themselves or not able to express themselves in the negotiating table while interacting with the respective HR managers (*both male and female*). It is observed that male HR's tend to dislike the female employees in particular who try to negotiate whereas the female HRs dislike every employee trying to negotiate irrespective of gender, which has been pretty much evident from reply in both the instances. It is often perceived that the women to have lower value than the male employees mainly due to gender stereotypes as can be seen from their promotions being declined politely despite their dedication and efforts towards their work. Both female employee respondents have witnessed repeated failures of their negotiation attempts related to revising of their pay structure and taking grant from competent authorities for allowing flexibility in their working schedule or change in the working

conditions. It is clear from above instances that gendered barriers especially during negotiations is the main reason for the gender pay disparity and hinders the women employees to achieve and properly enjoy the benefits of an equitable working conditions.

5.2 Hypothesis acceptance and rejection

Hypothesis	Acceptance/Rejection
H0	Accepted
H1	Rejected

Table 2: Hypothesis status

(Source: Self-Made)

The reason for acceptance of this hypothesis is because it is obvious and established from the detailed study that women are being discriminated in corporate sector workplaces. This is visible from the gradual rate of decline of women representation in leadership roles of these two organisations, HR policies not being that much supportive, continuous decline of their work flexibility requests, reduced hike, and appraisal % of them in comparison to the male colleagues in the same firm. It is established that not just only men are responsible for gender discrimination to take place but women are responsible as well. Despite companies showing commitment to gender equality, the prevailing conditions are not at all conducive with unconscious bias and gender stereotyping impacting women at their workplaces.

Conclusion

In relation the objectives

Related to 1st objective

From the detailed study that conducted in this report, it is evident that despite a lot of talks and initiatives taken by the mid-level corporate size companies of UK and Ireland the menace of gender discrimination still prevails. In UK firms the issues of gender pay disparity is on the rise and Irish firms are not much behind in it. Several steps and initiatives have been taken by many of the UK firms for creating an equitable environment at workplaces but modified HR policies have not been able to resolve the issues completely. In most of the UK firms, the companies have taken initiatives by bringing women HR for easing the problem solving and issue addressing process of women employees that is not the case in majority of Irish firms. The gender discrimination level is comparatively higher in Irish firms than that of UK mid-level corporate organisations as can be seen from the interview responses. In this regard, the companies have a major role to play in tackling of this challenging situation that is bound to affect company culture, its reputation and popularity but so far their initiatives to reduce gender discrimination at workplaces has not yield much positive results.

Related to 2nd objective

It was a common conception among peers that gender stereotypes are only present in men and women about their opposite gender people but it is not the only case as women are also having an unconscious bias against other women which is observed in every aspects of life and very much so in professional domain. The disheartening fact is gender stereotypes severely impact the perception of a person towards other individual and if it is on the grounds of gender then women are the worst victims of it. The self-esteem, ambition and expectation range of women employees see a drastic downfall once they are ignored or their plights go

unnoticed by a senior member or immediate superior belonging to the same gender. It is often the norms in many corporate organisations that women are denied promotions or leadership roles as it is considered that they will not be able to handle the pressure once they get married or become mother. The present condition of both the women employees of UK and Ireland is not at all good because they are not satisfied with their jobs and the reason for it is prevalence of gender discrimination at large in their respective workplaces.

Related to 3rd objective

The negotiation is an important factor and more of an important requirement criterion for the employees at their respective workplaces because it is termed to be a process for proper preparation of agreement among the parties i.e. employer and employee. The outcome of the negotiation needs to be mutually acceptable to both parties because this ultimately contributes to workplace sanctity and by not doing any type of discrimination. The presence of gender discrimination is felt by the women employees at workplaces as can be seen from the condition of the two respondents in the form of their denied promotion, variable salary structure to that of male employees, hike % fluctuating on the basis of gender factor and many more. The women employees are also having a tough time while dealing or negotiating with their women seniors due to a perceived notion and stereotypes related to them. This is observed from lack of their representation in leadership roles and even many opposing their candidature on the grounds of probable marriage and future motherhood to be the grounds for it. The women employees are struggling to get what they really deserve due to their negotiations getting failed mostly and missing out on getting approval to make use of their non-monetary opportunities as well.

