

Analyzing women's career trajectories in male-dominated industries: Evidence from the video game industry.

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Analyzing women's career trajectories in male-dominated industries: Evidence from the video game industry – written by Maximilian Joerg Kessler

Abstract English

This research explores women's career trajectories in the video game industry, a field traditionally dominated by male professionals. In addition to an extensive review of existing literature, this thesis seeks to generate new insights into women's career paths on a global scale, evaluating potential differences between countries and company cultures. Through qualitative analysis of interviews with female employees at various career stages, the study examines the challenges and opportunities women encounter throughout their careers in the video game industry. The findings highlight the barriers that women face in accessing leadership positions and the strategies they employ to navigate and overcome these obstacles. Furthermore, the research identifies organizational policies and cultural dynamics that influence women's career advancement, offering valuable insights for promoting gender diversity and inclusion in male-dominated industries. By understanding women's experiences and career trajectories in the video game industry, this study contributes to broader discussions on gender equality in the workplace. It provides strategies for fostering a more inclusive and equitable work environment. Additionally, the research uses insights from the interviews to underscore the benefits of inclusivity for both the gaming industry and the workplace.

Resumo em Português:

Esta pesquisa explora as trajetórias de carreira das mulheres na indústria de videogames, um campo tradicionalmente dominado por profissionais do sexo masculino. Além de uma extensa revisão da literatura existente, esta tese busca gerar novos insights sobre os caminhos de carreira das mulheres em uma escala global, avaliando as possíveis diferenças entre países e culturas empresariais. Por meio de uma análise qualitativa de entrevistas com funcionárias em várias etapas de carreira, o estudo examina os desafios e as oportunidades que as mulheres encontram ao longo de suas carreiras na indústria de videogames. Os resultados destacam as barreiras que as mulheres enfrentam para acessar posições de liderança e as estratégias que elas empregam para navegar e superar esses obstáculos. Além disso, a pesquisa identifica políticas organizacionais e dinâmicas culturais que influenciam o avanço na carreira das mulheres, oferecendo insights valiosos para a promoção da diversidade e inclusão de gênero.

em indústrias dominadas por homens. Ao entender as experiências e trajetórias de carreira das mulheres na indústria de videogames, este estudo contribui para discussões mais amplas sobre igualdade de gênero no local de trabalho e fornece estratégias para fomentar um ambiente de trabalho mais inclusivo e equitativo. Adicionalmente, a pesquisa utiliza as percepções das entrevistas para sublinhar os benefícios da inclusividade tanto para a indústria de jogos quanto para o ambiente de trabalho.

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1. Introduction

“We need the talent and insights of girls today to lead our businesses tomorrow. That’s why expanding educational opportunities for girls isn’t charity. It’s a smart investment in a stronger global economy and in our future.” – Indra Nooyi, the Chairman and CEO of PepsiCo.

In recent years, the issue of gender diversity and representation within the workforce has attracted a growing level of attention across a range of industries (Giannetti & Wang, 2023). Regardless the considerable strides made towards the promotion of inclusivity and equality, certain sectors continue to grapple with deeply entrenched disparities, particularly those that have historically been dominated by men. The video game industry provides a salient case in point, exhibiting a workforce and culture that are predominantly male. The industry's distinctive cultural and economic importance renders it a crucial area of investigation. Video games are not only a significant source of entertainment but also a rapidly expanding sector in terms of revenue and cultural impact, influencing millions of people globally (Scholz, 2012). The career trajectories and experiences of women within this dynamic and influential field offer invaluable insights into the systemic challenges and opportunities for advancing gender equity. It is of great importance to gain an understanding of the experiences of women in the video game industry for a number of reasons. Firstly, it has been demonstrated that diversity within the workforce can lead to enhanced company success, as well as increased creativity, innovation and problem-solving abilities. These are vital qualities in a field that is driven by cutting-edge technology and innovation (Li & Nagar, 2013). Secondly, the promotion of gender equity is a matter of social justice, ensuring that all individuals have equal opportunities to succeed regardless of gender. Finally, the findings from this industry can provide broader implications for gender diversity efforts across similarly structured fields, making this research pertinent to a wide range of stakeholders, including policymakers, industry leaders, and diversity advocates (Allison, 2000).

The existing research and numerous high-profile cases provide a compelling yet incomplete picture of the pervasive issues surrounding gender discrimination and the underrepresentation of women in the video game industry. The recent scandal involving Activision Blizzard, a leading company in the industry, serves to illustrate the gravity and pervasiveness of these issues. Female employees at Activision Blizzard have reported a disturbing work environment, characterized by sexual harassment, gender discrimination, retaliation, and a culture that is

perceived to be akin to that of a "frat boy" environment, where women are objectified and subjected to inappropriate jokes (Post, 2022). These revelations not only illustrate specific instances of employee grievances but also indicate broader systemic issues within the company's culture and practices. Similarly, concerning patterns have been identified at Riot Games, where female employees have described a toxic culture replete with sexual harassment and gender discrimination (Martens, 2020). These instances demonstrate a pattern of behavior that is not confined to a single company but is indicative of a broader issue affecting the industry as a whole. The continued prevalence of these toxic work environments gives rise to concerns about the effectiveness of current policies and practices designed to advance gender equity and safeguard employees from harassment and discrimination.

In addition to these high-profile cases, data from Rockstar Games North suggests the existence of a broader, more systemic issue within the industry. The available evidence suggests the existence of a significant gender pay gap and the presence of a "glass ceiling" in management positions, where women are markedly underrepresented (Adams & Funk, 2012). These patterns are indicative of structural barriers that impede women's career progression, reflecting deep-seated biases and inequalities that require urgent attention. The gender pay gap, for instance, not only exemplifies inequities and injustices but also has far-reaching ramifications for women's economic stability and professional growth (Post, 2022).

Notwithstanding the aforementioned documented issues, there remains a substantial gap in understanding the multifaceted factors that influence women's professional advancement in this field. While high-profile scandals and pay gap data provide valuable insights into this field, they do not fully encompass the diverse experiences of women and the complex ways in which gender dynamics manifest in the workplace. This gap represents a crucial area for investigation, as its resolution is essential for the development of effective strategies to combat gender discrimination and promote gender equity. A more profound comprehension of these elements can facilitate the formulation of more precise and efficacious interventions, policies, and practices that bolster women's career advancement and contribute to a more inclusive and equitable industry (Guthridge et al., 2022). Moreover, it is crucial to assess the discrepancies between countries with regard to gender equality and to identify cultural clusters that may either reinforce or impede gender equality (Van de Velde et al., 2010).

This thesis represents a comprehensive investigation into the career trajectories of women in the video game industry, with the objective of illuminating the factors that shape their professional advancement. By employing a qualitative research methodology, this master's thesis aims to offer a detailed and multifaceted account of the obstacles encountered by women

in this field. The research combines insights from 12 in-depth interviews with women working in the video game industry worldwide, providing significant insights into the situation of women in this field on an international stage. By illuminating the issues faced, the thesis aims to facilitate the development of more effective policies and practices that promote diversity, equity, and inclusion, benefiting both individuals and organizations alike.

The research will examine several key areas. First, it will explore the influence of organizational culture on the experiences and career trajectories of women. Understanding how workplace environments impact women's professional lives is crucial for identifying areas in need of reform. Second, the study will assess the efficacy of current diversity and inclusion initiatives, evaluating how these programs are implemented and their actual impact on promoting gender equity within organizations. Third, the research will identify structural impediments that hinder women's career advancement, analyzing systemic barriers such as the gender pay gap, the glass ceiling, and biases in promotion practices. Finally, the role of mentorship, networking, and organizational support in facilitating women's professional growth will be investigated, determining how these elements contribute to or detract from women's career progression. By examining these pivotal areas, the thesis aims to advance the understanding of gender dynamics within the video game industry through a comprehensive analysis. The research will contribute to the ongoing discourse on fostering inclusivity and equality in traditionally male-dominated industries, offering actionable insights and recommendations for systemic reform. This thesis aspires to support the development of more effective policies and practices that promote diversity, equity, and inclusion. The insights gained from this research will not only benefit individuals within the video game industry but also have the potential to influence broader organizational and societal change.

2. The Gender Literature in Management

Gender literature is a broad field that encompasses various topics, including differences in political representation, healthcare, cultural norms, family roles, wage disparities, educational differences, and more. The reasons behind these disparities are deeply rooted in cultural contexts and vary globally (Van de Velde et al., 2010). Gender disparities in management and their impact on career trajectories are a significant part of this broader topic, warranting a more in-depth discussion. Therefore, Chapter 2 of this master's thesis will provide a brief overview of gender literature. In contrast, Chapter 4 will offer a more detailed examination of the industry specific gender literature and the career trajectories faced by women in male-dominated industries, such as the video game industry.

2.1 Gender Disparities

Gender disparities are a widespread global issue, though their extent varies by country. These disparities can manifest in various areas, including wage gaps, educational opportunities, political representation, access to healthcare, and social and cultural norms (Daniels et al., 2023). In 2006, the World Economic Forum introduced the Global Gender Gap Index to benchmark progress toward gender parity and compare countries' gender gaps across four dimensions: economic opportunities, education, health, and political leadership. While the gender gap varies significantly by country, no nation has achieved full gender parity. However, in 2023, the top five countries—Iceland (91.2%), Norway (87.9%), Finland (86.3%), New Zealand (85.6%), and Sweden (81.5%) have come close to achieving gender parity and have consistently led the rankings for several years. On the other hand, countries like Congo (57%), Chad (57%), and Afghanistan (40.5%) have the most significant gender gaps. The regional data from the Global Gender Gap Report 2023 reveals a similar pattern. Europe leads with a gender parity score of 76.3%, surpassing North America, which ranks second with 75%. Latin America and the Caribbean follow closely, with a parity level of 74.3%. More than five percentage points behind Latin America and the Caribbean are Eurasia and Central Asia (69%), along with East Asia and the Pacific (68.8%). Sub-Saharan Africa ranks sixth with 68.2%, slightly below the global weighted average of 68.3%. With a parity level of 63.4%, Southern Asia has overtaken the Middle East and North Africa, which stands at 62.6% (Global Gender Gap Report, 2023).

Looking at the overall improvements made since the start of the Index, progress towards gender parity is at an overall 4.1%. Hence, on average, over the past 17 years, the gap has been reduced by only 0.24 percentage points per year. This slow improvement indicates that Gender equity remains a significant obstacle (Global Gender Gap Report, 2023).

2.2 Wage differences

The Gender pay gaps represent one of today's most significant social injustices. According to the International Labour Organization (ILO) Global Wage Report 2018/19, women worldwide earn, on average, about 20% less than men. However, there are considerable variations across countries (The Gender Pay Gap | International Labour Organization, 2024).

In 2022, a study across OECD countries revealed an average gender wage gap of 11.6%. This means that, on average, a full-time woman earns around 88 cents for every dollar or euro a full-time working man earns, based on median earnings. This reflects only a modest improvement since 2010, when the gender wage gap was 14%. Among OECD countries, Belgium has the most equal pay between genders, with a gender pay gap of just 1.1%. In contrast, South Korea has the highest gender pay gap, with a 31.2% difference between genders (Gender Equality and Work, 2022). The findings on wage differences align with the outcomes of the Global Gender Gap Index. Europe leads in achieving equal pay, followed by North America. In the European Union, the gender pay gap was 12.7% in 2021, with only minimal changes over the past decade. However, there are significant differences within the EU itself. In countries like Luxembourg, Romania, Slovenia, Poland, Belgium, and Italy, the gender pay gap ranges from less than 5%, while in Hungary, Germany, Austria, and Estonia, it exceeds 17% (The Gender Pay Gap Situation in the EU - European Commission, 2021).

2.3 Key Drivers of the Compensation Gap

Scholars point out several interconnected factors that influence the gender pay gap. One significant factor that contributes to the gap is the career choices and interruptions related to family responsibilities. For example, in 2018, a third of employed women in the EU had taken work breaks for childcare, a stark contrast to only 1.3% of men, which can impact women's career progression (Rúa Gómez, 2018).

Moreover, the unequal distribution of paid and unpaid work exacerbates the issue. Women typically work longer hours than men, but a considerable portion of their time is devoted to

unpaid domestic duties, which affects their career opportunities and choices. Furthermore, women tend to work more part-time than their male counterparts, leading to fewer promotion opportunities. The glass ceiling further compounds the problem, with women significantly underrepresented in top executive positions fewer than one in ten CEOs of major companies are women resulting in disparities in pay (Adams & Funk, 2012). Lastly, pay discrimination persists, with some women earning less than men for the same work or work of equal value. These factors collectively contribute to the ongoing gender pay gap (Rúa Gómez, 2018).

Additionally, Sectoral segregation plays a significant role, as women are often overrepresented in lower-paying fields such as care, health, and education, where jobs are systematically undervalued compared to those in male-dominated sectors (Bettio et al., 2009). The video game industry is another sector where gender pay differences exist. Section 3.2.2 will provide a more detailed overview of these disparities.

2.4 Prospects for Further Study

However, modern gender literature in management highlights several areas that require further exploration and research. To narrow the scope of this thesis and align it with our research topic, "Women's Career Trajectories in Male-Dominated Industries: Evidence from the Video Game Industry," the focus will be on two specific research areas. One is the Intersectionality between factors like race, ethnicity, and age and the impact on women's career trajectories; the existing literature revealed some gaps in the links between these factors and left space for further investigation. Another one is the global perspective; most extant research is situated within a Western context. However, the potential for a more comprehensive understanding of gender dynamics in management can be realized through further comparative studies conducted across a range of cultural and economic contexts. This master's thesis and the accompanying questionnaire aim to address these two gaps: the Intersectionality between race and gender and the global perspective. The study focuses on how these two factors influence participants' experiences and careers in the video gaming industry.

3. Market Overview

This part on market structure will first provide an overview of the video game industry, including its main players, products, and technological advancements. The following section, market growth, will analyze the industry's growth potential and highlight the key drivers behind it.

3.1 Market Structure

The video game industry is frequently cited as an exemplar of a two-sided market, wherein hardware (e.g., game consoles) serves as a platform for connecting two distinct user groups: video game publishers and gamers. These two groups are interconnected through cross-side network effects, otherwise known as indirect network effects. The greater the number of publishers and games, the greater the benefit to gamers of owning the console (Davidovici-Nora et al., 2012). Similarly, the greater the number of gamers on a console, the greater the potential profit for game publishers. These network effects make it extremely difficult for new entrants to gain a foothold in the market. Even if they possess superior technology, they may lack the necessary customer and publisher base to reach the critical mass of product offerings, making it challenging to attract new customers (Tan & Li, 2008).

Video games are distributed across various platforms, including consoles such as the PlayStation and Xbox, personal computers, mobile devices such as smartphones and tablets, and cloud-based streaming services. Video game developers and publishers encompass a diverse range of entities, from independent developers to large multinational corporations. Among the most prominent players in the industry are Electronic Arts (EA), Activision Blizzard, Ubisoft, Rockstar Games, Nintendo, Sony Interactive Entertainment, and Microsoft Xbox Game Studios (Davidovici-Nora et al., 2012). The video game industry is a highly concentrated market, with a dominant position held by three principal companies: Nintendo (Wii/Switch), Microsoft (Xbox/Computers), and Sony (PlayStation). These three competitors are the major video gaming hardware manufacturers and strongly influence the console gaming market. Due to this infrastructure advantage, these three companies are also the largest video game publishers worldwide, generating billions of U.S. dollars from video games annually. The latest data indicates that they collectively account for 29% of the total gaming industry revenue, with Sony holding the largest market share (Grandview Research, 2023).

The concept of success in the gaming industry is not limited to the proprietors of gaming platforms. The Chinese digital conglomerate Tencent, renowned for its achievements in mobile and online gaming, is among the most prominent entities in the gaming industry in terms of revenue generation. Furthermore, revenue generated from mobile gaming is not solely the domain of companies with a historical association with the gaming industry. For example, Apple and Google, primarily known for their app stores, also generate significant revenue from gaming apps through revenue cuts (Statista, 2024).

