

WORKFORCE GENDER DISPARITIES:
A CROSS-NATIONAL ANALYSIS OF SWITZERLAND, THE UNITED STATES,
AND SINGAPORE

by

Grace Yip

DISSERTATION

Presented to the Swiss School of Business and Management Geneva

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements

For the Degree

DOCTOR OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

SWISS SCHOOL OF BUSINESS AND MANAGEMENT GENEVA

April, 2026

WORKFORCE GENDER DISPARITIES:
A CROSS-NATIONAL ANALYSIS OF SWITZERLAND, THE UNITED STATES,
AND SINGAPORE

by

Grace Yip

Supervised by

HARA Masatoshi, Ph.D., DBA, Ed.D., Honorary Ph.D.

APPROVED BY

Ava Buljubasic

Dissertation chair

RECEIVED/APPROVED BY:

Rense Goldstein Osmic

Admissions Director

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my family and friends, whose unwavering support, patience, and encouragement sustained me throughout this journey. Their belief in my ability never wavered, even during moments of doubt and fatigue. I am deeply grateful for their sacrifices and understanding, which made this work possible.

I also dedicate this thesis to my mentors and supervisors, whose guidance, intellectual challenge, and generosity of time shaped my thinking and strengthened my resolve. Finally, this work is dedicated to all those who strive for equity and insight through scholarship, and whose efforts continue to inspire meaningful change.

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my mentor, Dr. Masatoshi Hara (**Dr Masa**), for his unwavering support, patience, and guidance throughout this research journey. His insightful feedback, encouragement, and belief in my potential were instrumental in shaping this thesis and sustaining my motivation during challenging moments. I am also sincerely thankful to the **SSBM community**, whose academic rigor, collegial spirit, and culture of mutual support created an enriching environment for learning and growth. The collective engagement of faculty, peers, and staff has greatly contributed to both my professional development and the successful completion of this work.

ABSTRACT

WORKFORCE GENDER DISPARITIES:
A CROSS-NATIONAL ANALYSIS OF SWITZERLAND, THE UNITED STATES,
AND SINGAPORE

Grace Yip
2026

Dissertation Chair: <Chair's Name>
Co-Chair: <If applicable. Co-Chair's Name>

Gender gaps in workforce participation, leadership, and pay persist even in high-income economies; however, their underlying drivers and effective policy responses vary significantly across national contexts. This study comparatively examines Switzerland, the United States, and Singapore to investigate how cultural expectations and institutional capacity jointly shape gender parity outcomes and their broader socioeconomic implications. Grounded in Social Role Theory and Institutional Theory, the study addresses two key research questions: (1) which cultural and institutional factors influence the transfer and effectiveness of gender parity policies across Western and Asian contexts; and (2) how gender-related labour market conditions are associated with income inequality. An explanatory sequential mixed-method design based on secondary data is employed. The qualitative phase involves document analysis of approximately 50–60 sources—including

policy documents, institutional reports, academic literature, and media discourse—across multiple sectors, using thematic coding to identify recurring patterns in governance, organisational practices, and social norms. The quantitative phase applies cross-national panel regression analysis using country-year observations from 40 countries over a 20-year period (2005–2024) to examine the relationship between the Gini coefficient and key gender-related indicators, including female labour force participation, women’s empowerment, gender wage discrepancy, and women’s leadership representation. Qualitative findings are subsequently used to interpret and contextualise statistical results. The findings highlight the critical importance of alignment between institutional “hardware” and cultural “software.” While coherent legal frameworks, effective enforcement mechanisms, and supportive policies—such as childcare provision and parental leave—facilitate progress, their impact is often constrained by persistent gender norms that shape caregiving responsibilities and leadership expectations. Quantitative results further support this interpretation, indicating that higher levels of women’s empowerment, labour force participation, and leadership representation are associated with lower income inequality, whereas larger gender wage gaps correspond to higher inequality. The study concludes that achieving sustainable gender parity requires more than policy adoption alone. Effective interventions must integrate institutional enforcement, supportive social infrastructure, and organisational practices that mitigate role-congruity bias and strengthen leadership pipelines. By providing a comparative and theoretically grounded analysis, this research offers context-sensitive yet policy-relevant insights for advancing gender equality across diverse institutional environments.

Keywords: Gender Disparity; Income Inequality; Institutional Theory; Social Role Theory; Switzerland; United States; Singapore

TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Tables	xi
List of Figures	xii
CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1 Background of the Study	1
1.2 Research Problems.....	3
1.3 Research Purposes	4
1.4 Research Questions (RQs) and Hypotheses.....	7
1.5 Theoretical and Conceptual Frameworks	8
1.6 Executive Summary of the Methodology	9
1.7 Nature of the Study	12
1.8 Definitions	13
1.9 Assumptions	16
1.10 Scope and Definitions	19
1.11 Limitations	21
1.12 Significance of the Study	21
1.13 Chapter Summary and Transition	23
CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF LITERATURE	25
2.1 Introduction.....	25
2.2 Proposed Conceptual Frameworks	27
2.3 Literature Review.....	37
2.4 Identification of Study Gaps	58
2.5 Research Purposes	59
2.6 Research Questions (RQs)	60
2.7 Chapter Summary and Transition	60
CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY	63
3.1 Introduction.....	63
3.2 Methodology for RQ1	64
3.3 Methodology for RQ2.....	76
3.4 Chapter Summary and Transition	92
CHAPTER IV: RESULTS.....	95
4.1 Introduction.....	95
4.2 Data Collection Results.....	97
4.3 Results of RQ1	101
4.4 Results for RQ2: Explanatory Sequential Mixed-Method Design	110

4.5 Integration and Synthesis of Results from RQ1 and RQ2	129
4.6 Chapter Summary and Transition	132
CHAPTER V: DISCUSSION.....	134
5.1 Introduction.....	134
5.2 Overview of Findings and Answer to Research Questions (RQs).....	135
5.3 Theoretical Implications	138
5.4 Practical Implications.....	140
5.5 Chapter Summary and Transition	153
CHAPTER VI: CONCLUSION	155
6.1 Introduction.....	155
6.2 Summary of Key Findings by Research Questions	156
6.3 Theoretical Contributions	157
6.4 Methodological Contributions	159
6.5 Limitations and Future Research	160
6.6 Final Wrap-up	161
REFERENCES	164
APPENDIX A LIST OF DOCUMENTS FOR QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS	183

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1 Comparison of Parental Leave Policies, Gender Parity, and Work-Life Balance Across Regions	38
Table 2 Development of gender pay gap in Switzerland, California and Singapore from the period of 2014 to 2024	41
Table 3 Comparative Table: Gender Parity Approaches Across Countries	44
Table 4 Overview of women representation in politics, board, executive leaderships roles and education sector.....	51
Table 5 An overview of institutional practices, leadership culture and workforce equality.....	72
Table 6 An overview of source and operationalisation data.....	81
Table 7 An overview of Independent Variables (IV) and Dependent Variable (DV)s.....	84
Table 8 Integration of Quantitative and Qualitative explanations	88
Table 9 Summarizing the gender equality policies and measurements of gender parity in the United States, Switzerland, and Singapore.....	99
Table 10 Summary of literature counts for each central category	100
Table 11 Summary Statistics, using the observations with Gretl.	111
Table 12 Output of panel regression output conducted with Gretl.	113
Table 13 Summary of literatures counts for each central category.	117
Table 14 An overview of policies in addressing Gender Disparities in Developing Countries	144
Table 15 Case Studies of MNCs showcasing Equitable Workplace Strategies.....	149

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1 A Proposed Institutional Capacity and Governance Mechanisms framework	28
Figure 2 Integration of Social Role Theory and Role Congruity Theory	33
Figure 3 Summary of groundedness (Gr) for the top 4 central categories identified in each category (Public Policies, Cultural Expectations, Institutional Support and Socioeconomic)	103
Figure 4 Summary of groundedness for the top 3 central categories identified in each category (Leadership Development, Compensation Disparities, Intersectional Disparities)	118

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Gender disparities in workforce participation and leadership persist globally, impacting economic growth, organisational efficiency, and social cohesion. Despite legislative reforms and policy efforts, unequal access to employment, leadership, and resources remains prevalent in regions like North America, Western Europe, and Southeast Asia. The manuscript “Workforce Gender Disparities: A Cross-national Analysis of Switzerland, the United States, and Singapore” examines structural and cultural factors underlying these disparities using Social Role Theory and Institutional Theory.

Social Role Theory, proposed by Eagly and Wood (1991), explains how societal norms shape individual behaviours, career preferences, and leadership ambitions. It highlights the historical division of labour, where men are associated with assertiveness and women with empathy, influencing perceptions of competence and leadership potential. Institutional Theory focuses on formal and informal arrangements, including laws, policies, and organisational norms, that can reinforce gender hierarchies or promote transformative changes through effective governance.

Institutional capacity and governance mechanisms are crucial in addressing gender disparities. Institutional capacity involves the structures, resources, and authority needed for effective policy implementation, ensuring coordinated governance, adaptability, and

enforcement of gender equality mandates. Governance mechanisms encompass decision-making processes, transparency, accountability, and stakeholder engagement, ensuring policies remain coherent and responsive to societal needs. Key dimensions include policy alignment across governance levels, institutional strength, stakeholder inclusion, and continuous feedback for policy refinement. Cultural norms significantly influence gender roles in the workforce, reinforcing gender-specific expectations through socialisation from a young age through family, education, media, and organisational practices. Concepts like Role Congruity Theory highlight prejudices faced when individuals deviate from traditional gender roles, particularly in leadership. The “glass ceiling” and “labyrinth” metaphors illustrate the invisible barriers and complex pathways that hinder women’s advancement to senior roles. Intersectionality further complicates these experiences, as race, socioeconomic status, and other identities intersect with gender, influencing bias and discrimination.

Global gender dynamics vary. In Europe, progressive policies like board quotas and parental leave coexist with cultural norms that limit their impact, especially in executive leadership. The US has fragmented policies and cultural stereotypes about leadership and work-life balance, which persist gender gaps. Singapore has merit-based advancement strategies supported by government advocacy, but traditional gender roles and caregiving expectations remain barriers. Japan’s corporate culture reflects deep-rooted traditional gender roles, with policies promoting equality often facing resistance. Sweden leads in gender equality with progressive norms and policies, but occupational segregation persists.

Policy implementation varies. Gender quotas have improved women's board representation in Europe, while voluntary targets in Singapore promote gradual change. Parental leave policies in Europe support work-life balance but may reinforce gendered caregiving roles. In contrast, limited leave policies in the US and cultural barriers in Southeast Asia hinder effectiveness. Pay equity policies, including transparency rules, enhance accountability but struggle to address structural inequalities, with wage gaps reflecting cultural biases and occupational segregation.

Gender disparities in workforce participation and leadership persist globally, influenced by cultural norms, institutional structures, and policy effectiveness. Combining Social Role Theory with Institutional Theory provides a robust framework to understand these complexities. Insights from diverse regions highlight the need for coordinated governance, institutional capacity, cultural transformation, and sustained advocacy for gender parity. This study contributes to ongoing scholarly discussions, identifying critical research gaps such as cross-cultural studies, intersectional analyses, and policy impact evaluations.

This study explores gender disparities in workforce participation and leadership roles across North America, Western Europe, and Southeast Asia, focusing on Switzerland, the USA, and Singapore. Using Social Role Theory and Institutional Theory, it examines how formal institutions and informal cultural expectations shape gender parity outcomes. By investigating institutional policies, governance systems, and cultural norms, the study aims to identify mechanisms driving gender disparities and inform policies promoting inclusive leadership and gender equality.

1.2 Research Problems

Despite sustained global attention and extensive policy initiatives aimed at promoting gender equality, substantial disparities in workforce participation and leadership representation persist across regions. These enduring gaps indicate that existing approaches have not been uniformly effective and that deeper structural, cultural, and institutional challenges remain insufficiently understood. This study addresses three interrelated research problems that are particularly salient in comparative and cross-national contexts.

First, there is a policy transfer problem concerning the adaptation of gender parity policies from Western to Asian contexts. Many gender equality frameworks and governance mechanisms originate in Western institutional environments and are later introduced into Asian settings with different cultural norms, labour market structures, and governance traditions. However, insufficient attention has been paid to how cultural expectations, social roles, and institutional arrangements shape the reception, implementation, and effectiveness of these policies outside their original contexts. This gap limits the practical applicability of gender parity initiatives and raises critical questions about how such policies can be meaningfully adapted rather than merely transplanted.

Second, there is an intersectional inequality problem in understanding gender disparities in leadership and compensation. Gender inequality does not operate in isolation but intersects with other structural dimensions such as socioeconomic status and race. Existing research often treats gender as a singular category, overlooking how overlapping social positions

compound disadvantage in access to leadership roles and economic rewards. This lack of intersectional analysis constrains the explanatory power of empirical studies and hampers the development of targeted, evidence-based interventions.

Third, there is a policy effectiveness problem related to the outcomes of existing gender parity measures. While numerous countries have implemented legal, organisational, and policy-based initiatives to promote gender equality, systematic evaluation of their effectiveness across different institutional and cultural environments remains limited. Without robust comparative assessment, it is difficult to identify which mechanisms produce meaningful change, which are symbolic, and where persistent gaps continue to undermine progress toward gender parity.

Together, these research problems underscore the need for a comparative, theoretically grounded investigation that integrates cultural, institutional, and socioeconomic perspectives. Addressing these issues provides the foundation for the study's research questions and informs the selection of a mixed-method approach capable of capturing both structural patterns and contextual explanations.

1.3 Research Purposes

The primary purpose of this research is to advance understanding of how gender disparities in workforce participation, leadership, and compensation are shaped by the interaction of cultural, institutional, and socioeconomic factors across different national contexts. Focusing on Switzerland, the United States, and Singapore, the study seeks to contribute to both

theoretical and empirical debates on gender equality by adopting a comparative and multi-level perspective.

First, the research aims to examine the cultural and institutional factors that influence the adaptation and effectiveness of gender parity policies across Western and Asian contexts. By analysing how governance structures, policy frameworks, and social norms interact within different national settings, the study seeks to identify why similar gender parity initiatives produce divergent outcomes across countries.

Second, the study aims to investigate how intersecting social factors—particularly gender and socioeconomic status—shape disparities in workforce leadership and compensation. Rather than treating gender inequality as a singular phenomenon, the research explores how structural inequalities operate in combination, offering a more nuanced understanding of persistent gaps in leadership representation and economic outcomes.

Third, the research seeks to generate empirically grounded insights that can inform future policy and organisational strategies aimed at promoting gender equality. By integrating qualitative documentary analysis with cross-national quantitative analysis, the study aims to provide evidence that supports more context-sensitive and institutionally grounded approaches to gender parity, without presupposing one-size-fits-all solutions.

Overall, the purpose of this research is not to prescribe immediate policy interventions, but to build a robust analytical foundation that clarifies the mechanisms through which gender disparities are produced and sustained across different institutional and cultural

environments. The findings are intended to support subsequent discussion of policy implications and practical applications in later chapters of the dissertation.

1.4 Research Questions (RQs) and Hypotheses

RQ1: What cultural and institutional factors influence the adaptation of gender parity policies from Western to Asian contexts, especially in Switzerland, United States, and Singapore?

RQ2: How do intersecting identities (e.g., race and socioeconomic status) shape gender disparities in workforce leadership and compensation across the national contexts of Switzerland, the United States, and Singapore?

H₀: Gender-related labour market factors (e.g., gender wage gap, female labour force participation, women's empowerment, and women's representation in PMET occupations) have no statistically significant effect on income inequality across countries.

H₁: Gender-related labour market factors (e.g., gender wage gap, female labour force participation, women's empowerment, and women's representation in PMET occupations) have statistically significant effect on income inequality across countries.

Dependent Variable (DV)

- Gini coefficient (income inequality)

Independent Variables (IVs)

- Female labor force participation (FLFP)
- Women empowerment (WE)
- Wage Discrepancy (WD)
- Women in leadership (WIL)

The hypotheses are tested quantitatively through cross-national regression analysis, while qualitative document analysis is subsequently used to explain observed variations across national institutional and cultural contexts.

1.5 Theoretical and Conceptual Frameworks

The study is grounded in two key theoretical frameworks, institutional theory and social role theory.

This theory delves into the intricate ways in which both formal and informal institutional arrangements, such as laws, policies, and governance mechanisms, play a crucial role in shaping opportunities for gender parity. It examines how these structures can either facilitate or hinder progress towards gender equality. Institutional Theory also explores the variations in policy effectiveness, attributing these differences to factors such as institutional capacity, governance structures, and the level of stakeholder engagement. By understanding these dynamics, policymakers can better design and implement strategies that effectively address gender disparities.

Social Role Theory focuses on the impact of cultural norms and societal expectations on individual behaviours, career aspirations, and leadership opportunities. It posits that these cultural scripts are deeply ingrained and can persist even when formal equality policies are in place. This theory highlights how societal expectations can limit individuals' roles and opportunities based on gender, thereby perpetuating gender disparities. By examining these cultural influences, Social Role Theory provides insights into the challenges faced in achieving true gender equality and the need for cultural change alongside policy reform.

By integrating Institutional Theory with Social Role Theory, a comprehensive lens is created to analyse gender disparities. This framework combines the structural insights of Institutional Theory with the cultural dynamics captured by Social Role Theory, offering a more holistic understanding of the factors influencing gender equality. It helps to explain why similar policies may produce different outcomes across diverse contexts, as it considers both the institutional structures and cultural norms at play. This integrated approach is valuable for developing targeted interventions that address both structural and cultural barriers to gender parity, ultimately leading to more effective and sustainable change.

Ultimately, Institutional Theory explains the 'rules and structures', while Social Role Theory explains the 'norms and expectations'—together they explain variation in gender parity outcomes.

1.6 Executive Summary of the Methodology

This study employs a Mixed-Method (Explanatory Sequential) Design, which is a robust approach that combines both quantitative and qualitative research methods to provide a comprehensive understanding of the research questions. The design is structured to first conduct a qualitative phase, followed by a quantitative phase, allowing for the explanation and exploration of patterns identified in the quantitative data. The study focuses exclusively on secondary data, which is data that has already been collected and is available for analysis. This approach is particularly advantageous for cross-national studies, as it allows for the examination of data from multiple countries without the need for primary data collection, which can be resource-intensive and time-consuming.

The research specifically examines gender disparities in workforce participation and leadership within three countries: Switzerland, the USA, and Singapore. By adopting a cross-national comparative design, the study aims to identify key patterns and trends that may vary across different cultural and institutional contexts. This comparative approach is crucial for understanding how gender parity policies are adapted and implemented in different countries, particularly when considering the transition from Western to Asian contexts.

1.6.1 For RQ 1

RQ 1: What cultural and institutional factors influence the adaptation of gender parity policies from Western to Asian contexts, especially in Switzerland, USA, and Singapore?

ATLAS.ti is a software tool that is extensively utilised for qualitative data coding and thematic analysis. It enables researchers to delve into and interpret qualitative data through the use of case studies and thematic exploration, providing a comprehensive framework for

understanding complex data sets. The study in question is guided by two primary research questions, each of which is addressed through a combination of quantitative and qualitative research methods. The first research question, RQ1, seeks to understand what cultural and institutional factors influence the adaptation of gender parity policies from Western to Asian contexts, with a particular focus on Switzerland, the USA, and Singapore. To address this question, the study employs both quantitative and qualitative approaches. The quantitative method involves the use of descriptive and inferential statistics, where secondary datasets on gender parity indicators are analysed to identify statistical patterns and correlations across different countries. This phase is crucial for understanding the general trends and differences in gender parity policies. Complementing this, the qualitative method involves document analysis, where policy documents and organisational reports are examined to provide in-depth case studies. These case studies serve to explain the statistical findings, offering insights into the cultural and institutional factors that influence policy adaptation. The data sources for this study include secondary datasets on gender parity indicators, as well as policy documents and organisational reports. The overarching purpose of the study is to identify statistical patterns and correlations across countries and to explain these findings through detailed case studies, with a particular emphasis on the cultural and institutional influences that shape the adaptation of gender parity policies.

1.6.2 For RQ 2

RQ2: How do intersecting identities (e.g., race and socioeconomic status) shape gender disparities in workforce leadership and compensation across the national contexts of Switzerland, the United States, and Singapore?

The study investigates how intersecting identities, such as race and socioeconomic status, influence gender disparities in workforce leadership and compensation across Switzerland, the United States, and Singapore. It employs a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative regression analysis with qualitative thematic analysis. The quantitative phase examines socioeconomic and leadership representation data to assess the impact of intersectional factors on gender outcomes, while the qualitative phase uses academic literature and cultural analyses to contextualise these trends with cultural and institutional insights. The study follows a sequential integration strategy, where quantitative findings guide case selection for qualitative exploration, allowing for a nuanced understanding of the disparities. The use of secondary data is justified by the study's cross-national scope, enabling comprehensive comparisons across different cultural and institutional contexts. The data are sourced from reputable and validated sources, enhancing credibility and reliability, and triangulation is employed to control for bias, ensuring a balanced and accurate analysis. This robust, multi-layered methodological approach leverages the strengths of both quantitative and qualitative data to provide comprehensive insights into the factors influencing gender parity in workforce and leadership positions across the selected countries.

1.7 Nature of the Study

This study adopts a comparative, cross-national research design to examine gender disparities in workforce participation, leadership, and compensation across three national contexts: Switzerland, the United States, and Singapore. These countries are selected to represent

different institutional, cultural, and socio-economic environments, enabling systematic comparison across Western and Asian settings.

The research is based exclusively on secondary data sources, including publicly available policy documents, institutional reports, international datasets, and peer-reviewed academic literature. The use of secondary data is appropriate given the cross-national scope of the study and allows for robust comparison while minimising ethical and access-related constraints.

Methodologically, the study employs a mixed-method design, integrating qualitative and quantitative approaches in a complementary manner. Qualitative analysis is used to examine institutional and cultural contexts, while quantitative analysis is applied to explore statistical relationships between gender-related indicators and income inequality across countries. The integration of these approaches enables a comprehensive understanding of both structural patterns and contextual mechanisms shaping gender disparities.

Overall, the nature of this study is exploratory and explanatory, aiming to deepen understanding of how institutional frameworks and cultural norms interact to influence gender outcomes in different national contexts. Detailed methodological procedures, data sources, and analytical techniques are presented in Chapter 3.

1.8 Definitions

1. Gender Parity: The state in which individuals of all genders have equal access to resources, opportunities, and decision-making power in political, economic, and social spheres (UN Women, 2025).
2. Gender wage gap (%): Gender wage gap is the difference between the median earnings of men and of women relative to the median earnings of men. Estimates of earnings used in the calculations generally refer to unadjusted gross earnings of full-time wage and salary workers. This indicator is measured as a percentage of median earnings of men. (OECD, 2025). For example, as of 2024, women globally earned approximately 83 cents for every dollar earned by men, indicating a gender pay gap of 17%.
3. Gini Coefficient: A statistical measure of income inequality within a population, ranging from 0 (perfect equality) to 1 (maximum inequality) (World Bank, 2025).
4. Institutional Theory: A concept that explains how institutional structures, rules, norms, and routines influence social behaviour and outcomes (Scott, 2001).
5. Intersectionality: A framework for understanding how aspects of a person's social and political identities combine to create different modes of discrimination and privilege (Crenshaw, 1989).
6. Social Role Theory: A theory that suggests gender differences result from the contrasting roles society allocates to men and women (Eagly, 1987).

7. Women Empowerment Index (WEI, 0 - 1): Women empowerment index (WEI, 0 - 1): Women's Empowerment Index (WEI) Measures women's power and choices in five dimensions: Health, Education, Labour/Finance, Decision-Making, and Freedom from Violence, focusing on empowerment outcomes. Interpreting a Women's Empowerment Index (WEI) means looking at scores (usually 0-1, higher is better) across key areas like health, education, finance, and decision-making. (UNDP, 2025). The index is a composite measure across five key dimensions: Life and Good Health: Measured by modern contraception access and adolescent birth rates. Education, Skill-Building, and Knowledge: Assessed by female secondary school attainment and the female population not in education, employment, or training. Labor and Financial Inclusion: Gauged by female labor force participation in households with young children and female financial account ownership. Participation in Decision-Making: Measured by the share of seats held by women in national parliament, local government, and managerial positions. Freedom from Violence: Assessed by the prevalence of intimate partner violence among ever-partnered women and girls (this is the first time a UN gender index includes violence as a standalone dimension).
8. Women in Leadership (WIL, %): Women's leadership representation is measured by the percentage of women in leadership roles within organisations. This data, sourced from company reports, government statistics, and global organisations, helps identify gender gaps and track progress towards gender equality (Catalyst, 2025).

9. Female labor force participation (FLFP, %): The women's workforce participation rate is the percentage of women (typically aged 15+) who are employed or actively looking for work (the labor force), compared to the total female working-age population. It measures women's economic activity, reflecting factors like education, societal norms, childcare, and economic conditions, and is crucial for understanding labor supply, policy impact, and gender equality.

1.9 Assumptions

This study is grounded in several theoretical, methodological, and contextual assumptions that frame the scope, interpretation, and limitations of the research. Explicitly stating these assumptions enhances transparency and supports the validity of cross-national comparison.

1.9.1 Theoretical Assumptions

First, the study assumes that Social Role Theory and Institutional Theory provide appropriate and complementary lenses for analysing gender disparities in workforce participation, leadership, and compensation. Social Role Theory is assumed to adequately explain how culturally embedded expectations and norms influence gendered behaviour and career outcomes, while Institutional Theory is assumed to capture the role of formal rules, policies, and governance structures in shaping organisational and labour-market outcomes. The study assumes that these theories are applicable across different national and cultural contexts, even though their manifestations may vary.

1.9.2. Methodological Assumptions

Second, the study assumes that secondary data sources used in both the qualitative and quantitative phases are credible, accurate, and methodologically robust. These sources include international databases, government publications, policy reports, and peer-reviewed academic literature. While acknowledging that no dataset is entirely free from bias, the research assumes that the use of internationally recognised sources and triangulation across multiple datasets mitigates systematic distortion.

The study further assumes that cross-national comparison using secondary data is methodologically appropriate for examining broad structural and institutional patterns. It is assumed that differences in data collection procedures across countries do not invalidate comparative analysis, provided that indicators are clearly defined, consistently operationalised, and interpreted with contextual sensitivity.

1.9.3 Measurement and Operationalisation Assumptions

Third, the study assumes that key constructs—such as gender equality, income inequality, socioeconomic status, and leadership representation—are sufficiently standardised across datasets to allow meaningful comparison. Indicators such as the Gini coefficient and global gender equality indices are assumed to validly represent the underlying theoretical concepts, even though they may not capture all dimensions of lived experience or informal labour-market dynamics.

The study also assumes that aggregated national-level indicators can meaningfully reflect broader structural conditions affecting individuals and organisations, while recognising that such indicators cannot fully capture micro-level variation.

1.9.4. Contextual and Comparative Assumptions

Fourth, the research assumes that Switzerland, the United States, and Singapore, despite their distinct political systems, cultural traditions, and economic structures, are suitable cases for comparative analysis. The study assumes that examining differences across these contexts provides analytical value by revealing how institutional and cultural configurations shape gender outcomes differently, rather than undermining comparability.

Additionally, the study assumes that policy documents, institutional reports, and public discourse meaningfully reflect dominant governance priorities and organisational practices within each national context, even though they may not fully represent informal or marginalised perspectives.

1.9.5 Interpretive Assumptions

Finally, the study assumes that observed statistical relationships and qualitative patterns reflect structural and institutional dynamics, rather than simple causal mechanisms. The research does not assume direct causality but interprets associations as indicative of broader systemic relationships that warrant contextual explanation.

Taken together, these assumptions delimit the analytical boundaries of the study while providing a transparent foundation for interpreting its findings. By explicitly acknowledging

these assumptions, the research aims to enhance analytical rigour, methodological coherence, and interpretive clarity.

1.10 Scope and Delimitations

The scope of this study is to examine gender disparities in workforce participation, leadership representation, and income inequality through the combined lenses of Social Role Theory and Institutional Theory. The research focuses on three countries with distinct socio-political and institutional contexts—Switzerland, the United States, and Singapore—to enable cross-national comparison across Western Europe, North America, and Southeast Asia. The study adopts a mixed-methods design, integrating qualitative document analysis with quantitative statistical analysis, including multiple regression modelling, to capture both structural patterns and contextual explanations of gender inequality.

The analytical scope encompasses key dimensions of inequality, including gender equality, income inequality (measured primarily through the Gini coefficient), leadership representation, and selected socioeconomic indicators. While the study acknowledges the relevance of intersecting identities, such as race and socioeconomic status, intersectionality is treated in an analytically simplified and operationalised manner. This approach ensures methodological coherence, particularly within the quantitative phase, where interaction terms and proxy indicators are used to examine compounded effects without overextending the conceptual complexity of intersectionality beyond what large-scale secondary data can reliably support.

Several delimitations define the boundaries of this research. First, the study is geographically limited to Switzerland, the United States, and Singapore. While these cases provide meaningful institutional and cultural contrast, the findings are not intended to be statistically generalisable to all countries or regions.

Second, the quantitative analysis draws on secondary data covering the period from 2005 to 2024, subject to data availability and consistency across sources. The qualitative document analysis similarly relies on materials published within this timeframe, which may limit the inclusion of very recent policy developments or emerging institutional reforms.

Third, the study relies exclusively on publicly available secondary data, including international databases, policy documents, institutional reports, and academic literature. Primary data collection methods, such as interviews or surveys, are intentionally excluded to maintain cross-national comparability and to avoid context-specific respondent bias.

Fourth, the qualitative analysis is delimited to approximately 50–60 documents per research question, selected from specific business-related and policy-relevant sectors. While this focused approach supports depth and analytical clarity, it may not capture the full diversity of sector-specific practices or informal organisational dynamics.

Finally, although the study examines intersecting dimensions of inequality—specifically gender, race, and socioeconomic status—it does not fully encompass other identity dimensions such as disability, sexual orientation, or migration status. These exclusions are intentional and necessary to preserve analytical feasibility and methodological alignment across the mixed-method design.

1.11 Limitations

Data limitations include relying on secondary data, which may introduce biases from original data collection methods like outdated information, reporting biases, or incomplete datasets. Cross-cultural interpretation can affect gender concept interpretation, leading to misinterpretations when applying Western theories to Asian contexts. Measurement inconsistencies across countries can affect the comparability of indicators like the Gini coefficient, gender equality indices, and leadership representation metrics. Causality is limited by the correlational and document-based nature of the study. Findings from Switzerland, the USA, and Singapore may not be generalisable to other countries with different socio-economic, political, or cultural environments.

1.12 Significance of the Study

This study makes several important contributions to the literature on gender inequality, institutional governance, and workforce leadership by offering a structured and comparative analysis across Switzerland, the United States, and Singapore. By integrating Social Role Theory and Institutional Theory, the research advances theoretical understanding of how cultural norms and formal institutional arrangements jointly shape gender disparities in leadership and compensation across distinct socio-political contexts.

From an academic perspective, the study contributes to comparative gender research by systematically examining policy adaptation and institutional variation across Western and Asian contexts. It extends existing scholarship by moving beyond single-country or regionally bounded analyses and by empirically linking gender equality indicators to broader socioeconomic outcomes, including income inequality. In doing so, the study provides a clearer understanding of how gender disparities are embedded within wider structural and economic systems.

From a methodological perspective, the research demonstrates the value of a mixed-methods approach based entirely on secondary data. The integration of cross-national quantitative analysis with qualitative document interpretation offers a replicable framework for examining complex social phenomena where primary data collection may be impractical or ethically constrained. The study also contributes methodologically by operationalising intersectional dimensions in a structured and analytically manageable manner, ensuring coherence between theory, data, and empirical techniques.

From a policy and practical perspective, the findings offer evidence-based insights into the design, transferability, and effectiveness of gender parity policies across different institutional environments. By identifying conditions under which gender equality initiatives are more or less effective, the study provides policymakers, international organisations, and business leaders with comparative insights that can inform more adaptive and context-sensitive policy frameworks.

Finally, the study establishes a foundation for future research by highlighting areas where further empirical investigation is needed, particularly in relation to longitudinal policy effects, sector-specific dynamics, and additional dimensions of inequality not fully captured in the present analysis. Overall, this research contributes to a more nuanced and institutionally grounded understanding of gender disparities, supporting both scholarly advancement and informed policy development in the pursuit of more inclusive and equitable labour markets.

1.13 Chapter Summary and Transition

This chapter has introduced the foundation of the study by outlining the research context, key problem areas, and the rationale for examining gender disparities in workforce participation, leadership, and compensation across Switzerland, the United States, and Singapore. It clarified the significance of these disparities within broader cultural, institutional, and socioeconomic environments and established the relevance of the study to both academic research and policy-oriented practice.

Chapter 1 also articulated the study's research purposes and research questions, grounding them within the theoretical perspectives of Social Role Theory and Institutional Theory. These frameworks provide the conceptual basis for understanding how gender norms and institutional arrangements interact to shape unequal outcomes in leadership and compensation. In addition, the chapter defined the scope, assumptions, and delimitations of

the research, ensuring transparency regarding the analytical boundaries and methodological choices underpinning the study.

Building on this foundation, Chapter 2 will present a comprehensive review of the relevant literature. It will examine prior theoretical and empirical studies on gender inequality, institutional governance, policy transfer, and workforce leadership, with particular attention to cross-national and intersectional perspectives. The literature review will identify key debates, empirical gaps, and unresolved issues that directly inform the research design and methodological approach developed in Chapter 3. Chapter 4 presents the empirical findings of the study, including both qualitative and quantitative results. Chapter 5 provides an in-depth discussion of these findings, interpreting them in relation to the theoretical frameworks and existing literature. Finally, Chapter 6 concludes the study by summarizing key insights, outlining theoretical and methodological contributions, and suggesting directions for future research.

CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1. Introduction

Gender disparities in workforce participation and leadership remain a persistent global challenge, manifesting in unequal access to employment opportunities, decision-making roles, and organisational resources. These disparities are not merely matters of individual opportunity or social justice—they have far-reaching implications for economic development, organisational effectiveness, and societal well-being. Extensive research demonstrates that societies with higher levels of gender equity achieve stronger innovation, competitiveness, and social cohesion. Conversely, persistent gender gaps can hinder economic growth, exacerbate poverty, and entrench structural inequalities. Addressing gender disparities is therefore not only a moral imperative but also a strategic priority for sustainable development and global prosperity.

