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Project Title:

How do Human Resources Managers reduce the gender pay gap in big technology firms in the United Kingdom?

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Abstract:

Over 70 % of women are in the workforce now in the UK, spending longer in jobs. However, the experiences of women and men are still very different, as the primary issue women workers are experiencing is a gender pay gap in various sectors in the UK (Bryson et al., 2020). The research focused and analysed the gender pay gap in the technology sector in the UK, specifically at big tech firms such as Microsoft UK, Google UK, Meta gap.

The research was conducted from theoretical and practical perspectives (based on annual gender pay gap reports of tech firms analysed and academic journals /books). The appropriate method chosen to conduct this research was a mixed-method approach based on secondary data.

This research focused on three theories that explained the cause of gender pay. The source of the gender pay gap in society can be attributed to the ‘three glass ceilings (Bishom-Rapp and Sergeant, 2016). Human model theory (Phelps, 1972) and undervaluation theory (Grimshaw and Rubery,2007, cited in Brynin, 2017).

It analysed the reasons behind the gender pay gap and the actions that have been taken to reduce the gender pay gap. The result from the analysis, the HR managers, pointed out that the main reason for the gender pay gap is the female representation gap. Additionally, the figures data analysed showed that the gender pay gap in Microsoft is significantly less compared to the gender pay gap in the other UK based tech companies analysed.

The HR practices taken in each firm are similar, but it still shows fluctuation over the years in reducing the gender pay gap. Moreover, these tech firms are increasing the pay each year for women to reduce the gender pay gap but also, they increase the pay for men, which led to a continued gender pay gap for the upcoming years. Despite the challenges, the HR practices that have been applied have slightly narrowed the gender pay gap but not significantly.

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1. Introduction:

Women have experienced significant changes in the British labour market since the second world War (Bryson et al., 2020). Over 70 % of women are in the workforce now, and they are spending longer in jobs (ibid). However, the experiences of women and men are still very different as the primary issue women workers are experiencing a gender pay gap in various sectors in the UK (ibid). As claimed, the UK's technology sector faces the highest gender pay gap cause of the lack of female representation (ibid).

The proliferation of mandated and optional organisation-level monitoring on gender pays inequalities piques HR practitioners' interest in how HR policies and practices might increase gender pay equity, therefore avoiding image concerns about pay discrimination. Firms should move to a firm-level analysis and apply pay transparency to overcome biases against women in the workforce, effectively reducing the gender pay gap (Bennedsen et al., 2019). The fact that workplace HR policies impact employment inequities is widely recognised in work organisation, supervision, recruitment and selection (Bradley and Petrescu, 2004).

This research investigated how HR managers reduce the gender pay gap in big tech firms in the UK; the leading tech firms analysed are Microsoft UK, Google UK, and Meta UK. Besides this, the main objectives of this research are analysing to understand how big the gender pay gap is at those firms. Secondly, identify the main reasons for the gender pay gap and the primary HR practices applied to reduce the gender pay gap.

Furthermore, the method attained to carry out this research is a mixed-method approach based on secondary data collected from various sources, including government reports, academic journals and articles for accurate theoretical concepts and background about gender pay gap. Besides this, analysing gender pay gap from annual reports published by the HR managers in tech firms and identifying the HR practices in reducing the pay gap.

2. Literature review:

2.1. Gender Pay Gap and Glass Ceilings Theoretical Concepts:

In order to understand how the technology firms in the UK manage the gender pay gap, it is first crucial to comprehend what the gender pay gap is. According to McDowell (2014), the gender pay gap steadily controls women in society, even in the contemporary world. The gender pay gap can be characterized as the gap between the wages earned by men and women for the same task. Evidence suggests that women are paid significantly less than men. On average, women have been observed to be paid 83 cents for every dollar a man earns. This parity is even greater among lower-level workers (Gloud, Jessica and Kathleen, 2016).

The source of the gender pay gap in society can be attributed to the 'three glass ceilings. The Glass ceiling Commission established the term glass ceilings and are referred to as the invisible barriers encountered by women as they attempt to reach the top level in corporate hierarchy (Bishom-Rapp and Sergeant, 2016). According to Bishom-Rapp and Sergeant (2016), there are three types of glass ceilings, including bias and prejudice arising out of lack of educational opportunities, internal structures of business and the lack of adequate law enforcement. Sampson and Moore (2008), through an empirical study, also substantiated the existence of these glass ceilings and established that these barriers are leading to widening the wage gap between men and women over time, resulting in a lack of representation of women in upper management and a significant gap between average salary.

