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# Inclusivity, Diversity, and Workplace Experience: A Consolidated Analysis Report

**Date:** March 2025

**Prepared by:** Tech Beyond Gender

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## 1. Executive Summary

This report investigates employee perceptions of gender diversity, leadership, work-life balance, discrimination, career development, and compensation within the technology sector. By combining quantitative survey data from 189 respondents with qualitative insights from in-depth interviews, the report provides a comprehensive view of underlying systemic challenges affecting women and gender-diverse professionals.

### Key Findings:

#### **Superficial diversity initiatives erode employee confidence and hinder true inclusivity**

Organisations frequently promote diversity initiatives that remain superficial, with nearly 45% of employees reporting insufficient active promotion of gender diversity. Without systemic changes in recruitment, promotion, and retention policies, these surface-level efforts fail to create genuine inclusivity. The disconnect between stated commitments and actual practices undermines employee confidence and Organisational reputation.

#### **Leadership gap in senior technical roles hinders innovation and increases turnover among women and gender-diverse professionals**

More than half of employees report unbalanced gender representation in leadership, particularly in technical and senior roles. This imbalance is most acute among mid-career professionals and technical staff, despite diverse entry-level recruitment. Organisations with balanced leadership demonstrate significantly better outcomes across innovation, team

inclusion, work-life balance, career development, and compensation equity. However, the persistent leadership gap continues to drive high turnover rates, particularly among women and gender-diverse professionals.

### **Despite recognising diversity's role in innovation, team formation remains male-dominated, undervaluing talent**

While 85% acknowledge diversity's crucial role in driving innovation, particularly in technical roles, 80% report that diversity is not actively considered in team formation. This stark contrast reveals a critical gap between recognising diversity's value and implementing inclusive practices. Informal, male-dominated networks often restrict participation of non-male individuals in key projects, while women and gender-diverse professionals frequently face undervaluation of their technical expertise.

### **Subtle gender biases and microaggressions cumulatively hinder career growth and workplace advocacy**

More than 40% of employees report experiencing gender-based microaggressions and discrimination. These experiences significantly impact career progression, job satisfaction, and workplace advocacy. Even more concerning, qualitative insights suggest these numbers would be higher if considering experiences across the broader tech sector rather than just current workplaces. The normalisation of subtle biases—including interruptions, idea appropriation, and cultural assumptions—creates cumulative barriers to career advancement.

### **Widespread pay transparency issues and fear demand audits and safe reporting**

Over 70% of employees express dissatisfaction with pay transparency, while 58% lack clarity about raise processes. Nearly half feel their compensation is unfair, with disparities particularly affecting women in technical roles and migrant employees. Despite awareness of pay gaps, many remain silent about inequities due to fear of repercussions, highlighting a critical need for systematic pay equity audits and safe reporting channels.

## **Retention concerns among diverse employees necessitate comprehensive reform to retain tech talent**

A concerning 63% of employees have considered leaving their current positions, while 38% have contemplated exiting the tech sector entirely. These retention challenges vary significantly across age groups and ethnicities, with migrant women facing compounded difficulties due to intersectional biases. The data suggests that without comprehensive reform in career development, compensation practices, and workplace culture, the tech sector risks losing valuable talent.

## **Flexible work valued yet undermined by domestic burdens and extra performance pressures**

While flexible arrangements are highly valued—with 87% supporting flexible hours and 79% favouring remote/hybrid models—21% still report negative impacts on personal time. The benefits of flexibility are often undermined by disproportionate domestic responsibilities, particularly affecting migrant women and mothers. Women and gender-diverse professionals frequently face additional performance pressures, having to work harder than peers to prove their expertise.

## Recommendations for Systemic Change

To transform superficial diversity efforts into genuine inclusivity, organisations must adopt a holistic approach that prioritises systemic changes across HR practices, leadership development, compensation transparency, and work-life balance.

Key recommendations include:

- **Embed Genuine Inclusivity in HR:** Integrate mandatory anti-bias, anti-discrimination, and microaggression training into regularly updated HR protocols, and implement transparent recruitment, promotion, and retention strategies to ensure merit-based decisions.
- **Strengthen Leadership Development and Career Pathways:** Provide structured mentorship, regular feedback, and clear advancement frameworks—especially for women returning from leave and migrant employees—to ensure equitable leadership opportunities.

- **Promote Transparent and Equitable Compensation:** Conduct regular pay audits and clearly communicate pay structures and promotion criteria, fostering an environment where discussions about pay equity are normalised.
- **Enhance Work-Life Balance and Flexible Policies:** Refine flexible and remote/hybrid work arrangements to mitigate scheduling conflicts and support employees balancing professional and domestic responsibilities.
- **Expand Training and Development Initiatives:** Invest in comprehensive, tailored programs covering both technical and soft skills to support career growth and address cultural needs.
- **Ensure Robust Microaggression Policies and Reporting Channels:** Establish clear, consistently enforced policies with supportive reporting frameworks to address discrimination and subtle biases.
- **Adopt a Holistic Approach to Inclusive Team Formation:** Actively integrate diversity into team composition and align these practices with transparent compensation and promotion strategies.
- **Monitor Retention and Address Cultural Gaps:** Continuously track turnover intentions—particularly among underrepresented groups—and implement targeted interventions to support mid-career professionals.
- **Encourage Constructive Managerial Feedback:** Develop performance review systems that deliver actionable, culturally sensitive guidance to foster employee growth.
- **Regularly Assess and Evolve Diversity Strategies:** Use ongoing employee feedback to refine diversity initiatives, ensuring sustainable improvements in workplace inclusivity.