Video game developers and third-party publishers are of considerable importance within the gaming industry. As of early 2023, Activision Blizzard (renowned for its Call of Duty and World of Warcraft franchises) was the largest pure-play gaming company, with a market capitalization exceeding 67 billion U.S. dollars. Other prominent companies in the industry include U.S.-based Electronic Arts (the FIFA series), Rockstar Games (the GTA franchise), and Take-Two Interactive, in addition to European-based Ubisoft (the Assassin's Creed and Far Cry series). Furthermore, the Asia-Pacific region is home to several highly regarded gaming companies, including Bandai Namco, Capcom, Square Enix, NCSOFT, NetEase, and Nexon (Grandview Research, 2023). The release of games by these major players frequently results in millions of sales and the domination of global year-end charts. Notwithstanding the considerable discrepancy in scale between these leading companies and their counterparts in the industry, a considerable number of the world's best-selling games are published by companies that do not possess proprietary rights to the platforms on which they are distributed. Examples of such games include the Call of Duty series, published by Activision Blizzard, and the FIFA series, published by EA (Davidovici-Nora et al., 2012).

Due to their ownership and operation of major console gaming platforms, hardware manufacturers Nintendo, Microsoft, and Sony enjoy a significant competitive advantage. The Nintendo Switch is noteworthy for being one of the best-selling gaming consoles in history. The release of Sony's PlayStation 5 and Microsoft's Xbox Series X/S in November 2020 has led to intense competition between the two platforms for consumer attention. To date, approximately 38 million units of the PlayStation 5 have been sold, while approximately 22 million units of the Xbox Series X/S have been sold. These consoles are distinguished by their impressive graphics and a robust lineup of major games, which makes platform exclusivity a critical battleground for attracting players. Of the games anticipated for release between late 2022 and 2024, 115 were scheduled for distribution on the PlayStation 5, while 113 were designated for the Xbox Series X/S. Regarding exclusivity, 22 games were earmarked for release exclusively on the PlayStation platform, while 26 titles were designated as Xbox

exclusives, not available on the PlayStation platform (Kleinstein, 2005). Sony currently holds the leading position in gaming content revenues, the industry number two Microsoft, is expanding its gaming portfolio significantly through strategic acquisitions, catching up with Sony. As part of this strategy, Microsoft recently acquired Activision Blizzard for \$69 billion to extend its product portfolio and market presence (Grandview Research, 2023).

3.2 Market growth

The video game industry has rapidly evolved over the past few decades. In 2012, global sales reached a value of USD 68 billion. By 2022, these sales had grown significantly, reaching an estimated USD 217.06 billion. Projections indicate that the industry will continue to expand, with a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 13.4% anticipated from 2023 to 2030. By 2030, global sales are projected to reach \$583.7 billion USD, showcasing the immense potential for future growth. The industry comprises many activities, including game development, publishing, hardware manufacturing, and digital distribution platforms (Grandview Research, 2023). Additionally, recent trends such as online and cloud gaming are gaining popularity, advancements in high-bandwidth network connectivity, and persistent demand for 3D games drive the expansion of the market. In particular, in key markets such as North America, Europe, and Northern Asia, there is a growing demand for innovative technologies such as virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR) (Johnson, 2013). Other noteworthy technological trends include the growing popularity of live-service games (games-as-a-service) and free-to-play models, as evidenced by the success of games like Fortnite, which offer in-game purchases (Semanová, 2020). Furthermore, the pervasive integration of smartphones has facilitated the increased accessibility, portability, and social integration of video games. This has led to a notable customer base expansion, as prospective players are no longer required to possess a console or gaming computer to engage with video games. In particular, the advent of mobile gaming services has facilitated the expansion of the gaming audience in developing countries (Kleinstein, 2005). The growing prevalence of video games in developing regions, including Latin America, the Middle East, and Africa, can be attributed to enhanced accessibility to mobile technology and increased disposable incomes. Moreover, population growth, evolving demographics, enhanced accessibility, connectivity, evolving perceptions, and increased cultural acceptance of gaming have collectively contributed to a substantial increase in gamers worldwide. These factors have propelled video games into the mainstream of global entertainment, resulting in a growing global player base (DCF Intelligence, 2018).

4. Industry specific gender Literature

The modern gender literature in management is extensive. It encompasses many themes, including but not limited to gender disparities, the gender pay gap, discrimination, barriers to advancement, work-life balance, family responsibilities, workplace culture, lack of representation, and educational pathways. Furthermore, the benefits of a more diverse culture are pointed out, including the advantages of diverse perspectives and creativity, a positive organizational culture, enhanced representation and role modeling, and improved governance and ethics. Moreover, the gender literature identifies strategies to cultivate a more diverse and inclusive work environment. These include strategies for cultural transformation, organizational policies, a supportive work environment, educational and outreach initiatives, industry-wide collaboration, and monitoring and accountability. The following pages will provide an exhaustive overview of contemporary gender literature in management.

4.1 Gender Disparities in the Video Game Industry

In the video game industry, women face various forms of gender disparities, ranging from general underrepresentation and the gender pay gap to more severe cases of discrimination.

4.1.1 Underrepresentation of Women in the Industry

While the global market for video games continues to experience expansion, the percentage of female players has also grown, reaching 39% of all gamers in 2022. Despite this growth, disparities based on gender persist within the video game industry, representing a significant issue that merits further examination (Grandview Research, 2023). A literature review reveals a consistent pattern of underrepresentation of women in various roles within the industry, particularly in leadership and technical positions. For example, a survey conducted in 2017 by the International Game Developers Association (IGDA) revealed that only one in five respondents identified as female among the developers surveyed (Grandview Research, 2023). This data is consistent with the employee demographics reported by Riot Games, the developer of League of Legends, where only 20% of employees were women in 2018 (D'Anastasio, 2018). Especially in top leadership positions, women remain underrepresented in the video game industry. Of 144 executives across the top 14 gaming companies, only 23 are women,

accounting for approximately 15.9%. In contrast, as of 2023, women hold 29% of management roles in US Fortune 500 companies. Additionally, women are underrepresented in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) fields, and female management roles are predominantly concentrated in areas such as HR (Human Resources) and marketing (Hall, 2024). However, there are notable examples of women in leadership positions in the video game industry, such as Canadian video game producer and executive Jade Raymond, recognized for her work on the "Assassin's Creed" series and for founding Ubisoft Toronto, as well as Christina Norman, Studio Director at Riot Games. These individuals represent a positive shift towards gender equality within the industry. Overall, there is a growing trend towards fostering a more gender-equal environment in the video game industry. Industry giants like Activision Blizzard and Microsoft Games Studios have recently begun appointing more women to leadership and board positions, signaling ongoing industry change (Post, 2022).

4.1.2 The Gender pay-gap

The gender pay gap is another significant issue for women in the video game industry. Women worldwide tend to earn less than their male counterparts (Lyons & Zhang, 2023). In 2023, the British Games & Interactive Salary and Satisfaction Survey provided valuable insights into the current disparities in pay between men and women in the industry.

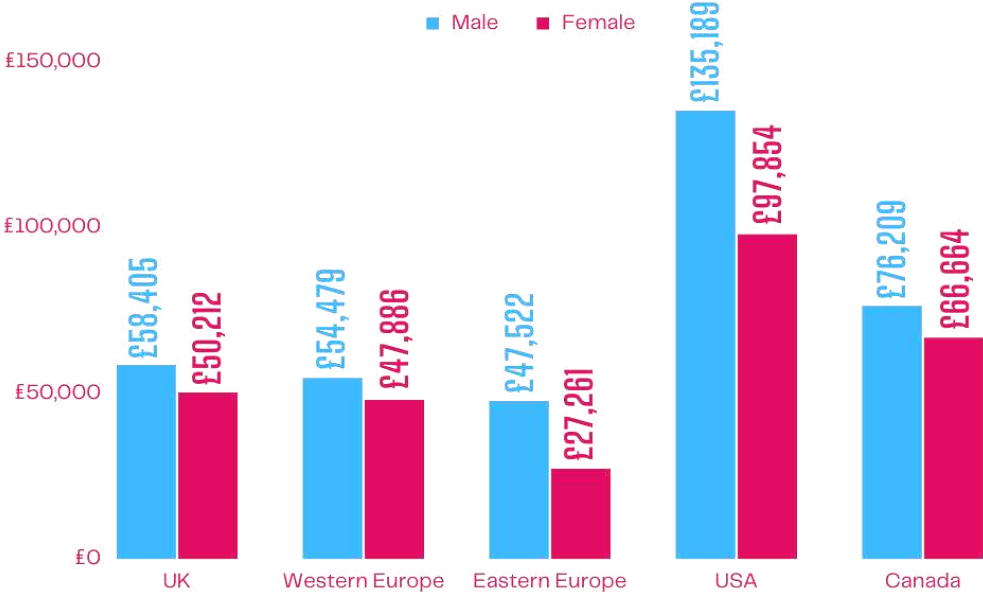


Figure 1: Global average pay gap by region – Games & Interactive Industry 2022/2023. From "GAMES INDUSTRY GUIDE TO: GENDER PAY GAP" by Freya Simmons, 19th June 2023

The study revealed significant regional disparities in gender pay differences across various functions in the video game industry. The extent of the pay gap varied depending on the region surveyed. In Western Europe, men earned an average of £54,479, while women earned an average of £47,886, resulting in a 12% gender pay gap. In the UK, men earned an average of £58,405, whereas women earned £50,212, indicating a 16% gender pay gap. The highest percentage-wise gender pay gap was observed in Eastern Europe, with men earning an average of £47,522 compared to women earning £27,261, revealing an extreme gender pay disparity of 42.6%. The United States exhibited the most significant gender pay gap in absolute terms. On average, men earn £135,189, while women earn £97,854, resulting in a total difference of £37,335 or a percentage difference of 27.6%. In Canada, the pay gap is narrower. On average, men earn £76,209, compared to £66,664 for women, a difference of £9,545 or 12.52% (Simmons, 2023). However, it is crucial to acknowledge the limitations of this comparison. In the majority of studies, female respondents from the USA predominantly held positions at the Mid-Senior level, whereas male respondents were primarily in Senior, Lead, and Director roles. A similar trend is observed in Eastern Europe, where the average gender pay gap exceeds £25,000. This limitation underscores the need for a more comprehensive approach to studying gender pay disparities. Given the higher representation of high-level roles among male respondents, it is understandable that the data would show a higher average salary for men than women. This difference may help to explain the significant gender pay gap observed in these countries (Simmons, 2023). Another limitation of this study is that it focuses only on European or North American countries. The survey data underscores the hypothesis that there is a significant imbalance in leadership positions between males and females across the industry, which is a key factor contributing to the gender pay disparities. Moreover, the survey highlights notable regional variations. The UK and Europe appear more progressive, demonstrating a more balanced hierarchical distribution between men and women. In contrast, the US and mainly Eastern Europe appear more polarized, with a higher concentration of men in leadership roles and women predominantly in lower to mid-level positions, resulting in a more unequal distribution (Fenwick, 2023).

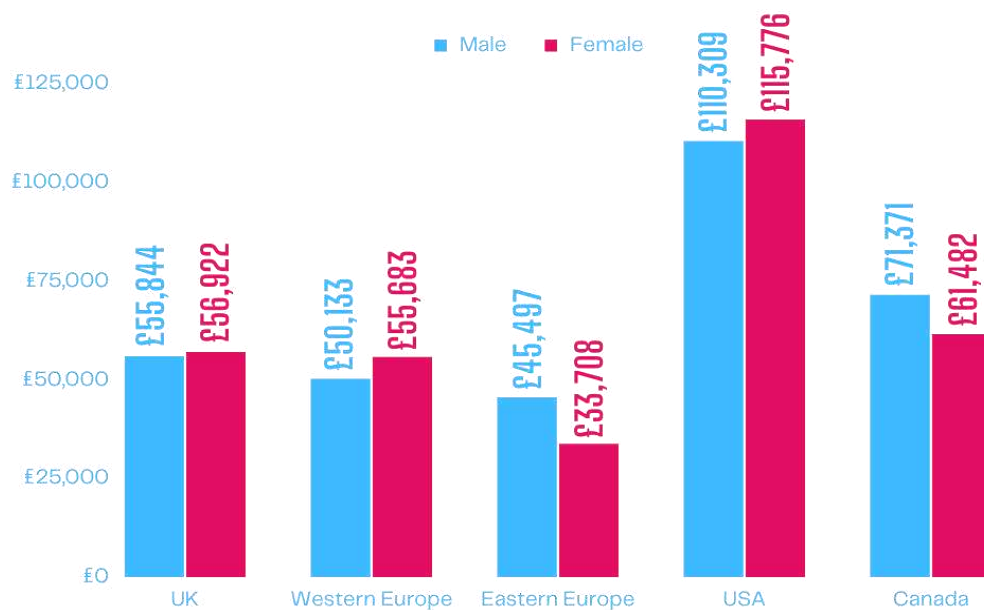


Figure 2: Global average senior pay gap by region – games and interactive 2022/2023. From "GAMES INDUSTRY GUIDE TO: GENDER PAY GAP" by Freya Simmons, 19th June 2023

The study also examined gender differences within specific hierarchical levels, focusing on more senior employees. The findings from this survey segment reveal that within the US, Western Europe, and the UK, women in senior positions earn, on average, between 2-8% more than their male counterparts. Conversely, in Canada and particularly in Eastern Europe, senior female employees earn between 13-25% less than their male counterparts for similar work. This disparity highlights significant regional variations in gender pay equity within senior roles across different parts of the world (Fenwick, 2023). By comparing data from different surveys conducted by the Gamer and Interactive Research Study, we observe a notable reduction in the gender pay gap between the 2020 and 2023 surveys. This narrowing trend is particularly pronounced in Western Europe and the US. This correlates with an industry-wide trend towards greater wage equality between men and women (Grund, 2023).

4.1.3 Discrimination

In addition to the widely recognized gender disparities, such as pay gaps and differences in career progression, within the video game industry, there have been more severe cases of sexual harassment. The #MeToo movement and heightened public awareness of gender discrimination have brought up these incidents within prominent international game studios. One noteworthy example is an interview with a female employee at Riot Games, in which she described a

pervasive "bro culture." She characterized it by the prevalence of sexist humor, the tendency for women to be overlooked in conversation, and the existence of structural impediments to the attainment of leadership positions. At the time of the interview, 21 out of 23 roles in the top management team at Riot Games are occupied by men (D'Anastasio, 2018). In 2018, two former employees, Melanie McCracken and Jes Negrón, filed a lawsuit against Riot Games, alleging gender discrimination, sexual harassment, and misconduct. The lawsuit was filed after an exposé by the gaming news site Kotaku, revealing a pervasive culture of sexism at Riot Games. This culture was typified by behaviors such as unwanted advances, harassment, and a hiring and promotion process that was biased against female candidates. The lawsuit was settled for \$100 million, distributed to all current and former California employees and contractors who identify as women and were employed by Riot Games between November 2014 and the settlement date. As part of the settlement, Riot Games also agreed to implement a series of reforms to its workplace policies. These reforms include increased transparency regarding pay scales for job applicants and the elimination of the use of prior salary history to determine employee pay or job titles (Liao, 2022).

In 2021, a more recent case unfolded at Activision Blizzard. The scandal involved several female employees who described a troubling work environment characterized by sexual harassment, gender discrimination, retaliation, and a "frat boy" culture. In this culture, men reportedly objectified women's bodies and openly made inappropriate jokes (Paul, 2021). Consequently, the California Department of Fair Employment and Housing initiated legal proceedings, culminating in the resignation of the company's president and head of human resources. This was followed by a walkout by hundreds of employees and the submission of a petition signed by thousands, demanding accountability for the scandal. The lawsuit alleges that female employees were routinely removed from lactation rooms to accommodate meetings held by male colleagues. Furthermore, the company was criticized for allowing male employees to engage in leisure activities while female employees were occupied with childcare responsibilities. Furthermore, female employees reported a high frequency of instances in which male colleagues approached them at the office, made inappropriate jokes, and commented on their bodies. One example cited in the lawsuit is a workplace tradition known as the "cube crawl," where male employees consume large quantities of alcohol while "crawling" between office cubicles, engaging in inappropriate behavior towards female colleagues (Paul, 2021). According to the lawsuit, as of the scandal in 2021, the company's workforce consisted of just 20% female employees, with all executive-level positions held by

white males, including CEO and president. By 2022, Activision had appointed four women to its fourteen-member executive committee. Three of these appointments occurred in the past 14 months as a direct consequence of the scandal (Post, 2022). In 2023, Activision Blizzard settled with the plaintiffs, agreeing to pay approximately \$54 million to resolve discrimination claims. As part of the settlement, the company also implemented measures to ensure fair pay and promotion practices within the organization (Veiga, 2023). In 2020, five former employees of the French game developer Ubisoft were apprehended by French law enforcement as part of an investigation into allegations of sexual harassment within the company. Prior to this, a considerable number of current and former employees had come forward with testimonies of sexual abuse and harassment they had endured at the company. Furthermore, allegations were made that Ubisoft was aware of the misconduct of certain employees and had protected them due to their high-profile status within the company or personal connections to Ubisoft CEO Yves Guillemot. The results of an internal survey conducted by Ubisoft in 2020 indicated that 25% of employees had experienced workplace misconduct. In response, the company apologized to those affected and committed to implementing changes to protect its employees better (Parrish, 2023).