2.2. The Human Capital Theory:

The human capital model also informs the prevalence of the gender pay gap to a great extent. As per the human capital model, each individual has human capital, measured through their skills and abilities. These skills, in turn, determine their wages in the labour market. However, historically, there is a traditional division within labour between men and women due to which women gain less labour market experience than men. This lack of experience subjects them to lower

wages (Becker, 1993, cited in Blau and Kahn, 2017). However, the situation has changed to a great extent, and contemporary women have greater labour participation due to various factors like a decrease in family size, expansion of service sectors and increase in divorce rates (Grybaitė, 2006). Despite women having the same labour experience, women continue to get paid less than men due to the existing discrimination within the labour market. Even in contemporary market management, employees, co-workers, and even clients have a taste for discrimination, which causes workforce segregation. Thus, these discriminatory practices involve judging women workers by the average characteristics of their group instead of their individual skills and abilities (Phelps, 1972).

2.3. Undervaluation theory:

The need to confront the gender pay gap has been on the agenda since 1999. In 2001, the Equal Pay Task Force identified three leading causes of the gap: segregation, discrimination, and the burden of family responsibilities. Since then, there have been more significant reports on the issue (Grimshaw and Rubery,2007, cited in Brynin, 2017). It has been argued by (ibid) that the undervaluation of women's work is a thread that links together the various causes of the gender pay gap: discrimination, occupational segregation, and women's unequal share of responsibilities (ibid).

Women also face two main risks related to undervaluation. The first is that they will earn less than men in the same job, and the second is that they will be hired in jobs that are typically undervalued (ibid). Besides this, the level of effort, a skill that an employee may have for a given job, may not be considered reasonable at that time. The research claimed that the pursuit of pay equality had become a highly complex and constantly moving goalpost; the core idea behind this hypothesis is that pay-setting is linked to broader social and economic trends and that it could help reduce gender pay inequality, but it also polarises the overall pay structure (ibid).

2.4. Gender Pay Gap in Technology Sector in the UK:

The gender pay gap in the UK national workforce, specifically in the technology sector, for 2017 is estimated at 17%, with analysts predicting that it might not close until 2040 (Microsoft, 2017). According to a report from Texas instrument Incorporated (TI) (2021), the gender pay gap in the UK tech industry was estimated to be 24.6%. However, in another equality report conducted by Hired (2021), the gender pay gap in the UK technology industry was estimated to be 4%. The same report revealed that the gap between average salary between men and women in the tech industry is £3,000. Furthermore, the majority of the technology roles are offered to men; as a result, which women ask for a lower wage for the same role in expectations of representation.

The gender pay gap has been increasing consistently, and it was reported that in order to achieve economic parity, women might have to wait for 250 years more (Sanchez, 2020). Despite being one of the most developed nations globally, the UK lags behind in achieving equal pay compared to its other European counterparts like Iceland, Norway, Finland, Sweden, Spain and Germany (ibid).

A survey conducted by PwC showed that 78% of large companies have a gender pay gap in the tech industry. It was also revealed that women earn less than men in the same roles. The median pay gap for women estimated is at 14% (Ash, 2017). A range of factors could cause the tech industry's gender pay gap to widen, such as the position and skills of the workers (ibid).

2.5. HR Practices in the UK and EU:

The gender pay gap is a globally significant issue that affects women's earnings. Most recently, it was estimated that women globally earn on average 16% less than men (OECD,2021). However, despite the progress made in achieving gender equality, the pay gap still exists due to deep-rooted inequalities in society and the economy (Eurostat,2021). In 2017, the UK Government required all employers with 250 or more employees to report on the gender pay gap. Over 10,000 have already submitted their reports in each of the last two years (Brown, 2019). The

Human Resources manager in the UK took into consideration reducing the gender pay gap and improving gender equality in organisations based on evidence-based practices that support equal pay and treat everyone fairly (Bohnet, no date). The leading practices that Human Resources managers have applied and helped HR managers to see effective results in reducing the gender pay gap are the following: HR managers use the recruitment process to make sure the shortlist includes multiple women because it will increase the chances of women being selected. Besides this, giving tasks that they would typically perform in the role to measure their suitability for the job as it is adequate to reduce the skills gap between genders. Moreover, being transparent about processes and procedures can also help employees feel more confident in their decisions. It allows managers to make informed and objective decisions (ibid).