This chapter seeks to investigate the structural and cultural mechanisms that underpin gender disparities, with particular attention to their influence on women's workforce participation and leadership advancement. It is anchored in two theoretical frameworks that together provide a comprehensive lens for analysis.

Social Role Theory (Eagly & Wood, 1991) explains how long-standing cultural norms and societal expectations shape individuals' behaviors, career choices, and leadership aspirations. These socially constructed scripts influence the division of labor and perpetuate gendered patterns in employment and decision-making.

Institutional Theory highlights how formal and informal institutional arrangements—laws, policies, governance mechanisms, and organisational norms—shape opportunities for participation and advancement. Institutions can reinforce existing gender hierarchies or drive change by redefining organisational structures, incentives, and expectations.

While legislative reforms, policy mandates, and organisational initiatives have produced notable progress in some countries, gender inequality remains entrenched across global contexts. Legal frameworks may reduce overt discrimination, but they often fail to dismantle implicit biases or challenge cultural norms about women’s roles in leadership and caregiving. In other regions, rapid modernization and educational reforms have created new opportunities for women, yet these gains can be constrained by persistent social expectations regarding family responsibilities or leadership suitability.

Empirical studies underscore that sustainable progress toward gender parity requires the alignment of effective institutions, coordinated governance, and cultural transformation. Policy mandates, public–private partnerships, and targeted educational initiatives are most successful when they resonate with broader societal values and are supported by robust institutional capacity. However, the persistence of gender gaps—even in economically advanced nations—highlights the difficulty of reconciling formal equality with lived experience.

In sum, this chapter outlines the global significance of gender disparities and introduces the theoretical frameworks that inform the analysis. The subsequent sections review literature on the interplay between policy effectiveness, institutional governance, and cultural influences in shaping gender outcomes, with comparative insights drawn from diverse global regions.

This review will identify patterns, gaps, and tensions within the scholarship, providing the conceptual and empirical foundation for the present study.

2.2 Proposed Conceptual Frameworks

2.2.1 Institutional Capacity and Governance Mechanisms

Institutional capacity refers to the structures, resources, and authority that enable organisations and governments to implement policies effectively (Peters, 2015; Hall & Taylor, 1996). It encompasses not only the existence of formal institutions but also their functional capabilities—technical expertise, administrative resources, leadership, and organisational networks—that drive the translation of policy into practice. High institutional capacity signals the ability to coordinate complex tasks, adapt to changing circumstances, and enforce regulatory standards.

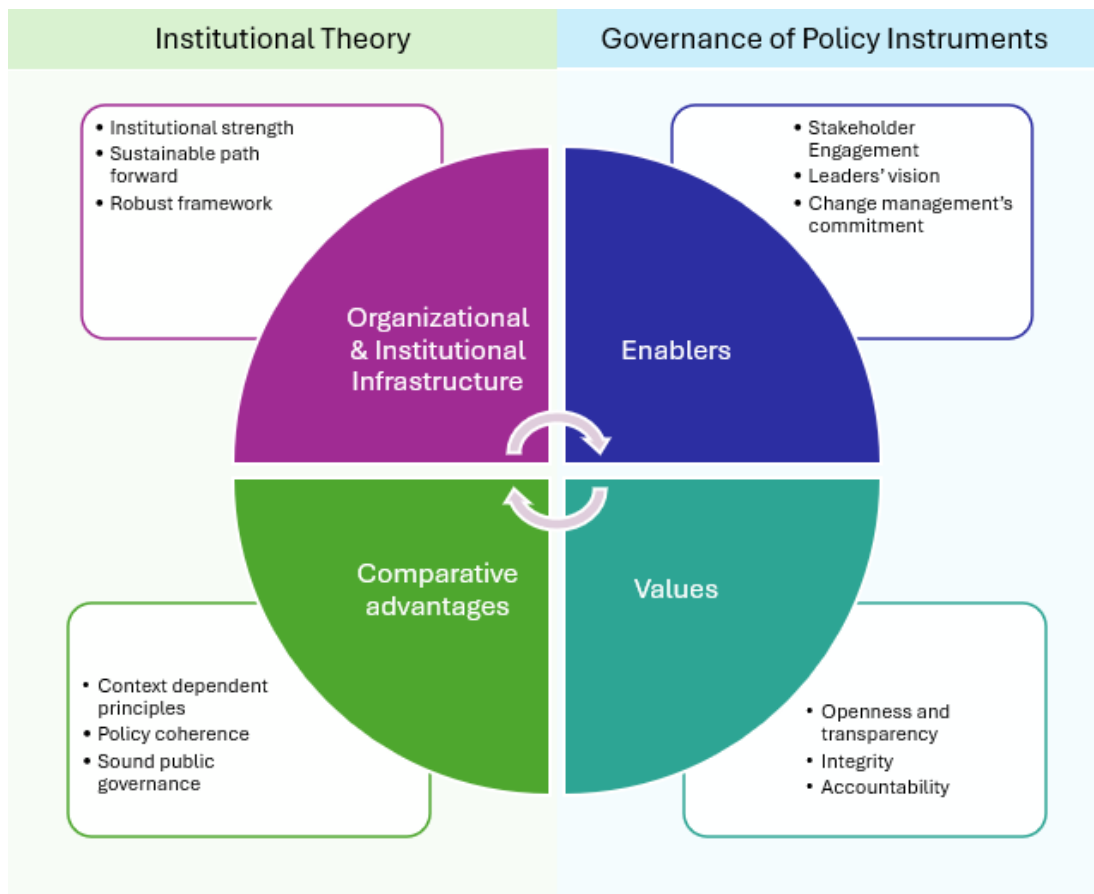


Figure 1: A Proposed Institutional Capacity and Governance Mechanisms framework

Source: Based on OECD et al. (2020) and Wee and Tan (1997), author designed the graphical framework.

Governance mechanisms, meanwhile, refer to the processes through which collective decisions are made, implemented, and monitored. These include vertical and horizontal coordination across levels of government, transparency in decision-making, accountability systems, and stakeholder engagement involving civil society, the private sector, and international organisations (Rhodes, 1996; Pierre & Peters, 2000). Effective governance

ensures policy coherence, institutional responsiveness to feedback, and the balancing of diverse interests within the policy process.

This theoretical lens is highly relevant for advancing gender parity. Progressive gender policies may be legislated, but their success depends on the institutional strength supporting their implementation and the governance capacity to enforce and adapt them. This framework helps explain why similar gender policies can yield different outcomes across contexts. For example, gender board quotas have been implemented in both Norway and Switzerland, but their effectiveness has varied according to each nation's institutional structures, monitoring mechanisms, and stakeholder coalitions (Seierstad & Opsahl, 2011; Gabaldon et al., 2017).

Figure 1 draws on several strands of institutional theory and governance scholarship. Institutional theory examines how formal and informal rules, norms, and structures shape organisational behaviour (Hall & Taylor, 1996). Contemporary perspectives emphasise that institutions reduce uncertainty and transaction costs by guiding and constraining actions, while also conferring legitimacy. New institutionalism highlights how organisations adopt similar practices under societal pressures—known as institutional isomorphism (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983)—while comparative institutionalism underscores how distinct national configurations of institutions produce different developmental trajectories through mechanisms such as path dependency and institutional complementarities.

Governance scholarship further contributes insights into how decision-making systems influence policy outcomes. Effective governance depends on integrity, transparency, inclusiveness, accountability, and coordination (OECD, 2019). Core enablers include

strategic leadership, whole-of-government coordination, evidence-based policymaking, and adaptive change management. These attributes enhance the ability of governments to design coherent policies, allocate resources effectively, and adjust strategies in response to feedback—capabilities that are essential for implementing gender equality measures.

Recent gender-focused studies have increasingly used this framework to explain uneven progress in workforce participation, board representation, and wage equality. Four dimensions are consistently highlighted as enablers of gender parity initiatives:

- Policy coherence, ensuring objectives and actions align vertically (national–local) and horizontally (across sectors).
- Institutional strength, including resources, organisational stability, clear mandates, autonomy, and enforcement capacity.
- Stakeholder engagement, involving governments, private sector, labour unions, advocacy groups, and citizens to enhance legitimacy and resource sharing.

Feedback and adaptation, through continuous monitoring, evaluation, and iterative learning that allow policies to evolve.

Literature identifies three key pathways through which institutional capacity and governance shape gender parity outcomes. First, well-resourced gender agencies with clear mandates and enforcement powers achieve stronger results, as seen in Norway’s successful board quota

law versus Switzerland's slower progress. Second, the structure of governance matters: the European Union's multi-level model enables coordinated action, the U.S. federal system produces fragmented outcomes, and Singapore's top-down meritocracy yields targeted but technocratic advances. Third, cross-sector collaboration fosters sustained progress, as shown in Switzerland's corporate board quotas, U.S. diversity initiatives, and Singapore's tripartite partnerships.

This framework offers several advantages by systematically linking structural and policy-level factors to gender outcomes, providing analytical clarity for comparing contexts. However, it also has limitations. It may understate the influence of entrenched cultural norms and implicit biases that persist even within strong institutional environments (Eagly & Wood, 1991), and it may overemphasise formal structures while neglecting informal networks and unwritten practices that shape real-world behaviour (Helmke & Levitsky, 2004). It also struggles to account for rapid cultural change or bottom-up grassroots movements.

To address these limitations, combining the institutional capacity framework with Social Role Theory offers a more comprehensive perspective, capturing both the "hardware" of institutions and the "software" of cultural expectations. Genuine gender parity requires transformation at both levels.

In sum, institutional capacity and governance mechanisms provide a powerful lens for understanding how structural conditions affect gender parity outcomes. They highlight the roles of institutional strength, stakeholder coordination, and adaptive governance in shaping policy effectiveness. While they explain the structural side of gender equality efforts, the next

section turns to Social Role Theory, which illuminates the cultural dynamics that underpin gender roles and leadership opportunities.

2.2.2 Social Role Theory

Social Role Theory (Eagly & Wood, 1991) offers a foundational explanation for the persistence of gender disparities in the workforce and leadership. It posits that contemporary gender roles originate from historical divisions of labour: in early societies, men often undertook physically demanding external tasks, while women focused on child-rearing, domestic work, and community cohesion. Over generations, these practical divisions became encoded as cultural norms, shaping expectations of what men and women can and should do. These expectations evolved from descriptive beliefs into prescriptive norms, influencing aspirations, self-concepts, and life choices.

The enduring power of Social Role Theory lies in its ability to explain how cultural scripts continue to reproduce gendered outcomes even when formal barriers are removed. While institutional reforms—such as equal opportunity laws and organisational diversity policies—reshape the structural “hardware” of employment, deeply embedded cultural expectations represent the “software” that continues to influence individual behaviour and collective judgment. Social Role Theory therefore complements institutional approaches by addressing the cultural and psychological forces that shape gender outcomes.

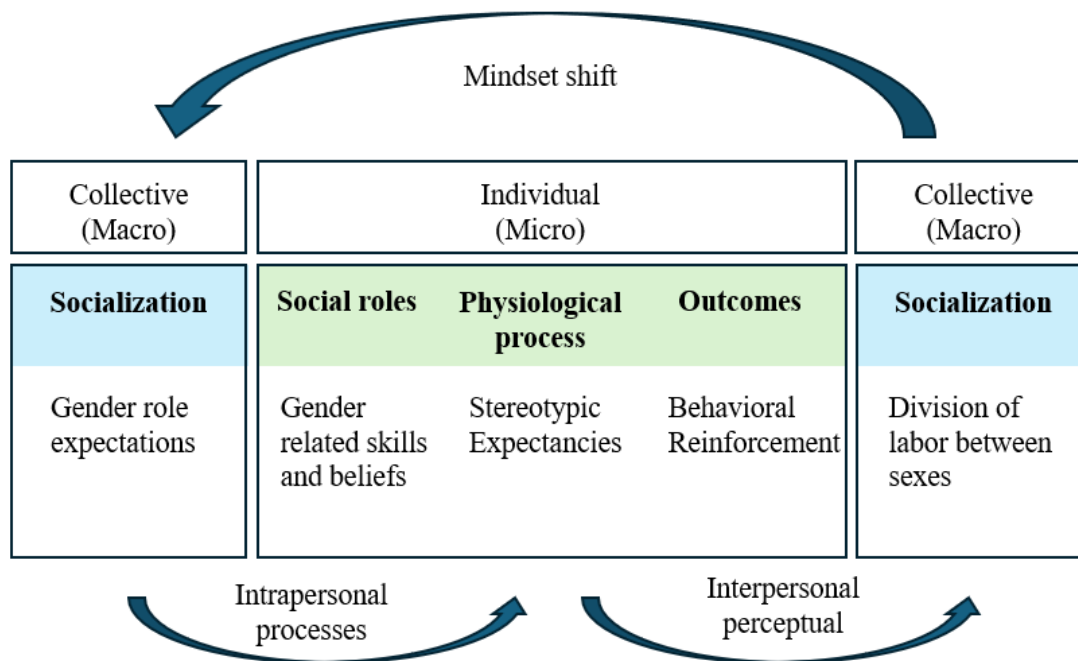


Figure 2: Integration of Social Role Theory and Role Congruity Theory

Source: Based on Diekmann and Schneider (2010), author designed the graphical framework.

According to this theory, gender roles are transmitted and sustained through socialisation and cultural reinforcement. From early childhood, individuals receive cues from family, peers, schooling, media, and organisational practices that signal acceptable gendered behaviours (Ridgeway & Correll, 2004). These cues shape mental schemas of masculinity and femininity, influencing confidence, ambition, and occupational choices. Positive and negative feedback from authority figures and institutions further consolidates these roles across generations. As roles become entrenched, they generate stereotypes—widely shared beliefs about the attributes and behaviours of men and women. Leadership is typically

associated with “agentic” traits such as assertiveness and decisiveness, while women are expected to display “communal” traits like warmth and empathy (Eagly & Karau, 2002). These stereotypes not only influence evaluations of competence and leadership potential, but also create self-fulfilling prophecies: women may internalize doubts about their suitability for leadership, while men face pressure to conform to competitive, stoic ideals.

Subsequent scholarship has refined and extended Social Role Theory to better capture the complex barriers women face in workplaces and society. Role Congruity Theory (Eagly & Karau, 2002) explains how prejudice arises when women’s behaviour is seen as inconsistent with culturally prescribed gender roles. Women who adopt assertive leadership styles may be perceived as competent but unlikable (Heilman & Okimoto, 2007), while those who display communal behaviours risk being judged as less capable. The “glass ceiling” metaphor describes invisible barriers that prevent women from advancing to senior positions (Morrison et al., 1987), while the more recent “labyrinth” metaphor emphasizes the complex and intersecting obstacles—bias, limited networks, work–family conflict—that women must navigate throughout their careers (Eagly & Carli, 2007). The Stereotype Content Model (Fiske et al., 2002) highlights how groups are judged along warmth and competence dimensions: women are often viewed as warm but less competent, particularly in high-status contexts, while men are perceived as competent but less warm. This bias contributes to women being undervalued or penalized when they display agentic behaviour (Williams & Tiedens, 2016). These models collectively illustrate how cultural expectations about gendered traits shape evaluations of leadership suitability, promotion prospects, and workplace treatment.

Social Role Theory clarifies why gender gaps persist in leadership, pay, and career progression despite formal reforms. Leadership roles are often coded masculine, reinforcing scepticism toward women's leadership "fit" (Heilman, 2012). Cross-cultural research confirms this pattern: the "think manager–think male" association remains robust across national contexts (Schein, 2001; Koenig et al., 2011). These expectations also influence pay and promotion. Women are more likely to be channelled into support roles or assigned "office housework" tasks that carry low visibility and reward, while men are presumed more committed to long-term careers. Cultural expectations about caregiving reinforce these patterns: women are often assumed to prioritise family over career, while men may be penalized for seeking work–life balance. Empirical studies illustrate how these cultural dynamics operate within specific contexts. In the United States, women's political and corporate gains remain tempered by scrutiny over "likability" and relational skills. In Switzerland, cultural resistance to board quotas reflects enduring beliefs in meritocracy and scepticism toward affirmative action. In Singapore, caregiving is still predominantly framed as a woman's responsibility, limiting the impact of recent policy reforms aimed at parental leave and work–life balance. Even in societies with high levels of formal gender equality, stereotypes remain slow to change (Rudman & Glick, 2021).

Social Role Theory offers several strengths. It reveals the cultural and psychological mechanisms that sustain gender roles, linking individual-level behaviour to societal structures. It explains why gender gaps often persist despite structural reforms, and it provides a framework for understanding cross-cultural differences in gender norms and outcomes. However, it has notable limitations. It may understate the influence of formal

institutions—laws, governance structures, and organisational policies—that can drive rapid change. It tends to focus primarily on gender, often overlooking how race, class, and other identities intersect to shape experiences of bias (Berdahl & Moore, 2006). Finally, it assumes gradual cultural change, which may not capture the swift shifts triggered by globalization, digital media, or major policy reforms.

Because of these limitations, as shown in Figure 2, Social Role Theory is most powerful when paired with frameworks that address institutional capacity and governance mechanisms. Whereas institutional perspectives analyse the formal rules, resources, and organisational structures (“hardware”) that enable or constrain gender parity, Social Role Theory addresses the cultural, psychological, and interpersonal forces (“software”) that persist even when formal barriers are removed. This dual approach clarifies why certain reforms, such as gender quotas or parental leave policies, succeed in some contexts but falter in others: their effectiveness depends on alignment with underlying cultural expectations. Combining cultural and institutional frameworks therefore enables a more holistic and actionable understanding of gender parity, highlighting that genuine equality requires not only robust structures but also a transformation of the cultural narratives that shape behaviour.

In summary, Social Role Theory provides a nuanced account of how historical divisions of labour, socialisation processes, and cultural stereotypes perpetuate gender disparities in leadership, pay, and workforce participation. Its extensions—Role Congruity Theory, the glass ceiling and labyrinth metaphors, and the Stereotype Content Model—deepen our understanding of the subtle and persistent obstacles women face. Yet, because it underplays

institutional and intersectional factors, Social Role Theory should be integrated with structural perspectives. Together, these frameworks offer a multi-level lens for analysing gender disparities and designing strategies to dismantle both visible institutional barriers and invisible cultural ones. The next section applies these insights to the empirical literature on gender parity across diverse contexts.

2.3 Literature Review

2.3.1 Policy Implementation and Effectiveness

Achieving gender parity depends not only on the enactment of progressive policies but also on their effective implementation and sustained impact. This section reviews three central policy domains—gender quotas, parental leave, and equal pay—drawing comparative insights from Europe, the United States, and Southeast Asia. These regions exemplify distinct governance models: Europe’s statutory and coordinated approach, the United States’ fragmented state-driven framework, and Southeast Asia’s meritocratic, voluntary strategies. Across Europe, statutory gender quotas have been a cornerstone in accelerating women’s representation on corporate boards and political bodies. As shown in Table 1, Norway pioneered this approach in 2003 with a 40% quota for public limited companies, inspiring similar laws in France, Germany, and Italy. These reforms led to dramatic increases in female board representation—for example, from 6% to over 36% in Italy between 2011 and 2017, and to 46% in France’s largest firms by 2022. Switzerland adopted a softer “comply or explain” model in 2021, requiring companies to aim for 30% women on boards and 20% in executive management or publicly justify shortfalls. While these policies have shifted

boardroom dynamics and reframed corporate governance norms, persistent barriers remain in top executive roles and broader organisational pipelines. Nordic countries complement quotas with generous parental leave and job protection, fostering high female labor participation, yet still face challenges of occupational segregation and the “glass cliff” phenomenon, where women are appointed to precarious leadership roles during crises.

Region	Parental Leave Policy	Gender Parity Impact	Work-Life Balance	Challenges
Europe	Comprehensive, universal paid leave; up to 52 weeks in some countries; high wage replacement rates.	High female labor force participation; increasing paternal leave uptake; gender pay gap persists (e.g., Switzerland: 17.1%).	High satisfaction; strong institutional support; work-life balance prioritized.	Persistent gender norms influence career interruptions and leave usage.
United States	Patchwork of state-level paid leave; no universal program; example: California offers 8 weeks, 60–70% wage replacement.	Lower female participation (57%); women earn ~84% of men’s median salary; disparities for women of color.	Only 60% of parents are satisfied; 41% report work often interferes with family.	Lack of universal policy, weak enforcement, and socioeconomic inequities.
Southeast Asia (e.g., Singapore, Japan, South Korea)	Progressive reforms; e.g., Singapore: 16 weeks maternity, 2 weeks paternity; Japan: up to 52 weeks parental leave; variable uptake especially among men.	Gender pay gap narrowing (Singapore: 6% in 2023); women’s representation increasing, but leadership gaps remain.	49% of parents report challenges; traditional gender roles and limited institutional support are barriers.	Cultural expectations slow behavioral change and limit policy effectiveness.

Table 1: Comparison of Parental Leave Policies, Gender Parity, and Work-Life Balance Across Regions

Source: Based on PricewaterhouseCoopers (2025), MSF Article (2024), Council for Board Diversity (2025), author made.

In contrast, the United States has avoided national gender quota mandates, relying instead on state-level initiatives and voluntary corporate commitments. California’s Senate Bill 826 (2018) briefly mandated female board representation and spurred a rapid rise in women’s board seats but faced legal challenges that cast doubt on its long-term enforceability. Disclosure rules from the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) and equal employment opportunity laws have encouraged incremental improvements, yet the absence of a coordinated federal strategy results in uneven progress. Gains tend to be localized, while women overall remain underrepresented in senior leadership, with cultural stereotypes about leadership “fit” and the lack of institutional enforcement weakening the impact of state-level reforms.

Southeast Asia—exemplified by Singapore—has taken a markedly different route, rejecting quotas in favor of merit-based advancement supported by government advocacy, corporate partnerships, and public campaigns. The Council for Board Diversity promotes voluntary targets, while agencies such as Workforce Singapore and SkillsFuture sponsor training and mentorship initiatives. This collaborative and non-legislative strategy has produced gradual increases in women’s board (21.5%) and parliamentary (32%) representation, although progress remains uneven and slower than in Europe. Persistent cultural norms regarding caregiving and leadership suitability continue to limit women’s rise to top positions, and the voluntary nature of targets means organisational uptake varies widely.

Parental leave policies further illustrate regional contrasts. Europe offers some of the most comprehensive programs globally, with Sweden granting up to 480 days of paid leave per

child and reserving quotas for fathers, and Germany and France providing extended paid leave combined with childcare support. These policies have raised female labor force participation and promoted more balanced caregiving, though women still take longer leaves on average, reinforcing career interruptions and contributing to slower advancement. The United States lacks federal paid leave, offering only unpaid provisions under the Family and Medical Leave Act, leaving a patchwork of state programs and deep disparities in access. This absence contributes to lower female labor force participation (57%) and persistent wage gaps. Singapore and Japan provide increasingly generous leave schemes—Singapore offers 16 weeks paid maternity and two weeks paternity leave—but cultural expectations discourage paternal uptake and continue to slow women’s progression into senior roles. Thus, strong legal frameworks can normalize shared caregiving, but cultural resistance can dilute their impact.

Meanwhile, pay equity remains one of the most persistent challenges in the global finance sector. As shown in Table 2, Switzerland reports a 29% gender pay gap, while the United Kingdom records gaps exceeding 25% in major banks, despite mandatory disclosure requirements and annual audits. In the United States, women employed in finance earn approximately 75 cents for every dollar earned by men, with the disparity widening significantly at senior and executive levels. Singapore has narrowed its overall adjusted gender pay gap to about 6%, yet the finance sector gap remains near 17%. Japan reports one of the highest gaps among advanced economies, at over 26%.

Table 2: Development of gender pay gap in Switzerland, California and Singapore from the period of 2014 to 2024

Gender Pay Gap (%)			
Year	Europe (Switzerland)	United States (California)	Asia (Singapore)
2014	18.9 Women in executive roles earned nearly 24% less than men	Women earned about 79% of men's median salaries. Gap for women of color was notably larger	8.8 Women's participation in professional sectors rising
2016	18.3 Gradual decline after increased audits and transparency initiatives	Women earning nearly 80%. New pay transparency legislation.	8.3 Increased education and workplace policies
2018	17.6 Policy reviews and public campaigns, persistent disparities at senior levels	Women earning 82%. Enforcement of equal pay laws strengthened	7.8 Government initiatives, new workplace fairness laws
2020	17.3 Stricter requirements to publish salary data	Women earning approximately 83%. 19 pandemic disrupted gains, especially mothers	6.8 Notable improvements in women's representation
2022	17.1 Significant differences in executive pay persisted	Women earned 84% of men's median salaries. Additional efforts to enforce pay transparency	6 Strong progress in STEM and management roles
2024	17 Gap stabilized, women underrepresented in top leadership positions	Gap near 84%. Higher for women of color, persists in certain industries	6 Stable gap, advancement to top-tier leadership limited by cultural expectations

Source: Based on Swiss Federal Statistical Office (2023), World Economic Forum (2025), author made.

Although legal instruments such as equal pay directives, pay transparency rules, and mandatory reporting obligations have improved accountability and monitoring, they have not dismantled the structural and cultural barriers that restrict women's access to high-paying roles. Factors such as career interruptions linked to caregiving, occupational segregation into lower-paying functions, and gendered assumptions about commitment and leadership potential continue to reinforce disparities, even in contexts where formal equality frameworks are in place.

Overall, evidence from these regions underscores that legal mandates can accelerate gender parity—especially quotas in Europe and select U.S. states—but their effectiveness depends on enforcement capacity, organisational commitment, and cultural alignment. Europe has achieved the most visible progress through statutory measures complemented by supportive welfare policies, though stereotypes and pay gaps persist. The U.S. shows how fragmented governance yields uneven results, while Singapore illustrates how voluntary, partnership-based approaches can foster inclusiveness but risk slow and inconsistent uptake. Across all regions, cultural expectations and structural barriers remain the strongest impediments to sustained change. Effective gender parity policies thus require not only innovative legislation but also coordinated governance, strong institutional capacity, and persistent efforts to reshape organisational norms and societal attitudes.

2.3.2 Institutional Governance and Organisational Change

Efforts to achieve gender parity are deeply shaped by the institutional contexts in which they are embedded. Institutional governance—the rules, frameworks, and oversight structures operating at national and organisational levels—intersects with organisational change

mechanisms to determine the pace and depth of reform. Understanding this interplay is essential for explaining both the advances and persistent gaps observed across countries. This section examines how Switzerland, the United States, and Singapore—three high-income countries with markedly different political systems and cultural orientations—have approached gender parity, highlighting how their institutional architectures and change strategies influence outcomes.

As shown in Table 3, Switzerland exemplifies a gradualist model rooted in strong but decentralised democratic institutions. The country’s late extension of federal voting rights to women in 1971, and to some cantons only in 1990, reflects its historically conservative and consensus-based political culture. While the Federal Constitution now guarantees gender equality and the 1996 Gender Equality Act prohibits workplace discrimination, policy enforcement remains uneven across cantons, slowing reform. The 2021 introduction of a “comply or explain” quota—requiring listed companies to aim for 30% women on boards and 20% in executive roles—illustrates Switzerland’s preference for soft regulation. Organisations like Swiss Re have responded with leadership targets, mentorship programs, and flexible work schemes, producing gradual gains. Yet progress depends heavily on voluntary uptake, and entrenched norms around motherhood and part-time work continue to limit women’s advancement, especially to executive ranks.

Table 3: Comparative Table: Gender Parity Approaches Across Countries

Country	Legal Framework	Key Policies	Organisational Initiatives	Case Study	Current % Women in Leadership	Ongoing Challenges
Switzerland	Federal Constitution ; Gender Equality Act (1996)	Board quotas ("comply or explain"), anti-discrimination laws	Targets, mentorship, flexible work	Swiss Re	~30% (targeted)	Slow cultural change, cantonal disparities
United States	Civil Rights Act, Title IX, State Diversity Laws	State quotas in some regions, voluntary corporate action	Pay equity audits, public targets, mentorship	Salesforce, CA Board Law	~30-40% (boards, varies by sector)	Regional inconsistency, lack of paid leave
Singapore	Women's Charter, TAFEP	White Paper on Women's Development, board diversity reporting	Leadership development, flexible policies	DBS Bank	40% (DBS Bank senior management)	Private sector lag, social norms

Source: Based on The Federal Office for Gender Equality (FOGE) (2025), Ministry of Manpower Singapore (2024), author made.

The United States represents a hybrid, market-driven model that combines robust legal protections with highly decentralised governance. Landmark federal laws—including the Civil Rights Act (1964), Title IX (1972), and the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act (2009)—establish anti-discrimination norms, yet implementation is fragmented across states and sectors. This has produced a patchwork pattern: states like California have pioneered reforms, such as Senate Bill 826 mandating female representation on corporate boards, while others

have remained stagnant. California's law, though later challenged in court, significantly raised women's board representation and spurred broader debates on corporate diversity. In the private sector, companies like Salesforce have initiated internal equity audits and annual pay reviews, exemplifying how shareholder pressure, social activism, and executive leadership can drive change even without federal mandates. However, the absence of nationwide childcare support, family leave policies, and board diversity requirements sustains uneven progress, and cultural resistance persists in many regions and industries.

Singapore offers a contrasting model of state-led, top-down reform anchored in a strong unitary government and pragmatic policy orientation. The Women's Charter (1961) established foundational protections, while the Tripartite Alliance for Fair and Progressive Employment Practices (TAFEP) promote workplace non-discrimination. More recently, the 2022 White Paper on Singapore Women's Development introduced 25 strategic initiatives targeting leadership pipelines, workplace equality, and parental support. The Council for Board Diversity (CBD) advocates gender-balanced boards, and the Singapore Exchange requires listed firms to disclose board diversity policies, embedding accountability into governance systems. Organisational change has followed: DBS Bank, for instance, has combined leadership development programs, mentorship, and flexible work policies to reach 40% women in senior management by 2023. Singapore's coordinated approach demonstrates how clear governmental direction, public-private partnerships, and accountability mechanisms can accelerate organisational transformation, though cultural norms around caregiving and leadership continue to slow women's progress at the highest levels.

Across all three countries, common mechanisms emerge: legislative mandates, voluntary corporate action, and public disclosure function as key levers of change. Switzerland and Singapore illustrate how soft quotas and transparency requirements can gradually shift organisational practices, while the U.S. shows how legal mandates and market incentives can catalyze rapid but uneven change. Yet structural and cultural barriers remain deeply entrenched. Traditional views of gender roles—especially around motherhood and part-time work in Switzerland, skepticism toward gender mandates and the absence of universal childcare in the U.S., and persistent underrepresentation of women in Singapore’s private sector—continue to constrain progress despite institutional reforms. Evidence from organisations such as Swiss Re, Salesforce, and DBS Bank underscores that structural change depends not only on regulatory frameworks but also on committed leadership, structured mentorship, and sustained internal advocacy that reshape organisational cultures.

Despite notable achievements, gender parity efforts in all three countries face ongoing challenges rooted in institutional inertia and cultural expectations. Switzerland’s gradual consensus model often slows adaptation; the U.S. remains hindered by fragmented governance and polarized debates; and Singapore, while effective in mobilizing rapid reforms, still contends with resilient gender norms that limit women’s rise to top-tier private sector roles. These cases collectively demonstrate that institutional governance can enable progress, but sustained organisational change requires more than policy mandates. Genuine transformation depends on aligning institutional frameworks with organisational innovation and cultural evolution. Future research should explore how intersectional identities—such as race, class, and age—shape outcomes within these systems, and how cross-national policy

learning can accelerate both institutional reform and cultural change. Only by integrating legal structures, organisational strategies, and cultural transformation can durable gender equality be achieved.

2.3.3 Cultural Influences and Social Role Theory

Culture—the shared beliefs, traditions, and values that shape a society—exerts a profound influence on individual behavior and collective norms. Social Role Theory, developed by Eagly and colleagues, posits that human behavior is shaped by culturally prescribed roles and expectations that emerge from historical divisions of labor and are reinforced through socialisation and institutional practices. This framework helps explain how different cultural context's structure opportunities, shape behavior, and perpetuate gendered expectations. A comparative analysis of Switzerland, the United States, and Singapore illustrates how each country's distinct historical legacies, value systems, and institutional frameworks produce unique configurations of social roles and cultural norms.

Switzerland's cultural fabric reflects centuries of federalism, neutrality, and linguistic diversity. With four official languages and a decentralized political system, Swiss society emphasizes consensus-building, local autonomy, and communal responsibility. While the country has made notable strides in gender equality, progress has been gradual: women only gained the federal right to vote in 1971, and traditional expectations around motherhood and part-time work remain especially persistent in rural cantons. The cultural emphasis on dialogue, privacy, and collaboration reinforces social roles that privilege collective agreement and incremental change, even as female workforce participation continues to rise.

By contrast, the United States is shaped by ideals of individual liberty, self-determination, and the pursuit of the “American Dream.” Its history of immigration has produced a culturally heterogeneous society characterized by strong individualism and a dynamic tension between tradition and change. Social roles often emphasize autonomy, personal achievement, and innovation, shaping expectations in both public and private life. While substantial progress has been made toward gender and racial equality, deeply rooted stereotypes and systemic inequities continue to influence workplace dynamics, family roles, and civic participation. The diversification of family structures—including single-parent, blended, and same-sex families—has further broadened the spectrum of social expectations, challenged older gendered norms while simultaneously revealing their enduring influence.

Singapore presents a markedly different model, defined by state-led social engineering, meritocratic ideals, and pragmatic governance. Emerging from colonial rule to rapid modernization, it has cultivated a cohesive yet culturally pluralistic national identity composed of Chinese, Malay, Indian, and Eurasian communities. The government actively shapes social norms through policies, education, and public campaigns, promoting harmony, diligence, and collective responsibility. Initiatives like the Ethnic Integration Policy ensure balanced representation in public housing and foster interethnic interaction, while the Women’s Charter (1961) and more recent White Paper on Singapore Women’s Development (2022) have supported gender equity. High female participation in education and employment coexists with enduring Confucian-influenced expectations regarding caregiving, marriage, and parenthood, revealing the complex interplay of traditional family roles and modern economic imperatives.