The causes of these instances of harassment are complex and pervasive. During the 1980s and 1990s, when the video game industry first emerged, it was predominantly male-dominated. Notable companies such as Midway Games and Id Software, renowned for their contributions to the video game industry, fostered a culture perceived as akin to that of a fraternity. This culture was characterized by male employees engaging in all-night work sessions fueled by Diet Coke and pizzas and displaying images of naked women on their desks (Schreier, 2022). Female employees in these environments were often compelled to either conform to the prevailing culture or to overlook the behaviors that were not aligned with it. Since that time, the industry has undergone significant evolution and has made notable progress in welcoming a greater proportion of women. However, the gender ratio within the industry remains disproportionately skewed. Many companies within the industry continue to grapple with the challenge of perpetuating a culture that is perceived as being akin to that of a fraternity, which contributes to ongoing issues of harassment and gender discrimination (Schreier, 2022).

These cases, particularly the one involving Activision Blizzard, have attracted considerable public interest and brought to light the discrepancies within the video game industry. Furthermore, these developments have prompted initiatives to foster a more equitable

environment. In recent years, numerous gaming companies have intensified their efforts to hire a more diverse workforce and produce content that reflects the diversity of their target audiences (Guthridge et al., 2022). These initiatives are designed to enhance the working conditions of all employees, with a specific emphasis on women of color, transgender women, nonbinary individuals, and other marginalized groups. Even with these advancements, further progress is still needed (Paul, 2021).

4.2 Barriers to Advancement and Impact on Career Trajectories:

Women face significant challenges in their careers, including limited hiring and promotion opportunities, work-life balance issues, increasing family responsibilities, hostile workplace cultures, and a lack of representation and educational pathways. This section will provide an overview of these challenges.

4.2.1 Hiring and Promotion Opportunities

The glass ceiling phenomenon is one significant barrier to advancement in the video game industry. According to the Games and Interactive Industry Report 2022/2023, around the topics of pay and satisfaction, data shows a disproportionate number of women in junior and mid-level positions. This skewed distribution suggests challenges for women in climbing the career ladder, particularly in countries with pronounced gender pay gaps, where patriarchal structures may be more prevalent in society (Simmons, 2023). It is important to note that women are underrepresented across all positions industry-wide. Even in junior positions, women comprise the highest percentage at around 36%. However, comparing this to the Games and Interactive Industry Report 2019/2020 reveals that most female respondents held graduate roles, with very few reaching director-level positions. Therefore, the latest data indicates a shift towards more women in mid-level and lead/managerial roles and an increase in female directors and CEOs (Fenwick, 2023).

4.2.2 Work-life Balance

Work-life balance is a significant concern for women in the video game industry, mainly due to the demanding nature of the work and the prevailing cultural expectations in this field. The

video game industry is notorious for its “crunch” periods, during which employees are expected to work extended hours to meet project deadlines. A 2019 International Game Developers Association survey revealed that 40% of game developers had experienced “crunch” time at least once in the previous year. For many developers, the abovementioned "crunch" periods entailed working at least 20 additional hours beyond their standard 40-hour workweek instead of merely a few extra hours or a single extended weekend. Furthermore, only 8% of respondents indicated they received additional compensation for these extended hours, and adequate remuneration in the form of additional holidays or salary needed to be improved (International Game Developers Association, 2019). In a demanding environment such as the video game industry, employers frequently prioritize hiring predominantly young men with fewer social attachments or family obligations. This preference is driven by the industry's expectation of consistently high workloads, which can precipitate burnout and other health issues. The challenging nature of the video game industry presents a significant challenge for women, particularly those who bear additional family or caregiving responsibilities. The available statistical data lends support to this assertion, indicating that women are more susceptible to stress and experience burnout at a higher frequency than their male counterparts. The confluence of a highly stressful work environment and greater social responsibilities places women at a disadvantage in the industry. Consequently, these dual pressures may make the video game industry less appealing to women. This underscores the urgent need for industry changes to create a more inclusive and balanced work environment (Thomsen, 2021).

4.2.3 Family Responsibilities

As they typically bear primary responsibility for family care, women frequently take on the role of primary caregiver for children, elderly parents, or other family members. The dual role can present significant challenges in balancing work and personal life, particularly in fast-paced environments like the video game industry (Lobel & Clair, 2017). In such industries, the availability and cost of childcare become significant barriers to employment. Without adequate assistance, women may encounter difficulties in navigating the demanding schedules often inherent to these roles (Chung, 2020). The costs associated with childcare are closely tied to the policies that govern parental leave. A significant challenge for women in the tech and gaming sectors is the limited parental leave, which necessitates policy changes and substantial support to help them balance their careers and family responsibilities. This limitation forces women to make difficult decisions, often sacrificing career advancement for family obligations.

Furthermore, reintegration into the workplace following childcare leave can be challenging, as women frequently observe that their roles have changed or that they have been overlooked for promotions (Sharma & Venkateswaran, 2021). In male-dominated industries, there is often a bias against working mothers, perceiving them as less committed to their careers due to their simultaneous focus on childcare responsibilities. Such a bias may result in fewer opportunities for advancement for working mothers (Parker et al., 2020). Furthermore, many working mothers choose to work part-time or utilize flexible schedules to manage their work-life balance effectively; this can make it harder to meet the intense industry requirements and may be perceived as a sign of a lack of dedication or availability, which can ultimately impede career progression over time (Chung, 2020).

4.2.4 Workplace culture and Lack of Representation

In male-dominated industries, gender disparities can present significant career barriers, which are further compounded by the presence of gender stereotyping, harassment, and discrimination. As illustrated in the preceding cases (Section 3.1.3), hostile work environments can significantly impede women's career advancement. The underrepresentation of women in senior or visible positions within these industries is not just a challenge but a pressing issue that needs to be addressed (Li & Nagar, 2013). It presents a significant obstacle for women seeking to envisage a clear path for their career progression. Furthermore, the lack of female representation results in a paucity of mentoring opportunities for women. Therefore, the achievements of women are frequently devalued and receive less recognition than their male counterparts. This discrepancy can result in women being overlooked for promotions due to biases or assumptions regarding their commitment or capabilities (Bain & Cummings, 2000).

4.2.5 Educational pathways

Educational pathways are critical in understanding women's career barriers in the video game industry, particularly their underrepresentation in STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) fields, which are essential for many roles within this sector. From an early age, societal norms and cultural biases play a significant role in dissuading girls from pursuing studies in STEM subjects. This disparity, which originates in the earliest stages of an individual's educational experience, persists throughout their higher education and subsequent career entry, exerting a considerable influence on the representation and advancement of

women within the industry (Ng Lane et al., 2018). The portrayal of toys, media, and classroom dynamics frequently reinforce the stereotype that STEM is more suitable for boys, which in turn influences girls' perceptions of their abilities. This can result in diminished self-assurance among female students in STEM subjects despite their academic performance being on par with that of their male counterparts (Harvey, 2019).

Moreover, teachers, who are frequently unaware of their biases, may have lower expectations for girls in STEM subjects, which can inadvertently impact their encouragement and support. Such experiences may deter girls from pursuing STEM-related educational pathways, potentially leading them to gravitate toward fields perceived as more traditionally aligned with women (Giancola & De Vita, 2017). Consequently, the dearth of early exposure, encouragement, and support in STEM education plays a pivotal role in the gender disparity observed in the video game industry, impeding women's prospects for professional advancement in this male-dominated domain. In secondary and post-secondary education, women remain significantly underrepresented in numerous STEM majors, including fields such as computer science, engineering, and physics, which are fundamental for careers in the video game industry (Ng Lane et al., 2018). This perpetuates a cycle whereby the need for more female faculty and mentors in STEM fields results in women students needing more role models and support networks to guide and encourage them to pursue these careers (Harvey, 2019). Despite an increase in the number of women pursuing studies at the university and postgraduate levels, including doctoral and PhD programs, in STEM fields, there are ongoing inequalities in the educational pathways of women that persist into their professional careers, both in established and emerging forms. (Giancola & De Vita, 2017).

4.3 Benefits woman in leadership in the Video game industry

The importance of having women in management positions can be assessed primarily through the company's achievements. Studies indicate that companies with more women in leadership tend to achieve better financial performance. For instance, companies in the top 10% for financial performance have a higher representation of women leaders, comprising 29% of their leadership compared to only 23% in underperforming companies. This correlation can be attributed to various interconnected factors (Novotney, 2023).

4.3.1 Diverse Perspectives and Creativity

Diverse leadership teams bring broader perspectives, enhancing decision-making and problem-solving processes. A higher number of women in leadership roles contribute to this diversity by introducing different life experiences and viewpoints. These diverse perspectives often lead to more innovative solutions and comprehensive organizational decision-making (Yukawa, 2023). Additionally, female CEOs are crucial in fostering inclusive and empathetic work cultures within gaming companies. They are often instrumental in creating environments that embrace diversity and inclusion, enhancing team productivity and stimulating creative growth. With the number of female gamers on the rise, women's leadership role is becoming increasingly significant. Female leaders bring valuable insights into the preferences and behaviors of female consumers, who constitute a substantial segment of the market. This deep understanding enables companies to develop products and services that are more precisely targeted and relevant to their diverse customer base (Harvey, 2019).

4.3.2 Positive Organizational Culture

Research indicates that women leaders positively impact businesses by enhancing productivity, fostering collaboration, inspiring organizational commitment, and promoting fairness. Therefore, having women CEOs in the gaming industry is crucial, as they have been shown to enhance business performance through increased productivity. This should motivate the industry to embrace diversity at the top levels, leading to a more productive and prosperous future (Lee & Kramer, 2016). Female CEOs' empathy and deep understanding of sociocultural contexts can foster creative growth within teams and lead to the development of games that inspire and spark meaningful dialogue. These qualities stimulate creativity and produce innovative, high-quality gaming products. Women leaders frequently demonstrate higher levels of emotional intelligence, empathy, and understanding, which can enhance employee morale and engagement within gaming companies (Hougaard et al., 2022).

4.3.3 Better Representation and Role Modeling

Women's leadership roles are of great significance, as they serve as role models and inspire other women to pursue leadership roles and careers in various fields. This influence is particularly profound for young women interested in studying in male-dominated fields like science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). By being role models, women

leaders can motivate women to enter these industries, thereby contributing to the transformation of these historically male-dominated fields towards greater inclusivity (Latu et al., 2019). Moreover, the inclusion of women in leadership roles is not just about breaking stereotypes, but also about paving the way for a more diverse pipeline of future leaders. This sets in motion a virtuous cycle wherein diverse company cultures continue to foster change and inclusivity, while homogeneous cultures may perpetuate internal barriers to organizational evolution. Therefore, it is imperative for women to be represented in leadership roles within traditionally male-dominated industries, such as the video game industry, as they are the catalysts for the desired organizational transformation (Bain & Cummings, 2000).

4.3.4 Improved Governance and Ethics

The presence of female leaders is often associated with an increase in ethical standards and the implementation of superior corporate governance practices, which collectively contribute to more ethical business conduct (SaintDic et al., 2016). This emphasis on transparency can enhance trust and credibility within the organization and among external stakeholders. Additionally, female leaders are more likely to cultivate robust, trust-based relationships with stakeholders, reinforcing the organization's reputation and fostering long-term success (Sampson et al., 2023). Female leaders offer distinct advantages to video game companies in multiple pivotal domains, they contribute diverse perspectives that enhance creativity and decision-making processes. Their presence improves organizational performance and financial outcomes. Women leaders foster inclusive and collaborative work environments, boosting employee engagement and retention. They serve as role models, inspiring more women to pursue careers in the industry and promoting gender diversity. Female leaders often advocate for work-life balance and ethical practices, enhancing company culture and governance. Ultimately, these contributions improve business and financial results (Stajkovic & Stajkovic, 2024).

4.4 Strategies for Change

Implementing a multifaceted strategy that targets cultural, organizational, and systemic barriers is essential to addressing the issues and enhancing the career trajectories of women in male-dominated industries like the video game industry.

4.4.1 Cultural Change

Before implementing organizational policies, it is essential to cultivate an awareness among employees of shifting the workplace culture towards greater inclusivity. Promoting awareness and educating employees about the existence and implications of unconscious biases is crucial. Regular training programs can facilitate identifying and resolving these biases among employees (Sampson et al., 2023). For example, companies such as Google and Facebook have implemented unconscious bias training programs to assist employees in recognizing biases and fostering a more inclusive work environment. Furthermore, cultivating an inclusive culture that celebrates diversity and underscores the accomplishments of successful women in the industry can have a profound impact. For example, Ubisoft regularly highlights the achievements of its female employees in internal newsletters and on social media platforms, thereby showcasing their contributions to the company and the industry (Pless & Maak, 2004). The presence of visible role models within an organization can inspire and motivate others. The periodic dissemination of narratives and accomplishments of female leaders can facilitate the deconstruction of stereotypes and motivate a more significant proportion of women to pursue leadership roles. For example, Microsoft hosts an annual ceremony entitled "Women in Gaming," designed to honor women's contributions to the gaming industry. It is similarly imperative to implement mentorship programs that facilitate connections between women and senior female leaders, providing guidance and support and making the audience feel supported and guided. Such programs can provide invaluable counsel and assistance to women navigating their professional trajectories (Latu et al., 2019).

4.4.2 Organizational Policies

Implementing inclusive hiring practices, like female leadership quotas, can bring significant change and reduce recruitment bias (Kogut et al., 2014). In the wake of the scandal, Activision Blizzard has endeavored to diversify its hiring panels and integrate blind recruitment techniques emphasizing skills and experience rather than gender. Such measures ensure a more equitable hiring process. Implementing leadership and professional development programs specifically targeted at women can facilitate their advancement in the workplace. For example, EA has implemented a program entitled "Women in Leadership," which provides training and mentorship opportunities for women aspiring to assume leadership roles. Defining career progression paths is crucial to ensure that women face the same opportunities as men. Such

initiatives may include implementing rotational programs or leadership workshops to equip women with the requisite skills and knowledge to assume higher-level positions (Pless & Maak, 2004).

4.4.3 Supportive Work Environment

Another essential strategy is creating a supportive work environment where employees act as a team, not as competitors. Company leaders can significantly improve the work climate by encouraging employees to speak up, ask questions, and share their ideas. Another aspect is that in today's world, with a shortage of highly skilled workers and an increasing importance of work-life balance, flexible working hours and remote work options have become a new standard that many employees require. Many organizations have adopted flexible work policies to accommodate the diverse needs of their employees, particularly those with caregiving responsibilities. Furthermore, implementing comprehensive parental leave policies for both parents facilitates the division of childcare responsibilities. In countries like Germany, both parents can take one year of leave to care for their newborns (Tran et al., 2020).

Implementing zero-tolerance policies for harassment and discrimination is crucial to preventing discrimination cases. However, it is equally important to establish support systems like employee resource groups (ERGs) for women. These groups, such as Ubisoft's Women's Network, provide a powerful platform for women to interact, exchange experiences, and offer mutual assistance. Their presence reassures employees of the support available, thereby contributing to a respectful work environment (Hope & Munro, 2021).

4.4.4 Educational and Outreach Initiatives

Educational and outreach initiatives are vital in encouraging more women to pursue careers in male-dominated industries. Partnering with educational institutions to promote STEM subjects to girls from an early age is essential. For example, Sony Interactive Entertainment partners with schools to provide workshops and programs encouraging girls to pursue STEM careers. Offering scholarships, internships, and entry-level positions for women can increase their representation in the industry. Companies like Microsoft and Google offer scholarships and internships for women pursuing STEM degrees. Participation in industry events focusing on women in gaming can facilitate the formation of professional networks and the exchange of knowledge. For example, the Game Developers Conference (GDC) hosts events such as

"Women in Gaming," which provide networking opportunities and highlight the achievements of women in the industry. The creation of outreach programs designed to introduce young girls to careers in the video game industry may also prove beneficial. For example, Girls Make Games is an organization that offers summer camps and workshops for young girls, providing instruction in game development (Zhou, 2020).