By adopting these succinct yet comprehensive recommendations, organizations can build an integrated, equitable culture that enhances employee satisfaction, drives innovation, and strengthens overall organizational reputation in the competitive tech industry.

## 2. Research Background, Objectives & Methodology

### 2.1 Background and Objectives

In today's competitive tech environment, the cultivation of inclusive, equitable, and supportive practices is critical for long-term Organisational success. This report aims to:

- Assess employee perceptions regarding gender diversity, leadership, work-life balance, discrimination, career development, and compensation.
- Provide actionable, data-driven recommendations to foster a more inclusive and supportive work environment.

## 2.2 Methodology and Participant Demographics

- **Quantitative Survey:** The survey was completed by 189 women and gender diverse professionals across various demographics (age groups, years of experience, role types, and ethnicities). Survey was open from October – December 2024. Statistical analysis (including ANOVA (Analysis of Variance) and correlation analysis) was conducted to assess trends and relationships.
- **Qualitative Interviews:** In-depth interviews were conducted with 13 professionals from diverse backgrounds and roles within the technology sector, between December 2024 and February 2025. These interviews provide context to the quantitative data by sharing personal experiences related to diversity, leadership, work-life balance, discrimination, career progression, and compensation.

## 3. Detailed Findings

### 3.1 Gender Diversity Promotion and Organisational Culture

#### **Quantitative Findings:**

- Approximately 45% of respondents do not agree that gender diversity is actively promoted in their organisation.
- The 35–44 age group reported the highest level of disagreement and employees with over 10 years of experience were more critical.
- Although slight differences emerged across ethnic groups, Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) analysis indicated no statistically significant differences by age, experience, role, or ethnicity.

- The following correlations were found,
  - **Active diversity promotion correlates with fair promotions, equitable pay, and inclusive culture**

Employees who perceive gender diversity as actively promoted tend to believe that promotions and advancements are awarded fairly, reflecting transparent, merit-based practices that underscore an Organisation’s commitment to equity. In addition, when employees feel that they are paid fairly and understand the compensation structure, they are more likely to view the Organisation’s diversity efforts positively, reinforcing the idea that fair compensation and clear pay processes are integral to building an inclusive workplace.

- **Strong anti-discrimination policies transform superficial diversity efforts into genuine inclusivity and trust**

The data reveal a nuanced relationship between diversity promotion and experiences with microaggressions. While employees in Organisations that emphasise diversity may report higher awareness of biased behaviours, they also tend to view their microaggression policies as effective and feel more comfortable reporting such issues to HR. This, combined with strong advocacy—evidenced by a greater willingness to recommend the workplace—suggests that robust anti-discrimination measures and comprehensive support structures are essential for transforming superficial diversity efforts into genuine inclusivity and trust.

### **Qualitative Insights:**

Interview narratives describe a disconnect between superficial diversity initiatives and genuine inclusion. One interviewee noted that while her local team was supportive, broader organisational practices reflected significant inequities, including pay discrepancies and tokenistic leadership diversity.

### **Inference:**

The findings indicate that nearly 45% of respondents do not believe that gender diversity is actively promoted in their Organisation, with particularly critical views among the 35–44 age group and employees with over 10 years of experience. Although demographic differences are minimal, strong correlations reveal that when employees perceive their workplace as committed to diversity—evidenced by transparent, fair promotion practices, effective microaggression policies, and equitable compensation—they also report a more positive overall

environment. In contrast, negative experiences, such as gender-based discrimination and microaggressions, diminish confidence in the Organisation's diversity efforts, which can adversely affect employee advocacy and external reputation. These results underscore the need for a holistic, systemic approach that goes beyond superficial diversity initiatives to embed genuine inclusivity throughout Organisational practices, ensuring that all employees feel valued and fairly treated.

## 3.2 Balanced Representation in Leadership

### Quantitative Findings:

- About 55% of respondents did not agree that leadership roles were balanced in their Organisation.
- The 35–44 age group showed the highest disagreement and experienced employees (10+ years) were more critical.
- ANOVA analysis revealed no significant differences across demographics.
- The correlations between balanced gender representation in leadership and various workplace factors offer several key insights:

- **Balanced leadership and supportive practices foster innovation, collaboration, career growth, and advocacy**

Employees who perceive their leadership as balanced are more likely to experience a range of positive Organisational outcomes. For instance, balanced leadership is strongly associated with innovation and inclusive team formation, where diversity actively drives creative thinking and effective collaboration. Moreover, supportive practices such as flexible work arrangements, clear career pathways, and transparent compensation practices contribute to a healthy work-life balance and robust career advancement opportunities. These factors, in turn, foster a workplace environment that encourages employee advocacy and increases the willingness to recommend the Organisation to other women and gender-diverse professionals. Policies addressing workplace microaggressions are perceived positively and would also feel comfortable to report incidences of microaggressions.

**Qualitative Insights:**

Several interviewees emphasised that although entry-level roles might be more diverse, as one moves up the hierarchy, the representation of women and gender-diverse professionals sharply declines. One narrative mentioned the “token diversity” at higher levels and the persistent underrepresentation in core technical roles despite external diversity commitments.