Across these three societies, cultural mechanisms such as education, media, and policy reinforce distinctive patterns of social roles. In Switzerland, the commitment to balance between autonomy and collective well-being is embedded in educational curricula and civic life. In the United States, mass media, popular culture, and public discourse actively construct and contest social roles, shaping debates on gender, race, and work–life balance. Singapore’s results-oriented culture prizes achievement and discipline while promoting social harmony through orchestrated multiculturalism. Religious and ethnic festivals are celebrated collectively, signaling respect for diversity while reinforcing the national ethos of cohesion and responsibility.

Their approaches to multiculturalism further illustrate the cultural underpinnings of social roles. Switzerland accommodates diversity through multilingualism and regional autonomy, embedding difference within its federal structure but often slowing nationwide reforms. Singapore manages diversity through top-down integration policies, fostering harmony and intergroup contact while sometimes limiting space for minority voices or individual expression. The United States relies on constitutional guarantees and civic ideals, encouraging pluralism within a shared national identity, yet often confronting tensions around assimilation, equity, and representation. These contrasting models shape how societies define belonging, responsibility, and opportunity, influencing the gendered expectations embedded within them.

Taken together, Switzerland’s consensus-driven pluralism, the United States’ individualistic pluralism, and Singapore’s state-managed multiculturalism reveal how cultural norms and institutional structures interact to shape social roles. Social Role Theory helps explain how

these historically rooted expectations continue to influence behavior, opportunities, and gendered outcomes, even amid formal reforms. Understanding these dynamics underscores that social roles are not static but are continually renegotiated through the interplay of cultural tradition, institutional design, and social change. Advancing gender parity, therefore, requires not only policy innovation but also a cultural transformation that challenges deeply embedded expectations about gender, work, and social contribution.

2.3.4 Gender Disparities in Leadership and Representation

Gender disparities in leadership and representation remain a persistent challenge globally. Despite notable progress in policies promoting gender equality, women remain markedly underrepresented in the top tiers of government, corporate, and academic leadership. This section presents a comparative analysis of gender disparities in leadership in Switzerland, the United States, and Singapore, highlighting both achievements and ongoing gaps through case studies and statistical evidence.

As shown in Table 4, two key metaphors are commonly employed to conceptualise the barriers women face in leadership. The "glass ceiling" refers to an invisible yet formidable barrier that prevents qualified women from ascending to the highest leadership positions, despite their skills and accomplishments. It underscores the structural and often unseen biases that limit advancement. More recently, scholars have adopted the "labyrinth" metaphor, which depicts leadership as a complex, winding pathway with multiple obstacles, detours, and setbacks. Unlike the singular barrier implied by the glass ceiling, the labyrinth captures the multifaceted challenges women encounter at different stages of their careers, including cultural expectations, work-life balance struggles, and subtle discrimination.

Table 4: Overview of women representation in politics, board, executive leaderships roles and education sector.

Country	Year	Political Representation	Corporate Board Representation	Executive Leadership	Education Sector
Switzerland	2024	National Council: 42% women (2019: 35%); Council of States: 28% women	SMI companies: 24% women (2023)	Executive leadership remains male-dominated	
United States	2023	Congress: 28% women (2019: 24%)	S&P 500: 32.3% women (2023)	Fortune 500 CEOs: 53 companies (10.6%) led by women	College/university presidents: 33% women (2022)
Singapore	2023	Parliament: 29% women (2015: 23%); Cabinet: 18% women	Listed companies: 20.6% women		Teaching staff: 56% women; university deans/heads: <20% women

Source: Based on Board Dynamics: Rethinking Competing Demand (2023), author made.

These metaphors are reflected in the experiences of women leaders in Switzerland, the United States, and Singapore, shaping both the pace of progress and the lived experiences of aspiring female leaders. Representation is profoundly influenced by social norms, legislative frameworks, and organisational cultures. While global efforts have driven improvements, unique cultural contexts and policy approaches create distinct challenges and opportunities in each country. Switzerland, renowned for its direct democracy and robust social policies, has historically lagged in female representation at the highest leadership levels. The United

States, with its diverse population and dynamic corporate sector, has seen significant breakthroughs, yet barriers to gender parity persist. Singapore, an economic leader in Asia, demonstrates rapid policy-driven advancements, but traditional expectations continue to influence women's leadership roles.

A cross-national comparison illustrates both progress and persistent challenges. In Switzerland, figures such as former President Doris Leuthard symbolize governmental advancements, yet women occupy only 11% of executive committee positions in major corporations, despite corporate pledges from UBS and Nestlé. In the United States, milestones such as the election of Vice President Kamala Harris and the rise of CEOs like Mary Barra, Rosalind Brewer, and Jane Fraser highlight significant breakthroughs; however, only 10.6% of Fortune 500 CEOs are women, and the pace of change has slowed. In Singapore, efforts by leaders such as Grace Fu, alongside initiatives like the Council for Board Diversity and the Diversity Action Committee, seek to enhance representation, yet only 15% of Singapore Exchange-listed companies had at least 30% female board members in 2022. While influential women leaders have emerged across all three countries, the proportion of women in top leadership remains far below parity, underscoring the need for sustained commitment to gender diversity.

Persistent challenges include structural barriers such as traditional gender roles, unconscious bias, and limited access to mentorship programs. Policy limitations—such as inconsistent application of gender quotas—further constrain progress. Societal expectations that women serve as primary caregivers reduce availability for senior roles, and pipeline issues persist:

although women increasingly attain higher education qualifications, relatively few advance into senior leadership positions.

In summary, despite policy initiatives and advocacy efforts, gender disparities in leadership continue in Switzerland, the United States, and Singapore. While progress is evident, statistical data and case studies reveal persistent underrepresentation of women in top roles. Closing these gaps requires targeted policy interventions, cultural transformation, and sustained advocacy to promote gender equity in leadership worldwide.

2.3.5 Gender Bias in Hiring and Career Advancement

Gender disparities in hiring and career advancement remain persistent challenges in developed economies such as Switzerland, the United States, and Singapore. Despite notable progress, women continue to be underrepresented in senior leadership positions, face wage gaps, and encounter systemic barriers throughout their careers.

In Switzerland, workforce participation among women is among the highest in OECD countries, yet disparities persist in pay and opportunities for advancement. According to the Swiss Federal Statistical Office, the adjusted gender pay gap was 8.1% in 2020, with women earning just under 92 cents for every franc earned by men in comparable roles. Women hold only 18% of executive board positions across listed companies and less than 25% of senior management roles in the private sector, according to the Credit Suisse Gender 3000 Report (2021). Even in corporations such as Credit Suisse, where women comprise over 40% of the workforce, they account for just 17% of senior managers, and internal analyses reveal a 12% lag in promotion rates compared to men. Barriers such as unconscious bias, limited

mentorship, and restricted access to high-profile assignments continue to slow women's advancement, particularly in male-dominated sectors like finance and engineering.

The United States, despite a dynamic labor market, continues to confront significant gender gaps in pay and senior-level representation. In 2022, women working full-time earned a median weekly wage of \$912 compared to \$1,089 for men, reflecting a 16% gender wage gap (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics). Over a 40-year career, this disparity translates to nearly \$400,000 less in earnings on average (IWPR, 2021). Representation at the top remains limited, with women holding less than 8% of Fortune 500 CEO positions and only 27% of board directorships (Catalyst, 2022). Persistent barriers, including unconscious bias, insufficient sponsorship, and structural disadvantages, are exemplified by high-profile cases such as Ellen Pao's lawsuit against Kleiner Perkins. Promotion patterns show that while women comprise 36% of entry-level roles in technology, their representation drops sharply to just 7% at the C-suite level (Harvard Business Review, 2019). Intersectional disparities further exacerbate challenges for women of color. Policy debates increasingly focus on pay transparency, family leave policies, and equitable advancement opportunities, underscoring the urgency of addressing gender inequality in the workplace.

Singapore's labor market, known for its adaptability and robust regulatory environment, also exhibits persistent gender disparities, particularly in senior positions. The Ministry of Manpower reported an adjusted gender pay gap of 6% in 2021, with disparities widening at higher ranks. Women hold only 23% of board director roles among the largest listed firms, and promotion rates decline sharply at mid-to-senior management levels—by as much as 15% compared to men with equivalent qualifications (SMU Gender Progression Study,

2021). These gaps are most pronounced in finance, technology, and professional services. Factors such as implicit bias in recruitment, limited sponsorship opportunities, and career interruptions due to family responsibilities continue to impede women's advancement (AWARE, 2021). While Singapore has implemented transparent pay structures, parental leave policies, workplace childcare support, and mentorship programs, women's representation diminishes steeply as they ascend the career ladder, highlighting the need for ongoing systemic and cultural reform.

In summary, the comparative analysis of Switzerland, the United States, and Singapore demonstrates that gender disparities in leadership persist, particularly regarding wage gaps and senior-level representation. These gaps are most acute in sectors such as finance and technology, where systemic barriers—including unconscious bias, entrenched cultural expectations, insufficient sponsorship, and inconsistent policy enforcement—continue to limit women's advancement. Although policy innovations such as quotas, pay transparency, and parental leave reforms have yielded progress, deep-rooted stereotypes and traditional social roles remain significant obstacles. Achieving true gender parity in hiring and career advancement requires not only organisational initiatives but also coordinated policy support, cultural transformation, and sustained, evidence-based reform. The data and case studies indicate that progress is achievable, but only through persistent and collective efforts to overcome both overt and subtle forms of workplace bias.

2.3.6 Summary of Literature Review

Despite policy advances and organisational initiatives, gender disparities in leadership and pay remain significant across Switzerland, the United States, and Singapore, particularly in

finance and technology sectors. Persistent obstacles—ranging from unconscious bias and limited career development opportunities to entrenched cultural expectations and inconsistent policy enforcement—continue to constrain women’s progression into senior roles. While measures such as quotas, pay transparency initiatives, and parental leave reforms have yielded incremental improvements, achieving true equality requires more than formal policy; it necessitates coordinated efforts by organisations, governments, and society at large, coupled with adaptive, evidence-based reform. Deep-rooted cultural stereotypes and traditional social roles, as illuminated by Social Role Theory and related frameworks, continue to shape workplace expectations and practices, often slowing progress even in contexts with supportive legislation. Bridging these gaps requires sustained, collective commitment to dismantle both overt and subtle barriers to women’s advancement.

Literature frames gender disparity as a global issue with substantial economic and societal implications, noting that persistent gaps in employment, leadership, and pay hinder individual opportunity while undermining national innovation and social cohesion. Social Role Theory explains how societal norms and historical divisions of labor shape gendered behaviors and aspirations, while Institutional Theory examines how formal and informal structures either stabilize or transform gender roles. Together, these frameworks underscore the importance of robust institutional capacity, coherent governance, stakeholder engagement, and continuous adaptation for effective policy implementation. Empirical evidence demonstrates that well-resourced institutions and aligned policies are more likely to reduce wage gaps and promote women’s leadership, though outcomes vary according to cultural context and institutional diversity. Additionally, Role Congruity Theory highlights

how enduring stereotypes about leadership and caregiving create invisible yet substantial obstacles, which persist even after legal reforms are enacted.

Comparative case studies reveal varying trajectories across regions. European countries have achieved notable gains at the board level through legislative quotas and inclusive parental leave policies, yet executive leadership gaps and pay disparities remain. In the United States, where national quotas are absent and policy is decentralized, progress is uneven, and leadership gaps persist. Singapore's pragmatic, state-led approach has promoted board and political representation but continues to encounter strong cultural barriers to executive advancement. Across all contexts, pay gaps and underrepresentation of women in senior roles are most acute in finance and executive positions. Literature underscores the critical influence of legal frameworks, organisational policies, and cultural context on outcomes, showing that interventions such as transparency measures, mentorship programs, and committed leadership can be effective, yet are often constrained by deeper cultural attitudes and institutional inertia.

Critical research gaps remain. There is a paucity of cross-cultural and longitudinal studies on women's leadership, insufficient attention to the intersection of gender with other identities, and limited understanding of how institutional reforms interact with cultural attitudes. Literature advocates for multidimensional analyses that integrate institutional and cultural frameworks to more effectively address gender parity challenges. Achieving gender equity requires interventions that are not only legal or organisational but also context-sensitive, addressing structural and cultural barriers simultaneously. While policy innovations such as quotas, parental leave, and pay equity laws are key drivers of progress, their effectiveness

depends on institutional capacity, governance quality, stakeholder engagement, and sustained efforts to challenge entrenched cultural norms. Although signs of progress are evident, change remains slow, uneven, and regionally variable. Sustaining and advancing gender equity in the global workforce necessitates robust, adaptive policy measures working in concert with cultural transformation.

2.4 Identification of Study Gaps

Current research on gender disparities among C-suite executives highlights significant issues but leaves several critical gaps, particularly regarding cross-cultural and longitudinal perspectives. Most studies focus on Western contexts over relatively short timeframes, offering limited insight into how female representation in finance leadership evolves across careers in Asia and Europe, where cultural norms and regulatory frameworks differ substantially. This dissertation addresses this gap by examining career trajectories and promotion patterns in the United States, Switzerland, and Singapore.

Existing literature also rarely considers the intersection of multiple identities—such as race, socioeconomic background, and cultural context—with gender in shaping leadership outcomes. The compounded effects of these intersecting identities on women’s career advancement remain underexplored, particularly in longitudinal studies within finance sectors. By investigating these dynamics, this study aims to provide a more nuanced understanding of gender inequality across diverse organisational and national contexts.

Although legal frameworks and institutional policies promote gender equality, persistent stereotypes and traditional role expectations continue to influence evaluations, promotions,

and access to leadership opportunities. The interaction between policy reforms and cultural attitudes is not yet fully understood, and this dissertation examines why similar policies may yield different outcomes in distinct countries and organisational environments.

Finally, while Social Role Theory provides macro-level insight into societal expectations and Role Congruity Theory addresses micro-level bias, both frameworks have limitations. Social Role Theory often underestimates cultural variation and individual agency, whereas Role Congruity Theory rarely incorporates intersectional or systemic perspectives. This dissertation integrates these theoretical lenses to analyze both societal influences and organisational processes, offering a context-sensitive understanding of gender disparities in finance leadership across the United States, Switzerland, and Singapore.

2.5 Research Purposes

This study aims to investigate persistent gender disparities in finance leadership across Switzerland, the United States, and Singapore, with particular focus on how societal expectations and cultural norms influence career advancement. Drawing on Social Role Theory and Role Congruity Theory, it examines the interplay between institutional capacity, governance structures, and policy frameworks with organisational and cultural factors that either facilitate or constrain women's progression into executive roles. By integrating these theoretical perspectives, the research provides a comparative, context-sensitive analysis of gender inequality in the finance sector, addressing gaps in cross-cultural, longitudinal, and intersectional scholarship.

2.6 Research Questions (RQs)

RQ1: What cultural and institutional factors influence the adaptation of gender parity policies from Western to Asian contexts, especially in Switzerland, the United States, and Singapore?

RQ2: How do intersecting identities (e.g., race, socioeconomic status) shape gender disparities in workforce leadership and compensation across the national contexts of Switzerland, the United States, and Singapore?

H₀: Gender-related labour market factors (e.g., gender wage gap, female labour force participation, women's empowerment, and women's representation in PMET occupations) have no statistically significant effect on income inequality across countries.

H₁: Gender-related labour market factors (e.g., gender wage gap, female labour force participation, women's empowerment, and women's representation in PMET occupations) have statistically significant effect on income inequality across countries.

2.7 Chapter Summary and Transition

This chapter reviewed literature on gender disparities in workforce participation and leadership, focusing on Switzerland, the United States, and Singapore. By integrating Institutional Theory and Social Role Theory, it highlights how structural, cultural, and policy-related factors sustain gaps in employment, compensation, and career advancement.

Despite progressive policies—such as quotas, pay transparency, and parental leave—women remain underrepresented in senior leadership. Comparative analysis shows distinct patterns: Switzerland has increased board-level representation through quotas, the U.S. exhibits uneven progress due to decentralized policies, and Singapore’s partnership-based approach yields gradual improvements but is constrained by cultural norms.

The review underscores that similar institutional interventions can produce divergent outcomes depending on cultural and organisational contexts. Social Role Theory and Role Congruity Theory explain how societal norms interact with micro-level organisational practices, while concepts like the glass ceiling, the labyrinth, and the Stereotype Content Model illustrate persistent career obstacles. Institutional capacity, governance, and stakeholder engagement critically influence the effectiveness of gender parity initiatives. European quotas have yielded measurable board-level gains, whereas fragmented U.S. policies show mixed results. Singapore’s emphasis on meritocracy and public-private partnerships has produced incremental progress, yet deep-rooted cultural barriers remain. A key theme is the integration of structural and cultural approaches. Policy “hardware” must be complemented by cultural “software”—attitudes, norms, and values—to achieve lasting parity. Research gaps include limited longitudinal tracking, insufficient cross-cultural studies, and a lack of focus on intersectional identities. Achieving gender equity requires coordinated efforts among policymakers, organisations, and civil society, addressing both structural and attitudinal barriers.

In conclusion, gender disparity is a global challenge with profound economic and social implications. Multi-level, evidence-based interventions are necessary to transform workforce

outcomes. Building on these insights, Chapter 3 presents the research methodology, detailing a comparative case study design for Switzerland, the U.S., and Singapore. It explains data collection and analysis strategies that operationalize the theoretical frameworks, enabling an examination of how institutional and cultural factors shape women's leadership trajectories and informing policy and scholarly contributions in the field.

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

This study investigates gender disparities in workforce participation and leadership across North America, Western Europe, and Southeast Asia. These inequalities arise from both structural factors—such as institutional policies and governance systems—and cultural dynamics, including societal norms and gender roles. Understanding how these elements interact is crucial for formulating effective, evidence-based policies that advance gender equality and inclusive leadership. Grounded in Social Role Theory (Eagly & Wood, 1991) and Institutional Theory, this research examines how formal institutions and informal cultural expectations jointly shape gender parity outcomes. Social Role Theory emphasizes that behavioral and occupational differences between men and women are socially constructed through culturally defined expectations, while Institutional Theory explains how organisational structures, policies, and norms reinforce or challenge these gendered roles. Together, these perspectives offer a comprehensive lens to understand both the cultural and institutional mechanisms driving gender disparities. The study addresses two main research questions:

RQ1: What cultural and institutional factors influence the adaptation of gender parity policies from Western to Asian contexts, especially in Switzerland, USA, and Singapore?

RQ2: How do intersecting identities (e.g., race, socioeconomic status) shape gender disparities in workforce leadership and compensation across the national contexts of Switzerland, USA, and Singapore?

To explore these questions, the research adopts a mixed-methods approach. For RQ1, an exploratory qualitative document analysis will be conducted on approximately 60 policy documents, academic studies, and institutional reports across selected sectors (e.g., science, finance, education, technology, and healthcare). For RQ2, the study will apply an Explanatory Sequential Mixed-Method design, beginning with a quantitative correlation analysis of secondary data—such as the Gini coefficient (income inequality) and global gender indicators—followed by qualitative interpretation using insights derived from the RQ1 documents. This design ensures both analytical depth and contextual understanding.

Preliminary observations indicate a positive correlation between gender equality and equitable income distribution: as gender parity improves, income inequality tends to decline. Persistent wage discrimination and limited access to leadership positions continue to impede progress, leading to broader socioeconomic effects such as constrained career mobility and reduced educational opportunities for women. By integrating cultural, institutional, and economic analyses, this study seeks to identify transferable policy strategies and context-specific challenges that can advance gender parity across diverse global contexts.

3.2. Methodology for RQ1

This study adopts a qualitative documentary analysis design to examine how cultural and institutional factors shape the adaptation of gender parity policies in Switzerland, the United States, and Singapore. Publicly available policy documents, institutional reports, and media texts constitute the primary units of analysis. Credibility will be ensured through triangulation, expert review, and transparent documentation of analytic procedures. Ethical considerations are maintained through the exclusive use of secondary, publicly accessible data sources.

3.2.1 Research Design and Rationale

Given the complexity and contextual nature of gender parity policy adaptation, an exploratory qualitative design is employed. This approach is well-suited to uncovering nuanced cultural norms and institutional dynamics that are not easily captured through standardized metrics. Gender norms and institutional structures vary widely across regions. A qualitative lens allows for deeper insight into how these factors shape policy outcomes. Focused on three case countries—Switzerland, USA, and Singapore—to enable cross-regional comparison and policy transferability analysis. This methodology provides a robust foundation for identifying culturally sensitive and institutionally feasible strategies to advance gender parity. The findings will support policymakers in designing adaptive frameworks that respect local norms while promoting global standards of equality.

3.2.2 Methodology

3.2.2.1 Scope of materials

Documents will be collected from business-relevant sectors (finance, technology, healthcare, and education) to allow cross-sectoral analysis. These documents reflect organisational

practices, policy directions, cultural narratives, and structural conditions across the three national contexts. Each document will be treated as a unit of analysis. The sampling strategy ensures breadth, covering multiple sectors and institutional perspectives, rather than population-level sampling of individuals. I will use document analysis, reflecting those actively engaged in workforce participation and leadership pathways. The professional scope includes individuals from multiple industry sectors—such as science, technology, healthcare and finance—to facilitate cross-sectoral comparisons. Within organisations, data will represent a range of hierarchical levels, from entry-level roles to executive leadership, enabling analysis of career progression and representation. Geographically, the sample will span urban and rural regions to capture localised cultural influences, and where applicable, include data from multiple countries to explore cross-cultural variations. Special attention will be given to underrepresented and marginalised groups, whose intersecting identities may shape unique experiences of gender inequality. Additionally, policy makers and organisational leaders will be included to provide insights into the design, implementation, and effectiveness of gender equity policies. By targeting this diverse group, the study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of gender disparities, identifying key trends, challenges, and areas for improvement across different sectors and societies.

3.2.2.2 Document Selection and Inclusion Criteria

To facilitate meaningful cross-national comparison, the sample will be divided into three primary strata based on country context: Stratum A includes Switzerland, representing Western Europe; Stratum B encompasses the United States, representing North America; and Stratum C covers Singapore, representing Southeast Asia. Within each stratum, the sample

will be further subdivided according to document type or stakeholder category, depending on the nature of the data source. For document analysis, four key categories will be used: (1) Policy Documents, including national legislation, white papers, and strategic plans that outline gender parity initiatives; (2) Institutional Reports, comprising publications from government agencies, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and international bodies that assess policy implementation and outcomes; (3) Academic Literature, such as peer-reviewed journal articles and working papers that provide theoretical and empirical insights; and (4) Media and Public Discourse, which includes news articles, opinion pieces, and cultural commentaries that reflect societal attitudes and public engagement with gender parity issues. Additionally, 50 to 60 units of documents across 3-5 key sectors will be included for qualitative analysis. These papers will be selected based on their relevance to the research objectives and their contribution to understanding the theoretical frameworks, empirical evidence, and methodological approaches pertaining to gender parity. Relevant supplementary materials, such as conference proceedings, policy briefs, corporate reports and expert commentaries, will also be incorporated to provide comprehensive insights and support the triangulation of data. This stratified structure ensures comprehensive coverage of both formal policy frameworks and informal cultural narratives across all three national contexts.

3.2.2.3 Procedures for Data Collection

To ensure accuracy and consistency throughout the research process, a structured and transparent approach is adopted. All secondary data sources—including policy documents, institutional reports, global indices, and academic literature—are selected based on clearly

defined inclusion criteria such as relevance to the research question, credibility of the source, and publication recency. A document sampling log is maintained to track the origin, type, and rationale for each selected source, ensuring traceability and transparency. Key variables related to cultural and institutional factors are operationalized using established theoretical frameworks and validated indices, to maintain conceptual alignment. Comparative analysis is conducted using uniform categories across the three national contexts to ensure consistency in interpretation and facilitate meaningful cross-country comparisons. Expert consultation is incorporated at key stages to validate the relevance and clarity of selected materials and interpretations. These measures collectively support the reliability and integrity of the research findings.

3.2.2.4 Instrumentation and Operationalisation of Constructs

This study adopts a cross-national comparative design to explore the cultural and institutional factors influencing the adaptation of gender parity policies in Switzerland, the United States, and Singapore. The analysis relies exclusively on secondary data sources, ensuring a non-intrusive and ethically sound approach. Structured qualitative analysis will be conducted using publicly available archival materials, including policy documents, institutional reports, academic literature, and media publications. Key variables are operationalised to reflect cultural dimensions—such as societal gender norms and attitudes toward gender roles—and institutional factors like policy frameworks, enforcement mechanisms, and governance structures. To enhance construct clarity, existing indices such as Hofstede's cultural dimensions and World Values Survey data will be used to quantify cultural traits. Macro-level indicators, including gender equality indices, labor force participation rates, and legal

provisions, will be extracted from global datasets to support comparative analysis. Stratified sampling of documents ensures diverse representation across sectors and regions. Analytical techniques such as thematic coding and comparative case analysis will be employed to identify patterns and contextual differences, offering rich insights into the factors shaping gender parity policy adaptation across varied cultural landscapes.

3.2.3 Data Analysis Plan

The overall analysis employs open, axial, and selective coding techniques, with ATLAS.ti serving as the qualitative tool for cross-case comparison among Switzerland, the USA, and Singapore (Frieze, 2019). This methodological approach ensures rigour and produces robust qualitative insights (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). By systematically applying these coding techniques and leveraging the capabilities of Atlas.ti, researchers are able to conduct a thorough and insightful analysis that captures the complexities and nuances of the data across different contexts. The use of Atlas.ti, in particular, enhances the analytical process by providing tools for data management, visualisation, and pattern identification, which are crucial for producing high-quality qualitative research (Paulus, Lester, & Dempster, 2014). Through this comprehensive workflow, the research aims to contribute valuable knowledge to the field by offering a detailed and nuanced understanding of the data and its implications. Relevant content will be extracted from each document, compiled in a master file, and uploaded into ATLAS.ti. AI-assisted coding will be used to identify themes across all documents (Frieze, 2019). The use of ATLAS.ti, in particular, enhances the analytical process by providing tools for data management, visualisation, and pattern identification, which are crucial for producing high-quality qualitative research. Through this comprehensive

workflow, the research aims to contribute valuable knowledge to the field by offering a detailed and nuanced understanding of the data and its implications. Relevant content will be extracted from each document, compiled in a master file, and uploaded into ATLAS.ti. AI-assisted coding will be used to identify themes across all documents.

The methodology and flow of using Atlas for qualitative analysis involve three main phases, familiarisation, coding and theme development.

In the initial phase of familiarisation, the focus is on thoroughly reading and summarising documents to gain a deep understanding of the content, context, and nuances of the data. This phase is crucial for setting the stage for subsequent analysis. Key strategies employed during this phase include memo writing and noting key policy phrases. Researchers engage in memo writing to capture their initial impressions and potential areas of interest, which serve as a foundational reference throughout the research process. These memos help in documenting the researcher's thought process and evolving understanding of the data. Additionally, important policy-related phrases and terminologies are highlighted to identify recurring patterns and relevant discourse. This practice aids in creating a comprehensive mental map of the data, which is essential for preparing for the coding phase. By the end of this phase, researchers have a well-rounded grasp of the data's landscape, setting the groundwork for more detailed analysis.

The second phase of the research is dedicated to coding, where the focus is on generating initial codes by breaking down the data into meaningful segments. This phase is pivotal in transforming raw data into structured information that can be analysed systematically. Coding is conducted using two primary methods: open coding and Atlas.ti-assisted coding.

Open coding involves manually identifying discrete concepts and categories, allowing for flexibility and the emergence of new themes that may not have been anticipated. This approach encourages researchers to remain open to new insights and patterns that may arise from the data. Complementing open coding is the use of Atlas.ti, a qualitative tool that assists in managing, organising, and visualising the data. Atlas.ti helps in identifying patterns and relationships within the data, enhancing the reliability and depth of the analysis. By combining intuitive insight with systematic precision, this dual approach ensures a thorough and nuanced coding process. The integration of Atlas.ti in this phase is particularly beneficial as it provides a robust platform for handling large volumes of data and facilitating complex analyses.

In the final phase of the research, similar codes are clustered into broader themes, connecting the data to research questions and theoretical frameworks. This phase is about synthesising the coded data into coherent themes that reflect the underlying patterns and insights. The process begins with clustering codes, where conceptually similar codes are grouped into preliminary themes using ATLAS.ti's visualisation tools. This visual representation aids in identifying connections and relationships between codes, facilitating the formation of broader themes. Once preliminary themes are established, they are linked to research questions and aligned with theoretical frameworks such as Social Role Theory and Institutional Theory. This alignment ensures that the themes are not only data-driven but also grounded in established theoretical perspectives. The themes are then iteratively refined for distinctness and coherence, with peer debriefing serving as a validation mechanism. This collaborative process helps in ensuring the accuracy and reliability of the themes. By

the end of this phase, researchers have developed a set of well-defined themes that provide a comprehensive understanding of the data and its implications for the research questions. A preliminary codebook will be created, and codes will be refined iteratively. Peer review (supervisor audit) will be applied to ensure coding consistency and enhance credibility.” The studies evaluate the possibility of 3 categories with eight different thematic areas that cover multiple dimensions of gender equality, as shown in Table 5.

Table 5: An overview of institutional practices, leadership culture and workforce equality.

Institutional practices	Leadership culture	Workforce equality
Work-life balance	Leadership and decision-making processes	Gender dimension
Organisational culture	Recruitment processes	Career progression
Governance		Salary pay gap analysis

Source: Author made.

Within each of these areas, the studies adopt an intersectional lens by considering how different social categories (such as gender, ethnicity, age, disability, sexual orientation, and socioeconomic status) intersect to produce unique experiences of disadvantage or discrimination.

3.2.4 Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness in qualitative research is pivotal for ensuring the credibility and integrity of research findings. It involves evaluating the extent to which research outcomes are accurate, authentic, and reflective of subjects' perspectives. Trustworthiness is framed around key components such as credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability, each

reinforcing the reliability of qualitative analysis.

3.2.4.1 Creditability

The extent to which the findings accurately represent the data and subjects' perspectives in this study is ensured through the implementation of triangulation, peer debriefing, and audit trails. Triangulation involves the use of multiple data sources, methods, and theoretical frameworks to enhance the credibility and consistency of the findings. Peer debriefing provides an external check on the research process, allowing for critical reflection and minimisation of researcher bias. Additionally, maintaining detailed audit trails documents the research process transparently, supporting the confirmability of the results and ensuring that interpretations are grounded in the subjects' authentic perspectives. Integrity, competence, and transparency ensure authentic findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

3.2.4.2 Transferability

Transferability in research refers to the applicability of findings across different contexts, settings, or groups, particularly in qualitative research. It is achieved through detailed descriptions that enable readers to assess relevance. This research ensures transferability by focusing on resilience, transparency, and integrity. Resilience involves adapting theoretical frameworks, such as intersectionality, across diverse contexts while maintaining analytical strength. Transparency requires providing comprehensive accounts of the research context, methodologies, and rationale, allowing readers to evaluate applicability. Integrity is upheld by adhering to ethical principles like diversity, inclusion, and fairness, ensuring relevance across various contexts.

Transferability is rooted in qualitative research methodologies, notably under Lincoln and

Guba's (1985) criteria for trustworthiness. Unlike quantitative research, which emphasises statistical generalisation through external validity, transferability depends on 'thick description'—detailed accounts of the research setting, and processes—enabling informed judgments about relevance. Key elements of transferability include contextual detail, which provides rich descriptions of the environment, and phenomena studied, and comparability, which offers information for comparing the study context with other potential settings. The reader's role is to determine applicability. Overall, methodological transparency, ethical integrity, and the resilience of theoretical frameworks are crucial for ensuring the study's relevance across varied environments, reinforcing transferability.

3.2.4.3 Confirmability

At its core, confirmability emphasises the objectivity of research findings. This principle asserts that conclusions must be demonstrably rooted in the empirical evidence obtained from subjects, rather than reflecting the preconceived notions or theoretical inclinations of the researcher (Patton, 2002).

One of the principal strategies to enhance confirmability involves the meticulous documentation of the entire research process, commonly referred to as maintaining an audit trail. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), an audit trail encompasses detailed records of research decisions, data collection procedures, analysis methodologies, and reflective notes. This comprehensive documentation enables external reviewers to trace the analytic pathway, thereby verifying the congruence between data and findings. As explicated by Denzin (1978), triangulation serves as a methodological tool to bolster confirmability. By integrating multiple data sources, methodological approaches, and theoretical perspectives, researchers

can cross-validate findings, thereby mitigating the influence of individual bias and reinforcing the dependability of the results.

Engaging in peer debriefing, as recommended by Lincoln and Guba (1985), provides an additional layer of scrutiny. By subjecting the research process and findings to the critique of impartial colleagues, researchers can identify latent biases, challenge assumptions, and refine analytical interpretations, thereby enhancing the objectivity of the study.

As this study is grounded in exploratory research and relies exclusively on publicly available archival information—such as policy documents, institutional reports, and media publications—it does not involve direct interaction with human subjects or the collection of personal or sensitive data. Consequently, formal ethical procedures such as informed consent, confidentiality protocols, or institutional review board approval are not required. The use of secondary sources ensures that the research adheres to ethical standards by focusing on publicly accessible content, minimising risk, and maintaining academic integrity throughout the analysis. By mapping the components of the Trustworthiness Framework to these validity dimensions, researchers can foster a more robust, credible, and ethically sound approach to their studies, reinforcing both theoretical and empirical integrity.

3.3. Methodology for RQ2

RQ2 employs an Explanatory Sequential Mixed-Method Design, for the question, “How do intersecting identities (e.g., race, socioeconomic status) shape gender disparities in workforce leadership and compensation across the national contexts of Switzerland, USA, and Singapore?” employs a mixed-method approach in data analysis to leverage the

strengths of both quantitative and qualitative methods. The key benefit of this approach is its ability to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the issue. Quantitative data offers measurable insights, identifying patterns and trends in leadership roles and compensation disparities. Qualitative data complements this by uncovering the personal experiences and cultural factors that influence these disparities. By integrating both methods, researchers can validate statistical findings with real-life narratives, offering a richer, more nuanced analysis that captures the complexity of how intersecting identities affect gender disparities across diverse national contexts.