4.4.5 Collaboration and Networking

Forming strategic alliances with other industry players to disseminate and adopt best practices represents a highly effective approach. To illustrate, the International Game Developers Association (IGDA) has established a Women in Games Special Interest Group, which provides a forum for companies to collaborate and exchange strategies for enhancing gender diversity. Collaborating with industry bodies to establish standards and guidelines for diversity and inclusion is similarly important. The promotion of policies at the industry level that support gender diversity and inclusion has the potential to facilitate broader change (Francis et al., 2019). For example, organizations such as Women in Games International (WIGI) promote gender diversity in the gaming industry through policy initiatives and awareness campaigns. Another effective strategy is to utilize platforms to influence broader industry changes by publishing thought leadership pieces and participating in public discussions. Companies can leverage their influence to drive industry-wide change and promote a more inclusive environment. Implementing these strategies can foster a more inclusive and supportive environment for women in the video game industry, facilitating greater representation, career advancement, and a comprehensive industry transformation (Wirsih et al., 2016). Another crucial aspect is to network strategically to raise awareness about oneself and connect with the right people to advance one's career. While men tend to network more often and build supportive relationships with colleagues, women do so less frequently. Strategic alliances among women are not guaranteed; especially in male-dominated environments, they may sometimes view each other as threats rather than sources of support (Francis et al., 2019).

4.4.6 Monitoring and Accountability

Regular audits within an organization are crucial to ensuring the long-term success of the implemented diversity and inclusion policies. Many companies conduct annual diversity audits to evaluate their progress and identify areas for improvement. Implementing a transparent

payment scheme effectively ensures that women are compensated fairly and comparable to their male counterparts (Kim et al., 2019). The publication of diversity metrics and progress reports holds the organization accountable and facilitates the monitoring of improvement. It also underlines the company's commitment to more diversity and inclusion and can serve as a role model for other industry players. For example, on its website, Ubisoft publishes an annual diversity report that includes data on gender representation and initiatives undertaken to enhance diversity. Implementing feedback mechanisms, through which employees may voice concerns and suggest improvements anonymously, can also facilitate the creation of a more inclusive environment (Promes, 2015).

5. Methodology

This master's thesis aims to raise awareness and illuminate women's situation in male-dominated industries, especially the video game industry. It enriches the general discussion about gender equality and inclusion in the video game industry and gives industry-specific insights into different female career paths on an international level. Furthermore, it uses the literature discussed, and the data gathered through expert interviews to point out the potential benefits of inclusivity in traditionally male-dominated industries.

To delve deeper into this theory, the title of this master thesis is: "Analyzing women's career trajectories in male-dominated industries: Evidence from the video game industry".

This master thesis employs a rigorous qualitative research design to explore and analyze women's career trajectories within the male-dominated video game industry. The primary methodological approach involves conducting in-depth semi-structured interviews with women currently employed in various roles across different sectors and countries of the video game industry. This approach was chosen for its ability to capture nuanced insights into their professional journeys, challenges faced, and experiences in navigating this industry, ensuring the credibility of the study. The semi-structured interviews are utilized to gather rich qualitative data from participants. This approach allows flexibility in exploring diverse perspectives while ensuring that key topics relevant to the research questions are systematically addressed. The interviews are designed to explore participants' educational backgrounds, professional experiences before entering the video game industry, motivations for pursuing a career in this field, and their career progression. Moreover, the questionnaire explicitly addresses employee well-being, inclusivity experiences, and relationships with male colleagues to provide the best possible overview of the participant's industry experiences.

The questionnaire is structured into 5 parts. The first part, the introduction questions, aims to establish the participant's background and context. It helps understand their current professional role, educational background, and motivations for entering the video game industry. This foundation is essential for contextualizing their experiences and insights throughout the interview. The second part is titled General Questions. This section seeks to understand the broader working environment, job satisfaction, and general career trajectories observed by women in the video game industry. It also addresses systemic challenges and changes in gender representation over time. It also includes a question regarding the race and gender of the

participant to collect demographic data to analyze how intersectional factors like race and age influence experiences. Since it is a critical question, it was not mentioned in the first part to give the participants time to familiarize themselves with the questionnaire and the interviewer. The third part delves into personal experiences related to gender-specific challenges and obstacles. It explores how these challenges are navigated and the impact of gender on professional interactions and career progression. Part four, the conclusion section, seeks recommendations and future outlooks for improving gender diversity and inclusion. It also aims to gather advice for aspiring women professionals and perspectives on the industry's future. Lastly, part number 5 of the questionnaire allows the participant to share some previously not-mentioned experiences within the context of the video game industry. The summarized findings can be found in chapter 6. Findings and a detailed overview of all questionnaires conducted under 10. Appendix.

Participants are purposefully selected based on their current or past employment in the video game industry. The sampling strategy aims for diversity in terms of roles (e.g., developers, designers, marketers, HR), levels of seniority, and years of experience. This diversity ensures a comprehensive exploration of women's experiences across different industry segments, ranging from game developers to professionals in management positions. Moreover, the interviews were conducted internationally, gathering data from female participants from different cultural backgrounds. The international aspect will enable us to highlight the differences between countries and the related working cultures.

Data collection involves face-to-face interviews, remotely over Microsoft Teams, or by sending and filling out the questionnaire, depending on participant location and preference. The questionnaire is structured around the study's framework, ensuring interview consistency and comprehensiveness. The questionnaire covers topics such as the working environment within their companies, job satisfaction, typical career trajectories observed for women in the industry, challenges faced due to gender, and perceptions of gender diversity in leadership roles. Interview transcripts are analyzed thematically to identify patterns, themes, and categories emerging from the data. This iterative process involves comprehensive evaluation and categorizing of the respondent's data to uncover recurring topics related to women's career experiences, gender-related challenges, strategies for overcoming obstacles, and perceptions of gender diversity initiatives within the video game industry. To ensure data security and ethical behavior, prior to participating in interviews, participants are informed about the study's objectives, potential risks and benefits, confidentiality measures, and their rights as participants.

Participant confidentiality is strictly maintained through anonymization of data and secure storage practices. The interview outcomes will be anonymized in the thesis to protect participants' identities when presenting quotes and examples.

The master thesis acknowledges limitations in generalizability due to its qualitative nature and specific sample selection criteria. Findings may reflect the participants' experiences but may not be broadly applicable to all women in the video game industry. Potential biases, such as participant self-reporting and researcher interpretation, are mitigated through reflexivity and transparency in reporting under point 7.3 Limitations. These limitations will be further reflected. This comprehensive methodology provides a structured approach to investigating and understanding women's career trajectories in the male-dominated video game industry. The study aims to contribute valuable insights into women's professional experiences in this field by employing qualitative methods such as semi-structured interviews and thematic analysis. Ultimately, the research seeks to inform benefits and initiatives to promote gender diversity, inclusion, and equitable career opportunities within the video game industry. This detailed methodology provides a robust framework for studying the complex dynamics of women's careers in the video game industry. It emphasizes the importance of qualitative research methods in capturing nuanced perspectives and experiences.

6. Findings:

	Age	Race	Company	Position	Office Location	Industry Affiliation
Respondend Nr. 1	31	White	Nintendo Europe	Contact Operation Coordinator	Germany	4 month
Respondend Nr. 2	25	White	Sony Electronics	Customer Marketing Specialist	Belgium	1,5 years
Respondend Nr. 3	42	Latina	King Digital Entertainment	Assoc. Director Agile coach	Spain	9,5 years
Respondend Nr. 4	38	White	King Digital Entertainment	Senior backend engineer	Sweden	5 years
Respondend Nr. 5	27	White & Asian	Nintendo	Junior Product Manager	Netherlands & Japan	4 years
Respondend Nr. 6	/	White	THQ nordic games	European Localization Director	Germany	30 years
Respondend Nr. 7	36	White	Ubisoft	UX research operations manager	Germany	16 years
Respondend Nr. 8	29	/	Nothern Lights Entertainment	Co-founder & Chief Content Officer	France	6 years
Respondend Nr. 9	25	Asian	Ubisoft	Website Project Assistant	China & France	6 month
Respondend Nr. 10	29	White	Activision Blizzard	Social Community Manager	United Kingdom	2 years
Respondend Nr. 11	34	African American	King Digital Entertainment	Corporate Stratgey	/	2 years
Respondend Nr. 12	27	White	Activision Blizzard	Localization Project Manager	Ireland	3 years

Figure 3: Overview of the questionnaire respondents

6.1 Introduction questions:

Which company in the Video game do you work for and what is your position?

The respondents in this survey work across various high-profile companies within the video game industry, holding roles ranging from entry-level to senior management. The companies represented include industry giants such as Nintendo Europe, Ubisoft, Sony Electronics, King Digital Entertainment, Northern Lights Entertainment, Activision Blizzard, and THQ Nordic Games.

In which country are you working?

Geographically, these professionals are based in various countries, including Germany, Belgium, Spain, Italy, Ireland, Japan, Sweden, the United Kingdom, the United States, China, and France, highlighting the global nature of the video game industry.

How long have you been working in the Video game Industry?

The respondents' experience in the industry varies significantly, with some having recently entered the field (as little as 4 months of experience, respondent 1), while others have been involved for over three decades (respondent 6).

Can you provide some background on your education and professional experience prior to entering the video game industry?

The respondents of this master thesis questionnaire come from diverse educational and professional backgrounds, reflecting the multidisciplinary nature of the video game industry. Educational experiences range from STEM fields such as Biomedical Engineering and Computer Science to arts and humanities, including History and Political Science. Many respondents also pursued higher education, obtaining degrees like MBAs, Master's in International Business, and Master's in Visual Arts, showcasing a wide spectrum of academic interests. Some respondents had creative arts backgrounds or were focused on business-oriented education. Before entering the video game industry, these professionals gained experience in various fields, including television development, healthcare software engineering, social media management, brand management in the fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) sector, and digitalization consulting in the public sector. A common thread among many is a career shift or pivot from their original industries into the video game sector.

What inspired or motivated you to pursue a career in the video game industry?

The motivations for pursuing a career in the video game industry are rooted in both personal passions and professional aspirations. Several respondents expressed a lifelong love of gaming (7/12 respondents), which was a significant part of their personal lives from childhood. They were drawn to the interactive nature of games and their ability to create immersive experiences. Others were motivated by the potential for career growth and the challenge of working in a dynamic and rapidly evolving industry (4/12 respondents). Specific company cultures emphasizing employee growth and work-life balance were also highlighted as key motivators (2/12 respondents). Some respondents sought to explore new horizons and move away from their previous industries due to factors such as high competitiveness or a lack of alignment with personal interests (2/12 respondents). The video game industry's appeal lies not only in its

products but also in the opportunity it offers to work with cutting-edge technology and contribute to digital transformation. The industry's broad appeal and diverse opportunities make it an attractive field for professionals looking to leverage their unique skills in new and innovative ways.

Can you tell me about your career journey in the video game industry? How did you get started, and what positions have you held?

The respondents in this study shared diverse career paths within the video game industry, reflecting the field's dynamic and multifaceted nature. Many began in technical or support roles, such as full-stack developers, scrum masters, or customer marketing specialists, and progressed into more strategic and leadership positions (4/12 respondents). Some transitioned from hands-on roles in UX/UI design or technical development to leading entire teams and focusing on user experience research, highlighting opportunities for growth and specialization. Others started in roles related to community management, localization, or international project management, which underscores the global scope of the industry and the variety of skills required. Despite their different starting points, all respondents demonstrated adaptability and resilience, often moving into new roles or companies as opportunities arose. Roles mentioned span from technical positions like Senior Backend Engineer and UX Research Operations Manager to strategic and leadership roles such as Product Manager, Social Media Specialist, and European Localization Director. This diversity in positions, locations, and experience levels underscores the broad range of opportunities and career paths available within the video game industry. The mix of technical, creative, and managerial roles also illustrates the multifaceted nature of the industry, requiring a wide range of skills and expertise.

6.2 General Questions:

How varied is the working environment in your company?

The findings from the questionnaire indicate that the working environments across various companies in the video game industry exhibit different levels of diversity, with notable differences in gender representation, cultural backgrounds, and the inclusivity of leadership

roles. In some companies, there has been significant progress in creating diverse workplaces, with close to a 50/50 gender ratio and a mix of cultural, ethnic, and age backgrounds among employees (5/12 respondents). For instance, some respondents highlighted the international nature of their teams, where employees from different countries and cultures work together, creating a rich and varied work atmosphere. These environments also allowed for different work settings, including remote, office, and hybrid models, providing flexibility and a broad range of experiences. However, challenges remain, particularly at the leadership level. Several respondents observed that while diversity exists at lower levels, it diminishes as one moves up the organizational hierarchy, with leadership still predominantly male (8/12 respondents). Some companies have made active efforts to address this, such as revising job postings to attract more female candidates and promoting gender diversity in recruitment, yet the balance remains skewed in favor of men in senior positions. In contrast, other companies have a more traditional makeup, with a noticeable dominance of white males, especially in higher-ranking roles. Even in these environments, however, there has been some progress over time, with more women and diverse backgrounds represented today compared to a decade ago. Some respondents pointed out that their departments, particularly in communications and marketing, are quite diverse and inclusive, but this is not uniformly reflected across all departments or leadership levels. Overall, the video game industry is making strides towards greater diversity, but there is still considerable work to be done, particularly in ensuring that this diversity extends into senior leadership and decision-making roles. The varied experiences of the respondents reflect the industry's ongoing efforts and challenges in creating a truly inclusive working environment.

How did you experienced working in the video game industry and how is your Job satisfaction?

The findings from the questionnaire reveal a mix of experiences and levels of job satisfaction among women working in the video game industry, reflecting both positive aspects and ongoing challenges. Several respondents expressed high levels of job satisfaction, with some highlighting the joy of working on popular titles like “Candy Crush” and the fulfillment of seeing their work impact millions of players. For some, the industry represents a dream job, where they feel valued, recognized, and have opportunities for growth. These respondents often emphasize the supportive and inclusive nature of their work environments, especially in non-core departments where diversity is more visible. The presence of women in leadership roles within these departments also contributes to a positive atmosphere of freedom, equality, and diversity. However, not all experiences are uniformly positive. Some respondents noted the

pressure and meticulous standards associated with working in large companies like Sony, while others described their work environments as still evolving in terms of inclusivity. For example, one respondent expressed satisfaction with her experience working on titles such as "Overwatch" and "Call of Duty." However, she also described the overall team at the game publisher Activision Blizzard as a "boy's club," which led to feelings of dissatisfaction and ultimately a decision to leave. Another respondent indicated that although her current position is satisfactory, she had encountered difficulties in previous roles due to the absence of inclusivity and the implementation of inflexible leadership strategies that had a detrimental impact on team sustainability. Furthermore, there is an acknowledgment of the male-dominated culture observed in certain organizations, particularly at the executive level and within the core technology and game development divisions. Some women reported feeling constrained by the perception that they were pigeonholed into specific roles, such as marketing, and that they had to fight for opportunities, despite the friendliness of colleagues and the benefits of having female managers. Overall, while there are instances of diversity and inclusion where women flourish and feel fulfilled, the broader industry still presents challenges, particularly in terms of gender representation in leadership and the creation of a more universally inclusive culture.

Can you describe the typical career trajectory for women in the video game industry, based on your observations and experiences?

The findings from the questionnaire reveal a common career progression among respondents, who typically start in entry-level or junior roles, often through internships or university alliances. As they gain experience, they advance to more senior positions, such as team leads or managers. However, respondents report significant challenges when attempting to progress to higher levels, like director or executive roles, due to systemic barriers and cultural norms. One major issue highlighted is the impact of maternity leave and other child-related responsibilities on women's career advancement (8/12 respondents). Many respondents have taken temporary leaves from the industry for maternity reasons, which has impeded their career progression. This absence often leads to missed opportunities for promotions or involvement in significant projects, making it difficult for women to re-enter the workforce at the same level or to advance further upon their return. These career interruptions contribute to slower growth compared to male counterparts, who typically do not face similar career-disrupting responsibilities.