In comparison to some European countries, which have taken various measures to reduce their gender wage gap, different strategies have been used. For instance, Estonia launched an action plan to reduce its gender pay disparity. The plan has five main streams, which are: improving the implementation and awareness-raising of existing legislation, improving the reconciliation of women and men in the workplace, reducing gender segregation in the public sector, and implementing pay systems that are fair and transparent. Besides this, in Austria, gender equality plans and audits are also implemented in companies to reduce the pay gap (EU Briefing, 2015). Additionally, it has been argued that several EU countries such as Germany, Luxembourg and Switzerland have developed tools to make payment systems more transparent and to identify the gender pay gap. One of these tools is the Login tool, which helps companies identify the gender pay gap (ibid).

3. Literature Gap:

There is a clear gap in the existing literature, this being that there is no extensive research that discusses the role of HR managers' policies in reducing the gender gap in the technology sector in the UK. Therefore, there is a simple opportunity to

develop something novel that can lay a new research foundation and help policymakers reduce the gender pay gap in the technology sector in the UK.

4. Methodology:

4.1. Research Question:

How does Human Resources Managers reduce the gender pay gap in big technology firms in the United Kingdom?

4.2. Research Aims and Objectives:

This research aimed to critically assess existing research work to find deep insights into the research problem. Furthermore, to examine the role of the HR managers in reducing the gender pay gap in big tech firms in the UK.

Below are the objectives:

Objective 1: Analysis of Gender Pay Gap in big tech firms in the UK

Objective 2: To identify the real reasons behind the gender pay gap in big technology firms in the United Kingdom

Objective 3: To identify different HR practices in big technology firms to reduce the gender pay gap in the United Kingdom.

4.3. Research design and methods:

The overall understanding concept of this research is attained by using a mixed-method approach, which is administered through qualitative and quantitative data (Saunders et al., 2019, page 352-353). The data has been collected through secondary research by reading literature on theoretical concepts about the gender pay gap. Moreover, how these are related and applied in organisations (ibid)—additionally, analysing accurate annual reports about the gender pay gap in big tech firms in the UK.

4.4. Secondary Data:

The secondary data that has been undertaken in this particular paper is data collected from various governmental reports such as Government Equalities Office, existing literature (original journal articles and books). Furthermore, big tech firms' annual reports that are under consideration and published by the HR directors of each tech firm have focused on the gender pay gap and HR practices applied by HR managers to reduce the gap in these big tech firms (Google UK, Facebook UK and Microsoft UK), as well as they, are being published on the office for national statistics.

A critical factor of using secondary data, is precise data which means data collected from accurate statistics and academic journals (Saunders et al., 2019, page 352-353). Research findings are open to public scrutiny and can be checked quickly and effectively. Besides this, it had answered the research question and clarified each objective (ibid).

Besides this, deductive reasoning is used to form a hypothesis from the previous studies to support positive research. Due to the inactive role of the participants in data collection, no participation of humans, positive research with deductive reasoning is the best for this research (ibid, page 51).

The research will be positivist because the study is based on secondary data. It is suitable and adequate to collect reliable data based on analysis pay gap and the HR practices to reduce gender gap pay. Therefore, it is useful for placing findings within the context of the topic (ibid, page 352-353).

5. Data Analysis:

5.1 Objective 1: Analysis of Gender Pay Gap in big tech firms in the UK:

Since 2017, organisations in the UK with over 250 employees have been required to submit their gender pay gap reports annually (GEO,2020). This section,

focusing on analysing the gender pay gap in big tech firms in the UK, such as Microsoft, Meta (Facebook), and Google.

Background about Big tech firms mentioned above:

Microsoft, Meta (Facebook), Google are the biggest tech firms with considerable economic influence in the UK economy. Microsoft's advanced cloud technology has played a crucial role in transforming education, public services and supporting the UK economy (Microsoft UK, no date).