In reference to research purpose

The researcher faced certain types of gender inequalities in early childhood and in respective workplaces as well in the form of failed negotiation pertaining to working hour's regulation, salary structure variation and approval for paid leaves all due to the reason of gender based discrimination. Gender equality is more of a human right for all, be it male and female adding but discrimination is taking place in workplaces not just by men against women but women against women as well. Some preconceived notion and gender stereotypes have restricted the women to progress in their career front and this research has helped in deeply looking and understanding biases that both men and women have about women that has been a main contributing factor to workplace discrimination.

Recommendations

In relation to the 4th objective, certain recommendations are presented over here taking reference from UK and Irish mid-level corporate organisations, in the form of modification of HR policies to make workplace environment healthier by gradual eradication of the menace of gender discrimination.

- There is a need for increasing the number of women participation in leadership roles along with training the women already present in superior position to show empathy towards their women employees (*especially the juniors or new recruits*).
- The idea of gender diversity needs to be promoted among senior leadership so that they are open to it and practice the same to bring a change in HR policies for the greater good of the company.
- The women employees must be encouraged with complex and critical projects or assignments for them to display their talent and the yardstick for performance evaluation needs to be on ability rather than gender.

- Both the women and male HR manager need to be trained to get rid of pre-conceived notions, like-me biases, double standards towards women and most importantly eradicating of any decisions based on gender stereotyping. There needs to be a system for guarding any sorts of impermissible assumptions about women employees or new women recruits that could have hindered their chance of career progression.
- The women employees need to be socially included in all types of decision-making process as a part of business inclusion step promoting workplace equality of good standards and evaluating their performance on the basis of work done on project assignments and not on the basis of personal relationships.
- There is a need for promotion of women employees to higher posts and provide them with good hikes as a part of their hard work and efforts recognition at workplaces that encourages them increase their productivity standards.
- The organisation needs to be considerate enough towards granting some relief to women employees during their time of pregnancy and paid maternity leaves that can prove to be welcome step towards eradicating of gender bias and gender discrimination at workplaces.

Future scope of study

This research work was initially planned for a quantitative data analysis by doing of questionnaire-based survey followed by its SPSS based statistical analysis but due to COVID-19 related restrictions and time constraints, the use of qualitative data (*i.e. interview method*) and thematic analysis is done. The future scope of study can be in the form of application of mixed method of data collection followed by its comparative analysis that can add to more reliability of research study post validating of obtained data results/findings.

Reflection

In this section I would like to express my learning and feelings in an open manner which I have gained as a part of this study while doing the research and writing dissertation report. As the reader can see that the topic of the dissertation is studying of the impact of gender discrimination in workplace with its effect in negotiation activities once taking place among the women. Regarding the topic selection and justification for it I would like to state some of my personal views over here. I have personally witnessed gender discrimination is every aspect of life and most commonly in workplaces and it hurt me specifically because of my gender. During my working days, I had been facing great difficulties for seeking holiday due to medical issues, getting promotions halted or reduced hikes and less salary than male counterparts. I was more surprised to witness the fact that gender discrimination is not just only done or promoted by men differentiating with women but women differentiating with individuals of same gender. It made me to start think about the fact that gender based biases which women are having about other women or female employees at workplaces is also one of the prime reason for gender discrimination. The effect of this type of discrimination can be seen from deteriorating negotiation capabilities of women while dealing or interacting with their women superiors or seniors at their respective workplaces. This prompted me to select this topic and undertake a thorough study about the factors contributing to gender discrimination at workplaces, reason of gender biases that women are having about other women and how it impacts the overall negotiation process.