Cultural differences also emerge as significant factors, particularly in companies with hierarchical or traditional structures, such as many Japanese firms. In these environments, the respondents often encounter additional obstacles to advancement due to deeply ingrained gender roles and expectations. For instance, Japanese companies frequently exhibit strong male dominance in higher management positions, making it challenging for women to break through the glass ceiling. Women in these companies may need to assert themselves more strongly to gain recognition and advance in their careers. Despite these challenges, the findings indicate that individual experiences vary. Some respondents have successfully navigated the industry by leveraging non-traditional backgrounds or adapting to diverse roles. However, gender disparities are evident, especially at senior leadership levels. Respondents frequently face biases and structural barriers that can impede their progress, particularly in sectors or companies that have not fully embraced diversity and inclusion. Overall, the findings suggest that while there are signs of improvement in some areas, women in the video game industry continue to encounter significant challenges in climbing the career ladder and reaching leadership positions. Addressing issues such as maternity leave, child-related responsibilities, and cultural biases remains crucial for creating a more equitable and supportive environment for female professionals in the industry.

What challenges do you think women commonly face when pursuing careers in male-dominated industries like the video game industry?

The questionnaire highlights several significant challenges that women encounter when pursuing careers in the video game industry. Maternity leave and childcare responsibilities pose considerable obstacles, often leading to a loss of opportunities due to the fast-paced nature of the industry (8/12 respondents). A career break of even one year can be detrimental, with longer absences potentially being nearly impossible to recover from. This impact is exacerbated in environments with quick product cycles, where time away from work can severely hinder career progression. Another major challenge is the scarcity of female talent in technical roles such as development and programming (4/12 respondents). This issue stems from lower female enrollment in relevant educational programs and a lack of female role models, perpetuating a cycle where fewer women enter and succeed in these fields. Additionally, gender bias remains a significant issue. Women often need to demonstrate their abilities more than men to achieve similar recognition and promotions, with performance evaluations frequently skewed in favor of men (5/12 respondents). Cultural and structural barriers also contribute to the challenges

women face. In traditional or hierarchical companies, such as some Japanese firms, women may experience less support for work-life balance and a lack of empathy from male superiors. The work environment can sometimes be unwelcoming or subtly exclusive, further exacerbating these challenges. Moreover, the lack of support networks and mentorship can hinder career advancement, making it difficult for women to navigate and succeed in male-dominated industries.

How do you think the representation of women in leadership roles in the video game industry has evolved over time?

The findings from the questionnaire reveal that the representation of women in leadership roles within the video game industry has shown some progress over time, though challenges persist. In Europe, respondents report an increase in the number of women in middle management positions, but top management roles still predominantly consist of men. The disparity between male and female executives remains significant, with a notable imbalance in executive positions. Efforts to improve gender diversity in leadership vary across companies and regions. Some respondents highlight organizations, such as Microsoft's Xbox division, which have made considerable strides by setting hiring targets for women and fostering inclusive environments. These companies demonstrate a proactive approach to achieving gender balance in leadership roles. In contrast, other respondents note that some companies, particularly in AAA studios, have been slower to adapt, with inconsistent efforts towards gender diversity and inclusion. Regional differences also impact progress. For instance, respondents from Sweden report steady improvement in gender representation, with companies ensuring equal opportunities and addressing salary gaps. Overall, the findings suggest that while there is growing awareness and effort to improve female representation in leadership roles, the pace of change varies widely across different companies and regions, indicating that continued efforts are necessary to achieve greater equity at the highest levels.

Which race would you belong to? And how old are you?

The questionnaire results show a diverse range of respondents in terms of ethnicity and age. The majority are White (8/12 respondents), with ages varying from 25 to 42. Other ethnic backgrounds represented include African American, Asian, and Latina. The sample encompasses a broad spectrum of ages and ethnicities, indicating a varied demographic profile.

6.3 Specific Questions:

Have you encountered any specific obstacles or challenges related to your gender while working in the video game industry? If so, could you share some examples?

The respondents reported a range of gender-related challenges within the video game industry. While some have not yet encountered significant obstacles, others have faced various issues. Early career challenges included initial biases from small companies, where concerns about team dynamics led to reluctance in hiring women (2/12 respondents). These issues, however, seemed less prevalent in larger, more international companies. Gender bias was a recurring theme, with several respondents noting that women often face higher standards for promotions and performance evaluations compared to their male counterparts (9/12 respondents). One respondent described difficulties in being included and valued, highlighting a need to prove oneself more rigorously to achieve promotions. Salary inequality was another notable issue, with multiple respondents reporting insufficient salary increases when promoted to higher roles (6/12 respondents). This required them to actively push for salary reviews to better reflect their new responsibilities. Workplace environments also posed challenges. Some respondents experienced a lack of empathy and support, such as being asked to attend events solely for appearance or facing misunderstandings about physical health issues (4/12 respondents). Additionally, there were instances of being overshadowed by more vocal male colleagues, leading to a sense of undervaluation (2/12 respondents). On the other hand, a few respondents reported positive experiences in inclusive and supportive environments where gender did not present significant barriers (2/12 respondents). However, they acknowledged that such experiences are not universal. Challenges also included a lack of mentorship and empathy from male superiors, affecting their work experience and contributions until these issues were addressed. Overall, the findings reflect a spectrum of experiences, from significant obstacles to supportive work environments, illustrating the diverse nature of gender-related challenges in the video game industry.

How have you navigated or overcome gender-related obstacles in your career in the video game industry?

Respondents shared various strategies and experiences related to overcoming gender-related

challenges in the video game industry. Several emphasized the importance of building strong relationships and a network of allies within the company (3/12 respondents). They highlighted how proactive contributions and seeking support from colleagues and mentors were crucial in navigating obstacles. Persistence and advocacy were also key, with some individuals showcasing their skills and seeking opportunities beyond their immediate roles to address barriers. One respondent found success by creating new roles and career paths within their organization, focusing on their skills and expertise rather than gender-related issues. This approach allowed her to establish a unique position and overcome traditional barriers. Additionally, differences in gender-related challenges based on geographical context were noted, with some regions having more objective processes and others presenting varying levels of difficulty. Gender-related performance bias was a common challenge, where women faced higher scrutiny and had to conform to expected behaviors while dealing with biases related to assertiveness. Some respondents did not encounter significant gender-related challenges, attributing their success to working in inclusive and supportive environments (3/12 respondents). They emphasized the importance of creating an inclusive network and actively participating in professional development (4/12 respondents). For some, overcoming obstacles involved directly addressing issues, such as negotiating salary adjustments or opting to leave if the environment was unsupportive. Overall, the responses reflect a range of experiences, from actively navigating and overcoming gender-related challenges to thriving in environments with fewer such issues. Strategies included building strong networks, persistence, creating unique career opportunities, and adapting approaches based on regional practices (6/12 respondents).

Can you share any experiences where your gender has influenced your interactions or relationships with colleagues or clients in the video game industry?

The in the questionnaire participating woman share a variety of experiences regarding how their gender has influenced their interactions and relationships in the video game industry. Overall, experiences were mixed. Some respondents noted that gender-related dynamics are sometimes subtle but present, such as being underestimated or facing expectations based on gender (3/12 respondents). For instance, one person mentioned feeling the need to maintain a more polished appearance compared to male colleagues, while another found that being the only female in a team led to some inappropriate comments, though there were efforts to adjust behavior. Others observed that gender dynamics could vary significantly depending on the region or company culture (4/12 respondents). For example, some reported that environments with a higher

percentage of women facilitated supportive relationships and collaboration, while others noted regional differences in how gender issues manifested, with some areas exhibiting more traditional or problematic behaviors. A few respondents did not identify specific gender-related experiences, reflecting either a more neutral or positive environment where gender did not appear to significantly impact their professional interactions (2/12 respondents). Overall, the findings indicate a range of gender-related experiences in the industry, from formal efforts to achieve gender balance to more personal, subtle influences in day-to-day interactions.

Have you observed any differences in career progression or advancement opportunities between men and women in the video game industry? If yes, what factors do you think contribute to these differences?

The findings from the master thesis questionnaire reveal varied perspectives on the differences in career progression and advancement opportunities between men and women in the video game industry often depending on the country of origin. Several respondents observed noticeable disparities in career progression, often attributing them to factors like maternity leave, unconscious bias, and the industry's demanding work culture. For instance, some respondents pointed out that women are underrepresented in senior leadership roles, which affects mentorship and networking opportunities (4/12 respondents). Others highlighted that informal networking events, crucial for career growth, are often male dominated, making it harder for women to participate and advance. Performance bias was also cited as a significant issue, where women felt they had to work harder to prove themselves and comply with stereotypical expectations. This bias often manifested in women being perceived as less assertive or less confident in their capabilities, leading to fewer opportunities for promotion (2/12 respondents). Some respondents noted that women were less likely to apply for higher-level positions, even when equally or better qualified than their male counterparts, due to self-doubt or a lack of confidence. On the other hand, a few respondents worked in environments where efforts were being made to reduce gender disparities, such as transparent career progression processes and initiatives to support women's confidence and visibility in the workplace. These environments reportedly fostered a more inclusive culture, helping to mitigate some of the challenges women face. In summary, while some progress has been made in addressing gender disparities in the video game industry, many women still face significant obstacles in career progression, influenced by biases, work-life balance challenges, and cultural dynamics within the industry.

6.4 Conclusion Questions:

In your opinion, what strategies or initiatives could be implemented to improve gender diversity and inclusion in the video game industry?

The respondents offered a variety of strategies and initiatives to improve gender diversity and inclusion in the video game industry, reflecting a broad range of approaches and priorities. Several respondents emphasized the importance of mentorship and sponsorship programs to support women and non-binary individuals in their career advancement (5/12 respondents). They suggested that senior leaders should actively guide and support these groups, helping them navigate the industry's challenges. The creation of women's networks within companies was also highlighted as a way to share tips, tricks, and inspiration, providing a supportive community. Unconscious bias training was frequently mentioned as a necessary step to foster a more inclusive workplace. Respondents suggested that regular training sessions could help employees recognize and mitigate biases, and some even recommended the inclusion of bias interrupters in performance and promotion discussions to catch and challenge any biased decisions. Flexible work policies were also seen as crucial, particularly for women balancing work and family responsibilities. Offering options like remote work and flexible hours was identified as a game-changer for those with children, enabling them to maintain active roles in leadership positions (4/12 respondents). Diverse hiring practices were proposed to ensure that more women and non-binary individuals are considered for roles within the industry. This includes having diverse candidate pools and representation on hiring panels. Transparent pay processes and regular checks to address gender pay gaps were also recommended as key initiatives. Additionally, some respondents advocated for the establishment of quotas for women in companies, arguing that this could drive more equitable representation in top management positions. (2/12 respondents). The visibility and promotion of women in leadership roles were seen as important for inspiring others and demonstrating the potential for career growth. Lastly, respondents underscored the importance of company-wide initiatives, such as tracking diversity data, promoting inclusive networking opportunities, and providing professional development targeted at women. These strategies aim to create a more supportive and equitable environment, ensuring that merit, rather than gender, drives career advancement.

Overall, while there is a recognition that societal issues contribute to gender inequality, the respondents generally agreed that targeted efforts within the industry could significantly improve gender diversity and inclusion.

What advice would you give to young women aspiring to pursue careers in male-dominated industries?

The participants provided a range of advice for young women aspiring to pursue careers in male-dominated industries, emphasizing self-confidence, resilience, and the importance of mentorship. Many respondents highlighted the importance of not being intimidated and standing your ground. They advised young women to trust their abilities and not let themselves be silenced. Building self-confidence and overcoming imposter syndrome were recurring themes, with several respondents stressing that women should believe in their worth and capabilities. Mentorship was frequently mentioned as a valuable resource. Seeking guidance from experienced professionals can provide support, advice, and networking opportunities, which are crucial for navigating male-dominated environments. Networking, in general, was also encouraged to open doors to new opportunities and build a supportive community. Persistence and resilience were key themes, with respondents advising women to stay determined and not give up, even in the face of challenges or setbacks. Some emphasized that things are improving over time, so perseverance is essential. Other respondents recommended staying focused on professional growth by continuing to learn and develop skills, staying updated with industry trends, and advocating for oneself in the workplace. They also suggested making accomplishments visible to managers and educating oneself on biases that may affect women in the workplace. Lastly, forming internal support networks with other women in the industry was seen as important for finding solidarity, sharing experiences, and empowering one another to create a more inclusive environment. Overall, the advice centers on self-belief, continuous learning, and the power of mentorship and community in overcoming the challenges of male-dominated industries.

How do you see the future of gender diversity and inclusion in the video game industry evolving?

The respondents provided diverse perspectives on the future of gender diversity and inclusion in the video game industry, reflecting a mix of optimism, cautious hope, and concern. Several

respondents expressed a positive outlook, noting that the industry is gradually moving in the right direction (9/12 respondents). They highlighted that increasing awareness and initiatives such as mentorship programs, unconscious bias training, and diverse hiring practices are contributing to a more inclusive environment. The growing visibility of women in leadership roles and the expansion of support networks were also seen as encouraging signs. Additionally, the adoption of flexible work policies was mentioned as a factor that could help women balance their careers with personal responsibilities. Some respondents were more cautious, acknowledging that while progress is being made, it may be slower than desired. They emphasized that meaningful change requires the dedication of top management and a continued focus on improving company cultures. In particular, respondents mentioned the importance of having more conscious women in leadership positions to drive these efforts forward.

On the other hand, a few respondents were skeptical about the future, pointing out that societal attitudes and cultural differences play a significant role in shaping progress (3/12 respondents). For example, while some countries like Sweden were seen as making positive strides, other regions, such as Italy and Japan, were viewed as lagging behind due to deeply ingrained societal norms and resistance to change. Finally, one respondent expressed concern that broader societal trends might reverse progress, fearing a regression to more traditional gender roles. Overall, the responses reflect a mixed but cautiously optimistic view of the future, with recognition that while strides are being made, significant challenges remain in achieving true gender diversity and inclusion across the global video game industry.

6.5 Closing Questions

Is there anything else you would like to add or share about your experiences in the video game industry as a woman?

The findings from the questionnaire reveal a diverse range of experiences for women in the video game industry, with respondents reporting both challenges and successes. While some respondents have encountered significant obstacles, such as being silenced or having their voices dismissed due to the industry's male-dominated demographics, others have thrived in supportive environments where diversity and inclusion are prioritized. One key theme emerging from the findings is the importance of resilience and self-advocacy. Respondents emphasize the need for women to stand their ground, seek mentorship, and not shy away from making their

voices heard. The value of strong networks and role models is also highlighted, as these connections provide essential guidance and support, helping women navigate their careers more effectively. Despite the challenges identified, there is a sense of optimism among respondents. Many believe that with continued effort, the industry can evolve towards greater gender diversity and inclusion. Some respondents have found success by challenging stereotypes, such as excelling in gaming competitions, which serves as a reminder that talent and skill are not determined by gender. Ultimately, the findings suggest that while the path for women in the video game industry may not always be easy, there is a strong emphasis on the power of persistence, creativity, and mutual support. By fostering these qualities, respondents believe that women can not only advance their own careers but also contribute to a more inclusive and diverse industry.

7. Discussion:

7.1 Scientific Contribution:

The findings from this master's thesis questionnaire provide valuable insights into women's experiences in the video game industry, highlighting key areas of concern and opportunities for improvement. This research contributes to a broader understanding of gender dynamics in a male-dominated field, offering empirical data that can inform policy and drive organizational change. While the study confirms many areas discussed in the literature review, it also generates new scientific knowledge by highlighting differences in women's career trajectories based on the cultural contexts in which they work. By including international participants, this thesis offers a unique perspective on the career experiences of women on a global scale. Additionally, it reveals the impact of other factors, such as cultures, race, age on career trajectories and perceived job satisfaction.

7.1.1 Enhancements of existing literature:

The master's thesis findings contribute significantly to the literature on the video game industry in various ways, especially in terms of diversity, gender representation, career progression, and company culture. The data highlights the multidisciplinary nature of the video game industry, showcasing its professionals' wide range of educational and professional backgrounds. This diversity underscores the industry's ability to integrate various skill sets, from technical to creative fields, thereby enhancing innovation. These findings reinforce existing theories previously mentioned in chapter 4.2.5 Educational pathways that many industry employees have STEM-related backgrounds. However, they also reveal the presence of individuals with business or psychological expertise, pointing to a broader educational variation.