A study by Deloitte noted that Meta has a significant contribution to the UK economy as it supported 35,200 UK jobs and fuels £2.2bn to UK GDP each year (2021). Lastly, Google UK has a crucial contribution on UK employees; above 4000 people work at Google in the UK, 700,000 businesses were helped by Google products and Programmes in 2020 (Google UK, 2020). Furthermore, over £55 billion in economic value is reinforced by Google search and £17 billion UK economic activity supported by Google in 2020 when Google assisted businesses to shift to online sales (Google UK, 2020).

According to Statista, the latest figures (2020/21) illustrate that the gender pay gap remains a critical issue in big technology firms in the United Kingdom. It has been argued that the gender pay gap in the UK predicts it will take longer to achieve the goal of "closing the gender pay gap" within the technology firms (Andria,2018). However, it is confirmed by HR managers at Microsoft, Meta, and Google are working to reduce the gender pay gap by utilising the government's methodology. The analysis below shows evidently the gender pay gap in these firms, and HR managers indicate are using the same methodology, "the mean (average) gender pay figure," based on using hourly pay and bonus pay (GEO,2020).

It has been debated that women get lower rates and compensation than men result of "the unchecked gender bias that pervades Microsoft's corporate culture "(Burns, 2017). However, HR Andrea Winfield at Microsoft (Gov.UK, 2019) claimed that Microsoft's focus in ensuring that all workers, no matter their gender, are

compensated equal pay for carrying similar roles, including features such as job level and title.

In this organisation, HR managers use employees' hourly pay to analyse the difference between the average (Mean) hourly pay of women and men because it specifies the gender pay gap (Gov UK, 2018). The analysis below explains Figures 1 and 2 by indicating two principal meters, the Hourly and bonus pay gap, to indicate the overall gender pay gap.

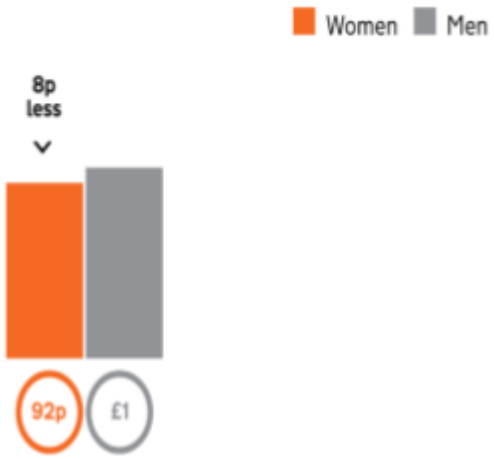


Figure 1 – Hourly Pay Gap in Microsoft UK (2018)

Figure 2 – Bonus Pay Gap in Microsoft UK (2018)

(Gov,2018)

Figure 1 above demonstrates the hourly pay gap in Microsoft UK; it shows that women bonus pays gap is 8p less than men. According to the approach followed to calculate average (Mean), there is a clear gap on the average hourly pay of 6.3 %, which means women's average hourly pay is lower than men's (Gov UK, 2018).

Figure 2 above illustrates the bonus pay gap in Microsoft UK, when comparing the bonus pay gap between men and women is 13p less (ibid). By applying the following approach, "the mean (average) gender pay figure "used by HR managers, it indicated that women's average bonus pay is 6.6 % lesser than men (ibid).

The senior HR Runham, and Director Kling (2019) noted that Meta UK measures the gender pay gap in the organisation by reviewing overall compensation data, bonus, equity, including base. The figures below show both principles based on calculating the average gender pay gap.

Figure – 3 Hourly pay gap (2019/20)

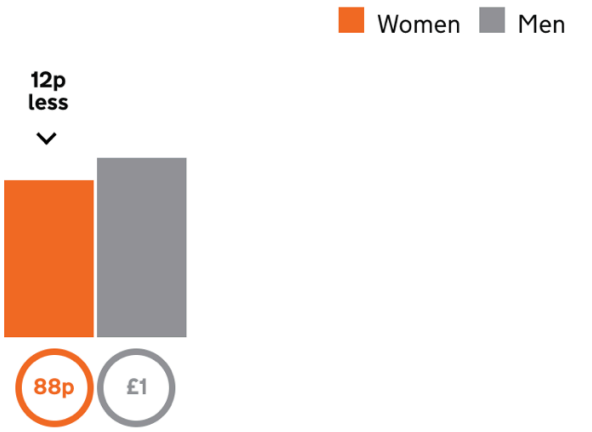
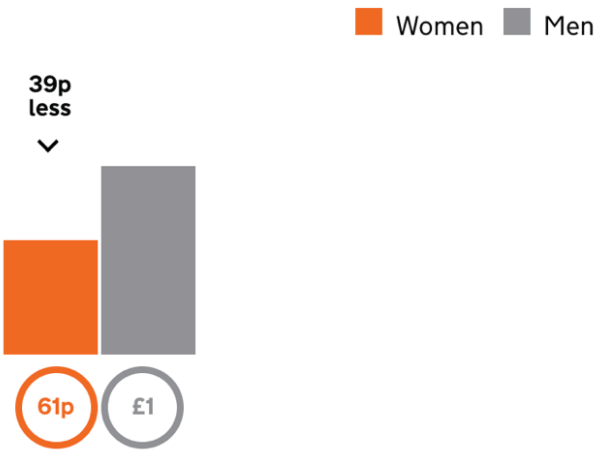