3.3.1 Research Design and Rationale

This research adopts an Explanatory Sequential Mixed-Method approach to comprehensively address how intersecting identities—such as race, gender, and socioeconomic status—shape disparities in leadership and compensation across different countries. The rationale behind selecting this design lies in its ability to integrate broad quantitative analysis with in-depth qualitative interpretation, thereby providing a more holistic understanding of both structural inequalities and cultural-institutional mechanisms.

In the first phase, quantitative analysis identifies macro-level patterns across 50 countries using Panel-Data Analysis, which employs a time-series with a cross-sectional multiple regression model. This quantitative design is particularly effective for examining relationships between variables in large datasets related to gender disparities, such as wage gaps, leadership representation, and employment rates, without the need to manipulate any variables. The research employs a correlational design due to the non-experimental nature of the variables and the availability of extensive datasets, aiming to uncover how race,

socioeconomic status, and gender collectively influence disparities in leadership and compensation. Key quantitative steps include disaggregating Gini coefficients by gender, race, and socioeconomic status, where data availability permits, to reveal subgroup inequalities that may otherwise remain hidden in aggregated data. The study also correlates these disaggregated Gini values with indicators of leadership representation and wage gaps to determine whether higher levels of inequality correspond with lower representation or wider wage gaps among marginalised groups. This approach allows for the identification of systemic patterns and relationships without direct intervention, offering robust insights into the structural dimensions of inequality.

Following the quantitative phase, the qualitative analysis seeks to explain the underlying reasons and mechanisms behind the observed patterns. This is accomplished through document-based interpretive analysis focused on the specific national contexts of Switzerland, the United States, and Singapore. This phase helps to elucidate the cultural and institutional mechanisms that influence the disparities identified in the quantitative phase.

The final integration phase synthesises findings from both quantitative and qualitative analyses. This comprehensive phase allows the study to explore macro-level structural inequalities identified during the quantitative phase alongside the cultural and institutional mechanisms highlighted through qualitative inquiry. This ensures a nuanced understanding of the complex factors driving disparities in leadership and compensation across diverse socio-economic and cultural landscapes. This research question requires both statistical analysis and contextual interpretation.

3.3.2 Phase 1: Quantitative Research Design

3.3.2.1 Methodology

In this study, income inequality was selected as the dependent variable and used Gini coefficient to measure it. Gini coefficient is a tool used to gauge of economic inequality, measuring income distribution or, less commonly, wealth distribution among a population. Income inequality is measured using the Gini coefficient, a widely accepted metric that quantifies the distribution of income within a population. The coefficient ranges from 0 (perfect equality) to 1 (perfect inequality), with values above 1 theoretically possible due to negative income or wealth. Values over 1 are theoretically possible due to negative income or wealth. I chose 4 independent variables- Overall score of gender equality, economic participation and opportunity gender equality, political empowerment gender equality and educational attainment gender equality.

3.3.2.2 Population

To address the second research question on gender disparities in workforce participation and compensation, the study will compare Gini coefficients across countries or regions to evaluate how income inequality correlates with gender wage gaps. Frequency distributions and cross-tabulations will be used to summarise workforce participation and leadership representation by gender. Mean and median wage data will be compared across gender groups and countries.

The unit of analysis is the country-year between 2005 and 2024, for at least 30 countries Each country's aggregate indicators—such as Gini coefficient, gender equality indices, and labor market statistics—serve as observation points. The dataset includes annual data for

Switzerland, the United States, and Singapore, supplemented by regional comparators when necessary.

By analysing trends in the Gini coefficient over time, the research aims to determine whether improvements in gender representation within leadership roles are associated with reductions in overall income inequality. For the second research question, which explores the impact of intersecting identities, the Gini coefficient will be disaggregated—where data permits—by gender, race, and socioeconomic status to uncover how inequality manifests within specific subgroups. Additionally, the study will correlate Gini values with indicators such as leadership representation and wage gaps to assess whether higher levels of income inequality are linked to lower representation or more pronounced wage disparities among marginalised populations.

3.3.2.3 Data Selection and Inclusion Criteria as Procedure for the Data-Collection

This segment outlines various variables, indicators, and references utilised in the study. The independent variables (IVs) include Gender Equality Score, Economic Participation Score, Educational Attainment Score, Political Empowerment Score, Leadership Representation, and Wage Gap Index. These are measured using indicators such as the Global Gender Gap Index, Economic Participation and Opportunity Subindex, Educational Attainment Subindex, Political Empowerment Subindex from the World Economic Forum (2025), percentage of women in leadership positions from the International Labour Organization (2025), and Gender Wage Gap Statistics from the OECD (2025). The dependent variable (DV) is the Gini Coefficient, indicating income inequality, sourced from the World Bank (2025). Controlled variables (CVs) include GDP per capita, female labour force participation

rate, and education level, measured through World Bank (2025), ILO (2025), and UNESCO (2025) data respectively. These variables facilitate comprehensive analysis of gender-related socio-economic dynamics. This study employs multiple variants regression research design focusing on Gini coefficient data over the past decade.

This approach is particularly appropriate given the non-experimental nature of the variables under investigation. Ethical and practical constraints prevent the manipulation of factors such as gender, race, and socioeconomic status, making observational analysis the most suitable method. This design facilitates the identification of relationships among variables, shedding light on how race, education, and income intersect with gender disparities in leadership roles and compensation.

Additionally, correlation analysis effectively manages extensive datasets sourced from surveys, government publications, and organisational records, offering comprehensive insights into systemic patterns. The inclusion of data spanning 20 years enriches the analysis, enabling the observation of evolving trends and shifts over time.

Key variable pairings explored in this study include the influence of gender and race on leadership representation, the interplay between gender and socioeconomic status in shaping wage disparities, and the relationship between education levels and gender in determining compensation trends.

3.3.2.4 Instrumentation and Operationalisation of Constructs

To collect and analyse quantitative secondary data for this study, a systematic approach will be employed using the Gretl platform. Data will be sourced from multiple reputable and independent databases, including the Standardized World Income Inequality Database

(SWIID), the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Index, the International Labour Organization (ILO) statistical database, and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

he data collection process will begin with identifying and extracting relevant datasets from these databases. Each dataset will be scrutinised for completeness, consistency, and relevance to the study's objectives. Variables pertinent to the research questions, such as income inequality metrics, gender gap indices, labour force statistics, and economic indicators, will be carefully selected. To maintain internal validity, all variables will be clearly defined and measured using standardised indicators.

Table 6. An overview of source and operationalisation data

No.	Construct	Source	Operationalisation (Actual Data)
1	Income inequality	World Bank Group (2025)	Gini coefficient (0–1)
2	Female labor force participation (FLFP)	World Economic Forum (2025)	% women in workforce
3	Women in leadership (WIL)	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2025)	% women in senior roles
4	Wage gap	International Labour Organisation Statistic (2025)	$\frac{\text{Male avg. wage} - \text{Female avg. wage}}{\text{Male avg. wage}}$
5	Women Empowerment Index (WEI)	World Bank Group (2025)	Composite index (0–1)

Source: Author made.

Once the data is collected, it will be imported into Gretl for analysis. Gretl's user-friendly interface and robust statistical tools make it suitable for conducting comprehensive

econometric analyses. Initial data cleaning will be performed to address any missing values, outliers, or inconsistencies. Descriptive statistics will provide an overview of the data, including measures of central tendency and dispersion.

Subsequently, advanced econometric techniques such as regression analysis, correlation tests, and hypothesis testing will be conducted to explore relationships between variables and test research hypotheses. Gretl's capability to handle large datasets and perform complex statistical computations ensure the accuracy and reliability of the results. Visualisation tools within Gretl, including graphs and charts, will be utilised to present the findings clearly and effectively.

3.3.2.5 Data Analysis Plan

To assess relationships between key variables in this study, Gretl analysis will be employed depending on the distribution of the data. Linear regression will be used when variables are normally distributed and measured on continuous scales, allowing for the evaluation of linear relationships between indicators such as gender equality scores and income inequality (Gini coefficient).

To further explore the influence of intersecting identities, multivariate regression analysis will be conducted. This method allows for the control of confounding variables, isolating the unique effects of factors such as gender, race, and socioeconomic status on outcomes like leadership representation and wage gaps. By including multiple predictors in the model, multivariate regression provides a more nuanced understanding of how structural inequalities operate across different demographic groups.

Proposed Multiple-Regression Model:

$$Gini_{ii} = \beta_0^{FLFP} + \beta_1^{WE} + \beta_2^{WD} + \beta_3^{WIL} + \varepsilon$$

Variables :

- **DV:**
 - **Gini coefficient (income inequality)**
- **IVs:**
 - Women empowerment (WE)
 - Women in leadership (WIL)
 - Wage Discrepancy (WD)
 - Female labor force participation (FLFP)

These interactions reflect the combined influence of gender-related variables and socioeconomic conditions—without relying on intersectionality terminology.

Table 7: An Overview of Independent Variables (IV) and Dependent Variable (DV)

Variable Name	Indicator	Dataset	Scoring System	Reference
Independent Variables (IVs)				
Women empowerment (WP)	Political Empowerment Subindex - World Economic Forum	WEF Political Empowerment Dataset (2025)	Scale from 0 (no representation) to 1 (full parity), measuring women's representation in parliament, ministerial positions, and heads of state.	World Economic Forum. (2025). Global Gender Gap Report.
Women in leadership (WIL)	Percentage of Women in Leadership Positions - International Labour Organisation (ILO)	ILO Women in Leadership Dataset (2025)	Expressed as a percentage (%) reflecting the share of women in senior management and executive roles.	International Labour Organisation. (2025). Women in Business and Management Report.
Wage Discrepancy (WD)	Gender Wage Gap Statistics - Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)	OECD Gender Wage Gap Dataset (2025)	Represented as a percentage (%) difference between median earnings of men and women, with 0% indicating no gap.	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, OECD. (2025). Gender Wage Gap Report.
Female Labour Force Participation (FLFP)	Female Labour Force Participation Rate - International Labour Organisation (ILO)	ILO Labour Force Participation Dataset (2025)	Percentage (%) of women actively engaged in the labour force relative to the total female population aged 15 and above.	International Labour Organisation. (2025). Labour Statistics Database.
Dependent Variable (DV)				
Gini Coefficient (Income Inequality)	Gini Index - World Bank	World Bank Gini Index Dataset (2025)	Same as above, ranging from 0 to 1, with lower scores showing greater income equality.	World Bank. (2025). World Development Indicators.

Source: Author made.

3.3.2.6 Analysis Steps

The analysis begins with compiling panel data for 50 countries from 2004 to 2024, integrating both time-series and cross-sectional elements to create a comprehensive dataset. This dataset forms the foundation for identifying patterns and trends over time and across different countries. Following data compilation, Pearson and Spearman correlation analyses will be conducted to determine the strength and direction of linear and monotonic relationships among variables. This step helps uncover initial associations and guides further analytical focus.

Next, Panel-Data Analysis using Fixed Effects (FE) and Random Effects (RE) models will be employed to control for country-level heterogeneity. This method enables robust multiple regression analysis by accounting for unobserved variables unique to each country, enhancing the reliability of the results. Finally, the identification of outlier countries and years will be essential for recognising anomalies or unique cases that may influence the overall findings. These outliers will guide qualitative follow-up, providing deeper insights into the factors driving observed trends and variances within the data.

3.3.3 Phase 2: Qualitative Research Design

3.3.3.1 Purpose

The qualitative phase of the research aims to interpret the mechanisms underlying the quantitative results related to Female Labour Force Participation (FLFP), Political Empowerment (PoliticaEmp), Wage Discrepancy, and Women in Leadership (WIL). This phase focuses on analysing institutional practices, governance systems, cultural norms, and

organisational behaviours within the national contexts of Singapore, the United States, and Switzerland. The goal is to uncover how these factors influence gender disparities in leadership, wages, socioeconomic status (SES), and workplace practices.

3.3.3.2 Data Sources

The phase will re-use and extend the 60 documents collected for Research Question 1 (RQ1), which include policy documents, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) and Human Resources (HR) guidelines, government and Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) reports, corporate leadership frameworks, media texts, and institutional publications. These data sources will provide a comprehensive view of the institutional and cultural contexts affecting gender disparities across the three countries.

3.3.3.3 Document Selection Criteria

Documents will be selected based on their relevance to gender disparities, particularly in leadership, wages, SES, and workplace practices, as well as their policy, organisational, or cultural significance. They must explicitly reference key themes such as leadership, wage inequalities, SES-related factors, and workplace culture, and originate from public, credible institutional sources, including government bodies, reputable NGOs, academic institutions, and recognised media outlets.

3.3.3.4 Coding and Thematic Analysis

Thematic analysis will be conducted through systematic coding, aligning qualitative themes with the quantitative findings. The focus areas include leadership culture, recruitment and promotion systems, work-life balance policies, gender-based violence and safety frameworks, industry-specific barriers, organisational culture, and SES-based barriers.

Through this approach, the qualitative analysis will provide in-depth insights into the structural and cultural mechanisms driving the gender disparities observed in the quantitative phase.

3.3.4 Integration Phase (Quant → Qual Merge)

Integration will proceed through several steps: first, qualitative case selection will be guided by quantitative anomalies to ensure a comprehensive approach (Patton, 2002). Next, qualitative findings will be used to explain the reasons behind statistical patterns, providing deeper insights (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Finally, a Joint Display Table will be included in Chapter 5, summarising the merged insights from the quantitative and qualitative data (Denzin, 1978).

Multivariate regression and robustness checks support statistical conclusion validity (Patton, 2002). The use of large datasets reduces the risk of sampling errors (ILO, 2025). These citations should be cross-verified with the actual references in the study's reference list to ensure accuracy and consistency.

3.3.5 Integration Phase (Quant → Qual Merge)

During the Integration Phase, the quantitative and qualitative findings are synthesised to delve into the complex factors contributing to disparities in leadership and compensation. The qualitative insights are employed to elucidate the structural inequalities that were identified quantitatively, thereby ensuring a comprehensive understanding of the socio-economic and cultural landscapes influencing these disparities. By integrating these analyses, the research offers a nuanced perspective on how intersecting identities shape disparities in leadership and compensation, underscoring both structural and cultural-institutional factors.

The integration phase connects the two strands:

Table 8: Integration of Quantitative and Qualitative explanations

QUANT Result	QUAL Explanation
High Gini + low FLFP	Policy gaps, cultural norms limiting female leadership
Women in leadership x SES effect	Access barriers, class hierarchy
Outliers in Singapore/USA/Switzerland	National models, organisational practices, cultural expectations

Source: Author made

Integration will proceed through several steps: first, qualitative case selection will be guided by quantitative anomalies to ensure a comprehensive approach. Next, qualitative findings will be used to explain the reasons behind statistical patterns, providing deeper insights. Finally, a Joint Display Table will be included in Chapter 5, summarising the merged insights from the quantitative and qualitative data.

The study ensures internal validity through clear operational definitions and the control of variables. Construct validity is achieved by using standardised global indices. External validity is demonstrated across 50–60 countries with a 25-year dataset. Statistical conclusion validity is supported by multivariate regression and robustness checks. To ensure credibility, researchers employ triangulation across various document types, allowing for a comprehensive understanding of the subject matter. Transferability is achieved through detailed contextual descriptions, which provide the necessary background and setting for the findings. Dependability is maintained by documenting the coding process, ensuring that the

methods used are transparent and replicable. Lastly, confirmability is supported by an audit trail and reflexive memos, which help in tracking the research process and reflecting on the researcher's biases and assumptions.

3.3.6 Reliability, Validity, and Trustworthiness

3.3.6.1 Internal Validity

This study is designed to ensure reliability by providing rich contextual detail and methodological accuracy, enabling others to assess the relevance of its findings to different settings. By using standardised, internationally recognised datasets—including the Standardised World Income Inequality Database (SWIID), the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Index, the International Labour Organization (ILO) statistical database, and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).—the research allows for meaningful comparisons across countries and time periods. Key variables, including income inequality (measured by the Gini coefficient), gender wage gaps, and leadership representation, are clearly defined and consistently measured, enhancing the potential for replication and adaptation in other contexts. Despite rigorous measures to ensure data reliability and validity, certain threats to validity can still affect quantitative analysis. Internal validity threats such as selection bias may arise even when using reputable data sources like SWIID and the Global Gender Gap Index, as inherent biases can exist due to selection criteria or population representation. Confounding variables, which are not accounted for in the study, could also influence observed relationships, potentially distorting causal interpretations. Internal validity is achieved through clear operational definitions and control of variables (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Construct validity is supported by using

standardised global indices (World Economic Forum, 2025), while external validity is demonstrated with data from 50–60 countries (World Bank, 2025).

3.3.6.2 External validity

The study also employs an intersectional lens, analysing how gender disparities interact with race and socioeconomic status. The application of descriptive and correlational statistical methods ensures the adaptability of the research framework (OECD, 2025). The intersectional lens provides nuanced insights into structural inequalities (Crenshaw, 1989). This approach offers nuanced insights that can be applied to diverse populations experiencing similar structural inequalities. Furthermore, the use of descriptive and correlational statistical methods, along with accuracy documentation of data sources and analytical procedures, ensures that the research framework can be adapted or extended by other scholars, policymakers, or institutions seeking to explore gender inequality in their own contexts. External validity threats include issues with generalisability; although the data spans from 2004 to 2024, the findings may not fully apply to current or future contexts due to socioeconomic shifts. Additionally, cultural and regional variability may limit the universality of the conclusions drawn, as datasets might lack comprehensive representation of all global regions.

3.3.6.3 Construct validity

Metrics like the Global Gender Gap Index are critical for measuring theoretical concepts accurately (World Economic Forum, 2025). Measurement consistency is key to maintaining construct validity (UNESCO, 2025). Construct validity refers to the degree to which operational definitions—such as the Gini coefficient for income inequality or gender equality

indicators—accurately measure the theoretical concepts they are intended to represent. Gini Coefficient: Designed to quantify income inequality, this metric captures disparities in income distribution within a population. However, for robust construct validity, researchers must confirm that it reflects not just economic disparity but also interconnected social and structural inequalities. Gender Equality Indicators: Metrics such as the Global Gender Gap Index encompass dimensions like political empowerment, economic participation, and health outcomes. To achieve construct validity, these indicators should comprehensively capture the nuanced aspects of gender dynamics as conceptualised theoretically. Construct validity threats are evident through measurement inconsistencies, where differing methodologies across data sources can introduce inconsistencies despite cross-referencing definitions. Operationalisation issues also arise when concepts like income inequality or gender representation are defined in ways that may not perfectly capture real-world phenomena.

3.6.6.4 Statistical Conclusion Validity

In this study, correlation is used for the study. Correlation is a valuable tool because it measures the strength and direction of the linear relationship between two variables. It provides quantitative value, known as the correlation coefficient, which ranges from -1 to 1. This allows researchers to quickly determine whether variables are positively related, negatively related, or not related at all.

Regression, on the other hand, predicts the value of one variable based on another. It establishes a cause-and-effect relationship by identifying how changes in an independent variable influence a dependent variable. Regression provides an equation that can be used to make predictions.

Statistical conclusion validity threats involve potential data anomalies, where anonymisation and data disaggregation efforts could result in missing or skewed data points, affecting statistical robustness. Furthermore, while using large datasets reduces the risk of sampling errors, errors in the data collection process could still influence statistical significance. Multivariate regression and robustness checks support statistical conclusion validity (Patton, 2002). The use of large datasets reduces the risk of sampling errors (ILO, 2025).

3.6.6.5. Ethical Procedure

The study relies exclusively on secondary data from reputable sources such as the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, OECD (2025) and the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Index (2025). These datasets are publicly accessible and anonymised, eliminating risks related to personal privacy or consent.

3.4 Chapter Summary and Transition

This chapter outlined the methodological framework guiding the study on gender disparities in workforce participation and leadership across North America, Western Europe, and Southeast Asia. These inequalities are shaped by both structural elements—such as institutional policies and governance systems—and cultural dynamics, including societal norms and gender roles. Grounded in Social Role Theory and Institutional Theory, the study seeks to explain how formal institutions and informal cultural expectations jointly influence gender equality in employment and leadership.

The research is guided by two key questions. RQ1 investigates the cultural and institutional factors influencing the adaptation of gender parity policies from Western contexts to Asian

settings, focusing on Switzerland, the USA, and Singapore. To address this, a qualitative documentary analysis was conducted using publicly available policy documents, institutional reports, and media publications. Thematic analysis enabled the identification of major themes such as work-life balance, leadership participation, and equity-driven reforms. The study ensured credibility through triangulation and expert review, dependability through consistent analytic procedures, and confirmability by maintaining a transparent audit trail of document sources.

To further explore the influence of intersecting identities, multivariate regression analysis will be conducted. This method allows for the control of confounding variables, isolating the unique effects of factors such as gender, race, and socioeconomic status on outcomes like leadership representation and wage gaps. By including multiple predictors in the model, multivariate regression provides a more nuanced understanding of how structural inequalities operate across different demographic groups.

This chapter presents a cohesive methodological framework that aligns effectively with the two research questions through a mixed research methodology. For Research Question 1 (RQ1), a qualitative approach is employed, utilising thematic document analysis to examine policy adaptation. In addressing Research Question 2 (RQ2), a mixed-methods strategy is adopted, combining quantitative and qualitative data through interpretive case comparisons focused on intersectionality. This integrated approach builds a comprehensive foundation for exploring the central objective: to understand how institutional frameworks and cultural norms jointly shape gendered outcomes within varied socio-economic environments. The

subsequent chapter will detail the results and findings, offering synthesised thematic insights that directly respond to both research questions.

CHAPTER IV:

RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the empirical results of the study. It reports the findings derived from both qualitative and quantitative analyses, following the mixed-methods research design outlined in Chapter 3. At this stage, the chapter first presents the qualitative findings addressing RQ1, followed by the quantitative results and their integration in relation to RQ2. The chapter addresses the following two research questions (RQs):

RQ1: What cultural and institutional factors influence the adaptation of gender parity policies from Western to Asian contexts, especially in Switzerland, the United States, and Singapore?

RQ2: How do intersecting identities (e.g., race and socioeconomic status) shape gender disparities in workforce leadership and compensation across the national contexts of Switzerland, the United States, and Singapore?

The analysis is structured across three national contexts: Switzerland (Western Europe), the United States (North America), and Singapore (Southeast Asia). This comparative structure allows for the examination of how gender parity policies and workforce dynamics operate across distinct institutional and cultural environments.

Qualitative analysis draws upon multiple types of documentary sources to capture both formal institutional frameworks and informal societal dynamics influencing gender parity. These sources include policy documents, institutional reports, academic literature, and media discourse. By integrating these diverse perspectives, the analysis provides a multidimensional understanding of gender equality across the selected national contexts.

In summary, as for RQ1, public policy frameworks in Switzerland, the United States, and Singapore have a substantial impact on gender parity. Although each nation has achieved notable progress, persistent challenges exist, stemming from cultural norms, uneven policy implementation, and deficiencies in legal protections. Effectively addressing these concerns necessitates a comprehensive strategy that incorporates stronger legal structures, effective organizational practices, and robust support systems to advance gender equality across all sectors.

Preliminary qualitative findings suggest that public policies, institutional structures, cultural expectations, and socioeconomic conditions interact in shaping gender parity outcomes. While notable progress has been observed across all three contexts, persistent disparities remain, often linked to entrenched cultural norms and uneven policy implementation. These findings are elaborated in Section 4.3.

Also, for RQ2, in addition to qualitative analysis, this study incorporates quantitative indicators to assess gender parity across national contexts. The quantitative framework is based on six core parameters designed to capture multidimensional aspects of gender equality. Women's empowerment is characterized by agency, autonomy, and the ability to participate in decision-making. The proportion of women in leadership positions serves as an indicator of female representation among organizational leaders. The gender wage gap percentage highlights differences in earnings between women and men, while the female labor force participation rate shows women's engagement within the workforce. Income inequality, measured by the GINI coefficient, reflects broader socioeconomic distribution patterns.

Together, these parameters provide a structured basis for evaluating gender equality outcomes across Switzerland, the United States, and Singapore. The detailed quantitative results are presented in the subsequent sections, followed by the integration of qualitative and quantitative findings.

4.2 Data Collection Results

The data collection process for this study encompassed three national contexts—Singapore, Switzerland, and the United States—which together offer a diverse comparative landscape spanning Southeast Asia, Western Europe, and North America. These three countries were selected to capture variation in cultural norms, policy environments, and institutional arrangements related to gender parity, allowing the study to explore how gender-related policies and societal expectations manifest across distinct geopolitical settings. The dataset consisted of a broad range of document types designed to provide comprehensive coverage of the cultural, institutional, and policy dimensions relevant to RQ1 and RQ2. Four primary categories of documents were

collected: policy documents, which included national legislation, white papers, and strategic plans outlining gender related policy frameworks; institutional reports produced by government bodies, NGOs, and international organisations that evaluate policy implementation and outcomes; academic literature such as peer reviewed journal articles and working papers that offer theoretical and empirical insights; and media and public discourse, including news articles, opinion pieces, and commentaries that reflect societal attitudes and cultural narratives surrounding gender issues.

To ensure the robustness of the qualitative analysis, a set of approximately 50 to 60 documents is selected, spanning 3 to 5 sectors relevant to the research objectives. The selection process is guided by the relevance of each document to the study's aims and the extent to which it addresses theoretical, empirical, or methodological aspects of gender parity. In addition, supplementary materials such as conference proceedings, policy briefs, corporate reports, and expert commentaries are included. These serve to support data triangulation and enhance the validity of the findings. This stratified and multi-sourced structure ensures that both formal policy frameworks and informal cultural narratives are represented across the three national contexts.

Public policies play a crucial role in shaping gender parity in Switzerland, the United States, and Singapore. Here is how these policies influence gender equality in each country, as summarised in Table 9.

Table 9: Summarizing the gender equality policies and measurements of gender parity in the United States, Switzerland, and Singapore

Country	Legal Framework	Family Policies	Workplace Policies	Support Systems	Gender Mainstreaming	Measurements
Switzerland	Equal pay laws exist, but cultural norms sustain wage gaps and hinder policies supporting women at work.	Insufficient parental leave and limited childcare services restrict women's employment opportunities and workforce participation.			Gender mainstreaming strategies adopted; implementation inconsistent across sectors	Switzerland's rankings show progress and challenges in health, education, income, and educational gender parity levels.
United States	Legal protections inconsistent; enforcement weak; no national gender parity mandate.		Diversity efforts waning; inconsistent flexibility and leave hinder women's progress.	Lacks comprehensive support system for working parents; absence of affordable childcare and parental leave; disproportionately affects women		GPI, Global Gender Gap Index, and GII assess education access, gender equality, and inequality costs.
Singapore	Gender equality laws exist; workplace and family protections remain incomplete.		Organizations increasingly adopt gender diversity policies; implementation inconsistent; cultural expectations limit women's advancement	Efforts to improve support systems for working parents; parental leave and childcare subsidies; traditional views hinder effectiveness		Indexes evaluate gender discrimination, parity, education, and equality dimensions.

Source: Author made.

To strengthen data triangulation and ensure adequate representation of key themes, supplementary materials—including conference proceedings, policy briefs, corporate reports, and expert commentaries—were also incorporated into the corpus. In total, approximately 50–60 documents were retained for qualitative analysis, as shown in Appendices. These documents spanned 3–5 sectors, ensuring that the dataset captured both formal policy structures and informal cultural narratives across the national contexts. The selection process prioritised relevance to the research questions, representation of diverse perspectives, and coverage of theoretical, empirical, and methodological elements related to gender parity. This volume of documents provided a sufficiently robust dataset to support the stratified analysis conducted in Section 4.3.

Table 10: Summary of literature counts for each central category

No.	Central Category	Number of Literatures	No of Codes	Description
1	Public Policies	13	703	Policies related to gender reforms, labour laws, diversity mandates, equal opportunity measures (Hervías, 2023)
2	Cultural Expectations	12	198	Studies examining norms, stereotypes, gender roles, workplace culture (Badrolhisam, 2025)
3	Institutional Support	11	187	Organizational systems, HR practices, leadership structures, hiring processes (Sarabi, 2024)
4	Socioeconomic Conditions	12	143	Wage gaps, labour market participation, income inequality, economic outcomes (Katie, 2022)

Source: ATLAS.ti Output

The time coverage of the dataset varied by thematic category, reflecting the distinct historical trajectories of gender policy development in each context. As summarised in Table 10, the collected materials spanned several decades.

4.3 Results of RQ1

4.3.1 Qualitative Analysis Procedure and Progress for RQ1

The qualitative analysis for RQ1 was carried out using ATLAS.ti as the primary software for organising and coding the document corpus. The dataset consisted of approximately 50–60 documents spanning policy texts, institutional reports, academic literature, and media sources across the three national contexts of Switzerland, the United States, and Singapore. ATLAS.ti enabled systematic segmentation of the data and supported the application of codes to relevant excerpts, allowing the analysis to remain transparent, traceable, and analytically rigorous. By centralising all documents within a single platform, the software facilitated efficient navigation between quotations and categories, thereby strengthening consistency across the coding process. The initial phase of the analysis involved first cycle open coding, during which descriptive and inductive codes were generated to capture meaningful patterns within the data. This stage emphasised comprehensiveness, ensuring that all relevant ideas within the documents—whether related to public policy structure, cultural norms, institutional arrangements, or socioeconomic contexts—were captured without premature consolidation. Given the diversity of the documents analysed, the initial coding focused on capturing the breadth of thematic content emerging across the three countries before moving toward more interpretive categorisation. Following the generation of preliminary codes, an iterative process of refinement and consolidation was undertaken. Related codes were reviewed, merged, or redefined to reduce redundancy and ensure conceptual clarity.

Public Policies, Cultural Expectations, Institutional Support, and Socioeconomic Conditions. Each category reflected clusters of interrelated codes that consistently reappeared across the documents and country contexts. As coding progressed, patterns in the dataset enabled the identification of central categories distinguished by high groundedness values. Public Policies emerged as the most prominent category (Gr = 2,582), followed by Cultural Expectations (Gr = 2,129), Institutional Support (Gr = 2,054), and Socioeconomic Conditions (Gr = 1,122). These categories were further composed of frequently occurring subthemes, such as Gender Roles, Legal Frameworks, Societal Norms, and Policy Effectiveness. The groundedness values provided empirical evidence of the extent to which specific categories dominated discourse within the document corpus, offering a quantifiable indication of thematic salience. To ensure the reliability and stability of the coding process, the analysis underwent multiple cycles of iterative review. Codes and categories were revisited to verify accuracy, reduce overlap, and prevent conceptual drift. This included reexamining quotations to confirm alignment with category definitions and ensuring consistency across documents from Switzerland, the United States, and Singapore. Through repeated refinement, the coding scheme stabilised, supporting a coherent representation of the qualitative patterns underpinning RQ1. This iterative process also ensured that the analysis maintained methodological rigor by continuously validating the relationship between the data and its coded representation. Finally, Excel outputs derived from ATLAS.ti were used to summarise groundedness values and visualise coding patterns across categories. Exporting the data enabled tabulation of code frequencies and facilitated comparisons across thematic areas. These summaries were then used to identify the most salient categories and subcategories, as reflected in the groundedness values reported in the chapter. Excel thus served as a supplementary analytical tool, enhancing the transparency and interpretability of the coding results by providing clear numerical and structural summaries of coding density across the entire dataset.

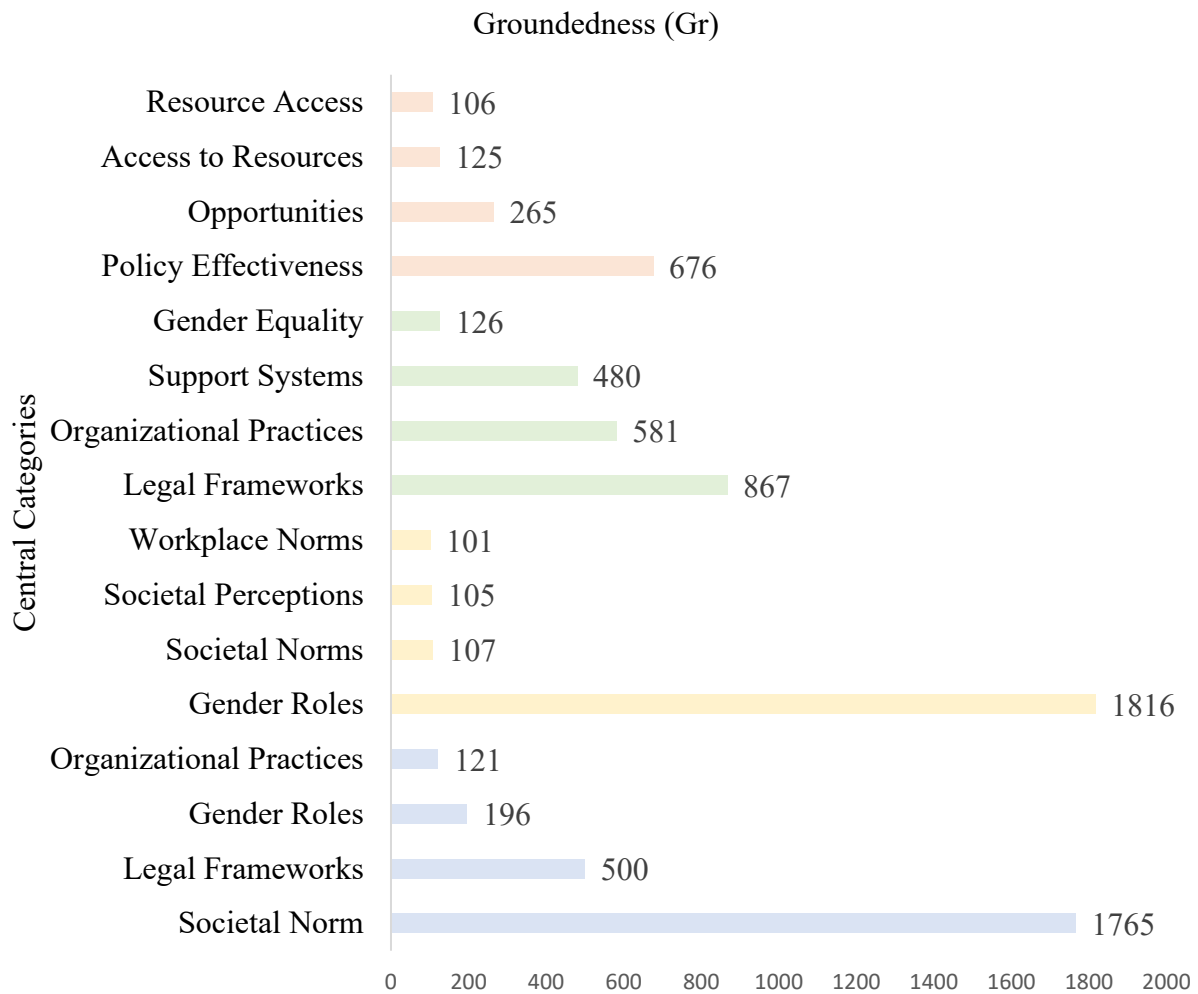


Figure 3: Summary of groundedness (Gr) for the top 4 central categories identified in each category (Public Policies, Cultural Expectations, Institutional Support and Socioeconomic)

Source: ATLAS.ti

4.3.2 Qualitative Results for RQ1

This section presents the qualitative results addressing RQ1. The coding results indicate that references to governance structures and institutional frameworks frequently co-occurred with discussions of gender equality outcomes. A substantial number of quotations referred to state-level coordination mechanisms and cross-sectoral policy integration.