Gender representation and leadership remain significant challenges, particularly at senior levels. The study provides empirical evidence to the literature mentioned in chapter 4.1.1 Underrepresentation of Women in the Industry by D'Anastasio, of women's underrepresentation in top management positions, with systemic barriers like maternity leave and cultural norms being key factors. This insight is critical to ongoing discussions about the glass ceiling effect in the technology and creative sectors, providing data to support more substantial diversity and inclusion efforts. The research also identifies specific obstacles to women's career progression,

including biases in performance evaluations, networking challenges, and the impact of maternity leave. By documenting these barriers, the study contributes to a better understanding of the systemic issues that hinder women's advancement, offering a foundation for developing targeted interventions such as mentorship programs and more equitable performance evaluations. Additionally, the findings shed light on the persistent gender pay gap within the industry. Several respondents reported salary disparities compared to their male counterparts in similar roles, with inadequate compensation even after promotions. This issue is more pronounced in specific regions and companies where traditional gender roles and biases are deeply ingrained. These findings align with the literature discussed in chapter 4.1.2 Gender Pay Gap, underscoring the need for more transparent and equitable pay practices and highlighting the importance of addressing systemic factors contributing to these disparities. Networking and mentorship are identified as crucial for overcoming gender-related challenges, aligning with existing literature. The study emphasizes the importance of social capital and professional networks in supporting women's careers in male-dominated industries, suggesting that organizations need to create more opportunities for women to build networks and access mentors, which are vital for professional development and career advancement. The findings match with the literature from the journal article "Gender and Cooperativeness: Evidence from Strategic Alliances," discussed in chapter 4.4.5 Collaboration and Networking (Francis et al., 2019). Company culture plays a pivotal role in shaping women's experiences and career trajectories in the video game industry. The findings highlight that diverse and inclusive company cultures significantly impact job satisfaction, career advancement, and overall well-being for female employees. Organizations prioritizing diversity and inclusion foster supportive environments where women are more likely to thrive (see section 4.4.2 Organizational Policies). Conversely, less inclusive cultures lead to slower career progression, reduced networking and mentorship opportunities, and lower job satisfaction. The study's international scope adds a nuanced perspective on how cultural differences across regions impact inclusivity, offering practical insights for global companies.

Lastly, the research identifies work-life balance as a key factor influencing the retention and career progression of women in the industry. As discussed in section 4.2.3 Family Responsibilities, Maternity leave and associated career disadvantages were major concerns among respondents. The findings suggest that companies with flexible work arrangements, supportive maternity leave policies, and a strong emphasis on work-life balance experience higher job satisfaction among female employees. In contrast, a lack of work-life balance is a significant barrier to career advancement, particularly in regions or companies with long

working hours and high-intensity environments. This imbalance often forces women to choose between career progression and personal life, leading to burnout, decreased job satisfaction, or even decisions to leave the industry.

Overall, these findings offer valuable contributions to the understanding of diversity, gender dynamics, career progression, and company culture within the video game industry, providing a robust foundation for future research and practical applications in fostering more inclusive and equitable work environments.

7.1.2 New scientific contribution to the Discussion

The study makes significant scientific contributions to the ongoing discussion about gender dynamics within the global video game industry. It highlights the global representation and geographic variation in gender-related challenges, alongside cultural and structural barriers, and their impact on work environment and job satisfaction.

The inclusion of respondents from multiple countries emphasizes the global nature of the video game industry and reveals the varying cultural contexts in which gender dynamics unfold. This geographical diversity allows for a comparative analysis of gender-related challenges and progress across different regions, offering a more nuanced understanding of how local cultures and corporate practices influence gender equity in the workplace. The findings show significant differences between nations and company cultures. They enhance the literature discussed in section 2.1, Gender Disparities, by illuminating the gender management literature more deeply. Countries like Japan and Italy are perceived as quite traditional, with high levels of inequality between men and women. Respondents noted that leadership roles were predominantly occupied by men, with women experiencing significant disadvantages and biases due to their gender. Japanese company cultures were particularly highlighted as negative examples, scoring high in gender inequality, which might be influenced by the fact that many multinational video game companies like Sony, Nintendo, and Sega originate in Japan and export their traditional company culture worldwide. On the positive side, participants from countries like Sweden and Germany reported few or no differences in career trajectories between men and women, highlighting societies and company environments with low levels of inequality.

The research also underscores the cultural and structural barriers that women face in different regions, particularly in hierarchical companies with traditional gender roles. This contribution is crucial as it provides evidence of how deep-rooted cultural norms can impact gender equity, even in global industries like video games. The findings suggest that efforts to promote gender

diversity must be tailored to specific cultural contexts to be effective. In cultures like Japan, which are traditionally male-dominated, the transition toward a more equal company culture appears to be significantly lacking. Additionally, smaller game studios tend to have higher structural barriers and are more resistant to cultural change. Some female respondents indicated that smaller studios felt threatened by the presence of female employees, viewing it as a challenge to team cohesion. This finding contrasts with the widely held belief that start-ups are adaptive and innovative. This stays in contrast to the traditional literature, which indicates a positive correlation between company size and internationalization with greater gender equality among employees. Moreover, the varied experiences of women in the video game industry, ranging from high job satisfaction to significant challenges, provide a comprehensive view of the factors that contribute to either a supportive or hostile work environment. The research enhances the existing body of knowledge on job satisfaction by linking it to gender dynamics and inclusivity, indicating that companies with more inclusive practices tend to see higher levels of job satisfaction among female employees.

Finally, the questionnaire revealed a correlation between race and perceived gender equality in the workplace. Women who identified as African American, Chinese, or Latina reported a more negative outlook on their career trajectories in the video game industry and experienced more gender-related biases. In contrast, women who identified as White or European generally had more positive industry experiences. While they also faced gender-related challenges, such as the pay gap and disadvantages related to maternity leave, they encountered fewer instances of direct discrimination, such as offensive jokes and comments. These findings reinforce the significant correlation between gender, race, and women's career experiences in the industry.

7.2 Managerial contribution:

The findings from the questionnaire offer valuable insights into the challenges and opportunities for enhancing diversity, job satisfaction, and career progression for women in the video game industry. These insights suggest several practical actions that managers can take to create a more inclusive and equitable work environment. Managers should actively work to improve diversity across all levels of the organization, particularly in leadership roles. This can be achieved by revising recruitment strategies to attract a more diverse talent pool and ensuring that job postings and hiring processes are designed to appeal to women and individuals from underrepresented backgrounds. The findings from the questionnaire, consistent with the literature discussed in Section 4.4.2 on Organizational Policies, indicate that creating diverse

candidate pipelines and involving diverse panels in the hiring process can help ensure fairer recruitment outcomes. Moreover, implementing a quota for females in leadership and also setting/tracking gender diversity targets at various levels of the organization can help maintain focus and accountability. To support women's career growth, managers should establish clear and transparent career progression pathways. Leadership training programs tailored to women and underrepresented groups can help prepare them for senior roles. Additionally, managers should advocate for flexible work arrangements, such as remote work and flexible hours, to accommodate the unique challenges women may face, particularly related to maternity and childcare responsibilities. Ensuring that career breaks, such as maternity leave, do not hinder long-term career progression is crucial for retaining top female talent (see section 4.2.2 Work-life Balance). To ensure smooth career growth Managers must be proactive in addressing gender-related challenges, including higher performance standards, salary inequality, and workplace bias. Regular unconscious bias training for all employees can help create awareness and foster a more inclusive culture. Transparent performance evaluations and promotion processes are essential to ensure that women are judged fairly and given equal opportunities for advancement. Implementing a transparent pay structure is another critical step. Regular salary audits and reviews should be conducted to identify and close any gender pay gaps, ensuring that women are compensated fairly for their contributions. This involves making salary ranges for different roles publicly available and conducting regular pay equity reviews. By providing employees with clear information about how salaries are determined and ensuring that pay decisions are based on objective criteria, organizations can build trust and demonstrate their commitment to fair compensation. These findings match with literature discussed in section 4.4.6 Monitoring and Accountability.

The questionnaire findings suggest that fostering a supportive and inclusive work environment is crucial for enhancing job satisfaction and retention among women. Managers should foster open communication, where employees feel comfortable discussing challenges related to gender or other diversity issues. Establishing formal mentorship and sponsorship programs can provide women with the guidance and support needed to navigate their careers. These programs should pair women with mentors or sponsors who can advocate for them, help them build networks, and provide career advice.

Managers should advocate for systemic change within their organizations and across the industry. This includes supporting industry-wide initiatives that promote gender diversity, such as setting benchmarks for female representation at all levels and sharing best practices. Participation in industry forums and diversity groups can also help drive broader change and

create a more inclusive industry culture. Laying the foundation for successful industry change must begin in early childhood. It is crucial to expose young women to STEM fields early on. Educational and outreach initiatives play a vital role in encouraging more women to pursue careers in male-dominated industries. Partnering with educational institutions to promote STEM subjects to girls from a young age is essential for fostering long-term change (see section 4.4.4 Educational and Outreach Initiatives). Managers must continuously monitor and adapt their strategies to ensure they remain effective. This involves tracking diversity metrics, soliciting employee feedback, and adjusting initiatives as needed to address emerging challenges. Recognizing and addressing regional differences in gender diversity is also crucial, as cultural and societal factors can influence the effectiveness of diversity efforts in different markets. Additionally, managers should implement an open-door policy and foster a climate of trust, where employees feel comfortable bringing up their concerns and have confidence that they will be appropriately addressed. By taking these actions, managers can create a more inclusive, supportive, and equitable workplace for women in the video game industry, ultimately leading to better retention, higher job satisfaction, and a more diverse and innovative industry.

7.3 Limitations:

The findings from the master thesis on areas like the working environment, job satisfaction, career trajectories, and gender-related challenges faced by women in the video game industry offer valuable insights, but several limitations must be considered when interpreting these results. One major limitation is the sample size and the limited representation it provides. The findings are based on a relatively small and specific group of women, which may not fully represent the broader population of women in the industry. Scholars suggest that a larger sample size improves the representativeness of the results for the wider population.

Another point to consider is geographic bias. Although this thesis's strength lies in providing an international overview of female career trajectories, it also represents a major limitation. Geographic bias may affect respondents' experiences, reflecting regional trends rather than industry-wide patterns. Consequently, this bias could lead to drawing conclusions about entire regions based on only a few responses.

Additionally, the voluntary nature of participation introduces self-selection bias, as women with particularly positive or negative experiences may be more inclined to participate, potentially skewing the results. The subjectivity of responses is another concern, as the findings rely on

personal experiences and perceptions that can vary widely among respondents. This subjectivity makes it difficult to generalize the findings or draw definitive conclusions about the prevalence or impact of specific issues. Furthermore, the questionnaire's focus on qualitative data, such as personal anecdotes, lacks the statistical rigor of quantitative data, limiting the ability to generalize the findings.

There is also a risk of overemphasizing gender-related challenges due to the focus of the questionnaire. This emphasis might overlook other important factors influencing the working environment and job satisfaction in the video game industry, such as industry trends, broader economic conditions, or company culture. The scope of the inquiry is limited to specific topics related to gender diversity and inclusion, potentially missing other relevant aspects that could provide a more comprehensive understanding of women's experiences in the industry. Social desirability bias may have influenced the respondents' answers, particularly in areas related to diversity and inclusion, leading to underreporting of negative experiences or overreporting of positive ones. Additionally, the variability in company policies and cultures makes it difficult to draw uniform conclusions, as organizations differ in size, management styles, and cultural backgrounds, which can significantly impact their approach to gender diversity.

The rapidly evolving nature of the video game industry presents another limitation. Ongoing changes in technology, business models, and societal attitudes may render the findings quickly outdated, particularly when making longitudinal comparisons or predicting future trends. The broader societal influences, such as attitudes toward gender roles, legal frameworks, and economic conditions, heavily impact the working environment and career opportunities for women in the industry. These external factors may not be fully accounted for in the findings, leading to an incomplete understanding of the challenges and opportunities women face.

Lastly, the intersectionality addressed in the questionnaire is a significant area of concern, despite being one of its strengths. While it highlights potential correlations between factors such as race and age, it may not fully capture the complex intersectional experiences of women who face multiple forms of discrimination (e.g., based on race, age, or sexual orientation). The questionnaire provides an overview of the presence of various forms of discrimination but does not specify which factor has the strongest influence. This limitation could hinder a deeper understanding of how different identities interact and shape experiences in the industry.

In conclusion, while the findings provide valuable insights into the experiences of women in the video game industry, they should be interpreted with caution due to the limitations of sample size, representation, subjectivity, and the scope of the study. A more comprehensive investigation with a larger, more diverse sample, quantitative data, and a broader focus could

yield a more accurate and generalizable understanding of the challenges and opportunities for women in this industry.

8. Conclusion

This thesis explores the career trajectories of women in male-dominated industries, with a focus on the video game industry. It provides valuable insights into the progress, challenges, and opportunities that women encounter as they navigate their professional paths on an international scale. The research makes a significant contribution to the existing literature on gender diversity and inclusion in management, particularly by highlighting the unique challenges and experiences faced by women in traditionally male-dominated sectors.

The thesis identifies key barriers for women in the industry, such as the lack of mentorship, which is crucial for career development. Mentorship provides women with guidance, support, and access to opportunities that can propel them into leadership positions. Despite this, leadership roles in the video game industry remain predominantly occupied by men, with women often facing obstacles to advancement that their male counterparts do not. A major challenge is the persistence of gender biases and stereotypes, which are prevalent and manifest in various ways, from subtle microaggressions to overt discrimination. These biases are especially pronounced in regions with strong masculine cultures, where traditional gender roles are more rigidly defined. In such environments, women may be perceived as less competent or less committed to their careers, particularly if they have caregiving responsibilities. The gender pay gap remains a widespread issue in the industry, with significant variations depending on the cultural context. The research reveals a prevalent culture of long working hours in many parts of the video game industry, disproportionately affecting women, especially those with family responsibilities. This culture not only hinders women's career progression but can also lead to burnout and attrition, further reducing the representation of women in the industry.

A closely related topic addressed in the literature and supported by the findings is the importance of work-life balance and flexible working hours. These factors are increasingly crucial for many employees, allowing individuals to balance their professional and personal lives. This is particularly valuable for women, who often bear more family and caregiving responsibilities, making flexible work arrangements essential for their career sustainability and advancement.

By analyzing these trajectories on an international scale, this research contributes new scientific knowledge to the existing body of literature on gender diversity and inclusion in the workplace, particularly within creative and technology-driven industries. The findings highlight a complex and nuanced landscape where significant strides have been made towards gender diversity and

inclusion in some regions. In contrast, others lag significantly behind, particularly in countries with deeply ingrained masculine cultures like Japan. Companies in some regions have increasingly recognized that fostering a diverse and inclusive workplace is a moral imperative and a strategic business decision that can drive creativity, innovation, and financial success. Introducing diversity initiatives, targeted recruitment practices, and inclusive workplace policies has led to a more balanced gender ratio in specific companies, particularly in Western countries. The benefits of gender diversity are well-documented. A diverse workforce brings a range of perspectives, experiences, and ideas, which can enhance problem-solving and decision-making processes. In the creative industries, such as video gaming, diversity is precious as it can lead to more varied and innovative content that resonates with a broader audience. By incorporating diverse viewpoints into the game design process, companies can create games that appeal to different demographic groups, ultimately expanding their market reach. However, this thesis also reveals that progress in gender diversity and inclusion is not uniform globally. Change has been slower in countries with solid masculine cultures, such as Japan. In these regions, traditional gender roles are more deeply entrenched, and the workplace culture tends to be less supportive of gender diversity initiatives. Women in these societies often face more significant challenges in advancing their careers, as the prevailing corporate culture may be less conducive to their professional growth and inclusion. Despite the progress made in achieving gender diversity at the entry and mid-career levels in certain regions, the findings suggest that significant challenges remain, particularly in advancing women into leadership roles.

Another critical contribution of this thesis is its exploration of how intersecting factors, such as race, ethnicity, and other social identities, compound women's challenges in the video game industry. The findings indicate that women of color, for example, often experience multiple layers of discrimination, both as women and as members of racial or ethnic minority groups. This intersectional discrimination can further limit their career opportunities, making it even more difficult for them to advance to leadership positions. In countries with less diverse workforces, women from minority backgrounds may face additional obstacles, including exclusion from informal networks, a lack of role models, and cultural misunderstandings. These factors can exacerbate the challenges of gender discrimination, leading to even greater disparities in career outcomes. The thesis underscores the importance of considering these intersecting factors when developing strategies to promote diversity and inclusion, as

addressing gender inequality in isolation may not be sufficient to create an equitable work environment for all women.