Figure – 4 bonus pay gap (2019/20)



Meta Gender Pay Gap 2019/20
(Runham and Kling , 2019)

According to Meta UK Gender Pay Report (2019) and the figures above, Meta's UK average (mean) gender pay gap is estimated at 5%, and the median gender pay gap is 12.3 %. Furthermore, the average bonuses for women at Meta were 44.3 % lower than men and 38.8 % lower at the median (Runham and Kling, 2019).

In comparison, at Google UK, the gender pay gap increased in 2018. the industry's median pay gap has increased from 16% to 20% (Harris,2018). Moreover, the company has a 30% median gap in bonus pay between men and women (Harris,2018). HR manager in Google UK report (2018) argued that workforce biases males in senior positions, while women make up 51 % of the

company's employees and the lowest-paid quartile, only 24 % of employees in the highest-paid quartile are women (Harris,2018).

The HR manager Harris (2018/19) illustrated a gender pay gap in the hourly and bonus pay gaps. The figures indicated:

Figure 5- Hourly Pay Gap 2018/19

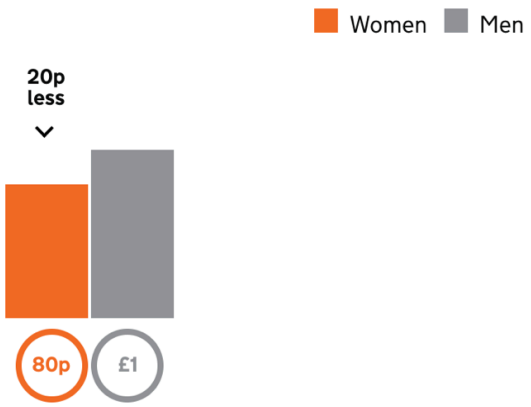


Figure 6- Bonus Pay Gap 2018/19

Google UK 2018/19 – Gender Pay Gap
(Harris, 2018)

In this firm, women earn 80p for every £1 that men receive when comparing median hourly pay (Harris, 2018); the median hourly pay at Google UK is estimated at 20 %, lower than men's (Harris, 2018). However, as a base when estimating average (Mean), confirm that women's average hourly pay is 19 % lower than men.

As well as for the bonus pay gap, the women's average bonus pay is 48 % lower than men's (ibid).

Comparing analysis above 2018 to the gender pay gap at Google UK in 2019 has increased according to the average calculation. The figures below display the hourly pay and bonus pay gaps (Harris, 2019).

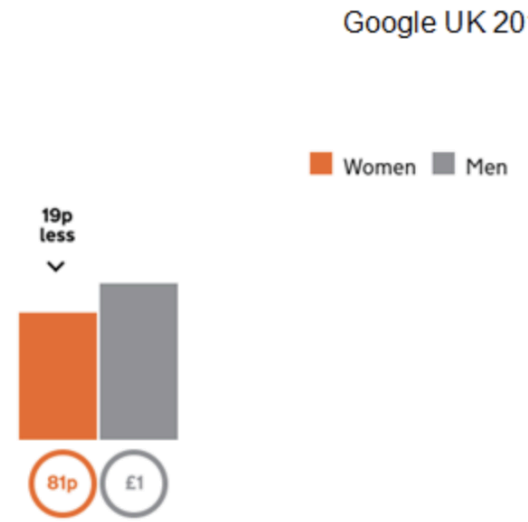


Figure 7 – Hourly Pay Gap

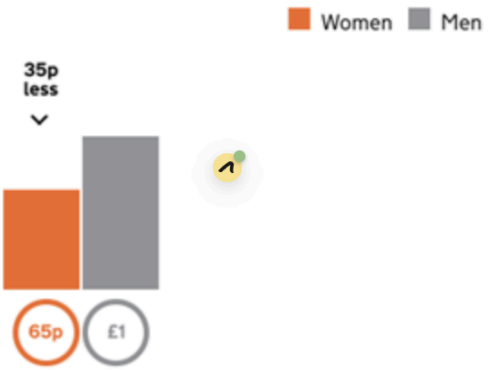


Figure 8 – Bonus Pay Gap

(Harris,2019)