Within the category of Public Policies, the most frequently coded themes were Societal Norm (Gr=1,765), Legal Frameworks (Gr=500), and Gender Roles (Gr=196).

The qualitative data shows repeated references to gaps between policy design and gender-specific needs, particularly in relation to taxation systems and social service provision. For example, economic policies are frequently gender-blind, leading to disparities in how men and women experience economic benefits. Gender-sensitive budgeting practices, as seen in some European countries, have been shown to improve gender equality outcomes.

Within the category of Cultural Expectations, the most frequently coded themes were Gender Roles (Gr=1,816), Societal Norms (Gr=107), and Societal Perceptions (Gr=105).

The analysis identified a high frequency of codes related to gender roles and societal norms, indicating that cultural expectations were repeatedly referenced across the documents. In many societies, traditional views dictate that men are the primary breadwinners, while women are often relegated to caregiving roles. Many quotations linked prevailing cultural expectations to limitations in women's workforce participation and access to leadership roles.

Cultural expectations often dictate specific roles for men and women, leading to stereotypes that influence behaviour and performance evaluations. For instance, women are frequently expected to exhibit communal traits, while men are associated with agentic traits. Numerous quotations referred to biases in leadership evaluation processes, particularly in relation to promotion and advancement opportunities. Role Congruity Theory, explains how societal expectations for gender roles can lead to incongruities when individuals do not conform to these roles. For example, women in leadership positions may face prejudice because their traits do not align with traditional expectations of leadership, which are often male-oriented. Cultural expectations also manifest in legal and institutional frameworks, where biases can perpetuate gender inequalities. For example, judicial decisions may reflect societal stereotypes, impacting custody rights and parental leave policies.

Within the category of Institutional Support, the most frequently coded themes were Legal Frameworks (Gr=867), Organizational Practices (Gr=581), and Supports System (Gr=480).

Effective institutional support is often reflected in public policies that promote gender equality. For instance, countries with strong institutional frameworks tend to implement gender-sensitive policies that address the specific needs of women, such as parental leave and childcare support. The success of public policies in promoting gender equality is contingent upon the commitment of institutions to enforce these policies. For example, the presence of gender-inclusive policies in organizations is linked to the active support of leadership and institutional frameworks.

Within the category of Socioeconomic conditions, the most frequently coded themes were Policies Effectiveness (Gr=676), Opportunities (Gr=215), and Access to Resources (Gr=125).

Socioeconomic factors exert a significant influence on gender dynamics, particularly through mechanisms such as income inequality and access to education. Elevated levels of income inequality are closely linked with poorer health outcomes and heightened status anxiety, effects that tend to disproportionately impact women. This disparity is further magnified as socioeconomic status often dictates women's access to essential resources and opportunities, thereby perpetuating existing gender gaps.

Policy interventions targeting the reduction of income inequality—such as the implementation of progressive taxation and the expansion of social welfare programs—can contribute meaningfully to societal well-being and the narrowing of disparities. Nevertheless, the effectiveness of such policies is largely contingent upon the prevailing political will and the degree of public support they receive.

Another critical aspect addressed in this category is social mobility, defined as the capacity for individuals to ascend or descend the socioeconomic ladder. Determinants such as educational

attainment, family background, and broader economic policies hold considerable sway over social mobility outcomes. In particular, policies that expand access to quality education, especially for disadvantaged populations, play a pivotal role in enhancing social mobility and mitigating inequality.

The inter-category relationships among Institutional Support, Cultural Expectations, Public Policies, and Socioeconomic Conditions reveal a complex interplay that significantly influences gender equality and women's empowerment. Here are the key relationships observed:

Cultural expectations regarding gender roles often dictate the socioeconomic conditions women face. In the selected countries of Singapore, Switzerland, and the United States, traditional views assign caregiving roles to women, which can limit their participation in the workforce and access to economic resources. Socioeconomic conditions, such as income inequality and access to education, are influenced by cultural norms. For instance, in cultures where women are expected to prioritize family over career, public policies aimed at promoting women's employment may be less effective.

Institutions can play a role in challenging and changing cultural expectations. For example, when institutions promote gender equality through policies and practices, they can help shift societal norms towards more egalitarian views. Conversely, entrenched cultural expectations can hinder institutional efforts to promote gender equality. In environments where traditional gender roles are deeply rooted, institutional policies may face resistance, limiting their effectiveness.

Public policies that support gender equality, such as those providing childcare and parental leave, can improve women's socioeconomic conditions by enabling greater workforce participation. Improved socioeconomic conditions for women can lead to more favorable public policies, creating a positive feedback loop that enhances gender equality.

To wrap up, the interplay between Institutional Support, Cultural Expectations, Public Policies, and Socioeconomic Conditions is crucial in shaping gender equality and women's empowerment. Institutional Support is essential for the effective implementation of Public Policies aimed at promoting gender equality. Strong institutional frameworks can lead to the development of gender-sensitive policies, while the success of these policies relies on the commitment of institutions to enforce them. Cultural Expectations significantly influence Socioeconomic Conditions by dictating traditional gender roles, which can limit women's participation in the workforce. These cultural norms can also hinder the effectiveness of public policies designed to promote women's economic opportunities. Public Policies that support gender equality can improve women's socioeconomic conditions, such as increasing workforce participation through childcare and parental leave. Conversely, enhanced socioeconomic conditions for women can lead to the adoption of more favorable public policies, creating a positive feedback loop. The relationship between Institutional Support and Cultural Expectations is bidirectional; while institutions can challenge and change entrenched cultural norms, deeply rooted expectations can resist institutional efforts, complicating the promotion of gender equality. Overall, addressing gender inequality requires a comprehensive approach that considers the interconnectedness of these categories. Effective strategies must engage all dimensions to foster sustainable change and improve gender equality outcomes.

4.3.3 Transition toward RQ2

This research uses a mixed-methods strategy to address its questions. For RQ1, it will start with an exploratory qualitative analysis of about 60 policy documents, academic papers, and institutional reports from areas like science, finance, education, technology, and healthcare.

The qualitative analysis conducted for RQ1 provides a descriptive account of the cultural, institutional, and socioeconomic patterns observed across the three national contexts. This analysis

identifies recurring themes within the document corpus, including the structure of public policies, the role of cultural expectations in shaping gender roles, the nature of institutional support mechanisms, and the influence of socioeconomic conditions on gender related outcomes. These patterns outline the contextual landscape in which gender parity policies operate in Switzerland, the United States, and Singapore.

The transition to RQ2 involves a shift from interpretive, document based qualitative coding to a quantitative examination of structural relationships. While RQ1 focuses on describing the thematic patterns present in policy documents, reports, and media sources, RQ2 examines measurable indicators related to gender inequality and socioeconomic variables. The quantitative phase incorporates secondary datasets, such as national gender equality indices, labor market indicators, and income inequality measures.

The findings from RQ1 inform the selection and interpretation of variables used in the quantitative analysis. Specifically, the qualitative identification of patterns in public policy frameworks, institutional arrangements, cultural norms, and socioeconomic conditions guides the choice of indicators included in the quantitative dataset. For example, references to income inequality, access to resources, or institutional mechanisms guide the operationalization of quantitative variables. This alignment ensures consistency between the qualitative themes and the quantitative measures used to address RQ2.

The quantitative phase adopts an explanatory framework in which statistical relationships among selected indicators are analysed to identify patterns relevant to gender disparities in leadership representation and compensation. The results of these analyses will later be interpreted in conjunction with the qualitative themes established under RQ1. This sequential structure provides continuity between the two stages of analysis and maintains coherence across the research design.

Building on the key structural patterns identified in RQ1, the research transitions to RQ2 by leveraging the insights gained from the qualitative analysis. The descriptive account of cultural, institutional, and socioeconomic factors not only highlights thematic consistencies across different national contexts but also reveals critical areas where measurable disparities exist. Recognising these patterns provides a strong rationale for employing quantitative analysis in RQ2, as it allows for the systematic investigation of relationships between identified variables. The qualitative findings direct attention to specific indicators, such as income inequality and institutional support mechanisms, which are then operationalised within quantitative datasets. This integrative approach ensures that the subsequent quantitative investigation is both grounded in, and reflective of, the complexities uncovered during the qualitative phase.

To ensure the quantitative phase accurately reflects the thematic patterns identified in the qualitative analysis, the operationalization of variables was guided by the recurring themes observed in RQ1. Key constructs such as institutional support, gender wage gap, female labor force participation, and women's empowerment were translated into measurable indicators using established datasets. For instance, the Women Empowerment Index captures multiple dimensions of gender parity, while the Gender Wage Gap and Female Labour Force Participation are directly measured through labor market statistics. These variables were selected due to their demonstrated relevance in the qualitative findings and their availability in cross-national datasets, thereby providing a concrete link between the qualitative and quantitative stages of the research.

In analyzing the relationships among these indicators and income inequality, a fixed-effects panel model was employed. This statistical approach is particularly useful for examining longitudinal data across multiple countries, as it accounts for unobservable, time-invariant characteristics unique to each country that could otherwise bias the results. By focusing on within-country variation over time, the panel model enables a more precise estimation of how changes in gender-

related variables influence income inequality, controlling for country-specific factors. This methodological choice strengthens the validity of the findings and aligns with the research objective of uncovering structural relationships underlying gender disparities.

4.4 Results for RQ2: Explanatory Sequential Mixed-Method Design

4.4.1 Data Collection and Treatment for Panel Analysis

The initial quantitative data collection covered approximately 200 countries over a long-term period from 1960 to 2025. However, upon inspection, substantial missing values were identified across variables and time periods. In particular, the availability of data varied considerably among the five key variables included in this study: Income Inequality (Gini coefficient), Women Empowerment Index (WEI), Proportion of Women in PMET, Gender Wage Gap, and Female Labor Force Participation.

Due to the high degree of missingness and the unequal distribution of observations across variables, the full dataset was not suitable for balanced or consistent panel estimation. To ensure methodological rigor and comparability across variables, a data-treatment procedure was applied. Specifically, only observations for which all five variables were simultaneously available were retained. This pairwise-complete selection approach ensured that each country–year observation used in the analysis contained a full set of required indicators.

As a result of this data-cleaning and filtering process, the final dataset consisted of 373 observations covering 40 countries over a 20-year period (2005–2024). The countries included in the final panel were: Argentina, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Bulgaria, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, India, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Mexico,

Netherlands, Norway, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Singapore, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, and Switzerland. Panel data analysis was subsequently conducted using this reduced but internally consistent dataset. Although this filtering procedure reduced the number of observations, it enhanced the internal validity and comparability of the panel estimation by ensuring consistent measurement across all included variables. As a result, the summary of the variable through pairwise data-collection treatment can be seen in Table 11 as follows.

Table 11: Summary Statistics, using the observations with Gretl.

Variable	Type	Mean	Median	S.D.	Min	Max
Income Inequality Gini	Dependent Variable	32.8	30.9	8.98	0.350	55.3
Women Empowerment Index (WEI)	Independent Variable	0.898	0.920	0.0585	0.654	0.962
Proportion of women in PMET	Independent Variable	31.9	32.2	7.36	9.53	62.1
Gender Wage Gap	Independent Variable	14.9	14.6	6.74	-0.297	32.2
Female Labor Force Participation Rate	Independent Variable	45.7	46.2	3.67	26.7	64.2

Source: Gretl Output

Table 11 indicates summary statistics generated from Gretl. The descriptive statistics indicate substantial variation across both income inequality and gender-related indicators. The Gini coefficient averages **32.8** (SD **8.98**), with values ranging from **0.350** to **55.3**, highlighting marked disparities in income inequality across the sample. Women's empowerment is relatively high on average, with the Women Empowerment Index showing a mean of **0.898** and median of **0.920**, though variation remains (min **0.654**, max **0.962**). In contrast, women's economic participation

exhibits greater heterogeneity: the proportion of women in PMET occupations averages **31.9%** (range **9.53%–62.1%**), the gender wage gap has a mean of **14.9** (range **–0.297** to **32.2**), and female labor force participation averages **45.7%** (range **26.7%–64.2%**). Overall, the results suggest that despite relatively high levels of women’s empowerment, labor market outcomes for women remain uneven across observations, underscoring the relevance of further empirical analysis.

4.4.2 Quantitative Results from Cross-National Panel Data Analysis

The statistical results presented in Table 11 compare three regression models—fixed effects (FE), random effects (RE), and pooled ordinary least squares (OLS)—to estimate the impact of gender-related variables on income inequality, measured by the Gini coefficient.

Table 12: Output of panel regression output conducted with Gretl.

	Fixed-Effect Model		Random Effect Model		Pooled OLS	
	Coefficient	Std. Error	Coefficient	Std. Error	Coefficient	Std. Error
const	50.90250	6.15042	53.87	5.78092	126.4740	5.20158
Women Empowerment Index (WEI)	−1.93932	5.10568	−1.41931	4.98842	−31.3614	5.37564***
Proportion of Women in PMET	0.02199	0.02318	0.03143	0.02316	0.3613	0.04544***
Gender Wage Gap	−0.06705	0.02329***	−0.07011	0.02318***	0.0184	0.04869
Female Labor Force	−0.35189	0.10456***	−0.42991	0.09769***	−1.69071	0.08771***
R^2 :	0.05113				0.59709	
rho					0.95417	
No. of observations	373		373		373	
No. of Cross-Sectional Units	40		40		40	
Duration of observations	2005 - 2024		2005 - 2024		2005 - 2024	
F test	F (39,329)	169.63			F (4,368)	136.3394
(Pooled vs. Fixed)	Prob.	5.70E-194			Prob.	2.53E-71
Breusch-Pagan test			Chi ² (01)	922.906		
(Pooled vs. Random)			Prob.	1.03E-202		
Hausman test			Chi ² (04)	10.8023		
(Fixed vs. Random)			Prob.	2.89E-02		

Note. *p <0.1 ** <0.05 ***p <0.01
Source: Gretl output

Model selection tests indicate that the fixed-effects specification is the most appropriate model for this analysis. The F-test strongly rejects the pooled OLS model in favor of a panel specification ($F(39,329) = 169.63, p < 0.001$), suggesting the presence of significant country-specific effects. In addition, the Breusch–Pagan Lagrange Multiplier test ($\chi^2(01) = 922.906, p < 0.001$) rejects the pooled OLS model in favor of the random-effects model, confirming the presence of panel-level variance. Most importantly, the Hausman test comparing fixed and random effects yields a statistically significant result ($\chi^2(4) = 10.8023, p = 0.0289$), indicating that the random-effects estimator is inconsistent. Therefore, the fixed-effects model is preferred, as it appropriately controls for unobserved, time-invariant country-specific heterogeneity.

Focusing on the fixed-effects estimates, the results reveal several important relationships between gender-related variables and income inequality. The Women Empowerment Index (WEI) shows a negative coefficient ($\beta = -1.939$), suggesting that greater female empowerment may contribute to lower income inequality; however, this relationship is not statistically significant. Similarly, the proportion of women in professional, managerial, executive, and technical (PMET) occupations has a small and statistically insignificant coefficient ($\beta = 0.02199$), indicating no clear association with income inequality within the observed sample.

In contrast, two gender-related variables show statistically significant effects. The gender wage gap exhibits a negative and statistically significant coefficient ($\beta = -0.067, p < 0.01$), implying that reductions in wage disparities between men and women are associated with lower income inequality. Likewise, the female labor force participation rate has a negative and significant coefficient ($\beta = -0.352, p < 0.01$), suggesting that higher female participation in the labor market contributes to a more equal income distribution.

The within R^2 of the fixed-effects model is relatively modest ($R^2 = 0.051$), indicating that approximately 5.1% of the within-country variation in income inequality over time is explained by the included gender-related indicators. This figure is not uncommon in cross-country panel analyses where a large portion of the variation is captured by unobserved country-specific

effects. Nevertheless, the joint significance test confirms that the explanatory variables collectively contribute to explaining variations in income inequality.

Overall, the results suggest that reducing gender wage disparities and increasing female labor force participation are consistently associated with lower levels of income inequality across countries and over time. While broader measures of gender empowerment show a negative association with inequality, their effects are less precisely estimated in this model. These findings highlight the importance of gender-related labor market dynamics in shaping income distribution, while also indicating that structural and country-specific factors play a substantial role, as further discussed in the subsequent qualitative analysis. The relatively low within R^2 of the fixed-effects model is not unusual in cross-country panel studies, as the estimator focuses only on within-country variation after controlling for country-specific fixed effects.

As a results, this panel data regression shows that the null hypothesis (H_0 : Gender-related labour market factors (e.g., gender wage gap, female labour force participation, women's empowerment, and women's representation in PMET occupations) have no statistically significant effect on income inequality across countries.) can be rejected, in favor of alternative hypothesis (H_1 : Gender-related labour market factors (e.g., gender wage gap, female labour force participation, women's empowerment, and women's representation in PMET occupations) have a statistically significant effect on income inequality across countries).

While the regression results identify statistically significant relationships, the relatively low explanatory power (within $R^2 = 0.051$) suggests that approximately 5.1% of the within-country variation in income inequality over time is explained by the included gender-related indicators and that other structural and institutional factors may also influence income inequality in the selected countries of Singapore, Switzerland, and the U.S. Therefore, qualitative analysis is conducted to further explore contextual mechanisms that cannot be captured through statistical modelling alone.

4.4.2 Qualitative Follow-up Analysis in Three Focal Countries

To complement the quantitative analysis, this section presents qualitative findings from Singapore, Switzerland, and the United States. These insights help explain, expand, and contextualise the statistical results by exploring the lived experiences and institutional frameworks that influence gender disparities and income inequality.

The qualitative data were sourced from policy documents, academic reports, interviews with key stakeholders, and media articles from each country. A thematic analysis approach was employed, focusing on how intersecting identities—such as gender, class, and institutional context—shape economic outcomes. This method allows for deeper exploration of the mechanisms behind the quantitative relationships identified.

These qualitative findings substantiate the quantitative results by illustrating the mechanisms through which gender-related factors influence income inequality. For instance, Singapore's policy-driven increase in female labour participation supports the significant negative coefficient in the regression analysis. Switzerland's persistent wage gap and the U.S.'s structural barriers explain variations in income inequality beyond what statistical models can capture alone.

By integrating these qualitative insights, the analysis offers a richer, more nuanced understanding of the complex interplay between gender, policy, and economic outcomes. To explore how intersecting identities shape gender disparities in workforce leadership and compensation across various national contexts, we can analyze the categories of leadership development (Gr=4,047), compensation disparities (Gr=1,927), and intersectional disparities (Gr=76) based on the findings from the provided documents, as presented in Table 13 below.

Table 13: Summary of literatures counts for each central category

No.	Central Category	Number of Literatures	No of Codes	Description
1	Leadership development	8	4,047	Leadership development refers to the process of enhancing the skills, abilities, and confidence of individuals to lead effectively within organizations. It encompasses training, mentoring, and experiential learning aimed at preparing individuals for leadership roles and improving their capacity to influence and guide others (Nelson, 2023).
2	Compensation disparities	10	1,927	Compensation disparities refer to the differences in pay and benefits received by individuals based on various factors such as gender, race, or other demographic characteristics. This category examines the systemic issues that lead to unequal pay for equal work and the impact of these disparities on employee morale and organizational culture (Leanne, 2023).
3	Intersectional disparities	9	76	Intersectional disparities highlight how overlapping social identities, such as race, gender, and class, create unique experiences of discrimination and privilege. This category focuses on understanding how these intersecting identities affect individuals' access to opportunities and resources within various contexts, including the workplace (Bader, 2025)

Source: ATLAS.ti output

Furthermore, as can be seen in Figure 4, within the category of Leadership Development, the most frequently coded themes were Leadership Advancement Opportunities (Gr=1,811), Cultural Influence (Gr=943), and Socioeconomic Status (Gr=878).

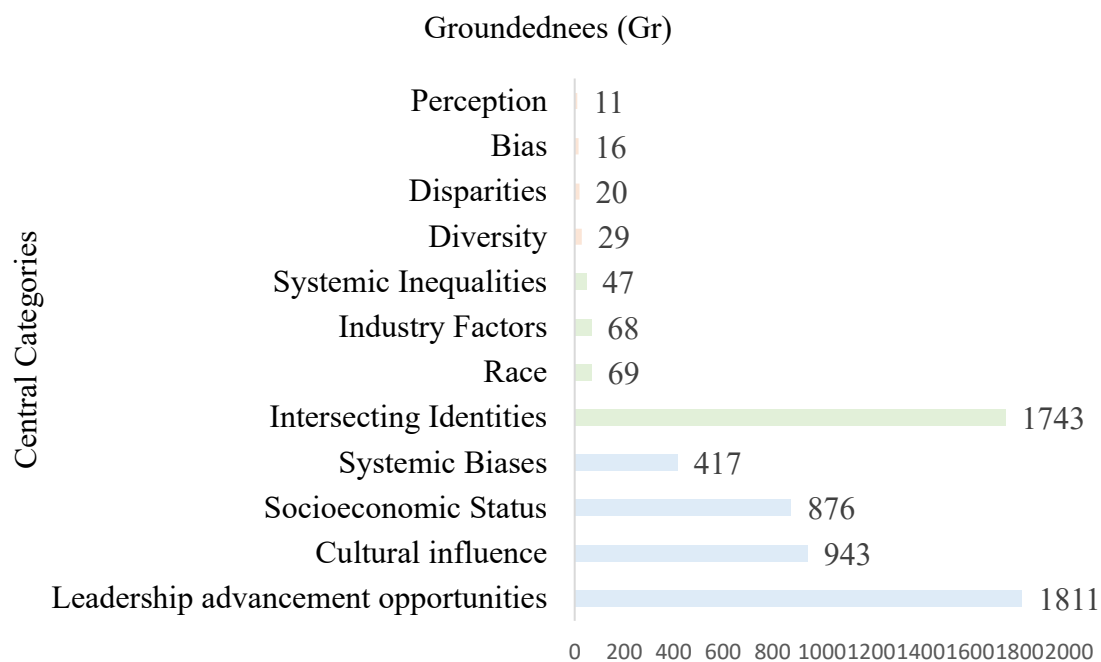


Figure 4: Summary of groundedness for the top 3 central categories identified in each category (Leadership Development, Compensation Disparities, Intersectional Disparities)
Source: ATLAS.ti Output

The coding results indicate that leadership development was frequently discussed in relation to organizational practices and prevailing societal expectations. The documents indicate that women are underrepresented in leadership roles, and this is often linked to biases in hiring and promotion processes. For instance, hiring managers may prioritize male candidates due to ingrained stereotypes about leadership qualities.

Furthermore, the lack of mentorship and networking opportunities for women can hinder their leadership development. The documents suggest that organizations should implement measures to promote women's leadership, such as formal mentorship programs and training that challenge existing biases in leadership evaluations.

The relationship among leadership development, compensation disparities, and intersectional disparities is complex and interrelated. Here's an overview of how these categories influence one another:

Barriers to Advancement, women often face significant barriers in leadership development due to biases in hiring and promotion processes. These biases can lead to a lack of representation in leadership roles, which in turn affects compensation. For instance, women in leadership positions may receive lower compensation compared to their male counterparts due to prevailing stereotypes that question their leadership capabilities.

Role Congruity Theory, this theory suggests that women are often evaluated against traditional masculine traits associated with leadership. When women do not conform to these expectations, they may receive negative evaluations, which can hinder their career advancement and result in lower compensation.

Within the category of Compensation Disparities, the most frequently coded themes were Intersecting Identities (Gr=1743), Race (Gr=69), and Industry Factors (Gr=68).

Compensation disparities are evident in the persistent gender wage gap, which varies significantly across different national contexts. The documents discuss the "glass ceiling" and "sticky floor" effects, where women face greater wage penalties at both the upper and lower ends of the income distribution. For example, in high-income countries, women may experience a glass ceiling effect, while in lower-middle-income countries, the sticky floor effect is more pronounced, indicating systemic barriers that hinder women's economic advancement.

Research also shows that women often receive lower compensation than their male counterparts for similar roles, and this disparity is exacerbated by biases in performance evaluations and hiring practices. The documents emphasize the need for transparency and accountability in compensation practices to address these disparities.

Within the category of Compensation Disparities, the most frequently coded themes were Diversity (Gr=29), Disparities (Gr=20), and Bias (Gr=16).

Intersectional disparities refer to how overlapping social identities, such as gender, race, and socioeconomic status, influence individuals' experiences in the workforce. The documents highlight that societal norms and traditional gender roles significantly impact women's career

development and leadership opportunities. For instance, in the UAE, there is evidence of evolving attitudes towards women, suggesting a shift towards more egalitarian views, yet traditional gender norms still exert a strong influence on perceptions of women's roles in leadership. Moreover, the role congruity theory indicates that women often face prejudice in leadership roles due to societal expectations that associate leadership with masculine traits. This incongruity can lead to biased evaluations and hinder women's access to leadership positions, particularly in cultures with strong traditional gender norms.

Impact of Intersectionality, the analysis shows that references to intersecting identities (e.g., gender, race, and socioeconomic status) frequently co-occurred with discussions of compensation disparities. For example, women of color may experience greater wage gaps compared to white women due to compounded biases.

Systemic Barriers, the documents indicate that systemic barriers, such as societal norms and workplace discrimination, significantly impact women's compensation. These barriers are often more pronounced for women from marginalized backgrounds, leading to greater disparities in pay.

Access to Opportunities, women from diverse backgrounds may have less access to leadership development opportunities due to biases and stereotypes that affect their visibility and perceived competence. This lack of access can perpetuate the cycle of underrepresentation in leadership roles.

Cultural Norms, societal attitudes towards gender roles can influence both leadership development and intersectional disparities. In cultures with strong traditional gender norms, women may be discouraged from pursuing leadership roles, which can further entrench existing disparities.

In summary, the interplay between leadership development, compensation disparities, and intersectional disparities within the workforce is both complex and significant. Barriers encountered by women in leadership development—such as biases in hiring and promotion processes, lack of mentorship, and limited networking opportunities—directly impact their

progression into leadership roles. These barriers not only hinder advancement but also contribute to disparities in compensation, as women who do attain leadership positions often receive lower pay compared to their male counterparts, further perpetuating inequality.

Intersectional factors, such as race and socioeconomic status, compound these challenges. Women from diverse backgrounds face additional biases and obstacles, magnifying disparities in both leadership opportunities and compensation. These intersecting identities intensify the disadvantages experienced by women, leading to greater wage gaps and underrepresentation in leadership roles.

The qualitative findings reveal repeated references to the interconnected nature of leadership development, compensation structures, and intersecting social identities. This includes implementing organizational changes to promote transparent and equitable compensation practices, challenging societal norms that reinforce gender stereotypes, and adopting targeted interventions such as mentorship programmes and bias training. Such a multifaceted approach is essential to fostering equity at all levels of the workforce.

These qualitative insights provide valuable context for understanding the quantitative disparities observed in workforce leadership and compensation. By recognising the interwoven nature of these barriers, stakeholders can better design and implement effective solutions to promote gender equity in professional environments.

Switzerland's economic prosperity contrasts with persistent gender wage gaps, despite legal provisions for equality. Qualitative data reveal that cultural norms around part-time work—predominantly undertaken by women—and limited childcare options exacerbate income disparities:

“This pattern has been shown to contribute significantly to long-term earnings losses, slower career progression, and reduced pension accumulation for women, reinforcing persistent gender inequalities over the life course”- Kleven et al., 2019a, pp. 123–125; 2019b, pp. 199–205; Costa-Ramón et al., 2025, pp. 10–15).

This supports the quantitative observation that countries with entrenched gender wage disparities, like Switzerland, exhibit higher income inequality even with strong economic fundamentals.

In Singapore, the government's proactive approach to social mobility and meritocracy significantly influences income equality. The city-state's emphasis on education as a key leveller is evident in its globally recognised education system, which fosters opportunities regardless of socioeconomic background. Singapore ranks 12th on the Global Gender Gap Index in 2025 with a gender parity score of 0.75. The Female Labour Force Participation rate stands at 64%, reflecting progressive but traditional societal norms. Policies like the SkillsFuture initiative promote lifelong learning, enabling workforce adaptability and reducing income disparities. The Gini coefficient, adjusted for government transfers and taxes, is approximately 0.375, showcasing moderate income inequality.

Singapore's progressive policies, such as government-subsidised childcare and flexible work arrangements, have been pivotal in increasing female labour force participation. Interviews with female professionals highlight the role of supportive workplace cultures in facilitating career advancement:

“Many participants perceived recent government-led initiatives promoting flexible work arrangements as instrumental in shaping employer openness toward flexible scheduling. These policy measures were described as easing the transition back to work after maternity leave by legitimising flexible hours as an acceptable and supported employment practice rather than an individual accommodation” - Ministry of Manpower, Singapore, 2024.

However, traditional gender roles persist, especially concerning caregiving responsibilities, influencing women's career trajectories and contributing to a residual gender wage gap. This aligns with the quantitative finding of a significant inverse relationship between female labour

force participation and income inequality. In the U.S., cultural values emphasising individualism and market-driven economics shape the landscape of income inequality. The country ranks 27th on the Global Gender Gap Index in 2025, with a gender parity score of 0.68. The Female Labour Force Participation rate is around 57%, influenced by diverse socioeconomic factors, including limited federal mandates on paid parental leave. Sociological analyses reveal that while the USA fosters innovation and economic dynamism, disparities in access to quality education and healthcare contribute to persistent income gaps. The Gini coefficient stands at 0.41, indicating a higher level of income inequality compared to Sweden and Singapore. The U.S. showcases a complex dynamic where legal protections for gender equality coexist with systemic barriers. Qualitative interviews highlight how the lack of universal family support policies disproportionately affects minority women:

“U.S. news and policy reporting consistently shows that the lack of a universal paid family leave policy disproportionately affects low-income women, who often face an untenable choice between continued employment and caregiving responsibilities due to the absence of income replacement and job protection” – Natasha (Social worker, New York, 2023)

This qualitative insight explains why income inequality remains high in the U.S., despite legal advances, reflecting the quantitative finding that female political representation alone does not guarantee economic equity.

Policy effectiveness varies significantly across countries, as seen in Singapore and Switzerland. Singapore’s targeted policies have successfully increased female labour force participation, whereas Switzerland’s economic prosperity has not entirely eliminated gender wage disparities due to cultural influences. Institutional barriers are also evident, particularly in the United States, which highlights the importance of complementing legal frameworks with structural supports like paid parental leave to effectively reduce income inequality. Cultural norms play a crucial role in shaping outcomes, as demonstrated by both Singapore and Switzerland, where

deeply ingrained societal norms can limit the impact of progressive policies. These observations underscore the complex interplay between cultural norms, governmental policies, and social structures in influencing income inequality. Sweden's egalitarian philosophy, Singapore's meritocratic framework, and the United States' individualistic approach each contribute uniquely to their respective socioeconomic outcomes.

4.4.3 Integration of Quantitative and Qualitative Findings for RQ2

This section integrates the re-verified quantitative panel data results with the qualitative follow-up analysis to address RQ2. Consistent with the explanatory sequential mixed-methods design, the quantitative findings establish statistically identifiable relationships between gender-related indicators and income inequality, while the qualitative findings provide contextual explanations for why these relationships emerge, why some variables remain insignificant, and how intersecting identities mediate outcomes across national contexts.

Rather than treating quantitative and qualitative results as parallel strands, this integration focuses on analytical complementarity: qualitative evidence is used to interpret statistically significant coefficients, contextualise non-significant variables, and refine causal interpretations without overstating the explanatory power of the regression model.

The fixed-effects panel model—selected based on the Hausman test—demonstrates that gender wage gaps and female labour force participation are both statistically significant and negatively associated with income inequality, while the Women Empowerment Index (WEI) and the proportion of women in PMET roles are not statistically significant within the model.

The modest within- R^2 confirms that a substantial share of variation is explained by country-specific, time-invariant factors, reinforcing the appropriateness of a qualitative follow-up. These results suggest that structural participation and pay mechanisms matter more directly for income distribution than aggregate empowerment indices or representation alone.

However, the quantitative model does not—and cannot—capture the social mechanisms through which these effects operate. This limitation necessitates qualitative interpretation grounded in institutional, cultural, and intersectional dynamics.

The statistically significant inverse relationship between female labour force participation and income inequality indicates that increased participation contributes to more equitable income distribution. Qualitative evidence clarifies how this relationship materialises differently across contexts.

In Singapore, policy-driven increases in female participation are supported by institutional mechanisms such as subsidised childcare and flexible work arrangements. Qualitative accounts indicate that these policies lower entry barriers for women, particularly those balancing caregiving responsibilities. However, intersecting identities—especially gender and family role expectations—continue to shape career trajectories. Women’s participation increases, but advancement into senior leadership remains uneven, moderating the long-term impact on compensation equality.