While the challenges are significant, the findings also highlight opportunities for change that can pave the way for more equitable and inclusive career trajectories for women in the video game industry. One critical focus area should be dismantling the structural barriers that impede women's advancement into leadership roles. This requires a concerted effort to challenge and change the cultural norms and biases that perpetuate gender inequality, particularly in regions with strong masculine cultures. Companies should invest in training programs that raise awareness of unconscious biases and provide tools for mitigating their impact. Additionally, organizations should adopt transparent and equitable promotion practices that ensure women have equal access to leadership opportunities, regardless of gender, race, or other intersecting identities. Mentorship and sponsorship programs must also be prioritized to support women's career development. Companies should establish formal mentorship programs that pair women with senior leaders who can provide guidance, advocacy, and support. These programs should create a pipeline of female talent ready to step into leadership positions when opportunities arise. Flexible work arrangements are another critical component of an inclusive workplace. By offering remote, hybrid, and flexible work options, companies can accommodate the diverse needs of their employees, particularly women with caregiving responsibilities. These arrangements help to level the playing field by allowing women to balance their professional and personal lives more effectively, reducing the likelihood of burnout and attrition.

Furthermore, companies should foster a culture of inclusion where diverse perspectives are valued and respected. This includes creating a work environment where women feel empowered to voice their ideas and contribute to decision-making processes. Inclusive leadership practices, where leaders actively seek out and consider diverse viewpoints, can help to create a more equitable workplace and improve organizational outcomes.

This research provides valuable insights into the current state of women's career trajectories in the video game industry across different cultural contexts. However, further research is needed to explore women's experiences in different industries, particularly in regions with strong masculine cultures. Additionally, longitudinal studies that track women's career progression over time provide a more comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing their advancement in this dynamic and rapidly changing industry.

In conclusion, while the video game industry has made strides towards greater gender diversity and inclusion, particularly in certain regions, there is still much work to be done, especially in countries with strong masculine cultures. The persistent challenges that women face in advancing their careers, compounded by intersecting factors such as race and ethnicity, underscore the need for targeted strategies to address the structural and cultural barriers that exist within the industry. By fostering a more inclusive and equitable work environment, the industry can not only support the career aspirations of women but also drive innovation and growth in an increasingly competitive global market. It's important to remember that the journey towards gender equality in the video game industry is ongoing, and it's a goal that is within reach with sustained effort and commitment. This thesis, by examining these issues on an international scale, contributes valuable new knowledge that can inform future efforts to create a more diverse and inclusive industry.

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10. Appendix

Responded Nr. 1

Introduction Questions:

Which company in the Video game do you work for and what is your position?

- Nintendo Europe, contact operation coordinator

In which country are you working?

-

Frankfurt, Germany

How long have you been working in the Video game Industry?

- 4 months

Can you provide some background on your education and professional experience prior to entering the video game industry?

- Bachelor in Political Science
- Duale Degree Master: Economics and International Security
- Master: International Relations
- Digitalization Consultant in the public sector Italy

What inspired or motivated you to pursue a career in the video game industry?

- Nintendo as a company (Previous video game experience)
- Position is similar to the previous work -> internal digitalization of the company.
- Move to private Industry.

Can you tell me about your career journey in the video game industry? How did you get started, and what positions have you held?

- Only this position
- Applying for the team lead position (internal at Nintendo)

General Questions:

How varied is the working environment in your company?

- Many different backgrounds
- Ratio men / woman nearly 50/50
- International teams (cultures, heritage)
- Age wise very mixed (slightly older people)

How did you experienced working in the video game industry and how is your Job satisfaction?

- High job satisfaction
- Wants to grow more in form of responsibilities/ Internally.
- Grow within the company (seems to observe no disadvantages of gender, too early to tell)

Can you describe the typical career trajectory for women in the video game industry, based on your observations and experiences?

- Same for men and female
- Enter in a Junior position, slowly grow, become senior, team lead, assistant manager, manager, and then senior level (director, partner etc.)
- Company id divided in 3 company's (Nintendo Japan, Nintendo Europe, Nintendo US)
-> Nintendo Japan still quite hierarchical and highly male based (only Japanese Males)
->For Nintendo US no experience

What challenges do you think women commonly face when pursuing careers in male-dominated industries like the video game industry?

- Having children (Time disadvantage of at least one year/ losing opportunities)
- fast-paced environment (quick product cycles)
- Missing one year is lot, up to 3 years impossible.
- Besides that, no difference between man and woman

How do you think the representation of women in leadership roles in the video game industry has evolved over time?

- In Europe seeing more woman in middle management position (50/50)
- Top management all men -> change is happening now, might change in the future. (90/10)

Which race would you belong to? And how old are you?

- 31 years old, white

Specific Questions:

Have you encountered any specific obstacles or challenges related to your gender while working in the video game industry? If so, could you share some examples?

- Too early to tell, for now not yet

How have you navigated or overcome gender-related obstacles in your career in the video game industry?

- German market very objective, no unappropriated questions during application
- Might change depending on country.

Can you share any experiences where your gender has influenced your interactions or relationships with colleagues or clients in the video game industry?

- Team has been restructured to have 50/50 ratio.

Have you observed any differences in career progression or advancement opportunities between men and women in the video game industry? If yes, what factors do you think contribute to these differences?

- Not yet, if difference might be only due to children (maternity leave)

Conclusion Questions:

In your opinion, what strategies or initiatives could be implemented to improve gender diversity and inclusion in the video game industry?

- More female Top-Management position
- Merit should make your career grow, not gender.

What advice would you give to young women aspiring to pursue careers in male-dominated industries?

- Continue what they want to do, not be stopped by prejudice
- Development sector male dominated, woman is seen in a different way, still woman should not be discouraged by this

How do you see the future of gender diversity and inclusion in the video game industry evolving?

- Will inhere to become more inclusive, further equality in higher management.
- Germany on a good way, but can be further improved
- Structure in Japan/ society totally different -> might not adapt

Closing Questions:

Is there anything else you would like to add or share about your experiences in the video game industry as a woman?

- Men are not better in gaming (won Mario kart tournament)

Thank you for sharing your insights and experiences!

Responded Nr. 2

Introduction Questions:

Which company in the Video game do you work for and what is your position?

- Sony Electronics
- Customer Marketing Specialist, as from April 1st I will be a Product Manager.

In which country do you work?

- Belgium

How long have you been working in the Video game Industry?

- 1.5 years

Can you provide some background on your education and professional experience prior to entering the video game industry?

- Education:
 - o Bachelor's in science and international Business: Maastricht University
 - o MDA in Business Administration: Global Business University Europe
- Internships:
 - o Brand Manager Intern: Unilever Home Care
 - o Category & Business Analytics intern: PepsiCo
- Work experience
 - o Assistant Supply Manager Co-pack: Unilever, Lipton
 - o Junior Brand Manager: Unilever, Dove
- No prior experience in the gaming industry beforehand. All experience was FMCG based.
 - o Customer Marketing Specialist: Sony
 - o Product Manager: Sony

What inspired or motivated you to pursue a career in the video game industry?

- Change in horizons, FMCG industry was too competitive to my liking. I wanted to explore the rapid advancements in technology and how consumer electronics companies keep up with this.

Can you tell me about your career journey in the video game industry? How did you get started, and what positions have you held?

- I started as a customer marketing specialist within Sony for the personal entertainment category, this means headphones, speakers and gaming. The gaming part I am responsible for is Inzone (gaming monitors & headsets).
- As from April 1st I am promoted to a Product Manager role for Home Entertainment so moving away from Personal Entertainment and gaming to TV & Soundbar. However, within our TV range we promote the “best for gaming” experience.

General Questions:

How varied is the working environment in your company?

- As we work on overarching categories and not product specific the job varies a lot, from budgeting, to forecasting to marketing activities.
- How did you experience working in the video game industry and how is your Job satisfaction?
- Not 100% focused on gaming, but I do really enjoy the company, people are more “chill” than in the FMCG industry personality wise. However, work pressure wise, Sony remains a Japanese company with very high standards, therefore everything must be meticulous. Overall, I much prefer this industry compared to FMCG.

Can you describe the typical career trajectory for women in the video game industry, based on your observations and experiences?

- In this industry and especially Japanese companies it is very hard for women to walk their way up the ladder. You really need to stand for yourself and show what you are capable of to stand a chance. To put this into other words, I am the first woman from customer marketing to go into a product manager role in the Benelux. Furthermore, this role has been out of Belgium for 8 years and I have been able to stand my ground and bring it back.

What challenges do you think women commonly face when pursuing careers in male-dominated industries like the video game industry?

- Women talent is often hidden behind male talent.
- Less transparency towards women
- Salary discrimination
- Male empowered work environment

How do you think the representation of women in leadership roles in the video game industry has evolved over time?

- It is indeed getting better over time and more and more companies are including women hiring targets in the management hiring KPI's to allow for a more equal work environment. However, we are still far behind. Within Sony SBNL there are about 15 women for 50 men.

Which race would you belong to? And how old are you?

- White ethnic race
- 25 years old

Specific Questions – Experience and Obstacles:

Have you encountered any specific obstacles or challenges related to your gender while working in the video game industry? If so, could you share some examples?

- Yes, initially I wanted to go for the Product Manager role Personal Entertainment as this is the overarching category, I am already familiar with. However, management were scared that I did not have the “arch” of what it takes & that I would fall into a burnout. They quickly realized that was not valid and promoted me for the home entertainment role.

How have you navigated or overcome gender-related obstacles in your career in the video game industry?

- Yes, I am the first women and even first employee from customer marketing to be promoted to a product manager role within Sony SBNL.
- Can you share any experiences where your gender has influenced your interactions or relationships with colleagues or clients in the video game industry?
- Luckily in Belgium this doesn't happen and all colleagues really view each other as the same. However, in the Netherlands, there are a few macho male men that have multiple times in meetings undervalued women and given the “dirty” work to them or made inappropriate comments.

Have you observed any differences in career progression or advancement opportunities between men and women in the video game industry? If yes, what factors do you think contribute to these differences?

- Men tend to progress a lot quicker than women and are given the chance before women are. However, if you stand your ground and show what you are capable of, of course this is not a barrier.

Conclusion Questions:

In your opinion, what strategies or initiatives could be implemented to improve gender diversity and inclusion in the video game industry?

- Minimum quota of women in the company
- Women's network within the company – this has been done at Sony and all women provide tips & tricks to progression. We also have inspirational speakers.

What advice would you give to young women aspiring to pursue careers in male-dominated industries?

- If you really want it is possible, so don't give up too quickly.
- Things take time but they are getting better.

How do you see the future of gender diversity and inclusion in the video game industry evolving?

- If companies work towards improvement, it can get better however it requires the dedication of top management.

Closing Questions:

Is there anything else you would like to add or share about your experiences in the video game industry as a woman?

- /

Thank you for sharing your insights and experiences!

Responded Nr 3.

Introduction Questions:

Which company in the Video game do you work for and what is your position?

- Company King; position Assoc. Director Agile coach

In which country are you working?

- Barcelona, Spain

How long have you been working in the Video game Industry?

- 9,5 years

Can you provide some background on your education and professional experience prior to entering the video game industry?

- I did a Bachelor in Computer Science. I was working as Software Engineer for 8 years, then as Engineering Manager before entering the gaming industry.

What inspired or motivated you to pursue a career in the video game industry?

- The main motivation was King culture, characterized for the caring in growing the employees and work life balance. Second thing was that I enjoyed playing video games.

Can you tell me about your career journey in the video game industry? How did you get started, and what positions have you held?

- I started in the industry when I joined King 9,5y ago. I joined as a Scrum Master working embedded in one team (facilitating Scrum rituals, caring about the team dynamics and their processes), then I grew and became Agile coach working with leaders and across teams. I worked for different departments so I could learn from different challenges and teams. Until where I am today supporting the franchise with two game studios, working with leaders and across teams in their evolution journey to become healthy and high performing orgs.

General Questions:

How varied is the working environment in your company?

- It's a big company, so each department/studio is very different, microcultures under the umbrella of the King culture. That was nice for me as moving from one department/studio to the other allowed me to grow in my experience. I enjoyed the varied experiences of working with engineering teams, then game teams, people and leaders from different cultural backgrounds, different race and gender among other aspects of diversity.

How did you experience working in the video game industry and how is your job satisfaction?

- My experience in general has been very good, I've felt valued and recognized. With growing opportunities and work-life balance. There was only one challenging moment in a previous studio where I felt the environment was not inclusive enough, some leaders pushing people too much to comply with deadlines and that was detrimental to the team's sustainability. In my role I was challenging that approach and I felt I was not listened to, so at the end I decided to move to another studio in which the situation was much better. I also feel since the Activision Blizzard scandal went public there is lots of efforts to make the working environment much more inclusive, listening and fostering a speak-up culture.

Can you describe the typical career trajectory for women in the video game industry, based on your observations and experiences?

- Typical career trajectory is to start in an internship as most of them are coming from universities that King has alliances with. Then they become full-time employees in junior positions. Over time they become regular and seniors. From senior to principal and even higher than that's when I see the ceiling glass, I've worked for departments in which that step was almost impossible. I also found myself being in this level for almost 4 years, so the more higher you want to go, the more difficult it is. Top leadership in my business unit is becoming more aware of this challenge for women, for there are still many male managers who hold performance bias affecting women, and that has been my experience as well, as most of my time at King I had male managers.

What challenges do you think women commonly face when pursuing careers in male-dominated industries like the video game industry?

- The main challenge comes from the performance bias, women need to show themselves and demonstrate much more than men if we want to get promoted or get a higher performance rating. I've seen men being promoted and advance in their careers at a much higher pace than women. Many times I've seen men being promoted based on potential while women need to show they are already performing at that level. Every year we also go through a performance appraisal process, and I can see how the distribution of higher ratings still goes to male people.

- There are also challenges in hiring, women talent is much more scarce in some profiles and some business units do not take the effort to source women in order to have a diverse pipeline.

How do you think the representation of women in leadership roles in the video game industry has evolved over time?

- Mmm, good question. It has not evolved that much from my point of view. At King this evolution has been totally different if you compare different business units, some doing active efforts to address that and some others not caring that much. With the recent Microsoft acquisition I was surprised to see the Xbox leadership being so gender balance and I think they have done a lot of efforts in this sense, but if I see sister companies like Activision or Blizzard (more like the AAA studios) I don't see they have evolved that much. I think it all depends on the top leadership of that company/business unit, how conscious they are about this topic and how much effort they invest.

Which race would you belong to? And how old are you?

- Latina - 42

Specific Questions

Have you encountered any specific obstacles or challenges related to your gender while working in the video game industry? If so, could you share some examples?

- Yes, there is an intersectional aspect here, being woman, Latina and with some HSP (highly sensitive person) traits.
- Main challenges have been feeling included, in the sense that my point of view was heard and valued.
- Second challenge has been promotion pace tied to performance bias. I feel there are higher standards I need to comply compared to male colleagues to show I deserve a high rating and promotion. In almost 10y I've been promoted only twice, while I see male colleagues reaching higher positions in this time.

How have you navigated or overcome gender-related obstacles in your career in the video game industry?

- Yes, the two mentioned before.
- On the challenge of being heard and my perspective valued I needed to prove with data while other male colleagues they didn't need that.
- On the second point I've always felt a lot of pressure to show and demonstrate I deserve having a high rating or being promoted.

Can you share any experiences where your gender has influenced your interactions or relationships with colleagues or clients in the video game industry?

- Yes, I've experience being interrupted in meetings much more than male colleagues. Or even not having space to share my point of view. And the other one I mentioned early, not feeling heard when I gave my point of view.

Have you observed any differences in career progression or advancement opportunities between men and women in the video game industry? If yes, what factors do you think contribute to these differences?

- Yes, I've already commented on that. For me it's all about performance bias (already described) and tightrope bias, meaning you need to comply with the stereotype of what is expected from you (being a diligent and servant person, a team player), if you are being more assertive and challenge more then that's not seen with good eyes.

Conclusion Questions:

In your opinion, what strategies or initiatives could be implemented to improve gender diversity and inclusion in the video game industry?

- Top leaders being real sponsors of DE&I efforts.
- Make sure pipelines, and interview panels for hiring are diverse.
- Have unconscious bias training in place, good experiential workshops with reflection time and analyzing real life cases.
- Have a bias interrupter role, an expert in unconscious bias present in performance and promotions conversations between managers. After delivering this kind of trainings I was invited to performance conversations in this role and I could catch and challenge many cases.
- Track these important people processes with data at different levels (company, studio, manager) and show this data to managers so we can balance the unconscious bias effects.

What advice would you give to young women aspiring to pursue careers in male-dominated industries?