It shows that women's average hourly pay is 18 % lower than men's in 2018; it negatively indicates that the hourly pay gap for women decreased from 19 % to 18 %. It positively illustrates an increase in the bonus gender pay gap by 33 % in the 2018 gender pay gap report. In comparison to 2019, women's average bonus pay is estimated at 52 % lower than men's in 2019 (Harris, 2019).

5.2. Objective 2: To identify the real reasons behind the gender pay gap in big technology firms in the United Kingdom.

Despite decades of progress in women's equality in the giant tech industry, the The UK still has a long way to achieve gender balance in the tech workforce. According to WISE, just 23% of people working in the UK's tech industry are women (PWC, 2017). The analysis of the gender pay gap above at Microsoft UK, Google UK, Meta UK showed a clear gender pay gap. The HR managers in those large big tech companies noted that the main reason is the female representation gap.

The major cause behind the gender pay gap at Google in the UK is primarily driven by a lack of women in technical roles because Google has more men than

women, which lead to paying men more than women in technical roles based on the market rates (Harris, 2020/21). Furthermore, HR managers debated that at Google, women and men have equal opportunities to earn a bonus more than workers in non-technical issues because the market for tech expertise is so competitive. However, the leading cause of the bonus pay gap is the lack of women in a senior tech role and technical roles in general at Google UK (ibid). It is the exact cause throughout the year (2018-2021).

In comparison, HR directors (2018/19) at Microsoft have focused on different factors resulting in the gender pay gap. Having more men at the top level is a critical factor in addressing the gender pay gap and focused on the gender pay gap in leadership positions, technical roles and non-technical roles. However, Google UK focused only on the gender pay gap in technical roles.

Besides this, McHenry demonstrated (2018/2021) that considers the skills gap that exists in the industry in the tech sector, which are cloud, artificial intelligence and data security. Furthermore, it has been established on UK Regulatory Gender Pay Gap Reporting (2018) by the HR director McHenry representation gap of female employees across all professions and levels, especially in technical roles. Research suggests that in the top two quartiles, the number of available positions is typically lower than in more junior levels, and this is due to Microsoft UK long term D&I policies. Moreover, their impact on their talent is due to changes in their hiring process (Winfield, 2020; Tantawy, 2021).

It has been noted that Microsoft UK operations continue to grow on parallel and have also grown headcount significantly; this is despite operation growth, the overall female headcount growth being less pronounced than that of the upper pay quartiles.
Similarly, many HR managers at Meta (2019-2020) discussed that the crucial reason for the pay gap is that Meta has more men than women working in technical roles in the industry. These roles are typically higher-paid than non-technical ones due to an exceptionally competitive talent market and equity rates (Mullan, 2018; Runham, 2019/2020).

5.3.Objective 3: To identify different HR practices in big technology firms to reduce the gender pay gap in the United Kingdom.

The HR managers at Google UK, Microsoft UK and Meta UK are committed to reducing the gender pay gap and believe that every employee should be paid fairly and equitably, regardless of their gender or position within the company, by addressing and solving the leading cause of the gender pay gap, which is the Female representation gap. The Analysis below identifies the HR directors' practices in increasing females in their industries to reduce the gender pay gap. Also, showing its effectiveness, how it is similar and different in their industries.

HR managers at Google UK and Meta UK focus on creating an inclusive and diverse work environment for everyone (Harris 2018-2021; Runham, 2018-2021). Google UK diversity and inclusion strategy aims to improve representation and create an inclusive culture (Harris, 2018-2021). HR managers are ensuring to meet these goals by setting ambitious goals that are designed to ensure that the external pool is overseen by the DEI leadership Council and working with universities outreach focusing on engaging with women student groups.