**Inference:**

The quantitative findings reveal that more than half of respondents (55%) do not view technology leadership roles as balanced, with the highest levels of disagreement among mid-career professionals and those with over 10 years of experience, despite no statistically significant differences across demographics. Furthermore, balanced leadership is strongly linked with positive outcomes such as enhanced innovation, inclusive team formation, healthy work-life balance, clear career pathways, robust training and development programs, and fair, transparent compensation practices. In contrast, experiences of discrimination and microaggressions correlate with perceptions of unbalanced leadership, suggesting that negative workplace behaviours undermine confidence in leadership and impede career advancement. Qualitative insights reinforce these findings, as respondents noted that while entry-level diversity is often achieved, women and gender-diverse professionals are underrepresented at higher levels, pointing to token diversity rather than genuine inclusivity. Together, these results underscore the need for a holistic, systemic approach to leadership development that integrates equitable practices across all facets of Organisational culture.

### 3.3 Gender Diversity’s Contribution to Innovation

**Quantitative Findings:**

- A robust 85% agreed that gender diversity contributes positively to innovation.
- Both younger and mid-career professionals reported high agreement. Technical roles, in particular, showed a higher appreciation for diversity’s impact.
- Role type was statistically significant, with technical staff more likely to see diversity as a driver of innovation.
- The correlation analysis reveals several key factors that are strongly associated with the belief that gender diversity sparks innovation within an Organisation:



- **Balanced leadership, diverse teams, and flexible work arrangements drive innovation and inclusivity.**

The analysis shows that balanced gender representation in leadership, active consideration of diversity in team formation, and supportive work-life practices are all strongly associated with the belief that gender diversity drives innovation. Organisations where leadership is diverse and team formation processes prioritise varied perspectives foster environments that inspire creative and innovative thinking. Additionally, flexible work arrangements that contribute to a healthy work-life balance further reinforce this positive impact, cultivating an inclusive and dynamic work environment.

- **Gender discrimination stifles innovation; eliminating biases is essential for sustained diversity-driven creativity**

Conversely, experiences of gender-based discrimination act as a significant barrier to innovation. When employees face or witness discriminatory behaviours, they are less likely to view diversity as a catalyst for innovative practices. This negative association underscores the critical need to address and eliminate gender biases to ensure that diversity efforts translate into meaningful and sustained innovation.

### **Qualitative Insights:**

Interview responses reinforced that diverse perspectives drive innovation, particularly when teams are inclusive and collaborative. However, subtle biases and microaggressions were noted to stifle the full potential of these benefits in some cases. An inclusive and collaborative environment ensures that every voice is heard, which amplifies the benefits of these diverse insights and drives overall innovation.

### **Inference:**

The findings indicate that gender diversity is widely recognised as a catalyst for innovation, with a strong majority of respondents—especially younger and mid-career professionals in technical roles—acknowledging its positive impact. The data reveal that Organisations with balanced leadership, inclusive team formation, and supportive work-life practices tend to foster environments where diverse perspectives thrive, enhancing creative problem-solving and innovation. Conversely, experiences of gender-based discrimination and subtle biases significantly hinder this potential, underscoring the need for robust interventions to eliminate bias and promote genuine inclusivity. Qualitative insights further reinforce that while diverse

perspectives drive innovation, the full benefits can only be realized in workplaces that actively address microaggressions and create truly collaborative, inclusive cultures.

### 3.4 Gender Diversity in Team Formation

#### Quantitative Findings:

- Almost 80% believe that diversity is not actively considered when forming teams.
- The 35–44 age group had the highest disagreement that diversity was considered when forming teams.
- ANOVA analysis revealed that ethnicity was the only significant demographic factor, suggesting varied experiences among different ethnic groups.
- The correlation analysis reveals the following,
  - **Inclusive leadership and commitment to innovation prioritise diverse teams and drive positive perceptions** - Perceptions of gender diversity in team formation are strongly influenced by broader organisational practices and workplace culture. For example, respondents who report balanced gender representation in leadership and view gender diversity as a key driver of innovation are significantly more likely to perceive that diversity is considered during team formation. The quantitative analysis suggests that visible, inclusive leadership and a commitment to innovation foster environments where diverse teams are prioritised.
  - **Healthy work-life balance with flexible policies fosters perceptions of inclusive team formation** - Employees who experience a healthy work-life balance, supported by flexible working hours and effective remote/hybrid work policies, also tend to believe that their teams are more inclusive, indicating that work-life support contributes to positive perceptions of team composition.
  - **Transparent career pathways, robust training, and fair promotions bolster inclusive team formation** - On the career development front, clear understanding of career paths, robust training and development programs and fair promotions positively correlated with perceptions of diversity in team formation—highlighting that transparent, supportive career advancement mechanisms reinforce inclusivity.
  - **Inclusive teams foster trust in microaggression policies** – Creating inclusive teams will give the confidence that the workplace has policies in place to

address microaggressions and feel comfortable reporting incidences of microaggressions.

### **Qualitative Insights:**

Respondents described a tendency for teams to be formed based on informal, gendered networks (e.g., “favouring predominantly male circles”), which limits opportunities for women and gender-diverse professionals to be included in critical projects and decision-making forums.

### **Inference:**

The quantitative findings reveal a significant disconnect between the proclaimed value of diversity in team formation and the actual experiences of employees, as almost 80% do not believe that diversity is actively considered when forming teams. Notably, the 35–44 age group expresses the greatest dissatisfaction, and ethnicity emerges as a significant factor in shaping these perceptions, indicating varied experiences among different groups. Correlation analysis underscore the inclusive Organisational practices—such as balanced leadership, flexible work arrangements, clear career development pathways, and robust policies addressing microaggressions—strongly enhance perceptions of diverse team formation. Qualitative insights further reveal that reliance on informal, gendered networks limits opportunities for women and gender-diverse in critical roles, emphasising the need for systemic interventions to bridge these gaps.