- Make visible to your manager all the recognition you receive in your daily work. Educate yourself in the biases affecting women so you are more aware the impact this has on the systems. For many years I was not aware at all and I thought it was due to my personality the feedback I received (it even provoked me having Impostor syndrome), where now I can read it through different lens.
- Try to form internal communities of support, sorority is very important to find support and advice from other women.

How do you see the future of gender diversity and inclusion in the video game industry evolving?

- It will evolve overtime, maybe not so fast as I wish. With more conscious women becoming leaders I've already see more efforts are being done.

Closing:

Is there anything else you would like to add or share about your experiences in the video game industry as a woman?

- No, thank you.

Respondent 4:

Introduction Questions:

Which company in the Video game do you work for and what is your position?

- King Xbox Microsoft. Position Senior backend engineer

In which country are you working?

- Sweden

How long have you been working in the Video game Industry?

- 5 years

Can you provide some background on your education and professional experience prior to entering the video game industry?

- I graduated in Biomedical Engineering from the University of Padua. Before entering the video game industry, I worked for 5 years in healthcare as a full-stack engineer
- What inspired or motivated you to pursue a career in the video game industry?
- I wanted to work for a big company, I wanted to challenge myself in building software (videogame) used by millions of players everyday and use the latest tech.

Can you tell me about your career journey in the video game industry? How did you get started, and what positions have you held?

- I started as full stack developer for internal tools in King and then I changed as backend developer for Candy Crush.

General Questions:

How varied is the working environment in your company?

- King is varied under different aspects:
 - o Mix of employees in terms of their cultural, ethnic, gender, and age backgrounds.
 - o Variety of job roles and functions
 - o Different types of work settings, like remote work, office work, and hybrid.

How did you experienced working in the video game industry and how is your Job satisfaction?

- I love working for Candy Crush. I love to design and to develop something that is used by millions of players. I love seeing that what I am doing has a big impact in the world of videogame.

Can you describe the typical career trajectory for women in the video game industry, based on your observations and experiences?

- There is no a typical career trajectory at least as software engineer. You can come from different backgrounds, different experiences and industries. For instance I came from healthcare background and this did not impact my success in the videogame industry.

What challenges do you think women commonly face when pursuing careers in male-dominated industries like the video game industry?

- It depends on the country. In Sweden, the only challenge I can think of is getting the same salary. Even though the gap is not that big, it is still present.
- I worked for many years in Italy, and the gap between males and females is huge. It's not only the salary but also career development and the trust people put in you, which is different only because you are a woman in a male-dominated industry.

How do you think the representation of women in leadership roles in the video game industry has evolved over time?

- In Sweden it is growing and gets better. Microsoft ensure that every gender has the same opportunity and possibilities.

Which race would you belong to? And how old are you?

- White, 38 years old

Specific Questions:

Have you encountered any specific obstacles or challenges related to your gender while working in the video game industry? If so, could you share some examples?

- Yes, like salary gap. When I was promoted to senior engineer, my salary did not increase that much. I had to push to upper level to get my salary reviewed.

How have you navigated or overcome gender-related obstacles in your career in the video game industry?

- No, except for the salary gap

Can you share any experiences where your gender has influenced your interactions or relationships with colleagues or clients in the video game industry?

- I can't think of any example

Have you observed any differences in career progression or advancement opportunities between men and women in the video game industry? If yes, what factors do you think contribute to these differences?

- No, King is a great company that takes care of reducing the gap between male/women and it has a transparent process of career progression

What are the benefits of having a more inclusive working environment, particularly in the video game industry?

- Wider range of ideas, creativity, and problem-solving approaches. This diversity can result in more innovative and engaging games and diversity helps in anticipating and addressing the needs of a global player base.

Conclusion Questions:

In your opinion, what strategies or initiatives could be implemented to improve gender diversity and inclusion in the video game industry?

- Promote mentorship and sponsorship program for women and non binary people
- Inclusive hiring process: hiring practices that ensure diverse candidate pools
- Training: Organize training sessions and workshops on diversity, and inclusion to raise awareness and educate employees about unconscious bias and inclusive behaviors.
- Transparent pay process: Ensure transparent pay process and conduct regular checks to address and eliminate any gender pay gaps with the company.
- What advice would you give to young women aspiring to pursue careers in male-dominated industries?
- Seek for mentors, have confidence in your abilities, not be afraid to speak up your mind and make your voice heard. Continue learning and growing, that is the key for any career success.
- I know imposter syndrome is a thing, especially among women, but trust yourself, embrace challenges and be confident in what you can achieve.

How do you see the future of gender diversity and inclusion in the video game industry evolving?

- In Sweden gender diversity and inclusion has a positive future. In Italy I do not see any improvement, the mentality needs to change before.

Closing:

Is there anything else you would like to add or share about your experiences in the video game industry as a woman?

- n/a

Respondent 5

Introduction Questions:

Which company in the Video game do you work for and what is your position?

- I worked at Nintendo as a Junior Product Manager

In which country are you working?

- Netherlands and Japan

How long have you been working in the Video game Industry?

- Since 4 years. 3 in the Netherlands and now since in Japan
- Can you provide some background on your education and professional experience prior to entering the video game industry?
- Before starting my career in the video game industry, I pursued my undergraduate in IT and master's in data Analytics.
- Preceding my work at Nintendo, I served as an intern at Philipps and Deloitte both in the Netherlands

What inspired or motivated you to pursue a career in the video game industry?

- Since I was young I loved playing video games. And I always wanted to live in Japan.
- Can you tell me about your career journey in the video game industry? How did you get started, and what positions have you held?
- I started as a Marketing Associate in Amsterdam, after 3 years I got promoted towards a Junior Product Manager and since then I am in that Position.

General Questions:

How varied is the working environment in your company?

- The Marketing Department in Amsterdam was really Diverse, we were more woman than man, also my managers were 50/50.
- Here in Japan the situation is different. There is only one other Junior Manager who is a woman. On the higher levels only, man are in the only ones in leadership positions.
- The people are nice, but a bit reserved. Most of them are man, the few females only work in Junior departments

How did you experienced working in the video game industry and how is your Job satisfaction?

- Overall, I'm happy with my job, I loved my Office and the colleagues from Nijmegen.
- Japan is interesting, I wanted to experience the country and live here for a couple of years, since my mum s Japanese. I got along very well, the people are polite and friendly. At work the colleagues are alright, sometimes I feel they don't take me serious here and

I feel a bit overlooked in meetings with other managers. It seems that they think I am a kind of intern which leaves after a while.

Can you describe the typical career trajectory for women in the video game industry, based on your observations and experiences?

- It really depends on the country, I experience the Netherlands as quite equal, but Japan is different. Here most females work in beginning positions and don't take on much responsibility. I think the male in management positions behave like a kind of boys club and tend to ignore me only telling me the basic things.

What challenges do you think women commonly face when pursuing careers in male-dominated industries like the video game industry?

- We often face challenges such as bias towards women and we have to prove that we are as good workers as men. We also lack representation there are only a few role models and in Japan none. That makes it harder to find our place in the company and seek advice

How do you think the representation of women in leadership roles in the video game industry has evolved over time?

- Like in the Netherlands we are almost equally represented. In top management a bit less since also many Japanese managers come over from the HQ in Japan.
- In Japan the situation is different, mostly beginners and secretaries are female.

Which race would you belong to? And how old are you?

- I am half Dutch half Japanese, 27 years old.

Specific Questions:

Have you encountered any specific obstacles or challenges related to your gender while working in the video game industry? If so, could you share some examples?

- See above my experience from the meeting.

How have you navigated or overcome gender-related obstacles in your career in the video game industry?

- Luckily in the Netherlands I didn't encounter that many.
- I see my career in Japan only as a temporary experience so it's fine. There is not much I can do anyway since the whole society is so.

Can you share any experiences where your gender has influenced your interactions or relationships with colleagues or clients in the video game industry?

- In Japan some male colleagues were too afraid to talk to me and it took me a while to get warm with them. Luckily, I speak the language otherwise it would be more

complicated. I have some female friends from work with who I am going out and sometime some male colleagues join us.

- Still, I sometimes feel a bit like an outsider here.

Have you observed any differences in career progression or advancement opportunities between men and women in the video game industry? If yes, what factors do you think contribute to these differences?

- Yes, I did. Women are underrepresented in senior leadership in the Netherlands and in Japan from the Manager level onwards. I think it mostly cultural factors contributing and if it is a society which scores high in masculinity or femininity.
- But also family responsibilities, like maternity leave and childcare play a significant role.

Conclusion Questions:

In your opinion, what strategies or initiatives could be implemented to improve gender diversity and inclusion in the video game industry?

- Mentorship Programs:
- Maternity leave for both gender
- Female quotas in Management
- General cultural change in terms of Japan

What advice would you give to young women aspiring to pursue careers in male-dominated industries?

- My advice is to believe in yourself and trust your abilities. Stay resilient and don't be discouraged by setbacks; use them as learning experiences. Keep learning, speak up confidently, as your ideas and opinions are valuable. Advocate for yourself by seeking promotions and raises, ensuring your contributions are recognized.

How do you see the future of gender diversity and inclusion in the video game industry evolving?

- I see a positive trend in Europe and also Japan is shifting since there is a shortage in skilled work. To generally I positive for the future of diversity and inclusion.

Closing Questions:

Is there anything else you would like to add or share about your experiences in the video game industry as a woman?

- /

Respondent 6:

Introduction Questions:

Which company in the Video game do you work for and what is your position?

- Last position: European Localization Director at THQ Inc.

In which country are you working?

- Germany.

How long have you been working in the Video game Industry?

- About 30 years.

Can you provide some background on your education and professional experience prior to entering the video game industry?

- Misc. / Application Programmer 1985 – 1985 Training “application programmer” with exam & certificate of the chamber of crafts.

What inspired or motivated you to pursue a career in the video game industry?

- I liked the industry, the people (at least most of them), and I’ve never been afraid to work hard.

Can you tell me about your career journey in the video game industry? How did you get started, and what positions have you held?

- THQ European Localization Director, Jul 2005 - Oct 2013
 - o Head of department
 - o International Project Management
 - o Communication with international studios, developers, departments, service providers and licensors
 - o Localization of software, websites, printed material in more than 25 languages
 - o Calculation, reporting, negotiations with service providers
 - o Verification of localized printed material, graphic editing
 - o Voice recording, audio editing, file conversion
 - o Quality assurance
 - o Supervision of apprentices and trainees
 - o Head of department
 - o International Project Management
 - o Communication with international studios, developers, departments, service providers and licensors
 - o Localization of software, websites, printed material in more than 25 languages
 - o Calculation, reporting, negotiations with service providers
 - o Verification of localized printed material, graphic editing
 - o Voice recording, audio editing, file conversion
 - o Supervision of apprentices and trainees

- THQ Localization Director, 2002 - Jun 2005
 - Head of department
 - International Project Management
 - Communication with international studios, developers, departments, service providers and licensors
 - Localization of software, websites, printed material in more than 15 languages
 - Calculation, reporting, negotiations with service providers
 - Verification of localized printed parts, graphic editing
 - Voice recording, audio editing, file conversion
 - Quality assurance
 - Data transfer, data archiving
 - Supervision of apprentices and trainees
 - Head of department
 - International Project Management
 - Communication with international studios, developers, departments, service providers and licensors
 - Localization of software, websites, printed material in more than 15 languages
 - Calculation, reporting, negotiations with service providers
 - Verification of localized printed parts, graphic editing
 - Voice recording, audio editing, file conversion
 - Quality assurance
 - Data transfer, data archiving
 - Supervision of apprentices and trainees

- Softgold Computerspiele GmbH (a THQ company) Producer / Project Manager, 1999 – 2002
 - International Project Management
 - Communication with international studios, developers, departments, service providers and licensors
 - Localization of software, websites, printed material in more than 10 languages
 - Calculation, reporting, negotiations with service providers
 - Verification of localized printed parts, graphic editing
 - Voice recording, audio editing, file conversion
 - Quality assurance, software mastering, re-mastering
 - Data transfer, data archiving
 - International Project Management
 - Communication with international studios, developers, departments, service providers and licensors
 - Localization of software, websites, printed material in more than 10 languages
 - Calculation, reporting, negotiations with service providers
 - Verification of localized printed parts, graphic editing
 - Voice recording, audio editing, file conversion
 - Quality assurance, software mastering, re-mastering
 - Data transfer, data archiving

- Softgold Computerspiele GmbH Softgold Computerspiele GmbH Project Manager / Producer, 1992 - 1999
 - Translation / localization of computer and video games, including graphic editing and software customization
 - Translation / localization of printed material from English into German
 - Communication with international developers and licensors
 - Producer for externally developed games
 - Voice recording, audio editing, file conversion
 - Quality assurance, software mastering, re-mastering
 - Data transfer, data archiving

- Rushware Product Sourcing, 1991 - 1992
 - Product Sourcing
 - Communication with international developers, service providers and licensors, business development, contract negotiation, licensor relations
 - Visiting trade fairs and developers in Germany, England and the United States
 - Translation / localization of in-game text, manuals, advertisements and packaging
 - Quality assurance, checking stock received
 - Screenshots for press, catalogues, ads, packaging

- Rushware Marketing Manager, 1990 - 1991
 - Head of Marketing and PR, Head of department / admin tasks
 - Established a dedicated marketing department
 - Press and public relations, radio, TV
 - Working with purchasing department / ordering
 - Label management
 - Software localization, project management
 - Communication with international developers, service providers and licensors
 - Translation of printed material
 - Quality assurance, checking stock received
 - Screenshots for press, catalogues, ads, packaging

- Rushware Product & PR Manager, 1987 - 1990
 - Product Manager / PR Manager
 - Press and public relations, magazines (specialist and non-specialist press), PR, radio, TV
 - Translation of printed materials, instructions, packaging, information, advertisements, and on-screen text for computer and video games
 - Designing ads in cooperation with the advertising agency
 - Communication with international suppliers, service providers and licensors
 - Working with printer and replicator, production master testing
 - Translation of printed material, graphic editing
 - Quality assurance (production)
 - Checking stock received
 - DTP, catalogue “Software Aktuell“ / “Rushware Aktuell“
 - Screenshots for press, catalogues, ads, packaging

General Questions:

How varied is the working environment in your company?

- I made sure it was as varied as possible. However, these were different times.

How did you experience working in the video game industry and how is your job satisfaction?

- I made the most of it by constantly shaping and adjusting my job.

Can you describe the typical career trajectory for women in the video game industry, based on your observations and experiences?

- Back then, my approach was not typical for women. Therefore, I am not a good example.

What challenges do you think women commonly face when pursuing careers in male-dominated industries like the video game industry?

- Today's industry is different, and so are most of the women.
- I am no longer up to date, so you'd better ask the younger women.

How do you think the representation of women in leadership roles in the video game industry has evolved over time?

- Sorry, I have been out of the industry too long.

Which race would you belong to? And how old are you?

- White, and old enough to buy a drink.

Specific Questions – Experience and Obstacles:

Have you encountered any specific obstacles or challenges related to your gender while working in the video game industry? If so, could you share some examples?

- Probably the same as most women have today.

How have you navigated or overcome gender-related obstacles in your career in the video game industry?

- Always in the smartest way, never ever relied on my gender. However, these were different times, different people and a different industry. I can't stress this enough.

Can you share any experiences where your gender has influenced your interactions or relationships with colleagues or clients in the video game industry?

- After 30 years, this is so much that could write a book about this.

Have you observed any differences in career progression or advancement opportunities between men and women in the video game industry? If yes, what factors do you think contribute to these differences?

- Yes, of course ... for the usual reasons.

What are the benefits of having a more inclusive working environment, particularly in the video game industry?

- Well, that's obvious, isn't it?. For a start, 50% of the world population shouldn't be excluded, right?

Conclusion Questions:

In your opinion, what strategies or initiatives could be implemented to improve gender diversity and inclusion in the video game industry?

- This is more of a problem of our society.

What advice would you give to young women aspiring to pursue careers in male-dominated industries?

- Just do your thing.

How do you see the future of gender diversity and inclusion in the video game industry evolving?

- Today's society is trying to move back to the 1950s. One can just hope this won't affect each and every aspect.

Closing Questions:

Is there anything else you would like to add or share about your experiences in the video game industry as a woman?

- My comments and remarks would go beyond the scope of this article.

Due to Católica Lisbon guidelines, the appendix can only contain 30 pages. Please find the rest of the questionnaire responses at this link:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1AO8qvSNxuRA9R0UN8VSIFMSTePbr6BoWdNRukRY-EN0/edit?usp=sharing>