Similarly, the international HR Runham (2020) at Meta noted that they regularly review and assess their diversity and inclusion strategy to ensure that they are inclusive to all. Also, they established external partnerships that help them hire more underrepresented women candidates, such as Everywoman, ColourinTech, and BYP. These initiatives have steadily increased the number of women hired by Meta from 23% to 24.1% (Runham and Kling, 2020). The hiring process is built on a diverse Slate Approach, which means they connect to as broad a pool of candidates as possible while ensuring their interviewers reflect the increasing women workforce at Meta (ibid). As a part of the continuous effort to create an inclusive workplace, HR managers are actively integrating inclusion into the various aspects of the Meta experience that matter to their employees; this includes employee onboarding, performance reviews, training, and product innovation (ibid).

As a result of HR managers efforts at Google UK to improve the representation of women in tech roles, Google UK's percentage of female leaders has increased from 35 % to 38 % (ibid). Besides this, this is in line with the company's commitment to invest in hiring more women as they saw an increase in women's representation in tech roles (ibid). Moreover, HR practices followed by the HR director to increase the female representation gap at Google UK:

HR managers at Google are working on increasing the number of women in technical and leadership roles by focusing on improving the representation of their workforce across the UK (ibid). Also, it includes creating and implementing recruitment teams specifically focused on hiring women (ibid).

Besides this, changes included in the recruitment system have upskilled above 300 new interviewers across EMEA to ensure that all job adverts go through a debiasing process to ensure that they are more inclusive and effective in attracting diverse candidates. Besides this, HR managers are working on improving an authentic representative culture where women can thrive by supporting women in tech through various initiatives (ibid) that prepare female students for a tech career; these include the women tech makers initiative and students with Disabilities (ibid).

Furthermore, Conference attendance remains a crucial venue for reaching talent from a wide variety of communities. In 2019, they increased the number of events focused on women in tech, and they also adapted their approach to include hiring workshops (ibid).

The HR managers at Google UK, Meta UK saw a positive impact on increasing female representation in their industry. The HR manager Harris (2018) at Google UK illustrated that female worker has increased from 34 % to 35 % in the past years (2018-2020). In comparison at Meta UK, The HR directors Mullan and Kling noted that in 2018 the number of female employees globally has increased from 35 % to 36 %. Women's number in leadership positions has also increased from

23 % to 30 % in the same year; comparing the number of women representations in 2020 to 2018, there was a significant increase from 31 % to 34 % (Runham and Kling, 2020).

HR director McHenry (2018) confirmed that Microsoft UK is committed to increasing the number of women in their workforce across all levels. This is a part due to the industry's significant pay gap and skills gap. The HR practices taken to reduce the gender pay gap at Microsoft have not been updated since 2018. As HR Winfield (2019/2020) and Tantawy (2021) noted that they saw a significant positive reduction in the gender pay gap by applying the HR practices below that has been demonstrated by the HR manager McHenry (2018).

HR Directors invest in programmers that help young women, and girls get into technology education. One example of this is the DegiGirlz program, which gives young women and girls get into education in subjects related to technology at an A level (McHenry, 2018). As a result, HR directors are constantly looking for new ways to improve their sourcing and processes; this includes adopting an inclusive interviewing process, hiring managers trained on unconscious bias, and rolling out inclusive hiring training for all Microsoft UK sources (ibid). Moreover, HR directors focus on transforming their culture by creating a culture that values everyone, which is foundational to Microsoft UK's mission

The figures below demonstrate percentages of increasing women representation at Microsoft UK from 2018-2021; as it has been noted by HR manager McHenry (2018), Winfield (2019/2020) and Tantawy (2021), The figures below show HR practices effectiveness in increasing female representation to reduce the gender pay gap at Microsoft UK.

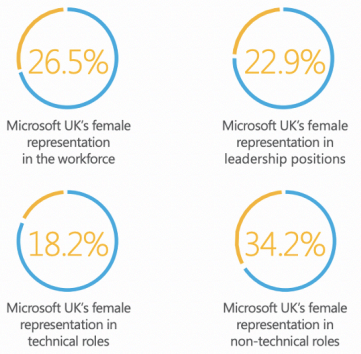


Figure 9- 2018.