## 3.5 Experiences of Gender-Based Discrimination

### **Quantitative Findings:**

- Approximately 40% of respondents reported experiencing or witnessing gender-based discrimination.
- Analysis by tenure indicates that mid-career professionals (especially those with 3–5 years’ experience) report the highest incidence of bias, with similar rates across technical and non-technical roles.
- ANOVA results show no statistically significant differences by age, role type, or ethnicity; however, years of experience is marginally significant, suggesting that perceptions of discrimination may intensify during mid-career stages.
- Observed correlations are summarised as below,

- **Discrimination lowers employee perceptions of career paths, promotions, and support** - Employees who have experienced or witnessed gender-based discrimination tend to report less favourable perceptions across many aspects of the organisation. For instance, significant correlations were found between discrimination experiences and clear career pathways, fair promotions, workplace support on taking leadership roles and compensation fairness. This indicates that when employees face bias, they are less likely to see benefits in these areas and may feel less supported overall.
- **Discrimination increases awareness of microaggressions, workplace policies, and reporting confidence** – The positive correlations indicate that employees who report experiencing or witnessing gender-based discrimination are also more likely to report related experiences of microaggressions, perceive that their workplace has effective policies to address these issues, and feel comfortable reporting such incidents to HR. In other words, exposure to discrimination appears to be linked with greater awareness and sensitivity to microaggressive behaviours and the efficacy of Organisational responses. The robust correlation (0.313,  $p=0.0002$ ) further underscores a strong, statistically significant relationship between these aspects, highlighting the critical importance of comprehensive anti-discrimination measures and clear reporting channels in fostering a supportive work environment.
- Here is the summary of responses to the open-ended question on the biases experienced by women and gender-diverse professionals:
  - ***Undervaluation of Experience and Competence:***  
 Women and gender diverse professionals are often treated as if they lack the technical expertise of their male counterparts. Even when they clearly articulate their relevant experience, they are frequently perceived as junior or less capable.
  - ***Patronising and Tokenistic Treatment:***  
 Responses from leadership—such as the CEO sharing a personal anecdote about the benefits of having a female board member—are seen as superficial and patronising, undermining the genuine contributions of women.

- ***Interruption and Idea Appropriation:***

In meetings, women and gender-diverse professionals report being interrupted, talked over, or having their ideas dismissed until repeated by a male colleague, which diminishes their credibility and contribution.

- ***Exclusion from Opportunities and Networking:***

Women and gender-diverse professionals are often not invited to key working groups, networking events, or informal team activities (e.g., social events or meetings), limiting their access to mentorship and advancement opportunities.

- ***Bias in Hiring and Promotion Decisions:***

Women and gender-diverse professionals are sometimes passed over for roles or promotions based on assumptions about their physical abilities (e.g., not strong enough to lift a printer) or caregiving responsibilities. They also face a double standard where men with less experience are promoted more quickly.

- ***Gendered Language and Stereotypes:***

The frequent use of casual, gendered terms (such as “guys,” “boys,” or “bros”) and underlying assumptions that women and gender-diverse professionals are less competent foster an exclusionary workplace environment.

- ***Inequitable Compensation Practices:***

There are recurring reports of women and gender-diverse professionals being paid less than their male peers despite similar or superior performance, often only rectified after significant pushback.

- ***Subtle Microaggressions and Discriminatory Behaviour:***

Women and gender-diverse professionals face a range of subtle biases—from being labelled “emotional” or “difficult” for expressing themselves to experiencing dismissive behaviour or sexual innuendo. Such microaggressions, even if not overt, accumulate over time and hinder career progression.

- ***Cultural and Stereotypical Assumptions:***

Women, especially those from diverse or migrant backgrounds, face additional assumptions based on their culture, such as being expected to adhere to

established male-dominated norms or facing premature judgments based on their family responsibilities.

**Qualitative Insights:**

Interviewees detailed various subtle discriminatory behaviours (e.g., being interrupted, having ideas appropriated, or dismissed) that cumulatively erode confidence and hinder career progression. These accounts reinforce the notion that while overt bias may not be universal, the “death by a thousand cuts” of microaggressions and implicit discrimination remains a pervasive challenge.

**Inference:**

The findings reveal that a significant number of employees have encountered gender-based discrimination, particularly among mid-career professionals, which negatively affects their perceptions of clear career pathways, fair promotions, leadership support, and compensation fairness. Furthermore, strong correlations show that those who experience discrimination are also more likely to report microaggressions and rely on effective policies to address these issues, indicating a heightened awareness of subtle biases and the need for robust reporting channels. Qualitative insights reinforce these trends, with respondents describing pervasive subtle biases—such as undervaluation of expertise, tokenistic treatment, and exclusion from key opportunities—that cumulatively erode confidence and hinder career progression. Overall, these results underscore the urgent need for comprehensive, transparent anti-discrimination measures and support systems to build a truly inclusive and equitable work environment.