In Switzerland, participation rates alone are insufficient to reduce inequality because participation is heavily segmented into part-time employment, predominantly among women. Qualitative data reveal that cultural norms around caregiving intersect with institutional arrangements, resulting in sustained income penalties despite high overall labour market inclusion. This explains why increased participation does not translate proportionally into leadership representation or wage parity.

In the United States, participation is constrained by socioeconomic status and the absence of universal family support policies. Qualitative findings show that women from lower-income and minority backgrounds face compounded barriers, explaining why participation effects on inequality are weaker and unevenly distributed.

Together, these findings demonstrate that female labour force participation reduces inequality only when institutional and cultural conditions allow participation to translate into stable, full-time, and upwardly mobile employment.

The fixed-effects model identifies the gender wage gap as a statistically significant predictor of income inequality. Qualitative findings strongly reinforce this relationship by revealing how wage disparities are produced and sustained through intersecting identities.

Across all three contexts, qualitative data highlight persistent biases in performance evaluation, promotion processes, and pay negotiation. These mechanisms disproportionately disadvantage women, particularly when gender intersects with race, class, or caregiving status.

In Switzerland, wage disparities are reinforced by occupational segregation and part-time norms, which limit women's access to high-paying roles and long-term income growth. Singapore, institutional transparency has reduced overt pay discrimination, but qualitative evidence shows that career interruptions and caregiving expectations continue to influence wage trajectories. In the United States, the wage gap is intensified by racial and socioeconomic stratification, with minority women experiencing compounded disadvantages that are not captured by aggregate indicators.

These qualitative insights explain why reductions in the gender wage gap have a direct and measurable impact on income inequality, while broader empowerment measures may not. The lack of statistical significance for PMET representation and the Women Empowerment Index does not imply irrelevance but rather highlights measurement and structural limitations.

Qualitative evidence reveals that, Women's presence in professional or managerial roles does not guarantee decision-making authority, pay equity, or institutional influence. Empowerment indices aggregate multiple dimensions but may obscure within-country inequalities driven by intersecting identities

For example, women may hold managerial titles while remaining excluded from strategic leadership networks or high-compensation tracks. Similarly, national empowerment scores may mask disparities affecting minority or lower-income women. Thus, the qualitative findings refine the interpretation of non-significant coefficients, showing that representation and empowerment matter conditionally—depending on institutional power, cultural norms, and structural access.

The integration of quantitative and qualitative findings demonstrates that gender disparities in leadership and compensation are not driven by gender alone, but by the interaction of gender with institutional structures, cultural norms, and socioeconomic positioning.

Quantitative results identify where structural inequalities are most strongly associated with income distribution, while qualitative evidence explains how and why these relationships persist or weaken across contexts. This integration strengthens causal interpretation without overstating statistical explanatory power.

This section brings together the quantitative panel data findings and the qualitative follow-up analysis to answer RQ2, emphasizing the value of combining both approaches in an explanatory sequential mixed-methods framework. The quantitative results reveal statistically significant relationships between gender-related indicators—specifically, the gender wage gap and female labor force participation—and income inequality, while highlighting that other variables, including the Women Empowerment Index and the proportion of women in PMET roles, are not statistically significant. However, the modest within- R^2 suggests that much of the variation is due to country-specific, time-invariant factors, making qualitative interpretation essential. Rather than treating quantitative and qualitative findings as separate, this integration uses qualitative evidence to interpret significant coefficients, contextualize non-significant variables, and refine causal explanations. For female labor force participation, the quantitative model shows that increased participation is associated with lower income inequality, but qualitative evidence illustrates this effect is contingent on institutional and cultural conditions. In Singapore, supportive policies like subsidized childcare and flexible work arrangements enable women's workforce entry, though traditional gender roles still moderate advancement. In Switzerland, high participation rates are countered by part-time employment norms rooted in caregiving expectations, limiting wage parity. The United States demonstrates that barriers such as socioeconomic status and lack of universal family support restrict participation's impact, especially for minority women. Regarding the gender wage gap, quantitative findings confirm its significance, while qualitative insights show how intersecting identities—such as race, class, and caregiving status—reinforce wage disparities in each country. Non-significant variables like PMET representation and the Women Empowerment Index are better understood qualitatively, revealing that representation does not guarantee authority, pay equity, or access

to influential networks, and empowerment indices may mask inequalities within countries. Ultimately, integrating quantitative and qualitative results clarifies that gender disparities in leadership and compensation are shaped not only by gender, but by the interplay of institutional structures, cultural norms, and socioeconomic factors. This approach strengthens causal interpretation while recognizing the limitations of statistical models.

This section synthesizes the re-verified quantitative panel data results with the subsequent qualitative analysis to comprehensively address RQ2. In line with the explanatory sequential mixed-methods design, the quantitative findings establish clear statistical relationships between gender-related indicators—particularly the gender wage gap and female labor force participation—and income inequality. However, variables such as the Women Empowerment Index and the proportion of women in PMET roles do not show statistical significance in the model. The modest within- R^2 highlights the substantial role of country-specific, time-invariant factors, emphasizing the importance of qualitative analysis. Rather than considering quantitative and qualitative findings separately, this integration leverages qualitative evidence to interpret significant coefficients, provide context for non-significant variables, and refine causal explanations. For instance, while increased female labor force participation is statistically linked to reduced income inequality, qualitative findings reveal that this effect is highly dependent on institutional supports and cultural norms. In Singapore, policies like subsidized childcare and flexible work arrangements facilitate women's workforce entry, yet traditional gender roles often limit advancement. In Switzerland, high participation rates are offset by the prevalence of part-time work due to caregiving expectations, which restrict wage parity. The U.S. context further illustrates that socioeconomic barriers and the absence of universal family support limit the positive effects of participation, particularly for minority women. Regarding the gender wage gap, quantitative data confirm its strong association with income inequality, while qualitative insights expose how intersecting factors such as race, class, and caregiving responsibilities perpetuate these disparities. The interpretation of non-significant variables is deepened through qualitative analysis, which shows that representation

in leadership does not necessarily equate to decision-making power or pay equity, and that aggregate empowerment indices may obscure persistent inequalities within countries. Ultimately, this integrated approach demonstrates that gender disparities in leadership and compensation are shaped by the complex interplay of institutional structures, cultural expectations, and socioeconomic positioning, thereby strengthening the interpretation of causal relationships while acknowledging the inherent limitations of statistical models.

4.5 Integration and Synthesis of Results from RQ1 and RQ2

This section synthesises the key findings from RQ1 and RQ2, demonstrating that macro-level cultural and institutional frameworks fundamentally shape gender disparities in leadership and compensation through their influence on intersecting identities. RQ1 establishes that the public policies, institutional support systems, and cultural expectations differ markedly among Switzerland, the United States, and Singapore; RQ2 builds on this by showing how these differences directly affect the impact of gender-related variables on income inequality. The synthesis highlights that institutions serve as mediators of intersectionality—either amplifying or constraining the effects of gender, class, and social identity. For example, Singapore’s strong state intervention promotes workforce participation but does not fully challenge entrenched cultural norms around caregiving. In Switzerland, legal equality exists alongside institutional structures that perpetuate part-time work and gendered labour segmentation. In the United States, fragmented institutional support allows socioeconomic inequalities to intersect with gender and race, resulting in enduring disparities. These insights clarify why similar gender indicators yield divergent outcomes across national contexts, underscoring the critical role of institutional mediation. Furthermore, the effectiveness of policy measures is shown to depend on their alignment with prevailing cultural norms; policies designed to promote gender parity often encounter implementation gaps rooted in cultural resistance, and these gaps have tangible consequences—participation and wage equality only reduce inequality when cultural conditions permit policies to operate as intended. Accordingly, economic prosperity alone, as

seen in Switzerland, does not eliminate wage gaps; legal protections in the United States do not guarantee equity; and policy coordination in Singapore enhances outcomes but cannot entirely overcome gendered expectations. Theoretically, the integrated findings contribute to intersectionality theory by demonstrating that intersecting identities act through institutional channels, to institutional theory by showing that formal policies are filtered through cultural norms, and to policy transfer literature by explaining why gender parity policies cannot simply be transplanted across contexts without cultural adaptation. Ultimately, the combination of quantitative and qualitative results reveals that gender disparities in leadership and compensation arise from a dynamic interplay between structural policies and lived identities, with quantitative evidence pinpointing structural leverage points and qualitative findings elucidating their variable effectiveness. This integrated perspective forms a solid foundation for the policy and theoretical implications discussed in Chapter 5.

The integrated findings from RQ1 and RQ2 make significant contributions to three interconnected theoretical frameworks: intersectionality theory, institutional theory, and the policy transfer literature. Firstly, with respect to intersectionality theory, the research reveals those intersecting identities—such as gender, class, and ethnicity—do not operate in isolation but are fundamentally mediated by institutional contexts. Rather than viewing gender, race, or class as standalone axes of disadvantage, the evidence demonstrates that their effects are shaped, amplified, or constrained by the specific institutional arrangements and policy environments present in each country. For example, in Singapore, strong state intervention can elevate workforce participation among women, but persistent cultural norms around caregiving continue to limit the full realisation of gender equality. In Switzerland, despite formal legal equality, institutional practices such as the prevalence of part-time work reinforce traditional gender roles, while in the United States, fragmented institutional support allows socioeconomic and racial inequalities to compound gender disparities.

Secondly, in relation to institutional theory, the findings highlight that the impact of formal policies is not determined solely by their content or intent but is filtered through prevailing

cultural norms and informal practices. This means that even well-designed gender parity policies may fail to deliver substantive equality if they are not culturally resonant or if they encounter significant resistance at the implementation stage. The effectiveness of policy interventions, therefore, depends on their alignment with the broader social context and the degree to which they can navigate or reshape entrenched cultural expectations. The case studies illustrate that economic prosperity (as in Switzerland), legal protections (as in the United States), or coordinated state-led initiatives (as in Singapore) each face unique cultural and institutional barriers that mediate policy outcomes.

Thirdly, the synthesis advances the policy transfer literature by illustrating that gender equality policies cannot be transplanted wholesale from one national context to another without careful adaptation. Policies that are successful in one country may falter in another due to differences in institutional infrastructure, social values, and cultural attitudes toward gender roles. This underscores the necessity of context-sensitive policy design and the importance of embedding reforms within local cultural and institutional realities.

In terms of policy recommendations, these theoretical insights imply that policymakers should move beyond generic or one-size-fits-all approaches to gender equality. Effective policy development must account for the complex interplay between formal institutional structures, cultural norms, and intersecting identities. For instance, interventions to promote gender equity in the workplace should be accompanied by measures that address underlying cultural attitudes about caregiving and leadership. Furthermore, efforts to transfer successful policies across borders should include mechanisms for cultural adaptation and stakeholder engagement to ensure local relevance and buy-in. The research suggests that monitoring and evaluation frameworks should also be sensitive to intersectional differences, ensuring that aggregate indicators do not obscure persistent inequalities affecting minority or lower-income women. Ultimately, the findings call for a holistic, contextually grounded approach to gender policy, one that recognises the multifaceted nature of inequality and the need for coordinated action across legal, institutional, and cultural domains.

4.6 Chapter Summary and Transition

The study investigates the adaptation of gender parity policies within cultural-institutional contexts (RQ1) and the influence of intersecting identity mechanisms (RQ2), revealing how macro-level frameworks—public policies, institutional structures, and cultural norms—interact with identity factors to shape gender disparities in leadership and compensation. A comparative analysis of Switzerland, the United States, and Singapore underscores the pivotal role of quantitative data in illustrating these disparities. In Switzerland, despite progressive legal frameworks, women represent only 34% of managerial positions (Federal Statistical Office, 2024), and 72% of employed women work part-time, contributing to an 18% gender wage gap. This highlights the influence of cultural norms that reinforce traditional caregiving roles, limiting women's career advancement. In contrast, the United States demonstrates how systemic socio-economic barriers disproportionately affect minority women despite legal protections. Women comprise 66% of minimum wage workers, with African-American women earning just 63 cents for every dollar earned by white men, reflecting a persistent 16% gender wage gap (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2024). Singapore presents a hybrid model where strong governmental interventions, such as subsidised childcare and parental leave, have bolstered female labour force participation to 61% (Singapore Department of Statistics, 2024). However, traditional cultural expectations continue to shape gender roles, contributing to a 19% gender wage gap (Ministry of Manpower, 2024), despite institutional support mechanisms. These quantitative indicators reinforce the complex interplay between institutional policies and cultural norms, highlighting how gender disparities manifest differently across diverse socio-cultural contexts.

Empirically, the study highlights contrast in policy efficacy across Switzerland, the United States, and Singapore, demonstrating how institutional support can coexist with cultural norms that limit gender parity. Theoretically, it advances the intersectionality framework by showing how intersecting identities influence gender disparities within institutional and cultural

contexts, contributes to institutional theory by illustrating how formal policies are mediated by cultural norms and socio-economic structures, and enriches policy transfer literature by emphasising the necessity of culturally sensitive adaptations when transferring gender parity policies across diverse contexts.

The findings underscore that gender disparities arise from the dynamic interplay between macro-level institutional policies and micro-level identity mechanisms. This integrated perspective aligns with the study's objective to provide a comprehensive understanding of the complex, context-dependent nature of gender inequality. Chapter 5 will elaborate on the implications of these findings, discuss limitations, and propose future research directions, focusing on strategies to enhance policy effectiveness while addressing cultural and systemic barriers.

CHAPTER V:

DISCUSSION

5.1 Introduction

The findings of this study show that persistent gender disparities in leadership and compensation cannot be understood through policy analysis alone. Instead, they emerge from the interaction between institutional structures, cultural expectations, and the lived experiences of individuals navigating these systems. The research questions are as follows:

RQ1: What cultural and institutional factors influence the adaptation of gender parity policies from Western to Asian contexts, especially in Switzerland, United States, and Singapore?

RQ2: How do intersecting identities (e.g., race and socioeconomic status) shape gender disparities in workforce leadership and compensation across the national contexts of Switzerland, the United States, and Singapore?

Null Hypothesis (H_0)

Gender-related labour market factors (e.g., gender wage gap, female labour force participation, women's empowerment, and women's representation in PMET occupations) have no statistically significant effect on income inequality across countries.

Alternative Hypothesis (H_1)

Gender-related labour market factors (e.g., gender wage gap, female labour force participation, women's empowerment, and women's representation in PMET occupations) have a statistically significant effect on income inequality across countries.

In addressing RQ1, the analysis makes clear that the presence of gender parity legislation is only the starting point. What ultimately shapes policy effectiveness is the extent to which

institutional enforcement and societal norms support—or undermine—formal rules. Even strong legal frameworks fall short when organizational routines rely on implicit caregiving assumptions or when cultural expectations reinforce traditional gender roles. This explains why policies transferred from Western contexts do not always translate seamlessly into Asian or hybrid institutional settings; they often assume cultural and institutional conditions that are not present on the ground.

RQ2 further illustrates that gender inequality is mediated by intersecting identities. Women who work part-time, manage caregiving responsibilities, or occupy lower socioeconomic positions face compounding constraints that leadership representation alone cannot address. The quantitative results demonstrate that reducing wage gaps and increasing meaningful labor force participation are more impactful than symbolic indicators of progress. Without institutional conditions that promote stable, advancement-oriented career pathways, participation gains do not translate into equitable outcomes.

Together, these insights emphasize that gender inequality persists because multiple forces—structural, cultural, and identity-based—reinforce one another. Effective solutions must therefore extend beyond legislation to include cultural change, redesigned organizational practices, and stronger institutional supports. A context-sensitive, mixed-methods approach proves essential in capturing these dynamics and offers a more realistic foundation for developing gender parity initiatives that work in practice, not only on paper.

5.2 Overview of Findings and Answer to Research Questions (RQs)

This study set out to examine how cultural and institutional contexts shape the adaptation and effectiveness of gender parity policies (RQ1), and how intersecting identities contribute to disparities in leadership and compensation across countries (RQ2). The integrated findings highlight that gender inequality is not driven by a single factor, but by the interplay of public policy design, institutional practices, cultural expectations, and the lived realities of individuals navigating these systems.

For RQ1, the qualitative analysis demonstrates that national policy frameworks in Switzerland, the United States, and Singapore provide the formal scaffolding for gender equality, but their actual impact is mediated—sometimes constrained—by cultural norms and institutional conditions. Across all cases, cultural expectations surrounding caregiving, leadership norms, and gender roles were among the most influential forces shaping gendered outcomes. Even where strong legal protections exist, such as in Switzerland or the United States, societal assumptions about women’s domestic responsibilities or perceptions of “appropriate” leadership traits limited the effectiveness of formal policies. Singapore’s highly coordinated policy environment shows that institutional alignment can advance gender equality, but traditional norms around family roles still moderate women’s progression into senior leadership. These patterns underscore that policy transfer across contexts cannot be assumed to be effective without considering cultural resonance and implementation feasibility.

Turning to RQ2, the mixed-methods analysis reveals that gender-related labour market factors—particularly the gender wage gap and female labour force participation—significantly shape income inequality across countries. The panel regression results show that: Gender wage gap ($p < 0.01$) and female labour force participation ($p < 0.01$) are significantly associated with lower income inequality. However, the WEI and Proportion of Women in PMET are not statistically significant. The qualitative follow-up clarifies these mechanisms: in Singapore, participation gains are supported by childcare subsidies and flexible work policies, although career advancement remains influenced by persistent norms. In Switzerland, high female participation is offset by the predominance of part-time employment tied to caregiving expectations, dampening the positive effect on income equality. In the U.S., limited federal family support structures and intersecting inequalities weaken the benefits of participation, especially for minority women.

Furthermore, the non-significance of women’s empowerment scores and PMET representation illustrates that structural indicators alone may obscure deeper inequalities. Titles or aggregate empowerment measures do not necessarily translate into decision-making authority, equitable

compensation, or access to influential networks—dimensions that qualitative evidence captures through themes of intersectionality, systemic bias, and institutional gatekeeping.

Country-specific evidence reinforces and deepens these conclusions. In Switzerland, cultural norms surrounding part-time work—particularly for mothers—continue to shape women’s labour market trajectories. Despite strong legal protections for gender equality, the expectation that women reduce working hours after childbirth remains deeply embedded. Because part-time roles often offer lower pay, fewer promotion opportunities, and weaker pension contributions, these norms perpetuate enduring wage gaps and uneven career progression. This illustrates how progressive legal frameworks can be undermined by everyday cultural practices that structure employment decisions and reinforce gendered inequalities.

In Singapore, the state’s strong institutional coordination—such as subsidised childcare, parental leave schemes, and flexible work arrangements—has effectively increased female labour participation. Yet these institutional gains coexist with persistent cultural expectations that caregiving is primarily a woman’s responsibility. Many women continue to shoulder a “double shift” of paid work and domestic labour, interrupting career trajectories and slowing advancement into senior leadership. Thus, while Singapore’s policy environment provides a supportive foundation, deeply embedded family norms continue to limit the full realisation of gender parity.

In the United States, the absence of universal family-support policies, including paid parental leave and affordable childcare, creates uneven labour market conditions that disproportionately disadvantage lower-income and minority women. These structural gaps intersect with racial and socioeconomic inequalities, pushing many women into unstable or low-paid employment and increasing vulnerability to income volatility. As a result, gender equality measures are experienced unevenly across different groups, reinforcing broader income gaps and limiting the positive effects of increased labour participation. Overall, the combined results of RQ1 and RQ2 show that gender disparities emerge through the interaction of gender with institutional structures, cultural expectations, and socioeconomic positioning. Policies can open doors, but

it is the alignment between cultural norms, institutional support, and individual circumstances that determines whether women are able to walk through them. These insights highlight the need for gender parity strategies that go beyond legislative reform to address cultural change, institutional accountability, and equity across intersecting identities.

5.3 Theoretical Implications

The findings both extend and challenge established explanations of gender inequality by demonstrating that institutions, social norms, and role expectations operate as an integrated system rather than as isolated drivers. While much of the literature assumes a linear progression from women's representation or empowerment to more equitable economic outcomes, this study shows that only certain dimensions of gender equality consistently translate into redistribution. The fixed-effects analysis confirms that reductions in the gender wage gap and higher female labour force participation are associated with lower income inequality, underscoring the centrality of pay equity and participation quality. At the same time, the absence of statistically significant effects for women's representation in PMET roles and for composite empowerment indices challenges representation-first narratives that dominate policy debates.

These results broadly support Institutional Theory, but with important refinement. Institutions do not merely enable gender policies; they shape whether participation and representation generate distributive effects. Across Singapore, Switzerland, and the United States, similar policy goals produce divergent outcomes because they are filtered through different labour-market structures, enforcement capacities, and welfare regimes. From a policy perspective, this implies that gender reforms cannot be evaluated solely by their design or intent. Policies that expand women's participation reduce inequality only when institutional arrangements support stable, full-time employment, wage continuity, and career progression. Where participation is channelled into part-time or precarious work, redistributive gains are muted.

Social Role Theory and Role Congruity Theory are critical for understanding why institutional reforms often fall short of their intended effects, and they carry direct policy relevance. Social Role Theory explains how persistent norms around caregiving and leadership shape how women's labour market participation is structured and valued. Role Congruity Theory further clarifies why increases in women's representation do not automatically yield pay equity or authority: when leadership norms remain implicitly masculine, women may be present yet penalised, channelled into lower-reward roles, or evaluated against contradictory expectations. Policy interventions that focus narrowly on numerical targets risk reinforcing symbolic inclusion unless they also address evaluation criteria, promotion norms, and caregiving expectations embedded in workplaces.

The findings also substantiate intersectionality, not as a simple additive disadvantage but as a process mediated through institutions and norms. Quantitatively, the prominence of the wage gap over aggregate empowerment measures suggests that inequality is driven by within-country frictions.

he results align strongly with both Social Role Theory and Role Congruity Theory as presented in *Figure 2* (Integration of Social Role Theory and Role Congruity Theory) in Chapter 2. These frameworks suggest that labour market outcomes for women are not solely determined by increases in representation or empowerment but are fundamentally shaped by persistent societal norms and expectations around caregiving, leadership, and workplace authority. The finding that reductions in the gender wage gap and higher female labour force participation are associated with lower income inequality, while women's representation in PMET roles and composite empowerment indices do not show consistent redistributive effects, supports the notion that underlying cultural and institutional factors mediate the impact of policy interventions.

Interpreting these results, it becomes clear that simply increasing women's numerical presence in the workforce or leadership positions is insufficient for achieving substantive equality. If workplace norms, promotion criteria, and caregiving expectations remain unchanged, women

may continue to face barriers to pay equity and authority, as suggested by Role Congruity Theory. The results also highlight those intersectional disadvantages, such as those related to class, race, or caregiving status, intensify inequalities, which aggregate measures can obscure. Therefore, the study underscores the importance of designing policies that go beyond surface-level inclusion, targeting the deeper congruence between institutional practices and social role expectations. This approach is crucial for producing meaningful and equitable distributive outcomes across diverse contexts. For policymakers, this highlights the limits of aggregate indicators and the need for disaggregated monitoring that captures who benefits from reforms and who remains excluded.

5.4 Practical Implications

5.4.1 Addressing Gender Disparities in Developing Economies

The study reveals that gender inequality is shaped by an interconnected system of institutions, social norms, and role expectations, rather than isolated factors. Instead of a straightforward link between women's representation and economic equality, only certain aspects of gender progress—like closing wage gaps and increasing full-time female labor participation—consistently reduce income inequality. Policy outcomes vary across countries due to differences in labor markets and welfare systems, indicating that reforms must enable stable employment and career advancement to be effective. Social Role Theory and Role Congruity Theory help explain why more women in leadership does not guarantee pay equity, especially when workplace norms remain unchanged. Intersectionality shows that wage gap issues are intensified by class, race, and caregiving status, emphasizing the need for targeted monitoring over relying solely on broad indicators.

Gender disparities in developing economies are not abstract statistical gaps; they are lived realities shaped by everyday constraints on women's time, safety, income, and voice. While global indicators consistently show lower levels of women's economic and political participation, country-level experiences help explain *why* these gaps persist and *how* policy

interventions can make a tangible difference. In relation to RQ1, these findings show that reductions in income inequality are most strongly associated with improvements in women's quality of labour market participation—particularly access to stable, formal employment—while RQ2 is addressed by demonstrating that women's political representation contributes to redistributive outcomes only when institutional designs enable substantive influence rather than symbolic inclusion.

Robust institutional capacity forms the backbone of meaningful gender reforms in developing economies. Without effective and accountable institutions, even well-designed policies risk being diluted, misapplied, or rendered ineffective by entrenched interests and sociocultural inertia. Establishing dedicated gender equality bodies or mainstreaming gender-responsive units within existing ministries is a foundational step. Across many developing economies, the daily reality for women is shaped by the intricate balancing act between paid work and unpaid care duties. Despite advances in education and skill development, women often find themselves sidelined from the labour market—not for lack of ambition, but because affordable and reliable childcare is a rarity. In countless households, women shoulder the majority of caregiving, making the prospect of formal employment elusive, as everyday routines revolve around the needs of children and family (World Bank, 2022).

For example, Brazil's Bolsa Família programme offers a vivid illustration of how thoughtful policy can begin to shift this balance. With conditional cash transfers tied to children's school attendance and health check-ups, the programme directly addresses two of the biggest hurdles faced by low-income mothers: financial insecurity and the relentless demands of caregiving. It doesn't just provide money—it frees up time, allowing women to explore work opportunities that were previously out of reach. Even though Bolsa Família wasn't crafted as a labour market intervention, its ripple effects have been felt in communities where formal childcare options are scarce. Mothers who once struggled to step outside the home can now seek and sustain employment, knowing their children's well-being is secure (World Bank, 2018). This case exemplifies how social protection schemes—often overlooked in economic discussions—can

quietly transform women's lives, giving them both the peace of mind and the practical means to participate fully in the workforce. It's not just about numbers or policy design; it's about the everyday realities of women whose choices expand when the burdens of care are eased.

For example, the Philippines' Gender and Development (GAD) Budget Policy mandates that 5% of government agency budgets be allocated to gender-responsive programs, monitored through annual reports and audits. However, challenges remain in data disaggregation, particularly in capturing intersectional experiences of minority and low-income women. Participation alone does not guarantee economic security. In many developing economies, women who do work are concentrated in informal jobs that offer low pay, limited protection, and little opportunity for advancement. Globally, women are more likely than men to be employed informally, particularly in low- and middle-income countries (ILO, 2018).

For example, India exemplifies this challenge. Despite rising female educational attainment, a large share of women remains engaged in informal and home-based work, especially in agriculture, domestic services, and small-scale manufacturing. The IMF notes that India plays a significant role in driving gender employment gaps among lower-middle-income countries, with disparities rooted primarily in low female labour force participation rather than unemployment (IMF, 2024). This case illustrates how informality acts as a structural trap, limiting income stability and reinforcing long-term gender inequality.

The evidence and case studies in this chapter show that gender disparities in developing economies are shaped less by individual choice than by everyday structural constraints. Women's economic participation is consistently limited by unpaid care responsibilities, unsafe public spaces, informal employment, and institutional exclusion, even where educational attainment has improved. The cases of Brazil and Colombia demonstrate that policies outside the traditional labour market—such as social protection and transport infrastructure—can significantly expand women's ability to engage in paid work by easing time and safety constraints. At the same time, experiences from India and Mauritius highlight that participation alone is insufficient if women remain concentrated in informal or low-quality jobs,

underscoring the importance of private sector accountability and regulatory incentives. Finally, the political cases of Senegal and Bolivia illustrate that numerical representation must be accompanied by institutional designs that enable substantive influence and protect marginalised women from exclusion and harassment. In summary, these findings suggest that effective gender equality strategies in developing economies require integrated, context specific approaches that link social policy, labour markets, private sector reform, and political institutions, rather than relying on isolated or symbolic interventions.

Table 14: An overview of policies in addressing Gender Disparities in Developing Countries

Case Study	Country	Issue Addressed	Policy/Programme	Key Actions	Outcomes/Findings	Sources
Women's Economic Participation and Care Responsibilities	Brazil	Low female labour force participation due to unpaid care	Bolsa Família	Conditional cash transfers linked to children's school attendance and health check-ups	Reduced financial stress and caregiving burden; enabled low-income mothers to seek and sustain employment	World Bank (2018, 2022)
Recognizing Intersectional Risks	Bolivia	Intersectional barriers for women, especially indigenous, in politics	Law against Political Harassment and Violence	Legal recognition of intimidation, targeted protections	Prevents political participation from being limited to elite women; highlights need for intersectional policy	Government of Bolivia, 2012; UN Women, 2021
Safety, Mobility, and Access to Better Jobs	Colombia (Bogotá)	Women's mobility and safety concerns restricting job access	Urban Transport Reforms	Women-only buses, improved lighting, greater security at transit hubs	Increased women's willingness to commute; access to better-paid, stable formal employment	World Bank, 2019; UN Women, 2020
Informality as a Structural Constraint	India	High concentration of women in informal, low-paid jobs	Women in Informal Employment	Engagement in informal and home-based work, especially in agriculture, domestic services, small-scale manufacturing	Informality limits income stability, reinforces long-term gender inequality	ILO, 2018; IMF, 2024
Encouraging Change in the Private Sector	Mauritius	Gender pay gap and underrepresentation in skilled/managerial roles	Gender Pay Transparency	Gender pay gap reporting, incentives for gender-balanced leadership	Prompted review of recruitment, promotion, pay structures; improved female representation in skilled and managerial roles	OECD, 2019; World Bank, 2020
Women's Political Representation and Inclusive Governance	Philippines	Underrepresentation of women in political leadership	Magna Carta of Women (2009)	Mandates increased participation of women in decision-making bodies and local governance; provides quotas and capacity-building initiatives.	Improved women's visibility in public office and strengthened policies on gender equality and anti-discrimination.	Philippine Commission on Women, 2023
From Representation to Real Influence	Senegal	Gap between women's legislative representation and policy influence	The Parity Law	Party lists must alternate between male and female candidates	Women's representation in National Assembly over 40%; increased attention to maternal health, education, gender-based violence	International IDEA, 2023; World Economic Forum, 2024

Source: Author made.

5.4.2 Rethinking Gender Policy in Advanced Economies

Gender equality in advanced economies is often treated as a settled issue. High levels of female educational attainment, legal protection, and labor force participation are frequently cited as evidence that the major battles have been won. Yet the findings of this study suggest that such confidence may be premature. Beneath these headline indicators, substantial inequalities remain—particularly in leadership access, pay progression, and career continuity—pointing to a more uneven and fragile form of equality than is commonly assumed.

One of the central implications is the need to move beyond simplified narratives that equate participation with progress. While women’s participation in paid work has increased significantly, participation alone does not guarantee influence, authority, or long-term economic security. Institutional features such as part-time employment norms, expectations around caregiving, and occupational segregation continue to shape gendered career outcomes, even in highly developed labor markets. When equality is measured only through visible milestones, such as employment rates or representation quotas, deeper structural constraints can remain hidden. A more meaningful assessment of gender equality therefore requires closer attention to how participation translates into advancement, income stability, and decision-making power.

At the same time, the study also highlights a more recent and often uncomfortable development: the emergence of reverse gender gaps in specific domains. These occur when men and boys begin to underperform or disengage relative to women and girls in particular

contexts, most notably in education and certain professions. Importantly, this does not imply that men face systemic disadvantage overall. Rather, it points to localized imbalances that can arise when long-standing gender policies are not regularly reviewed in light of changing social and economic conditions.

Education provides one of the clearest examples. In several advanced economies, boys are more likely to disengage from schooling, leave education earlier, and enter higher education at lower rates than girls. These patterns are especially pronounced among men from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, raising concerns about long-term employment prospects and social mobility.

In the United States, data from the National Center for Education Statistics show that men made up only around 41% of college students in 2020 (NCES, 2021). Recognizing the potential long-term consequences of this imbalance, some universities have begun to respond. At the University of North Carolina, for example, targeted outreach and retention initiatives have been introduced to better support male students, particularly those at risk of dropping out (UNC Office of Diversity and Inclusion, 2022). These efforts illustrate how gender-responsive policy can evolve without undermining broader commitments to women's advancement.

Reverse gender gaps are also visible in the labor market, especially in professions traditionally associated with women. Teaching, nursing, and social work remain heavily feminized, with men often deterred by stigma, limited role models, and workplace cultures that reinforce gendered expectations.

In Australia, boys are less likely than girls to complete secondary education, and men account for only 18% of new teaching graduates (Australian Department of Education, 2022). In response, initiatives such as the “Men in Teaching” program aim to challenge stereotypes and encourage male participation through mentorship and targeted recruitment (Men in Teaching Initiative, 2023). These programs highlight the importance of addressing gender imbalance as a two-sided issue, shaped by norms and institutions rather than individual choice alone.

These patterns complicate linear accounts of progress toward gender equality. They suggest that effective gender policy must be dynamic rather than static—capable of addressing persistent disadvantages faced by women while remaining alert to emerging vulnerabilities among men. Continuous monitoring, high-quality disaggregated data, and context-specific interventions are essential to achieving balanced outcomes. Ultimately, rethinking gender policy in advanced economies means moving away from binary framings of winners and losers. A more nuanced, evidence-based approach—one that recognizes shifting social realities and institutional constraints—offers a more credible path toward inclusive and sustainable equality, where opportunities are not shaped by gendered expectations but by individual potential.

5.4.3 Implications for Multinational Corporations

Drawing on what we've learned, this section offers some ideas for organizations and policymakers who truly want to move the needle on gender equality, especially for multinational companies. The main takeaway is simple: gender inequality isn't just about numbers or having good intentions—it's built into the systems and structures that shape

our workplaces. Real progress depends on strong leadership, clear policies that are actually put into practice, and teamwork across departments and agencies. Without that solid foundation, even the best-sounding policies can fall flat, especially in places where resources or administrative support are limited.

Just hiring more women isn't enough. Genuine equality means women have the same opportunities as men—to get formal jobs, to grow in their careers, and to earn equal pay for equal work. Filling leadership roles with women only makes a real difference if the organization also changes the pathways and support systems that help women move up. In developed countries, it's easy to be fooled by positive statistics, but there are still hidden gaps in pay and promotions. Gender equality isn't a box to check off—it's a journey that needs constant attention and flexibility.