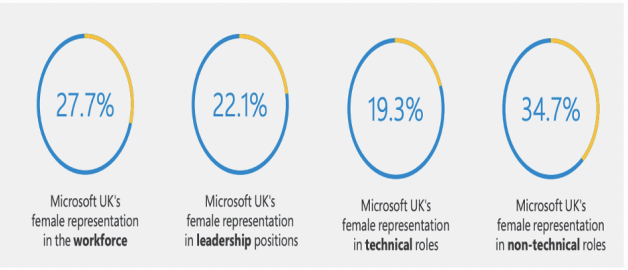


Figure 10 - 2019

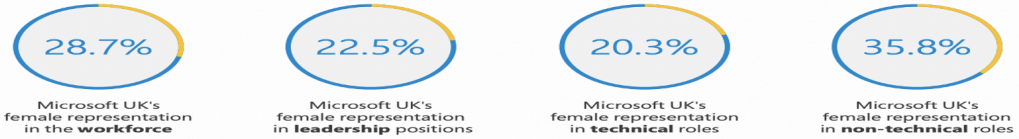


Figure 11 -2021

Female Representation at Microsoft UK (2018-2021)

6.Conclusion:

This research has investigated the gender pay gap at four of the biggest tech firms in the UK: Google, Facebook, and Microsoft. The findings above have shown the estimated gender pay gap over the years (2018-2021) in each tech firm that has been discussed in the analysis. It has analysed the reasons behind the gender pay gap and the actions that have been taken to reduce the gender pay gap. Additionally, this study has discussed several studies and theoretical concepts.

After deep research and analysis, it has been shown that these theories have shown the causes and explored the different aspects of the gender pay gap, which are Human Capital theory (Becker, 1993, cited in Blau and Kahn, 2017), Glass Ceiling (Gloud, Jessica and Kathleen, 2016) and Undervaluation theory (Grimshaw and Rubery,2007, cited in Brynin, 2017).

The result from the analysis above, the Human Resources managers (2018-2021) at Google, Microsoft, and Facebook have pointed out that the main reason for the

gender pay gap is the female representation gap at their firms. However, the Human Resources managers at Microsoft have distinguished another cause of the gender pay gap in their firm: the skills gap between both genders. Furthermore, the challenge in their organisations has a strong link between the gender gap and the gender pay gap because more men than women (gender gap) cause the pay gap.

Additionally, the figures data analysed above showed that the gender pay gap in Microsoft is significantly less compared to the gender pay gap in the other UK based tech companies analysed above. Besides this, the HR practices that have been taken in each firm are similar, but it still shows fluctuation over the years in terms of reducing the gender pay gap.

Moreover, these tech firms are increasing the pay each year for women to reduce the gender pay gap but also, they increase the pay for men, which lead to a continued gender pay gap for the upcoming years. It has been professed that there is no quick fix to the representation issue as it is a challenge faced by all companies in tech industries. Despite the challenges, the HR practices that have been applied have slightly narrowed the gender pay gap but not significantly. However, Human Resources are still committed to focusing on reducing the gap.

6.1 Limitation:

Although this research is based on the collection of secondary data with insightful and accurate information about analysis gender pay gap at big tech firms in the UK, the findings of this study have to be seen in the light of some limitations, which are: time constraints and word count limit that led on focusing only on four big firms in the UK.

In order to provide specific information, this research considered only four big tech companies in the UK technology sector. This means that more research could be conducted in the future to establish a more holistic review of this topic. In addition, the methodologies of smaller tech firms on this matter should not be overlooked;

however, given the time constraints and word count limit, this could not have also been included and researched.

6.2 Recommendation:

For further research, the Human Resources managers should consider practices to have a balanced workplace in terms of having 50 % women and 50 % men that will significantly reduce the gender pay gap and close the gender pay gap in the future.

Some of the HR practices that have been applied by the HR manager in big tech firms that have been analysed in the findings are offering mentoring and sponsorship, improving workplace flexibility for both genders, offering networking programmes. The Government Equalities Office (no date) has argued that these HR practices are promising. They require more research to improve their effectiveness, and the government is currently evaluating their efficiency. Besides this, the government recommend that HR managers evaluate their practices.

It has been recommended by the Government Equalities Office (no date) for HR managers to reduce the gender pay gap as these practices have a positive impact on reducing gender equality; some other practices that could be used to reduce the gender pay gap are utilising diversity training to raise awareness and encouraging salary negotiation by showing salary ranges.

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