### 3.6 Work-Life Balance

**Quantitative Findings:**

- 74% agreed they maintained a healthy work-life balance. However, 21% felt that work commitments negatively impacted their personal time.
- The 35–44 age group reported the highest disagreement on work-life balance. Experienced employees (10+ years) tended to report poorer work-life balance compared to early-career professionals.
- No significant differences were found by role type or ethnicity.
- Below are the observations of the correlation analysis,

- **Flexible, inclusive workplaces strongly promote work-life balance and career clarity** - Employees who report maintaining a healthy work-life balance tend to work in environments that actively support flexible work arrangements and remote/hybrid models. This also correlates with higher clarity in career pathways and adequate training programs to support career growth, indicating that inclusive Organisational practices—such as clear team formation processes.
- **Even balanced work-life employees acknowledge work commitments stress personal time** - The small but statistically significant positive correlation with the variable on work commitments negatively impacting personal or family time, suggests a nuanced relationship. In practical terms, employees who rate their work-life balance more favourably also tend—albeit slightly—to feel that their work commitments impinge on personal or family time. This may indicate that while these individuals generally believe they can manage their professional and personal responsibilities, they remain aware of the stresses that work demands can create. It underscores the importance of further strengthening supportive policies—such as flexible scheduling or clear workload expectations—to ensure that even employees who report a healthy balance do not experience ongoing tension between work obligations and personal well-being.
- Here is the summary of responses to the open-ended question on the of factors which affect work-life balance,
  - ***Disproportionate Domestic Burden:*** Women frequently bear an unequal share of household chores and caregiving responsibilities, which not only increases their mental load but also significantly reduces the time and energy available for professional development and career growth.
  - ***Blurred Boundaries in Remote Work:*** Flexible or work-from-home arrangements can lead to an overlap between professional duties and household tasks, further blurring work-life boundaries.
  - ***Societal and Cultural Expectations:*** Implicit assumptions that women are the default caregivers intensify pressure on them to prioritise home responsibilities over career advancement.

### **Qualitative Insights:**

Open-ended responses consistently emphasised that women face an unequal burden at home—ranging from household chores to caregiving responsibilities—which directly diminishes available time for personal recharge and career advancement. Several respondents noted that even when flexible work arrangements are available, the expectation to manage domestic tasks persists, thereby blurring the boundaries between work and home.

### **Inference:**

Overall, employees who report a healthy work-life balance tend to be in environments that support flexible work practices and offer clear career development pathways, suggesting that inclusive Organisational structures play a pivotal role in reducing work-life stresses. However, the slight positive correlation between maintaining balance and feeling that work commitments impinge on personal time indicates an underlying tension, even among those who consider their balance manageable. Qualitative insights further reveal that women, particularly those shouldering disproportionate domestic responsibilities, often struggle to fully benefit from flexible arrangements due to blurred boundaries and cultural assumptions that they must prioritise home obligations. Consequently, while many employees can navigate professional and personal demands, persistent domestic pressures and workload expectations highlight the need for more robust, comprehensive strategies—such as equitable scheduling, clearer workload management, and explicit support for domestic responsibilities—to truly alleviate these strains.

## 3.7 Flexible Working Hours and Remote/Hybrid Work

### **Quantitative Findings:**

- **Flexible Working Hours:**
  - 87% agreed that their workplace offers flexible working hours.
  - Demographic breakdown showed strong agreement among most groups, with a near significant difference by role type.
  - Correlation Analysis reveal the following,
    - **Flexible work fosters positive perceptions of diversity, leadership, and balance** - Employees who benefit from flexible working hours are significantly more likely to perceive a wide range of positive



Organisational practices. In environments where flexible work arrangements are in place, respondents tend to report that gender diversity is actively promoted, leadership is balanced, diversity is considered when teams are being formed, and diversity is seen as a driver of innovation. They are able to maintain healthy work life balance and have the option to work remote or hybrid.

- **Flexible scheduling correlates with work-life tension, necessitating improved supportive policies** – The flexibility of working hours is correlated with the variable on work commitments negatively impacting personal or family time. Employees who rate their work to be more flexible also feel that their work commitments impinge on personal or family time. This further underscores the importance of strengthening supportive policies—such as flexible scheduling or clear workload expectations—to ensure that even employees who report a healthy balance do not experience ongoing tension between work obligations and personal well-being.

- **Remote/Hybrid Work :**

- 79% agreed that remote or hybrid working models are supported.
- While technical roles and some ethnic groups showed a near significant difference in perceptions, overall sentiment was largely positive.
- The following correlations were observed,
  - **Positive Impacts of Robust Remote/Hybrid Work Support** - Employees who perceive that their workplace supports remote or hybrid work are more likely to report balanced leadership, promotions and advancements are more clear and they would recommend their workplace to others.
  - **Insights on Flexible Working Hours and Work Commitments** – Similar to the above, work commitments are reported to negatively impact personal or family time.

**Qualitative Insights:**

Interviewees described flexible work options as a key factor in managing both professional responsibilities and caregiving duties. However, some noted that while flexibility exists on paper, the practical implementation (such as scheduling and workload distribution) can be challenging and may sometimes result in inequitable work distribution.

**Inference:**

Employees overwhelmingly value flexible working arrangements and remote/hybrid models, perceiving them as essential for managing professional duties alongside personal or caregiving responsibilities. Correlation analysis shows that those who benefit from flexible hours are also more likely to view their Organisation as actively promoting gender diversity, fostering balanced leadership, and integrating diverse perspectives in team formation. Notably, however, a slight but meaningful association exists between flexible work practices and the perception that work commitments still impinge on personal or family time—indicating that, while flexibility is beneficial, it does not fully resolve workload-related pressures. Similarly, robust remote/hybrid support correlates with more favourable views of leadership, career progression, and willingness to recommend the workplace to others. Yet, qualitative insights suggest that implementation challenges—such as uneven workload distribution and scheduling conflicts—can undermine these advantages. Collectively, these findings underscore the importance of refining flexible and remote work policies to ensure equitable workload allocation, clearer expectations, and supportive cultural norms, thereby maximizing the positive impact on employee well-being and inclusivity.