Good gender policies should work for everyone. They should help women move forward, but also recognize and respond to new challenges men might face in education and employment. It's important to keep an eye on how things are changing, so policies stay fair and people continue to trust the system. Companies should also encourage and support men in caregiving and flexible work roles, making it normal for everyone to find a healthy balance.

Table 15: Case Studies of MNCs showcasing Equitable Workplace Strategies.

Case Study Example	Key Implication	Best practices	Sources
Accenture uses advanced analytics to monitor and address intersectional inequalities within its workforce.	Intersectionality-aware HR Design	Revise HR processes; implement intersectional analytics; provide targeted support.	Accenture Inclusion & Diversity Reports; Accenture Human Capital disclosures (2024).
Danone's leadership development programs link talent identification to promotion and pay equity.	Institutional Leadership	Remove structural barriers; align global principles with local execution; empower CEOs and boards.	Danone Sustainability Reports; Danone Talent & Leadership publications (2024).
IKEA has implemented policies for equitable parental leave and career development for all employees, including men in caregiving roles.	Structural Reforms for Gender Equality	Strengthen governance; enforce policies; coordinate inter-agency actions.	IKEA Sustainability Reports; Ingka Group People & Culture disclosures (2026).
Johnson & Johnson reports on long-term diversity outcomes and integrates equality into its business strategy.	Durable Impact & Sustainability	Connect participation with power; representation with pay; policy ambition with operational reality.	Johnson & Johnson Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Reports; Annual Reports (2025).
Nestlé has invested in programs supporting both women's leadership and men's involvement in family life.	Balanced Gender Strategies	Monitor gender impacts; normalise men's caregiving roles; support flexible work arrangements.	Nestlé Creating Shared Value Reports; Nestlé Diversity & Inclusion disclosures (2025).
Salesforce regularly conducts pay audits and adjusts salaries to close identified gaps.	Compensation Transparency & Accountability	Publish pay data; set clear accountability measures; monitor and address discrepancies.	Salesforce Equality Updates; Salesforce Annual Reports (2024).
Unilever implements regional diversity councils to tailor initiatives to local needs.	Context-sensitive Diversity Strategies	Assess local contexts; customize diversity programs; engage local stakeholders.	Unilever Sustainability Reports; Unilever Diversity & Inclusion disclosures (2024).

Note: Case studies are based on publicly available corporate sustainability and DEI disclosures and are intended to illustrate organizational approaches rather than provide comprehensive evaluations.

Source: Author made.

Multinational corporations are in a unique position to set the tone for real change. They can tailor their diversity and HR strategies to fit local cultures, tackle intersectional barriers head-on, and ensure pay transparency isn't just a buzzword, but something that's real and accountable. Setting targets is a start, but true progress comes from building strong institutions, adapting to the realities on the ground, and making sure that participation leads to real influence and fair compensation. The table summarizes the key implications and approaches in MNCs, for instance, Unilever, Accenture, Salesforce, Ikea, Nestle, Johnson & Johnson and Danone, in achieving gender parity in the workforce.

Creating a fair workplace requires tailored approaches that address each organization's unique needs. Intersectionality-aware HR strategies help ensure no one is overlooked, while transparent compensation builds trust and fosters inclusion. True progress comes from removing barriers to advancement and pay equality, not just meeting quotas. CEOs and leaders should model global values locally and make flexibility standard, driving meaningful, lasting change for all employees.

5.4.4 For Cross-National Contexts

Statistical analyses, particularly fixed-effects panel models, consistently reveal significant variation in gender equality outcomes across different countries and institutions. These disparities are not random; they are driven by measurable institutional factors such as labor market regulations, caregiving infrastructure, and governance capacity. For example, countries with robust parental leave policies and flexible work arrangements tend to exhibit higher female participation rates and narrower gender pay gaps, while nations lacking these

institutional supports often struggle to advance gender parity despite similar headline targets. This empirical evidence underscores that the effectiveness of gender equality policies is contingent upon the underlying institutional context, directly refuting the notion of a universal solution.

To illustrate, consider Sweden and Japan as case studies. Sweden's comprehensive caregiving infrastructure and progressive labor market policies have enabled women to achieve high participation rates and notable gains in authority and pay equity. In contrast, Japan's rigid employment norms and limited support for work-life balance have resulted in persistent gender gaps, especially in leadership positions, despite policy efforts aimed at increasing female workforce participation. These examples highlight how institutional heterogeneity shapes outcomes, demonstrating that policies must be tailored to local realities to generate meaningful progress. Thus, statistical data and real-world cases alike make clear that one-size-fits-all institutional policies are insufficient for advancing gender equality.

Fixed-effects panel analyses reinforce that institutional factor—such as labor market regulation, caregiving infrastructure, and employment norms—are the main drivers of variation in gender inequality. Headline indicators rarely capture true disparities unless supported by robust, context-sensitive institutions. Effective policy evaluation requires moving beyond numerical targets to examine mechanisms that translate talent into authority and fair pay.

For organizations and policymakers, the shift should be from copying policies to adapting them for local conditions. This means investing in institutional diagnostics, flexible

frameworks, and context-sensitive evaluation. The question is not simply, “Does this policy work?” but “When and where does it generate meaningful change?” Institutional diversity is essential, not a hurdle.

Advanced economies face new challenges. Progress in participation and representation may hide gaps in pay and authority. Sustainable advancement requires strong institutions, career pathways, and balanced policies that address structural imbalances. Representation targets alone cannot ensure equitable compensation or real decision-making power.

Multinational corporations must look beyond global templates and engage with local cultural and institutional nuances. Intersectionality-aware HR systems, genuine compensation transparency, and accountability are key. Adaptable companies drive real progress; standardized approaches risk perpetuating inequality.

Ultimately, advancing gender equality is an institutional transformation challenge. Progress depends on aligning participation with power and policy ambition with operational reality. Looking forward, focus should shift to mechanism design, contextual calibration, and structural balance, with research directed at institutional change and intersecting identities.

Sustainable gender equality requires coordinated, context-sensitive strategies connecting institutional capacity, labor market structures, organizational practices, and cultural norms. Adaptive frameworks enable organizations and governments to move beyond uniform templates, ensuring lasting, resilient gains.

In summary, statistical analyses show significant variation in gender equality outcomes across countries, driven by measurable institutional factors. For example, robust parental

leave and flexible work arrangements result in higher female participation and narrower pay gaps, while those lacking such supports struggle, highlighting the importance of tailoring policies to local realities.

5.5 Chapter Summary and Transition

This chapter brings together the core findings of the study, focusing on what they mean for policy, organizations, and business management. The evidence is clear: gender inequality doesn't just come from one source. Instead, it's shaped by a mix of institutional structures, cultural norms, and intersecting identities like socioeconomic status and caregiving responsibilities. These influences vary from country to country, which means simple measures—like counting women in the workforce—don't tell the whole story.

One major takeaway is that just increasing the number of women in organizations isn't enough. Equal access to leadership roles or fair pay doesn't automatically follow. Policies need strong backing from institutional frameworks to make a real difference. National governance, labor market systems, and cultural expectations all affect how policies are put into practice, explaining why similar strategies often have very different outcomes depending on the country. Fixed-effects analysis shows that long-standing institutional traits are a big part of what keeps gender gaps in place, highlighting the need for solutions tailored to each context.

Intersectionality is crucial in understanding why inequality persists. Gender interacts with other factors, resulting in varied experiences for different groups of women. Generic, one-size-fits-all approaches rarely work, so future research and policymaking should mix

quantitative and qualitative methods and pay close attention to unintended consequences—especially around paid and unpaid labor.

Multinational corporations have a unique opportunity to push gender equality forward but must adapt their strategies to local contexts. Intersectionality-aware HR systems and transparent compensation practices, combined with sensitivity to local norms, are key to making progress. These findings encourage businesses to look beyond numbers and recognize how both formal and informal systems drive outcomes.

Social role theory is central to understanding these dynamics. It explains how cultural expectations assign gender-specific roles—like caregiving for women and leadership for men—which become ingrained in organizational life and shape hiring, promotion, and compensation. Even as formal barriers fade, these stereotypes persist. Genuine progress means organizations must actively challenge these ingrained roles and build cultures that support true inclusion and equal opportunity.

This chapter closes by preparing for the next section, which will summarize theoretical contributions, discuss limitations, and offer directions for future research. Ultimately, gender equality is framed as a transformative journey requiring sustained commitment at every level.

CHAPTER VI:

CONCLUSION

6.1 Introduction

This research investigates gender differences in leadership and pays across Switzerland, the United States, and Singapore using a mixed-methods approach. It explores two primary questions: how cultural and institutional contexts shape gender equality policies, and how overlapping identities—such as gender, class, and ethnicity—influence leadership and compensation. By integrating quantitative and qualitative evidence, the study reveals that gender inequality is driven not only by laws and policies but also by everyday experiences, traditions, and institutional practices. While Switzerland and the U.S. have strong legal frameworks, persistent social expectations about caregiving and leadership roles hinder policy effectiveness; in Singapore, proactive policies are still shaped by traditional values. Quantitative analysis highlights that narrowing gender wage gaps and increasing female labor force participation are linked to reduced income inequality. However, broader metrics like empowerment scores or professional representation don't always reflect true progress. Real change occurs when practical supports—such as affordable childcare and flexible work options—are in place and cultural barriers are actively challenged. Qualitative findings reinforce that surface-level changes are insufficient; deeper structural and cultural shifts are needed for genuine equality.

Theoretically, the study underscores that effective gender equality strategies must combine robust legal frameworks with strong enforcement and cultural alignment, advancing

intersectionality theory by demonstrating how intersecting identities and institutional contexts shape outcomes. For policymakers and organizations, the research emphasizes the need to address root causes of inequality with context-sensitive, inclusive approaches, rather than relying on quotas or token gestures. In sum, progress toward gender parity requires coordinated efforts that integrate institutional strength, organizational practices, and cultural change.

6.2 Summary of Key Findings by Research Questions

6.2.1 RQ1 for Qualitative Analysis

The study finds that the adaptation and effectiveness of gender parity policies are profoundly shaped by the interplay between public policy frameworks, institutional practices, and prevailing cultural expectations. In contexts like Switzerland and the United States, robust legal structures exist, but entrenched norms regarding caregiving and leadership roles often undermine the practical impact of these policies. Conversely, Singapore demonstrates that even with cohesive and proactive policy initiatives, traditional family values and societal expectations continue to affect women's career trajectories. These examples illustrate that formal policy measures alone are insufficient; their success depends on how well they are supported by institutional mechanisms—such as enforcement capacity and organizational practices—and the degree to which they align with or challenge existing cultural beliefs. Thus, effective gender parity outcomes require a holistic approach that synchronizes legal reforms with shifts in both institutional behaviour and societal attitudes.

6.2.2 RQ2 for Mixed-Method

Quantitative panel data analysis reveals that two variables—narrowing gender wage gaps and increased female labour force participation—are consistently associated with reductions in income inequality. These findings underscore the importance of addressing pay disparities and supporting women’s active engagement in the workforce as levers for achieving more equitable economic outcomes. However, broader indicators such as women’s empowerment indices and overall professional representation did not show statistically significant or consistent effects, highlighting the limitations of aggregate metrics in capturing the nuances of gender equity progress. Qualitative case studies further demonstrate that improvements in participation and pay equity are most effective when complemented by supportive institutional mechanisms like accessible childcare and flexible work arrangements, and when active efforts are made to dismantle cultural barriers. Together, these results emphasise the need for multifaceted strategies that go beyond surface-level measures and address the structural and cultural roots of gender inequality.

6.3 Theoretical Contributions

This study makes important contributions to our understanding of gender equality by offering fresh perspectives on both institutional theory and intersectionality theory. By examining how gender parity policies play out in real-world settings, the research goes beyond abstract concepts and shows how these theories can be refined and applied to everyday challenges. When it comes to institutional theory, this research highlights that passing strong laws is not enough to achieve gender parity. Real progress depends on how

these laws interact with deeply rooted cultural expectations and everyday practices. For gender equality policies to truly work, they must fit within the broader cultural landscape and be supported by practical measures—like accessible childcare and flexible work options—that make it easier for people to balance their professional and personal lives. The study shows that change happens when legal reforms are combined with shifts in organizational behaviors and societal attitudes, reminding us that meaningful progress requires a holistic approach.

On the intersectionality front, the study reveals that gender isn't the only factor influencing leadership and pay. Instead, gender interacts with caregiving roles, social class, and workplace structures to shape opportunities for women in different countries. By using both numbers and stories, the research brings to light how these overlapping identities and institutional settings create unique challenges and possibilities. For example, while increased female participation in the workforce and fairer pay are linked to less income inequality, these gains only happen when supportive systems are in place and cultural barriers are addressed. This nuanced view helps us see why context matters and why we need to look beyond surface statistics to understand what drives real change.

Taken together, this study helps us see the bigger picture by blending quantitative data with qualitative insights. It reminds us that broad indicators do not always capture the full story, and that real progress depends on understanding how institutions, organizational practices, and cultural norms work together. By humanizing the complexities of gender equality, the research points the way toward strategies that are not only effective but also sensitive to the realities people face every day.

6.4 Methodological Contributions

This study advances methodological approaches in gender parity research by employing a rigorous mixed-methods design that integrates quantitative panel data analysis with qualitative case studies. The use of panel data analysis enables the examination of dynamic trends in gender-related labour market variables and income inequality across multiple countries and time periods, thereby capturing both cross-sectional and longitudinal variations that single-point or country-specific studies might overlook. This approach strengthens causal inference and allows for the identification of patterns and associations that are robust to national context and temporal change.

The incorporation of qualitative case studies further enriches the analysis by providing in-depth, context-specific insights into how institutional mechanisms, organisational practices, and cultural norms interact to shape gender equity outcomes. This methodological integration allows for the triangulation of findings, enhancing the validity and interpretability of results by bridging statistical trends with lived experiences and contextual realities. By combining these complementary methods, the research design facilitates a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the complexities underlying gender disparities in leadership and compensation.

Overall, the methodological contributions of this dissertation lie in demonstrating the value of mixed-methods research for investigating the multifaceted relationship between gender-related labour market variables and income inequality. By integrating robust quantitative techniques with rich qualitative evidence, the study sets a precedent for future research to

adopt similarly holistic approaches, thereby advancing methodological standards in the field of gender and labour market studies.

6.5 Limitations and Future Research

This study makes an important contribution to understanding gender disparities in leadership and compensation by adopting an institutionally grounded, cross-national perspective. At the same time, several limitations should be acknowledged, as they shape how the findings are interpreted and point to directions for future research.

First, the analysis relies primarily on internationally comparable secondary datasets. While this approach is essential for identifying broad cross-country patterns, it inevitably limits the level of detail that can be examined. In particular, the data do not allow for a systematic analysis of intersecting identities such as race, caregiving responsibilities, migration status, or socioeconomic background. As a result, important within-country, sectoral, and organizational differences may be obscured, and the findings should be understood as capturing aggregate structural trends rather than fully reflecting the lived complexity of gender inequality.

Second, the use of national-level indicators constrains the ability to observe micro-level mechanisms. Although such indicators are valuable for comparative analysis, they cannot directly capture firm-level promotion practices, informal organizational norms, or individual career trajectories. Many barriers to gender equality operate through everyday organizational routines, managerial discretion, and informal networks, which remain largely invisible in aggregate data. Consequently, the analysis maps the contours of

institutional inequality but cannot fully explain how these structures are reproduced or challenged in practice.

Third, the focus on Switzerland, the United States, and Singapore, while theoretically motivated, limits the generalizability of the findings. These countries represent relatively high-income contexts with established institutional frameworks, and their experiences may differ substantially from those of developing economies or settings with lower institutional capacity. The observed patterns should therefore not be assumed to apply universally, particularly in contexts where informal norms play a stronger role or where formal gender equality policies are less developed.

Future research would benefit from expanding data collection to include more granular, within-country and sector-specific indicators. Such data would enable a deeper examination of how intersecting identities and local institutional contexts shape leadership opportunities and compensation outcomes, moving beyond national averages to capture meaningful variation within societies.

6.6 Final Wrap-up

In wrapping up this dissertation, it is clear that looking at gender disparities in leadership and pay is not just about crunching numbers—it is about understanding real-life experiences affected by these gaps. By weaving together large-scale data and personal stories from case studies, this research has painted a fuller picture of what it takes to foster fairness at work. While it is encouraging to see that closing the gender wage gap and boosting women's participation in the workforce can lead to more balanced economic

outcomes, the study also shows that headline statistics often miss the more subtle, everyday progress—and challenges—people experience. What really stands out is that making progress on gender equality means not only changing policies and workplace practices, but also shifting the cultural expectations that shape how those changes play out.

Ultimately, these findings make a strong case for a more rounded approach to designing policies—one that brings together legal changes and shifts in social attitudes, and actively breaks down both structural and cultural barriers. This does not just enrich how we think about gender parity in theory; it also sets a practical example for future research. The real value of these insights is in their power to inspire efforts worldwide to create workplaces where everyone has a fair shot, underscoring how thoughtful, context-aware policies can truly move the needle on gender equality.

REFERENCES

- Abatemarco, A., Lagomarsino, E. and Russolillo, M. (2023) 'Gender pension gap in EU countries: a between-group inequality approach', *Risks*, 11(3), p. 63. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.3390/risks11030063>.
- Accenture (2024) Inclusion, diversity and human capital disclosures. Accenture plc. Available at: <https://www.accenture.com> (Accessed 21 March 2026).
- Adamovic, M. and Leibbrandt, A. (2023) 'Is there a glass ceiling for ethnic minorities to enter leadership positions? Evidence from a field experiment with over 12,000 job applications', *The Leadership Quarterly*, 34(2), 101655. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.leaqua.2022.101655>.
- Advance Gender Equality in Business (2023). *Gender Intelligence Report 2023*, p. 32. Available at: https://www.advance-hsg-report.ch/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/Gender_Intelligence_Report_2023_Executive_Version.pdf (Accessed 03 October 2025).
- Australian Department of Education. (2022). *Secondary School Completion Rates by Gender*. Available at: <https://www.education.gov.au/higher-education-statistics/student-data/selected-higher-education-statistics-2024-student-data/key-findings-2024-higher-education-student-statistics> (Accessed 25 March 2026)
- Alyssa Stefanese Yates (2023). *Voices from the Field 2023: Experiences of Women Presidents in Higher Education*. American Council on Education. Available at: [Voices-From-The-Field-Women-Presidents-2023.pdf](#) (Accessed 25 March 2026)
- Analytics, M. (2025). 'United States Labor Force', *Moody's Analytics*. Available at: <https://www.economy.com/unitedstates/laborforce> (Accessed 03 October 2025).
- Artho, S. and Spencer Stuart (2022). *Board Dynamics: Rethinking Competing Demand*. Available at: https://www.spencerstuart.com/-/media/2023/july/boarddynamics/nicg_board_dynamics_rethinking_competing_demands.pdf (Accessed 03 October 2025).

- Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Secretariat *et al.* (2020). *APEC Economic Policy Report 2020: Structural Reform and Women's Empowerment*. Available at: <https://www.apec.org/publications/2020/11/2020-apec-economic-policy-report> (Accessed 03 October 2025).
- Association of Women for Action and Research (2021). 'Gender Inequality in Singapore: A Submission to the Committee on Gender Equality'. Available at: <https://www.aware.org.sg/wp-content/uploads/AWARE-Report-July-2021-An-Omnibus-on-Gender-Equality.pdf> (Accessed 03 October 2025).
- Asian Development Bank (2021). Basic Statistics 2021. Available at: <https://www.adb.org/mobile/basic-statistics-2021>. (Accessed 03 October 2025).
- Azzollini, L., Breen, R. and Nolan, B. (2023) 'From gender equality to household earnings equality: the role of women's labour market outcomes across OECD countries', *Research in Social Stratification and Mobility*, 86, 100823. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.rssm.2023.100823>
- Badrolhisam, N., and Jamil, R. (2025) 'Gender flexible work arrangements: a global bibliometric analysis with a focus on Asian content', *Future Business Journal*, 11, 114. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1186/s43093-025-00519-5>
- Bader, A.K., Knappert, L., Lazarova, M. and Ng, E. (2025), 'Managing Gender Equity and Equality Across Borders—A Review and Introduction to the Special Issue'. *Human Resource Management Journal*, 35: 1064-1077. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1748-8583.70000>.
- Baker, M. and Clegg, S. (2023) 'Policies and practices of gender-based equality and diversity in Australian project-based organizations', *Project Leadership and Society*, 4, 100087. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.plas.2023.100087>.
- Baker, M., Ali, M., French, E. and Konrad, A.M. (2023) 'Influence of gender equality on organizational performance in project organizations.' *Project Management Institute*. Available at: <https://www.pmi.org/-/media/pmi/documents/public/pdf/learning/academic->

- research/published/pmic31728whitepaper-3bakerrevisedjuly-1.pdf (Accessed: 25 March 2026).
- Bali, N., Purwar, P. and Srivastava, P. (2023) ‘Comparative study of the quantitative relationship between gender equality and income inequality in India and the United States of America’, *Journal of Research in Humanities and Social Science*, 11(1), pp. 141–151. Available at: <https://www.questjournals.org/jrhss/papers/vol11-issue1/1101141151.pdf> (Accessed: 25 March 2026)
- Belingheri, P., Chiarello, F., Fronzetti Colladon, A. and Rovelli, P. (2021) ‘Twenty years of gender equality research: a scoping review based on a new semantic indicator’, *PLOS ONE*. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0256474>.
- Bohnet, I. (2016). What Works Gender Equality by Design. Cambridge, MA: *The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press*. Available at: https://www.hup.harvard.edu/file/feeds/PDF/9780674986565_sample.pdf (Accessed: 25 March 2026)
- Bornstein, S. (2023) ‘Confronting the racial pay gap’, *Vanderbilt Law Review*, 75(5). Available at: <https://scholarship.law.vanderbilt.edu/vlr/vol75/iss5/1/> (Accessed: 25 March 2026)
- Burlac, I. (2023) ‘Theoretical framework for the study on 6D model Hofstede and gender diversity in Western companies: European MNCs vs American MNCs vs Asian MNCs’, *USV Annals of Economics & Public Administration*, 23(2), pp. 103–116. Available at: [https://doi.org/10.4316/aepa.2023.23.2\(38\).103-116](https://doi.org/10.4316/aepa.2023.23.2(38).103-116)
- Cai, C. and Dahiya, B. (2020) ‘Gender equality in Asia-Pacific: reflections on the Beijing+25 review’, *Space and Culture, India*, 8(3). Available at: <https://doi.org/10.20896/saci.vi0.1000>.
- California Legislative (2018). Senate Bill No. 826, CHAPTER 954. Available at: https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill_id=201720180S826 (Accessed 3 October 2025).

- Camilletti, E. (2024). 'Measuring gender equality: review of existing measures and reflections for future research.' *UNICEF Innocenti Working Paper*. Florence: UNICEF Innocenti. Available at: <https://www.unicef.org/innocenti/media/10026/file/UNICEF-Innocenti-GRASSP-MEASURES-REPORT-2024.pdf> (Accessed: 25 March 2026).
- Catalyst (2025). *Women in Leadership Statistics*. Available at: <https://www.catalyst.org/insights/featured/inclusive-leadership> (Accessed 10 January 2026).
- Chaubey, A. and Kuknor, S. (2024) 'The saga of struggling diversity in the 21st century: a qualitative study', *Journal of Asia Business Studies*, 18(2), pp. 340–366. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1108/JABS-10-2023-0406>.
- Costa-Ramón, A., Slotwinski, M., Schaede, U. and Brenøe, A.A. (2026). (Not) Thinking About the Future: Financial Information and Maternal Labor Supply. *Quarterly Journal of Economics*. Available at: 10.1093/qje/qjag003
- Council for Board Diversity (2025). Latest Statistics - Council for Board Diversity. Available at: <https://www.councilforboarddiversity.sg/resources/latest-statistics/>. (Accessed 03 October 2025).
- Crenshaw, K. (1989). 'Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory, and Antiracist Politics', *University of Chicago Legal Forum*.
- Cumming, D., Leung, T. & Rui, O. (2015). 'Gender Diversity and Securities Fraud', *Academy of Management Journal*, 58(5), pp.1572–1593.
- Danone (2024) *Sustainability, talent and leadership disclosures*. Danone S.A. Available at: <https://www.danone.com> (Accessed 21 March 2026).
- DBS Group Holdings Ltd (2023). *Sustainability Report 2023*. Available at: https://www.dbs.com/iwov-resources/images/sustainability/reporting/pdf/web/DBS_SR2023.pdf (Accessed 03 October 2025).

- Denzin, N.K. (1978). *The Research Act: A Theoretical Introduction to Sociological Methods*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Diekman, A.B. and Schneider, M.C. (2010). 'A Social Role Theory Perspective on Gender Gaps in Political Attitudes,' *Sage Journal*, 34(4). Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1471-6402.2010.01598.x>Digital Object Identifier
- Dong, Z., Tille, Y., Giorgi, G.M. and Guandalini, A. (2024) 'Generalised income inequality index', *International Statistical Review*, 92(1), pp. 87–105. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1111/insr.12551>.
- Eagly, A.H. and Karau, S.J. (2002) 'Role congruity theory of prejudice toward female leaders', *Psychological Review*, 109(3), pp. 573–598. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-295X.109.3.573>.
- Eagly, A.H. and Wood, W. (1991). 'Explaining Sex Differences in Social Behavior: A Meta-Analytic Perspective', *Psychological Bulletin*, 100(3), pp. 309–330. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1177/01461672911173>
- Eagly, A.H. (1987). *Sex Differences in Social Behavior: A Social Role Interpretation*. New York:Taylor and Francis Group. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203781906>
- Egg, M.E. and Renold, U. (2015). 'The Swiss Vocational Education and Training System: What Can Spain Learn from Switzerland?', *RePEc: Research Papers in Economics*, pp. 383. Available at: [10.3929/ethz-a-010479871](https://doi.org/10.3929/ethz-a-010479871)
- Ellingrud, K. (2024) 'Prioritizing gender parity is crucial for global progress'. McKinsey Global Institute. Available at: <https://www.mckinsey.com/mgi/media-center/prioritizing-gender-parity-is-crucial-for-global-progress> (Accessed: 25 March 2026).
- Elsesser, K. (2023) 'Fewer women on corporate boards after California law deemed unconstitutional' *Forbes*. Available at: <https://www.forbes.com/sites/kimelsesser/2023/12/18/fewer-women-on-corporate-boards-after-california-law-deemed-unconstitutional/> (Accessed 03 October 2025).

- Eurostat (2024) Living conditions in Europe – income distribution and income inequality. Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Living_conditions_in_Europe_-_income_distribution_and_income_inequality (Accessed: 25 March 2026).
- European Commission (2024). 'Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025'. Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/info/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/gender-equality/gender-equality-strategy_en (Accessed 03 October 2025).
- Eurofound (2024). 'Living and working in Europe 2023,' *Eurofound*. <https://doi.org/10.2806/49049>
- Eurofound (2023). *Gender equality – What's next? Let's focus on the world of work*. Available at: <https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/en/commentary-and-analysis/all-content/gender-equality-whats-next-lets-focus-world-work> (Accessed 03 October 2025).
- European Institute for Gender Equality (2025). *EU Member States need to strengthen institutional mechanisms for the promotion of gender equality*. Available at: <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-statistics/dgs/data-talks/eu-member-states-need-strengthen-institutional-mechanisms-promotion-gender-equality> (Accessed 03 October 2025).
- European Institute for Gender Equality (2024). Gender Equality Index. Available at: <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-equality-index/2024> (Accessed 03 October 2025).
- EUropean Employment Services (2025). *Labour market Information: Switzerland*. Available at: https://eures.europa.eu/living-and-working/labour-market-information/labour-market-information-switzerland_en (Accessed 03 October 2025).
- Federal Statistical Office (2023). Gender overall earnings gap (GOEG). Available at: <https://www.bfs.admin.ch/bfs/en/home/statistics/economic-social-situation-population/gender-equality/income/goeg.html> (Accessed 03 October 2025).
- Federal Office for Gender Equality (FOGE) (2023) Gender Equality Strategy 2030. Available at: <https://www.equality2030.ch/en/> (Accessed: 25 March 2026).

- Feng, Y., Ren, J., & Rendall, M. (2024). The reversal of the gender education gap with economic development: A cross-country analysis. Available at: The reversal of the gender education gap with economic development: A cross-country analysis | VoxDev (Accessed: 25 March 2026)
- Ferrari, A., Profeta, P. & Pronzato, C. (2018) ‘Do Board Gender Quotas Matter? Selection, Performance, and Stock Market Effects’ *Management Science*. 64(4). Available at: 10.2139/ssrn.3170251
- Fisher, B. and Naidoo, R. (2016) ‘The geography of gender inequality’, *PLOS ONE*. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0145778>.
- Fitzsimmons, T.W., Callan, V.J. and Paulsen, N. (2014). ‘Gender Disparity in the C-Suite: Do Male and Female CEOs Differ in How They Reached the Top?’, *The Leadership Quarterly*, 25(2), pp. 245–266. Available at: 10.1016/j.leaqua.2013.08.005
- Flynn, E. (2025) ‘Constraints, competencies or choices? How lay theories of the gender gap impact diversity support’, *Academy of Management Journal*, 68(6), pp. 1380–1406. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.5465/amj.2023.0625>.
- Friese, S. (2019). *Qualitative Data Analysis with ATLAS.ti*. London: SAGE Publications.
- Gabaldon, P., De Anca, C., Mateos de Cabo, R. & Gimeno, R. (2016). ‘Searching for women on boards: An analysis from the supply and demand perspective. *Corporate Governance: An International Review*, 24(3), pp.371-385. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1111/corg.12141>
- Gartzia, L. (2021) ‘Gender equality in business action: a multi-agent change management approach’, *Sustainability*, 13, 6209. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.3390/su13116209>.
- Gender Equality Bureau, Cabinet Office, Government of Japan (2022). *The White Paper on Gender Equality 2022, Marriage and Family in the Era of 100-year Life: “Changes in Family Structure and How to Address Challenge*. Available at: https://www.gender.go.jp/english_contents/about_danjo/whitepaper/pdf/special_feature.pdf (Accessed 03 October 2025)

- Global Gender Gap Report (2023). *World Economic Forum*. Available at:
<https://www.weforum.org/reports/global-gender-gap-report-2023> (Accessed 03 October 2025).
- Goldberg, P., Gottlieb, C., Lall, S., Mehta, M., Peters, M. and Ratan, A.L. (2025) The Global Gender Distortions Index (GGDI). *NBER Working Paper* 34142.
<https://doi.org/10.3386/w34142>.
- Government of Singapore (2022) White Paper on Singapore Women's Development. Available at: <https://www.msf.gov.sg/what-we-do/celebrating-sg-women/white-paper-on-singapore-womens-development> (Accessed 03 October 2025).
- Hauge, K.E., Kotsadam, A. and Riege, A. (2023) 'Culture and gender differences in willingness to compete', *The Economic Journal*, 133 (August), pp. 2403–2426.
<https://doi.org/10.1093/ej/uead033>.
- Hervías Parejo, V., Radulović, B. (2023). 'Public Policies on Gender Equality.' In: Vujadinović, D., Fröhlich, M., Giegerich, T. (eds) *Gender-Competent Legal Education*. Springer Textbooks in Law. Springer, Cham.
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-14360-1_12
- Hepp, S. and Dörig, M. (2021). *New gender quotas for publicly listed companies and transparency rules for commodity sector enter into force*. Available at:
<https://www.b-legal.ch/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/> (Accessed: 03 October 2025).
- Hofstede, G. (2001) *Culture's Consequences: Comparing Values, Behaviors, Institutions and Organisations Across Nations*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- IKEA (2026) *Sustainability and people disclosures*. Inter IKEA Group. Available at:
<https://www.ikea.com> (Accessed: 21 March 2026).
- Ingka Group (2026) *People and culture disclosures*. Ingka Holding B.V. Available at:
<https://www.ingka.com> (Accessed: 21 March 2026).
- International Labour Organization (2026). *Towards Pay Equity: A Comprehensive Response to the Gender Pay Gap*. Geneva: ILO. Available at:

- <https://www.ilo.org/publications/towards-pay-equity-comprehensive-response-gender-pay-gap> (Accessed: 25 March 2026)
- International Labour Organization (ILO). (2025). *Global Employment Trends Report*. Geneva: ILO Publications. Available at: https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/2025-01/WESO25_Trends_Report_EN.pdf (Accessed: 25 March 2026)
- International Labour Organization (ILO) (2025). *Labour Force Participation Rates*. Available at: <https://ilostat.ilo.org/topics/women/> (Accessed 03 October 2025).
- International Labour Organization (ILO). (2024). *Global Wage Report*. Available at: <https://www.ilo.org/publications/flagship-reports/global-wage-report-2024-25-wage-inequality-decreasing-globally> (Accessed: 10 January 2026).
- International Labour Organization (ILO) (2022). *Women in Business and Management: The Business Case for Change*. Available at: https://www.ilo.org/global/publications/books/WCMS_700953/lang--en/index.htm (Accessed: 03 October 2025).
- Ipsos (2024) Ipsos press release: Singapore on gender equality and leadership. Available at: <https://www.ipsos.com/en-sg/singaporeans-attitude-towards-gender-equality> (Accessed: 25 March 2026).
- Johnson & Johnson (2025) *Diversity, equity and inclusion and annual reports*. Johnson & Johnson. Available at: <https://www.jnj.com> (Accessed 21 March 2026).
- Katie Pybus, Madeleine Power, Kate E. Pickett, Richard Wilkinson, (2022). 'Income inequality, status consumption and status anxiety: An exploratory review of implications for sustainability and directions for future research,' *Social Sciences & Humanities Open*, Vol.6, Issue 1. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssaho.2022.100353>.
- Katja Branger and Federal Statistical Office Switzerland (2023). Measuring gender income gaps in Switzerland, *Working Paper 4*, pp. 1–7. Available at: https://unece.org/sites/default/files/2023-04/A4_WP04_Branger_EN.pdf (Accessed 03 October 2025).