I had initially set the objectives and research questions on the topic which were pretty broad and made certain modifications in those after receiving feedback on my submitted Research Proposal. After receiving suggestion from my supervisor and getting my concepts clear I decided to narrow down the topic a little bit thus focusing on the plight of women employees from mid-level corporate sector organisations and SMEs of UK and Ireland. I decided to stick

to the dissertation model and structure provided in the learning guide and divided by allocated word count for this whole report accordingly. I kept on working on the report along with doing the research and collecting data. Post finishing Introduction chapter in which aim, objectives, research questions and hypothesis was finalised I started working on the literature review chapter. I had a brief idea of how literature study is needed to be conducted and hence not faced much difficulty in collecting data and critically analysing it with giving due acknowledgement to authors and previous researchers. The literature gap and conceptual framework was properly made by me after getting a good and proper idea about the previous researcher that has been done in relation to the topic. After this the methodology chapter was done by me in whom I made every possible effort to justify the reason of selection of a particular technique that has been applied by me in this study. Initially I planned for questionnaire based primary data collection and its statistical analysis but due to time constraints and COVID induced restrictions had to change the data collection plan. Now this whole research study is based on mono method of data collection strategy done by online based open ended interview question answer session and collection of answers and responses which have been analysed by the help of thematic analysis process.

The data findings are properly presented and discussion done accordingly to arrive at a point of acceptance or rejection of the formed hypothesis followed by conclusion chapter in which the relation is established with the objectives for a better end to the report. Recommendations along with future scope of study is provided which means there is still a lot that needs to be explored and answers to be sought related to the topic. In doing this dissertation I was able to understand and develop the qualities of time management, enhance personal discipline standards and presently feeling a rise in self-confidence as well. Before ending my reflection I would like to specially mention about the positive role played by my supervisor during this whole period particularly in methodology selection, proposal correction, data collection

evaluation, interview questions and transcript preparation that helped me to complete the dissertation report successfully on time.

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Appendix

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS (QUALITATIVE DATA)

1. Do you think there is a divide between men and women in your work place? Do you think there is an inequality in that difference?
2. What are your views regarding gender issues if you may please elaborate in context of your workplace? What do you actually think about those?
3. Do you think that in your organization there is culture of gender divide and inequality of women representation? If yes, please elaborate.
4. Are you able to effectively raise your concerns pertaining to gender issues at workplace?
5. Is your company HR a male or female? Have you been able to negotiate properly with him/her?
6. Have you been denied promotion, appraisal, or hike at your workplace merely because of your gender? What do you think is the reason for it?
7. Do you think that your organization is knowingly or unknowingly promoting gender discrimination at workplace?
8. What steps have you taken to raise your concerns regarding gender discrimination issues faced by you to the organization's management? Do you think those have yielded good results?
9. Are you a victim of Gender Pay Gap or Pay Disparity? What do you think and Why?
10. What are the reasons that have been specifically given to you for your promotion, appraisal or hike related requests being declined? Were you satisfied with the given reasons?

11. What may point to issues with gender equality at your workplace and what is going to be your next move regarding that?

Transcripts

From female employees of reputed SMEs (UK based)

Answer to:

Question 1

“It is a very interesting question! Yes. Obviously, there is a divide in my workplace based on the gender factor and that is not a big deal. The real issue is the prevailing inequality in allocation of tasks and responsibilities among the male and female employees.”

Question 2

“ I have seen that male employees getting promoted, getting good hikes compared to us even after doing the same work and giving the same labour which I think is the biggest gender issue. Honestly speaking I have no clue about it.”

Question 3

“I believe that our organisation is in its continuous growing phase i.e. in SME category and setting a good culture is very necessary for improving of company image for gaining further investment. Some of the instances related to cases of gender divide and inequality is setting out a very bad image for such a new company about its company culture.”