### 3.6 Impact of Work Commitments on Personal Life

**Quantitative Findings:**

- A total of 21% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that work commitments negatively impact their personal or family time, while 47% disagreed, and 18% remained neutral.
- Demographic analysis reveals that the 35–44 age group perceives a higher negative impact compared to younger cohorts, and those with more than 10 years of experience report better work-life integration.

- ANOVA indicates no significant differences across age, experience, role type, or ethnicity.
- In addition to the correlations relating to work commitments discussed in the previous sections, the one below is also observed,
  - **Work-life strains boost HR microaggression reporting; robust support systems needed** - A modest yet statistically significant positive correlation exists between employees feeling that work commitments negatively impact their personal or family time and their comfort in reporting microaggressions to HR. In practical terms, this suggests that individuals who are more aware of the strains placed on their personal lives by work may also be more attuned to—or more willing to address—workplace injustices such as microaggressions. Alternatively, it may indicate that Organisations where employees feel safe reporting sensitive issues are also those where people openly acknowledge and discuss work-life challenges. Overall, the link underscores the need for comprehensive support systems that address both workload management and a culture of transparency, ensuring employees feel empowered to raise concerns around both personal well-being and workplace equity.

### **Qualitative Insights:**

Open-ended responses emphasise that women often bear a disproportionate share of domestic responsibilities, leading to a “double shift” effect. The blurring of boundaries—especially when working from home—exacerbates the challenge, leaving less time for personal recovery and professional growth.

### **Inference:**

The data suggest that while most respondents do not feel that work commitments negatively impact their personal or family time, a notable subset—particularly in the 35–44 age range—does perceive a strain. Interestingly, the correlation between feeling overburdened by work and being comfortable reporting microaggressions to HR hints at a more open Organisational culture in which employees feel safe voicing multiple kinds of concerns, from work-life balance issues to equity-related grievances. It may also imply that individuals who are already mindful of how work commitments encroach on their personal lives are more inclined to address workplace injustices, such as microaggressions. Consequently, these findings underscore the importance of an integrated approach: Organisations must offer robust workload management

and flexible work policies while fostering a transparent and supportive environment that encourages employees to speak up about both work-life pressures and equity concerns.

### 3.7 Clarity of Career Paths and Opportunities

#### **Quantitative Findings:**

- About 50% of respondents feel that they do not have clear understanding of career pathways and opportunities that exists within their organisation.
- Demographic analysis across age, experience, role type, and ethnicity shows no statistically significant differences, indicating consistent perceptions across the workforce.
- Significant correlation exists between few different variables.
  - **Clear career paths align with diverse teams, fair promotions, training -** Employees who have a clear understanding of their career paths and opportunities tend to work in Organisations that actively prioritise diversity in team formation. These Organisations typically create environments free from gender bias and discrimination, promote a healthy work-life balance, and offer robust training and development opportunities. Furthermore, they uphold fair promotion practices, provide ample access to mentorship, encourage leadership aspirations, enforce policies to mitigate microaggressions, deliver training to prevent them, and maintain transparent pay practices.

#### **Qualitative Insights:**

Interview narratives reveal that while many Organisations provide a clear progression framework at entry and mid-levels, the pathways into senior technical or leadership roles remain ambiguous. The lack of clear career development, especially for women returning from parental leave or those from migrant backgrounds, contributes to uncertainty and limits long-term growth.

#### **Inference:**

The findings indicate that about half of the respondents do not have a clear understanding of their career pathways and opportunities, and this perception remains consistent across all demographic groups. Significant correlations show that employees who are clear about their career trajectories tend to work in Organisations that prioritise diversity in team formation,

maintain environments free from gender bias, promote work-life balance, and offer robust training and development programs. These Organisations also uphold fair promotion practices, provide ample access to mentorship, encourage leadership development, enforce policies to mitigate microaggressions, and maintain transparent pay practices. However, qualitative insights reveal that while clear progression frameworks often exist at entry and mid-levels, pathways into senior technical or leadership roles remain ambiguous—particularly for women returning from parental leave or those from migrant backgrounds—highlighting the need for targeted interventions to support long-term career growth.

### 3.8 Training and Development Programs

#### Quantitative Findings:

- About 53% of respondents did not agree that their workplace provides adequate training and development programs.
- Demographic breakdown shows near significant differences based on years of experience and ethnicity, suggesting that perceptions of training quality may vary among more experienced employees and across cultural backgrounds.
- Strong positive correlations were found with several key workplace factors,
  - **Comprehensive training drives inclusive teams and supports healthy work-life balance** - Robust training initiatives are positively correlated with the active consideration of gender diversity in team formation, indicating that Organisations committed to building diverse teams are also more likely to invest in comprehensive training that reinforces an inclusive culture and continuous learning. Additionally, effective training programs are significantly associated with a healthy work-life balance, suggesting that such initiatives help employees better manage their personal and professional demands.
  - **Effective training fosters clear career paths, mentorship, and leadership development** - There is a strong link between training and clear career path understanding, highlighting that structured training programs empower employees to navigate their career trajectories with confidence. Moreover, significant positive relationships between training and access to mentorship, as well as the encouragement to pursue leadership roles, underscore that effective

training not only enhances skills but also supports career growth and leadership development.

### **Qualitative Insights:**

Respondents express a need for more structured and mandatory training, particularly in areas such as leadership development and microaggression prevention. Tailored programs that address both technical and soft skills are viewed as critical for overcoming barriers to career progression.