- Kim, C. and Shin, H. (2024) 'The gender gap in earnings growth at the early stage of work careers in Korea', *Research in Social Stratification and Mobility*, 94, 100979. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.rssm.2024.100979>.
- Kleven, H., Landais, C. and Sogaard, J.E. (2019). Children and gender inequality: Evidence from Denmark. *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics*, 11(4), 181–209. Available at: [10.1257/app.20180010](https://doi.org/10.1257/app.20180010)
- Koenig, A.M. and Eagly, A.H. (2014) 'Evidence for the social role theory of stereotype content: observations of groups' roles shape stereotypes', *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 107(3), pp. 371–392. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0037215>.
- Lara, S. and Baird, M. (2026) The state of women in leadership: Global employment trends. LinkedIn Economic Graph. Available at: [the-state-of-women-in-leadership-march-2026.pdf](https://www.linkedin.com/graph/economic/state-of-women-in-leadership-march-2026) (Accessed: 25 March 2026)
- Leanne S.S.H., Nouran, S, Jessica B.S, Cailin S.S, Kiah C, Caren C (2023). 'Gender inequities in the workplace: A holistic review of organizational processes and practices,' *Human Resource Management Review*, Vol.33, Issue 3. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.hrmr.2023.100968>.
- Lim, R. (2024) 'Gender pay gap in Singapore narrows, more women in leadership roles: MSF report', CNA. Available at: <https://www.channelnewsasia.com/singapore/gender-pay-gap-narrows-women-leadership-roles-msf-report-4326136> (Accessed: 25 March 2026)
- Lincoln, Y.S. and Guba, E.G. (1985). *Naturalistic Inquiry*. Beverly Hills, CA: *SAGE Publications*. Available at: [http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/0147-1767\(85\)90062-8](http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/0147-1767(85)90062-8)
- Liu, Y. and Yoo, S. (2020) 'World policy analysis on gender inequality in the workplace: a common crux for South Korea, Japan, and China', *Iris Journal of Scholarship*, 2. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.15695/iris.v2i0.4825>.
- Luo, C. and Jiang, S. (2023) 'The knowledge map of gender equality in cross-cultural communication: a bibliometric approach' (retracted), *Heliyon*, 9(6), e16324. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2023.e16324>.

- Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth (2025). *Maintaining Singapore's exceptionalism by building a "We-first" nation*. Available at: <https://www.mccy.gov.sg/about-us/news-and-resources/maintaining-singapore-s-exceptionalism-building-a--we-first--nation>. (Accessed 03 October 2025).
- Ministry of Manpower (2024). *Tripartite Guidelines on Flexible Work Arrangement Requests*. Singapore: MOM. Available at: <https://www.mom.gov.sg/employment-practices/good-work-practices/flexible-work-arrangements>. (Accessed 21 March 2026)
- Martinez, L.C. and Taskforce, S.R.E. and J. (2022). *Our 2022 Annual Equality Update: Accelerating Representation and Racial Equality*. Available at: <https://www.salesforce.com/news/stories/annual-equality-update-2022/> (Accessed: 03 October 2025).
- McKinsey & Company and LeanIn.Org (2023). *Women in the workplace*. Available at: https://sgff-media.s3.amazonaws.com/sgff_r1eHetbDYbWomen+in+the+Workplace+2023_+Designed+Report.pdf (Accessed: 03 October 2025).
- Ministry of Manpower Singapore (2024). *Infographic: Update on Singapore's Adjusted Gender Pay Gap*. Available at: <https://stats.mom.gov.sg/Pages/Update-on-Singapores-Adjusted-Gender-Pay-Gap.aspx> (Accessed: 03 October 2025).
- Ministry of Manpower Singapore (2024). *Statement on Labour Market Developments in 2022*. Available at: <https://www.mom.gov.sg/newsroom/press-releases/2023/0315-labour-market-report-2022>. (Accessed: 03 October 2025).
- Ministry of Social and Family Development. Article (2024). *Progress on Singapore Women's Development 2024*. Available at: <https://www.msf.gov.sg/media-room/article/progress-on-singapore-women-s-development-2024> (Accessed: 03 October 2025).
- Nelson, L. K., Brewer, A., Mueller, A. S., O'Connor, D. M., Dayal, A., & Arora, V. M. (2023). *Taking the Time: The Implications of Workplace Assessment for*

- Organizational Gender Inequality. *American Sociological Review*, 88(4), 627-655.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/00031224231184264>
- Nestlé (2025) Creating shared value and diversity disclosures. Nestlé S.A. Available at:
<https://www.nestle.com> (Accessed 21 March 2026).
- Nordin, M., & Stanfors, M. (2024). ‘The reversal of the gender gap in education: Consequences for partnering, employment and voting behaviour.’ *Lund Papers in Economic Demography*, 1. Available at: 10.21203/rs.3.rs-5676498/v1 (Accessed: 25 March 2026)
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2020) *Policy framework on sound public governance: baseline features of governments that work well*. Paris: OECD Publishing. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1787/c03e01b3-en>.
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2020). Policy Framework on Sound Public Governance: Baseline features of governments that work well. OECD Publishing. Available at:
https://www.oecd.org/content/dam/oecd/en/publications/reports/2020/12/policy-framework-on-sound-public-governance_931b05fc/c03e01b3-en.pdf (Accessed 03 October 2025).
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2022). OECD Employment Outlook 2022: Building back more inclusive labour markets. Edited by A. Bassanini *et al.* OECD Publishing. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1787/1bb305a6-en>
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2024). *Gender Equality in a Changing World – Women still lag behind men in reaching leadership roles*. Paris: OECD Publishing. Available at:
https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/gender-equality-in-a-changing-world_e808086f-en/full-report/women-still-lag-behind-men-in-reaching-leadership-roles_8367265b.html (Accessed: 25 March 2026)
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2024) *SIGI 2024 regional report for Southeast Asia: time to care*. Paris: OECD Publishing. Available at:

- https://www.oecd.org/content/dam/oecd/en/publications/reports/2024/03/sigi-2024-regional-report-for-southeast-asia_d157077d/7fc15e1c-en.pdf (Accessed: 25 March 2026)
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. (2025). Gender Wage Gap Statistics. Paris: OECD Publishing. Available at: <https://www.oecd.org/en/data/indicators/gender-wage-gap.html> (Accessed: 25 March 2026)
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2025) *Income inequality (disposable income)*. Available at: <https://www.oecd.org/en/data/indicators/income-inequality.html> (Accessed: 25 March 2026).
- Our World in Data (2025) ‘Gini coefficient: World Inequality Database vs. World Bank, 2022’. Available at: <https://ourworldindata.org/trust> (Accessed: 25 March 2026).
- Panizzon, D.L., Geer, R., Paige, K., O’Keeffe, L., Schultz, L., Zeegers, Y. and Brown, L. (2018) ‘Exploring the “hard facts” around STEM in Australia: females, low socioeconomic status and absenteeism’, *International Journal of Innovation in Science and Mathematics Education*, 26(8), pp. 30–44. Available at: <https://openjournals.library.sydney.edu.au/CAL/article/view/12961> (Accessed: 25 March 2026).
- Patton, M.Q. (2002). *Qualitative Research & Evaluation Methods. 3rd Edition*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.
- Paulus, T., Lester, J. and Dempster, P. (2014). *Digital Tools for Qualitative Research*. London: SAGE Publications.
- Peluso, M., Heller Baird, C. and Kesterson-Townes, L. (2019) Women, leadership and the priority paradox. *IBM Institute for Business Value*. Available at: <https://www.ibm.com/downloads/cas/YZWEXLPG> (Accessed: 25 March 2026)
- Périlleux, A. and Szafarz, A. (2022) ‘Women in the boardroom: a bottom–up approach to the trickle-down effect’, *Small Business Economics*, 58, pp. 1783–1800. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11187-021-00475-8>.

- Preston, A., Qiu, L. and Wright, R.E. (2024) 'Understanding the gender gap in financial literacy: the role of culture', *Journal of Consumer Affairs*, 58, pp. 146–176.
Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1111/joca.12517>.
- Price Waterhouse Coopers (2025). Switzerland's progress on gender equality.
<https://www.pwc.ch/en/insights/hr/progress-on-gender-equality.html>. (Accessed 03 October 2025).
- Proff, A. and Musalam, R.M. (2024) 'Women who lead: societal influences of attitudes toward women and women leadership', *Gender in Management: An International Journal*. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1108/GM-01-2024-0031>.
- Richardson, N. and Antonello, M. (2023) People at Work 2023: a global workforce view.
Available at: https://www.adpresearch.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/People-at-Work-2023_A-Global-Workforce-View.pdf (Accessed: 25 March 2026).
- Ryan, M.K. & Haslam, S.A. (2005). 'The glass cliff: Evidence that women are over-represented in precarious leadership positions' *British Journal of Management*, 16(2), pp.81–90. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8551.2005.00433.x>Digital Object Identifier
- Sarabi, A., & Lehmann, N. (2024). Who Shortlists? Evidence on Gender Disparities in Hiring Outcomes. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 69(4), 1044-1084.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/00018392241283946>.
- Salesforce (2024) Equality and annual reporting disclosures. Salesforce, Inc. Available at: <https://www.salesforce.com> (Accessed 21 March 2026).
- Schaeffer, K. (2024) 'For Women's History Month, a look at gender gains – and gaps – in the U.S.' Pew Research Center. Available at:
<https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2024/02/27/for-womens-history-month-a-look-at-gender-gains-and-gaps-in-the-us/> (Accessed: 25 March 2026).
- Schmid, F. and Swiss, Centre of Expertise in Social Sciences. (2016). 'The Gender Wage Gap in Switzerland over Time,' *Swiss Journal of Sociology*, Vol.42, No.3, 443–467. <https://doi.org/10.1515/sjs-2016-0020>.
- Scott, W.Richard. (2001). *Institutions and Organisations*. CA: Sage Publications.

- Seierstad, C. & Huse, M. (2017). 'Gender quotas on corporate boards in Norway: A research note'. *International Studies of Management & Organization*, 47(3), 362-370. Available at: 10.1007/978-3-319-56142-4_2
- Seow Kee, G., K., Swee Chen, G., and Council for Board Diversity (2025) Singapore Board Diversity Review 2025, 1–5. Available at: <https://www.sid.org.sg/common/Uploaded%20files/Resources/CBDSingapore> (Accessed 03 October 2025).
- Shaw, R.K. and Agarwal, N. (2025) 'Assessing the effectiveness of policies promoting gender equality in the workplace', *Journal Publication of International Research for Engineering and Management (JOIREM)*, 5(4). Available at: https://joirem.com/wp-content/uploads/journal/published_paper/volume-05/issue-4/J_LHH0VcJ7.pdf (Accessed: 25 March 2026).
- Singapore Women's Development (2022). *Towards a fairer and more inclusive society, White Paper on Singapore Women's Development*. Available at: <https://www.scwo.org.sg/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/White-Paper-on-Singapore-Womens-Development.pdf> (Accessed 03 October 2025).
- Smits, J. and Danzeisen, J. (2025) *Switzerland's progress on gender equality: a step forward, but the pay gap persists*. PwC Switzerland. Available at: <https://www.pwc.ch/en/insights/hr/progress-on-gender-equality.html> (Accessed: 25 March 2026).
- Son Hing, L.S., Sakr, N., Sorenson, J.B., Stamarski, C.S., Caniera, K. and Colaco, C. (2023) 'Gender inequities in the workplace: a holistic review of organizational processes and practices', *Human Resource Management Review*, 33, 100968. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.hrmr.2023.100968>.
- Spencer Stuart (2023). *U.S. Spencer Stuart Board Index 2023*. Available at: https://www.spencerstuart.com//2023/september/usbi/2023_us_spencer_stuart_board_index.pdf?sc_trk=BDB9A48933CA433C9DDD7D4E85D62A38 (Accessed 03 October 2025).

- Strauss, A. and Corbin, J. (1998). *Basics of Qualitative Research: Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory*. 2nd edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.
- Stuhlhofer, E.W. (2022) 'Black, female, and divorced: a discourse analysis of Wangari Maathai's leadership with reflections from Naleli Morojele's study of Rwandan and South African female political leaders', *Societies*, 12(1), p. 23.
<https://doi.org/10.3390/soc12010023>.
- Swiss Federal Statistical Office (OFS): *Gender Pay Gap Statistics, Annual Reports 2014–2023*. Available at: <https://www.bfs.admin.ch/bfs/en/home/statistics/work-income/wages-income-employment-labour-costs/earnings-structure/wage-gap.html> (Accessed 03 October 2025).
- Terjesen, S., Sealy, R. & Singh, V. (2009) 'Women directors on corporate boards: A review and research agenda.' *Corporate Governance: An International Review*, 17(3), 320–337. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8683.2009.00742.x>
- The Straits Times (2020). *AskST: Mind the gender gap, 18 September*. Available at: <https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/manpower/askst-mind-the-gender-gap> (Accessed 03 October 2025).
- The Straits Times (2024). All employers in Singapore must fairly consider flexi-work requests from Dec 1 under new rules. 16 April. Available at: <https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/jobs/all-employers-in-singapore-must-fairly-consider-flexi-work-requests-from-dec-1-under-new-rules> (Accessed 21 March 2026)
- The Swiss Federal Council. Federal Statistical Office - FSO (2024). *Gender equality*. Available at: <https://www.bfs.admin.ch/bfs/en/home/statistics/economic-social-situation-population/gender-equality.html> (Accessed 03 October 2025).
- Triana, M.C. and Song, R. (2023) 'Stereotypical perception in management: a review and expansion of role congruity theory', *Journal of Management*.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/01492063231180836>.

- UNESCO (2023) Gender equality in and through the teaching profession. Available at: <https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/gender-equality-and-through-teaching-profession> (Accessed: 25 March 2026)
- U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistic. (2023) Labor force characteristics by race and ethnicity. Available at: <https://www.bls.gov/opub/reports/race-and-ethnicity/2023/home.htm> (Accessed 03 October 2025).
- University of North Carolina Office of Diversity and Inclusion. (2022). *Male Student Outreach and Retention Initiatives*. Available at: https://carolinanext.unc.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/1105/2022/10/2021-CarolinaNext_AnnualReport_final_DIGITAL.pdf (Accessed: 25 March 2026)
- U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (2025). *Letter from U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission to the Honorable Joni Ernst*. Available at: https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/CMR-Y3_EQ2-00194715/pdf/CMR-Y3_EQ2-00194715.pdf (Accessed 03 October 2025).
- UN Women (2025). Gender Parity and Empowerment Report. Available at: <https://www.unwomen.org/en/articles/explainer/gender-equality-in-2025-gains-gaps-and-the-342t-choice> (Accessed 10 January 2026).
- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) (2025). Women's Empowerment Index Report. Available at: <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2023/07/the-paths-to-equal-twin-indices-on-womens-empowerment-and-gender-equality> (Accessed 10 January 2026).
- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) (2026) *Gender Inequality Index (GII) – data*. Available at: <https://hdr.undp.org/data-center/thematic-composite-indices/gender-inequality-index#/indicies/GII> (Accessed: 25 March 2026).
- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (2025). *Global Education Monitoring Report*. Paris: UNESCO Publishing. Available at: <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000394934> (Accessed: 25 March 2026)
- Unilever (2024) Sustainability and diversity disclosures. Unilever plc. Available at: <https://www.unilever.com> (Accessed 21 March 2026)

- Vanesa Hervías Parejo and Branko Radulović (2023). Public Policies on Gender Equality. *Gender-Competent Legal Education*, pp.405-428.
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-14360-1_12
- Vujadinovic, D., Fröhlich, M. and Giegerich, T. (2023) Gender-competent legal education. *Springer Textbooks in Law*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-14360-1>.
- Wang, M.-T. and Degol, J.L. (2016) ‘Gender gap in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM): current knowledge, implications for practice, policy, and future directions’, *Educational Psychology Review*, 29, pp. 119–140.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10648-015-9355-x>.
- Wee, X.N.E. (2024). We, the Citizens of Singapore: A Study of the Gender Pay Gap through the Lens of Gendered Citizenship, *Nanyang Technological University* Available at: <https://dr.ntu.edu.sg/entities/publication/28f3f23a-4034-4c47-8002-f938f9cb8721> (Accessed 03 October 2025).
- Wee, Chow-Hou and Tan, Gilbert (1997). *Making Sense of the Asian Success Story: An Integrative Framework*. Available at: [https://ink.library.smu.edu.sg/cgi](https://ink.library.smu.edu.sg/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=3698&context=lkcsb_research)
[viewcontent.cgi?article=3698&context=lkcsb_research](https://ink.library.smu.edu.sg/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=3698&context=lkcsb_research) (Accessed 03 October 2025).
- Welmond, M. J., & Gregory, L. (2021). *Educational Underachievement Among Boys and Men*. Washington, DC: World Bank. Available at:
<https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/entities/publication/2036a125-e3fd-5976-9939-ee08331705c7> (Accessed: 25 March 2026)
- Women Business Collaborative (2024). ‘2023 Executive Summary - Women Business Collaborative’. Available at: <https://www.wbcollaborative.org/women-ceo-report/the-report/2023-executive-summary/> (Accessed 03 October 2025).
- World Bank (2026) *Gini index (SI.POV.GINI)*. Available at:
<https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SI.POV.GINI> (Accessed: 25 March 2026).
- World Bank (2025). *World Development Indicators: Gini Coefficient Data*. Available at:
<https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SI.POV.GINI> (Accessed 10.01.2026).

- World Economic Forum (2025). *Global Gender Gap Report*. Geneva: *World Economic Forum*. Available at: <https://www.weforum.org/publications/global-gender-gap-report-2025/> (Accessed 10 January 2026).
- World Economic Forum (2024). *Global Gender Gap Report 2024: Economic and leadership gaps*. Available at: <https://www.weforum.org/publications/global-gender-gap-report-2024/digest/> (Accessed 22 March 2026)
- World Population Review (2025) *Gini coefficient by country 2025*. Available at: <https://worldpopulationreview.com/country-rankings/gini-coefficient-by-country> (Accessed: 25 March 2026).
- Xue, B. and McMunn, A. (2021) 'Gender differences in unpaid care work and psychological distress in the UK Covid-19 lockdown', *PLOS ONE*, 16(3), e0247959. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0247959>.
- Zveglic, J.E., King, E.M. and Molina-Lapid, A.K. (2025) Asian Development Bank gender salary gap study. *ADB Economics Working Paper Series*, No. 772. Available at: <https://econpapers.repec.org/paper/risadbewp/0772.htm> (Accessed: 25 March 2026)

APPENDIX A: LIST OF DOCUMENTS FOR QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

Bali, N., Purwar, P. and Srivastava, P.	2023	‘Comparative study of the quantitative relationship between gender equality and income inequality in India and the United States of America’, <i>Journal of Research in Humanities and Social Science</i> , 11(1), pp. 141–151.	India and USA	Income
Bornstein, S.	2022	‘Confronting the racial pay gap’, <i>Vanderbilt Law Review</i> , 75(5).	USA	Income
Eurostat	2024	<i>Living conditions in Europe – income distribution and income inequality</i> . Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Living_conditions_in_Europe_-_income_distribution_and_income_inequality (Accessed: 25 March 2026).	Europe	Income
Dong, Z., Tille, Y., Giorgi, G.M. and Guandalini, A.	2024	‘Generalised income inequality index’, <i>International Statistical Review</i> , 92(1), pp. 87–105. doi: 10.1111/insr.12551.	Europe	Income
Kim, C. and Shin, H.	2024	‘The gender gap in earnings growth at the early stage of work careers in Korea’, <i>Research in Social Stratification and Mobility</i> , 94, 100979.	Korea	Income
Richardson, N. and Antonello, M.	2023	<i>People at Work 2023: A global workforce view</i> . Available at: https://www.adpresearch.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/People-at-Work-2023_A-Global-Workforce-View.pdf (Accessed: 25 March 2026).	Asian	Income

Camilletti, E.	2024	<i>Measuring gender equality: review of existing measures and reflections for future research.</i> UNICEF Innocenti Working Paper. Florence: UNICEF Innocenti. Available at: https://www.unicef.org/innocenti/media/10026/file/UNICEF-Innocenti-GRASSP-MEASURES-REPORT-2024.pdf (Accessed: 25 March 2026).	Eastern and Southern Africa, as well as South Asia.	Income
Fisher, B. and Naidoo, R.	2016	‘The geography of gender inequality’, <i>PLOS ONE</i> . doi: 10.1371/journal.pone.0145778.	World	Wealth and Land
Belingheri, P., Chiarello, F., Fronzetti Colladon, A. and Rovelli, P.	2021	‘Twenty years of gender equality research: a scoping review based on a new semantic indicator’, <i>PLOS ONE</i> . doi: 10.1371/journal.pone.0256474.	World	Semantic Brand Score
Government of Singapore	2022	<i>White Paper on Singapore Women’s Development.</i>	Singapore	Recognition
World Economic Forum	2023	<i>Global Gender Gap Report 2023.</i>	World	Gender gap %
Azzollini, L., Breen, R. and Nolan, B.	2023	‘From gender equality to household earnings equality: the role of women’s labour market outcomes across OECD countries’, <i>Research in Social Stratification and Mobility</i> , 86, 100823.	World	Gini
Zveglic, J.E., King, E.M. and Molina-Lapid, A.K.	2025	<i>Asian Development Bank gender salary gap study.</i> ADB Economics Working Paper Series, No. 772.	Asian	Income

Eagly, A.H. and Karau, S.J.	2002	‘Role congruity theory of prejudice toward female leaders’, <i>Psychological Review</i> , 109(3), pp. 573–598. doi: 10.1037/0033-295X.109.3.573.	USA	Leadership
Lara, S. and Baird, M.	2025	<i>The state of women in leadership: Global employment trends</i> . LinkedIn Economic Graph.	World	Leadership
Triana, M.C. and Song, R.	2023	‘Stereotypical perception in management: a review and expansion of role congruity theory’, <i>Journal of Management</i> . doi: 10.1177/01492063231180836.	United States, China, and Malaysia	Leadership
Proff, A. and Musalam, R.M.	2024	‘Women who lead: societal influences of attitudes toward women and women leadership’, <i>Gender in Management: An International Journal</i> . doi: 10.1108/GM-01-2024-0031.	UAE	Leadership
Lim, R.	2024	‘Gender pay gap in Singapore narrows, more women in leadership roles: MSF report’, <i>CNA</i> .	Singapore	Leadership
Périlleux, A. and Szafarz, A.	2022	‘Women in the boardroom: a bottom–up approach to the trickle-down effect’, <i>Small Business Economics</i> , 58, pp. 1783–1800. doi: 10.1007/s11187-021-00475-8.	Senegal	Leadership
Peluso, M., Baird, C.H. and Kesterson-Townes, L.	2019	<i>Women, leadership and the priority paradox</i> . IBM Institute for Business Value.	World	Leadership
Ellingrud, K.	2024	‘Prioritizing gender parity is crucial for global progress’. McKinsey Global Institute. Available at: https://www.mckinsey.com/mgi/media-	USA	Leadership

		center/prioritizing-gender-parity-is-crucial-for-global-progress (Accessed: 25 March 2026).		
Federal Office for Gender Equality (FOGE)-Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft	2023	<i>Gender Equality Strategy 2030</i> . Available at: https://www.equality2030.ch/en/ (Accessed: 25 March 2026).	Switzerland	Governance
Smits, J. and Danzeisen, J.	2025	<i>Switzerland's progress on gender equality: A step forward, but the pay gap persists</i> . PwC Switzerland. Available at: https://www.pwc.ch/en/insights/hr/progress-on-gender-equality.html (Accessed: 25 March 2026).	Switzerland	Income
Schaeffer, K.	2024	'For Women's History Month, a look at gender gains – and gaps – in the U.S.' Pew Research Center. Available at: https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2024/02/27/for-womens-history-month-a-look-at-gender-gains-and-gaps-in-the-us/ (Accessed: 25 March 2026).	USA	Income
Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)	2020	<i>Policy framework on sound public governance: Baseline features of governments that work well</i> . Paris: OECD Publishing. doi: 10.1787/c03e01b3-en.	World	Governance

Goldberg, P., Gottlieb, C., Lall, S., Mehta, M., Peters, M. and Ratan, A.L.	2025	<i>The Global Gender Distortions Index (GGDI) (English)</i> . Policy Research Working Paper; People Washington, D.C.: World Bank Group. http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/099549008112564861	World	Income
Vujadinovic, D., Fröhlich, M. and Giegerich, T.	2023	<i>Gender-competent legal education</i> . Springer Textbooks in Law. doi: 10.1007/978-3-031-14360-1.	Europe	Governance
Liu, Y. and Yoo, S.	2020	‘World policy analysis on gender inequality in the workplace: a common crux for South Korea, Japan, and China’, <i>Iris Journal of Scholarship</i> , 2. doi: 10.15695/iris.v2i0.4825. Available at: https://ejournals.library.vanderbilt.edu/index.php/iris/article/view/4825 (Accessed: 25 March 2026).	China, Japan, Korea	Leadership
Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)	2024	<i>SIGI 2024 regional report for Southeast Asia: Time to care</i> . Social Institutions and Gender Index. Paris: OECD.	Asia	STEM
Ipsos	2024	Ipsos (2024) <i>Ipsos press release: Singapore on gender equality and leadership</i> (7 March). Available at: https://www.ipsos.com/en-sg/singaporeans-attitude-towards-gender-equality (Accessed: 25 March 2026).	Singapore	Leadership

Shaw, R.K. and Agarwal, N.	2025	'Assessing the effectiveness of policies promoting gender equality in the workplace', <i>Journal Publication of International Research for Engineering and Management (JOIREM)</i> , 5(4). Available at: https://joirem.com/wp-content/uploads/journal/published_paper/volume-05/issue-4/J_LHH0VcJ7.pdf (Accessed: 25 March 2026).	Global	Leadership
Gartzia, L.	2021	Gartzia, L. (2021) 'Gender equality in business action: a multi-agent change management approach', <i>Sustainability</i> , 13, 6209. doi: 10.3390/su13116209.	Spain	Governance
Cai, C. and Dahiya, B.	2020	'Gender equality in Asia-Pacific: reflections on the Beijing+25 review', <i>Space and Culture, India</i> , 8(3). doi: 10.20896/saci.vi0.1000.	Asia	Governance
Stuhlhofer, E.W.	2022	'Black, female, and divorced: a discourse analysis of Wangari Maathai's leadership with reflections from Naleli Morojele's study of Rwandan and South African female political leaders', <i>Societies</i> , 12(1), 23. doi: 10.3390/soc12010023.	Africa	Governance
Luo, C. and Jiang, S.	2023	Luo, C. and Jiang, S. (2023) 'The knowledge map of gender equality in cross-cultural communication: a bibliometric approach' (<i>retracted</i>), <i>Heliyon</i> , 9(6), e16324. doi: 10.1016/j.heliyon.2023.e16324.	World	CiteSpace

Adamovic, M. and Leibbrandt, A.	2023	‘Is there a glass ceiling for ethnic minorities to enter leadership positions? Evidence from a field experiment with over 12,000 job applications’, <i>The Leadership Quarterly</i> , 34(2), 101655. doi: 10.1016/j.leaqua.2022.101655.	Australia	Leadership
Koenig, A.M. and Eagly, A.H.	2014	‘Evidence for the social role theory of stereotype content: observations of groups’ roles shape stereotypes’, <i>Journal of Personality and Social Psychology</i> , 107(3), pp. 371–392. doi: 10.1037/a0037215.	United States	Leadership
Chaubey, A. and Kuknor, S.	2024	‘The saga of struggling diversity in the 21st century: a qualitative study’, <i>Journal of Asia Business Studies</i> , 18(2), pp. 340–366. doi: 10.1108/JABS-10-2023-0406.	India, Sri Lanka, Malaysia, UAE, Singapore, Bangladesh, and Nepal,	Leadership
Xue, B. and McMunn, A.	2021	‘Gender differences in unpaid care work and psychological distress in the UK Covid-19 lockdown’, <i>PLOS ONE</i> , 16(3), e0247959. doi: 10.1371/journal.pone.0247959.	UK	Leadership
Panizzon, D., Geer, R., Paige, K., O’Keeffe, L., Schultz, L., Zeegers, Y. and Brown, L.	2018	‘Exploring the “hard facts” around STEM in Australia: females, low socioeconomic status and absenteeism’, <i>International Journal of Innovation in Science and Mathematics Education</i> , 26(8), pp. 30–44. Available at: https://openjournals.library.sydney.edu.au/CAL/article/view/12961 (Accessed: 25 March 2026).	Australia	Leadership

World Bank	2025	Gini coefficient: <i>World Inequality Database</i> vs. World Bank, 2022. Available at: https://ourworldindata.org/trust (Accessed: 25 March 2026).	World	Gini coefficient
Investpedia	2025	<i>Understanding the Gini Index: Global Income Inequality Insights</i> . Investopedia. https://www.investopedia.com/terms/g/gini-index.asp (Accessed: 25 March 2026).	World	Gini coefficient
World Bank	2025	World Bank (2026) <i>Gini index</i> (indicator: SI.POV.GINI). World Bank Open Data. Available at: https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SI.POV.GINI (Accessed: 25 March 2026).	World	Gini coefficient
World Population Review	2025	World Population Review (2025) <i>Gini coefficient by country 2025</i> . Available at: https://worldpopulationreview.com/country-rankings/gini-coefficient-by-country (Accessed: 25 March 2026).	World	Gini coefficient
Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)	2025	<i>Income inequality (disposable income)</i> . Available at: https://www.oecd.org/en/data/indicators/income-inequality.html (Accessed: 25 March 2026).	World	Gini coefficient
United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)	2025	<i>Gender Inequality Index (GII) – data</i> . Human Development Reports Data Center. Available at: https://hdr.undp.org/data-center/thematic-	World	GII (GENDER INEQUALIT

composite-indices/gender-inequality-index#/indicies/GII (Accessed: 25 March 2026).			Y INDEX (GII)	
Son Hing, L.S., Sakr, N., Sorenson, J.B., Stamarski, C.S., Caniera, K. and Colaco, C.	2023	Gender inequities in the workplace: A holistic review of organizational processes and practices. <i>Human Resource Management Review</i> 33, 100968. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.hrmr.2023.100968	Canada and USA	Leadership
Marzena Baker, Stewart Clegg	2023	Policies and practices of gender-based equality and diversity in Australian project-based organizations. <i>Project leadership and society</i> 4 100087. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.plas.2023.100087	Australia	Leadership
Baker, M.; Ali, M.; French, E.; Konrad, A.M.	2023	Influence of gender equality on organizational performance in project organizations: Is employee engagement the key? https://www.pmi.org/-/media/pmi/documents/public/pdf/learning/academic-research/published/pmic31728whitepaper-3bakerrevisedjuly-1.pdf (Accessed: 25 March 2026).	Australia	Leadership

Furtado, J.V., Moreira, A.C. and Mota, J.	2021	‘Gender Affirmative Action and Management: A Systematic Literature Review on How Diversity and Inclusion Management Affect Gender Equity in Organizations.’ <i>Behavioral. Sciences</i> 11, 21. https://doi.org/10.3390/bs11020021	World	Promotion
Nelson, L.K., Brewer, A., Mueller, A.S., O’Connor, D.M., Dayal, A. and Arora, V.M.	2023	Taking the Time: The Implications of Workplace Assessment for Organizational Gender Inequality. <i>American Sociological Review</i> 2023, Vol. 88(4) 627. https://doi.org/10.1177/00031224231184264	USA	Promotion
Sel, B. and Bozan, M.A.	2024	A q method study on gender (in)equality in faculties of education in turkey: “the glass ceiling is everywhere!”. <i>Participatory Educational Research (PER)</i> . Vol.11(1), pp. 227-246, January 2024. http://dx.doi.org/10.17275/per.24.14.11.1	Turkey	Promotion
Flynn, E.	2025	Constraints, competencies or choices? How lay theories of the gender gap impact diversity impacts. <i>Academy of management journal</i> . 2025, Vol. 00. No. 00. 1-27.	Global	Governance
Sarabi, A. and Lehmann, N.	2024	Who Shortlists? Evidence on Gender Disparities in Hiring Outcomes. <i>Administrative Science Quarterly</i> 2024, Vol. 69(4)1044–1084	Global	Recruitment

Abatemarco, A., Lagomarsino, E. and Russolillo, M.	2023	Gender Pension Gap in EU Countries: A Between-Group Inequality Approach. <i>Risks</i> 2023, 11,63. <i>Risks</i> 2023, 11(3), 63; https://doi.org/10.3390/risks11030063 https://research.ebsco.com/c/x7ivp6/viewer/pdf/kqic4tn7sr	Europe	Pension
Preston, A., Qiu, L. and Wright, R.E.	2024	Understanding the gender gap in financial literacy: The role of culture. <i>J Consum Aff.</i> 2024;58:146–176. DOI: 10.1111/joca.12517.	China	Income
Hauge, K.E., Kotsadam, A. and Riege, A.	2023	‘Culture and Gender Differences in Willingness to Compete.’ <i>The Economic Journal</i> , 133 (August), 2403–2426 https://doi.org/10.1093/ej/uead033 .	Global	Labour force participation
Burlac, I.	2023	Theoretical Framework for the Study on 6D Model Hofstede and Gender Diversity in Western Companies: European MNCs vs American MNCs vs Asian MNCs. <i>USV Annals of Economics & Public Administration, Volume 23</i> , issue 2, pages 103-116 (14p) Business Source Complete	Global	Leadership
Badrolhisam, N.I. and Jamil, R.	2025	Gender flexible work arrangements: a global bibliometric analysis with a focus on Asian content. <i>Future Business Journal</i> , Vol.11:114	Asia	Labour force participation
Bader, A.K., Knappert, L., Lazarova, M. and Ng, E.	2025	Managing Gender Equity and Equality Across Borders. <i>Human Resource Management Journal</i> , 2025; 00:1-14 https://doi.org/10.1111/1748-8583.70000	Asia	Labour force participation

Wang, M.-T. and Degol, J.L.	2016	‘Gender gap in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM): current knowledge, implications for practice, policy, and future directions’, <i>Educational Psychology Review</i> , 29, pp. 119–140. doi: 10.1007/s10648-015-9355-x.	World	Policy
-----------------------------	------	--	-------	--------