Question 4

“Before answering this question I would like to state that we are having a female HR and expressing my concerns in case when I feel discriminated has never been this much easier.

But the real issue lies with the fact that despite stating about issues the problems still exists with no changes in it.”

Question 5

“As I have stated earlier that out HR is a woman and personally I do not have any issue with her and also feel comfortable to interact with her. But surprisingly every time during the time of salary negotiation, I have personally observed that the male employees are given the preference and getting a handsome hike during my stay over here for past 2.5 years.”

Question 6

“Let me tell about the case previous year when I was the most deserving candidate to get *The Employee of the Year* award but it was won by another one of my male colleague. I congratulate him for his recognition but on what grounds my candidature was rejected is still a mystery for me.”

Question 7

“This I think would turn into an allegation which I am not willing to make as there might be certain criteria for giving promotion or hikes. But saying this still I believe that it might be unintentional but company policies in a certain way promote gender discrimination.”

Question 8

“The real issue according to me is that the issues rose by me or many like me might not be reaching to the management ears otherwise some changes would have definitely taken place. Yes! I agree there is ease of communication with HR but no immediate changes to address gender discrimination has taken place as per since last 1 year.”

Question 9

“No! I do not think my low pay structure can be treated as Gender Pay disparity because I had joined in this company 2.5 years at junior executive position in a mutually agreed salary structure. The concern is related to present year % of hike less than that of my male counterpart working in same position.”

Question 10

“No such specific reasons were given to me but were asked to work more and show more dedication to be eligible for recognition in the coming year and honestly speaking I was not at all satisfied with it.”

Question 11

“I am pretty much observant about the ongoing activities and do not believe is repeated complaining or nagging about it but if conditions are not changing soon then I might be looking for a better opportunity with the expectation of being treated equally.”

To female employees of reputed SMEs (Ireland based)

Answer to:

Question 1

“Let me tell you one thing divide among men and women were always there since prehistoric times and are still present now, even at our workplace which itself is a mark of gender discrimination promoting inequality.”

Question 2

“Leaves getting granted, preference to work on new projects, facing less number of escalations and a considerable hike at the end of every financial year is a common thing for male employees and interestingly something or the other is missing for female employees.”

Question 3

“I cannot directly say or mention about the existing culture of my organisation but also cannot deny the fact that certain steps and activities promote the culture of gender divide as can be seen from no women representation in the governing body and executive body of this firm.”

Question 4

“The complaint and feedback channel flow is quite complicated of this company because there are too many numbers of levels to raise your concern or complain to relevant authorities and this makes the situation more complex. For me raising gender issues have literally been a nightmare for me.”

Question 5

“We are having a male HR at our workplace and I personally find it very difficult to carry out salary or hike negotiation with him because he is more into taking action rather than listening and understanding plight of employees.”

Question 6

“Yes! I have been denied my expected hike % during this financial year appraisal season and on the contrary, a male colleague of mine received it, which personally left me very hurt. No reason was given to me for that and I have also not sought for it.”

Question 7

“I cannot firmly make any comment on it but hike and promotion policies followed by company HR is a definite reason for the rise in instances of gender discrimination at our workplace.”

Question 8

“I have repeatedly pointed out my concerns to the HR many times over these issues but still have not received any positive changes to address my issues and let me tell you, I have started to give up on my expectations.”

Question 9

“Yes! I consider myself victim of gender pay disparity because a male employee belonging to same designation as mine but belonging to different department is having his monthly remuneration more than yes and I! Our joining date in this firm was same.”

Question 10

“On being asked to my HR, the reason for my denial of promotion for this year no satisfactory reply was given to me and was asked to up my performance standard in alignment with company modified objectives.”

Question 11

“I firmly believe that gender discrimination is present very strongly at our workplace and it might not be visible by open eyes but is felt by me and many other employees (*especially women*) like me.”