### **Inference:**

Our insights demonstrate that comprehensive training initiatives are a critical foundation for creating an integrated support system within Organisations. By investing in training, companies can simultaneously improve team diversity, work-life balance, career clarity, and leadership development—ultimately driving both employee satisfaction and long-term Organisational success.

## 3.9 Fairness in Promotions and Advancements

### **Quantitative Findings:**

- More than half the respondents did not agree that promotions are awarded fairly.
- There are no statistically significant differences in perceptions across demographic groups, indicating a uniform view on promotion fairness.
- The following correlations are observed,
  - **Inclusive Organisational Culture Enhances Perceptions of Fair Promotions -**  
Employees who view promotions as fair typically work in Organisations that not only actively promote gender diversity but also demonstrate it through balanced leadership. These Organisations offer flexible working hours—including hybrid and remote options—and foster an environment that encourages leadership development, implements policies to reduce microaggressions, and ensures inclusive team formation. In such supportive settings, employees experience fewer instances of gender-based discrimination and enjoy better work-life balance, clearer career pathways, robust training programs, accessible mentorship, and safe channels for reporting microaggressions, all of which reinforce the perception of equitable advancement practices.

### **Qualitative Insights:**

Several respondents cited personal experiences where promotions were influenced by subjective judgments (e.g., “personality fit”) rather than objective performance metrics. There is a recurring theme of male colleagues receiving preferential treatment, with ideas being dismissed when proposed by other genders and only acknowledged when reiterated by men.

### **Inference:**

The quantitative findings reveal that most employees perceive promotion process as unfair, a view that remains consistent across demographic groups. Correlation analysis shows that employees who view promotions as fair tend to work in Organisations that actively promote gender diversity through balanced leadership, flexible work arrangements, inclusive team formation, and robust support systems—including clear career pathways, comprehensive training, accessible mentorship, and effective anti-microaggression policies. These factors contribute to fewer instances of gender-based discrimination and a healthier work-life balance, reinforcing equitable advancement practices. Qualitative insights further highlight that promotions are often influenced by subjective judgments—such as “personality fit”—with male colleagues receiving preferential treatment, underscoring the need for more transparent and objective promotion processes.

## 3.10 Regular Feedback and Managerial Guidance

### **Quantitative Findings:**

- Half the respondents agree that they do not receive regular feedback or guidance from their Managers.
- ANOVA shows significant differences by age group, with older employees (35–44) reporting less satisfaction with feedback, while role type and ethnicity do not significantly impact perceptions.
- Following correlations were observed,
  - **Constructive Managerial Feedback Fosters Transparency and Trust** - Regular feedback and guidance from managers are positively correlated with effective policies to address microaggressions and with employees feeling comfortable discussing pay equity concerns with their manager or HR. This suggests that a culture of consistent, constructive feedback is associated with a supportive and

transparent work environment, where employees are more likely to trust that subtle discriminatory behaviours are addressed and feel safe to discuss sensitive compensation issues.

**Qualitative Insights:**

Interviewees emphasised the need for actionable, individualized feedback that goes beyond generic praise. There is a call for more structured performance reviews that integrate career development and inclusivity measures.

**Inference:**

The quantitative findings reveal that half of the respondents do not feel they receive regular feedback from their managers, with significant variations by age—specifically, employees aged 35–44 report lower satisfaction—while perceptions remain consistent across role type and ethnicity. Furthermore, the positive correlations between regular, constructive managerial feedback and both effective anti-microaggression policies and comfort in discussing pay equity concerns suggest that a culture of consistent, actionable feedback fosters a more transparent and supportive work environment. Qualitative insights reinforce this by emphasising the need for individualised, actionable feedback and structured performance reviews that integrate career development and inclusivity measures, ultimately enhancing trust and addressing subtle discriminatory behaviours.

### 3.11 Access to Mentorship Programs

**Quantitative Findings:**

- More than 60% of respondents did not agree that they have access to mentorship programs.
- The data suggest a near-significant variation by ethnicity, although age, experience, and role type do not show significant differences.
- Below correlations are observed,
  - **Mentorship enhances clear career paths and fosters inclusive, supportive leadership** - Access to mentorship programs appears to be a central pillar for professional growth within the Organisation. Employees who have access to mentorship are more likely to report a clear understanding of their career paths, benefit from adequate training and development programs, and feel encouraged



to pursue leadership roles. This suggests that mentorship not only clarifies career trajectories but also reinforces overall career development. Furthermore, the positive correlations with effective policies and regular training on microaggressions indicate that robust mentorship initiatives are part of a broader supportive framework that addresses subtle workplace biases and fosters an inclusive environment. Overall, these insights emphasise the importance of integrating mentorship with comprehensive career development and inclusivity strategies to empower employees and enhance leadership opportunities.

#### **Qualitative Insights:**

Respondents call for formal, structured mentorship initiatives rather than self-service programs, emphasising the need for regular, proactive engagement. Mentorship is viewed not only as a means of career guidance but also as a critical support mechanism for navigating systemic barriers in the tech industry for women and gender-diverse professionals.

#### **Inference:**

The quantitative findings reveal that over 60% of respondents feel they lack adequate access to mentorship programs, with near-significant variations noted by ethnicity, though age, experience, and role type do not appear to play a significant role. Furthermore, positive correlations indicate that access to mentorship is closely linked to a clear understanding of career pathways, effective training and development, and encouragement to pursue leadership roles, suggesting that robust mentorship initiatives are pivotal for both career advancement and fostering an inclusive Organisational culture. Complementing these findings, qualitative insights underscore the need for formal, structured mentorship programs that provide regular, proactive engagement, positioning mentorship not only as a tool for career guidance but also as a critical support mechanism to help employees navigate systemic barriers within the tech industry.

### 3.12 Encouragement for Leadership Roles

#### **Quantitative Findings:**

- More than 50% of respondents do not feel encouraged and supported by their workplace to take on leadership roles.

- Demographic analysis reveals significant variations by ethnicity—with New Zealand European respondents reporting higher support—and trends indicating that younger employees and those with less experience feel less supported.
- The following correlations are observed,
  - **Inclusive leadership and supportive practices drive advancement and reduce discrimination** - According to the analysis, women and gender-diverse professionals who feel encouraged to pursue leadership roles typically work in Organisations that demonstrate a range of supportive practices. In particular, respondents who observe balanced gender representation in leadership and deliberate consideration of gender diversity in team formation are more likely to feel backed in their career progress. Additionally, these employees often report not encountering or witnessing gender-based discrimination. Key factors—such as flexible working hours, transparent career pathways, and comprehensive policies and training on microaggressions—significantly contribute to creating a supportive and inclusive environment.
  - **Incongruity: Leadership support inversely correlates with clarity on pay raises** - The slight negative correlation between feeling encouraged to pursue leadership roles and awareness of pay raise processes suggests a nuanced dynamic. In practical terms, employees who feel more supported in their leadership aspirations may pay less attention to—or have less clarity about—how raises and bonuses are determined. Conversely, those who are highly attuned to pay structures might perceive fewer direct opportunities for leadership growth. This interplay indicates that while leadership encouragement is valuable, Organisations should also ensure that transparent compensation and promotion criteria are clearly communicated, so employees can confidently connect leadership roles with tangible career and financial outcomes.

### **Qualitative Insights:**

Interview narratives emphasise the importance of visible role models and supportive leadership, as well as the need for clear advancement pathways. Several respondents mentioned that subtle biases and preferential treatment for male colleagues diminish their confidence in pursuing higher-level positions.

**Inference:**

The findings indicate that over half of respondents do not feel encouraged to pursue leadership roles, with noticeable differences by ethnicity and experience—newer and younger employees tend to feel less supported. Employees who work in environments characterized by balanced leadership, inclusive team formation, flexible work arrangements, and clear career pathways report higher levels of support for leadership development. However, a slight negative correlation with pay raise process awareness suggests that while some feel encouraged, they may lack clarity on how advancement translates into tangible financial benefits. Qualitative insights reinforce these results, with several respondents highlighting the impact of subtle biases and a lack of visible role models on their confidence to pursue higher-level positions. Overall, these insights underscore the importance of a holistic approach that combines inclusive leadership practices with transparent compensation and promotion criteria to enhance overall employee empowerment and career growth.

### 3.13 Initiatives for Career Growth and Advancement

**Qualitative Findings (Open-Ended Responses):**

- **Structured Mentorship and Networking:** Respondents urge the establishment of formal mentorship programs, job shadowing, and buddy systems to help navigate career progression and secure leadership opportunities.
- **Clear Career Pathways and Development:** There is a strong call for transparent, well-defined career frameworks with regular feedback and targeted professional development (both technical and soft skills) to ensure that advancement opportunities are merit-based and accessible.
- **Enhanced Recruitment and Inclusive Policies:** Participants recommend revising job advertisements to eliminate gendered language, increasing the visibility of diverse role models in senior technical positions, and improving pay transparency through regular communication and equity audits.

**Inference:**

The responses underscore that women and gender-diverse professionals seek systemic and structured support mechanisms that go beyond ad hoc initiatives. They desire proactive policies that not only clarify career paths but also foster an inclusive culture where merit and diversity are genuinely valued.

### 3.14 Experiences and Management of Microaggressions

#### Quantitative Findings:

- About 45% of respondents reported experiencing gender-based microaggressions. 15% were neutral.
- Demographically, microaggression experiences were most pronounced among mid-career professionals. In contrast, respondents over 55 reported lower incidences, and views among the youngest groups were moderate. While both technical and non-technical respondents reported these experiences, slight variations appeared by role type and ethnicity.
- ANOVA results indicate that, aside from years of experience, there are no statistically significant differences by age group, role type, or ethnicity.
- The following correlations were observed,
  - **Impact of Gender-Based Microaggressions on Diversity Perceptions and Organisational Trust** - Employees who experience microaggressions related to their gender at work are more likely to have a negative perception of diversity initiatives, specifically in terms of whether gender diversity is actively promoted. Additionally, these employees are more likely to report experiencing gender-based discrimination and they are not satisfied with the inclusivity and support initiatives in their workplace.

#### Qualitative Insights:

Open-ended responses describe subtle yet pervasive behaviours—including being interrupted, the appropriation or dismissal of ideas by male colleagues, and gendered remarks about appearance—that force many women and other gender-diverse professionals to “get a thicker skin.” Several respondents noted that such microaggressions not only erode confidence but also discourage active participation in meetings and decision-making processes. Additionally, women reported being disproportionately tasked with administrative duties and encountering language or cultural norms that marginalize their technical expertise, further reinforcing exclusion in the workplace.

### **Inference:**

The findings reveal that nearly half of respondents have experienced gender-based microaggressions, with mid-career professionals reporting the highest incidences, while older employees and the youngest cohorts report relatively fewer occurrences. Although differences by age, role type, and ethnicity are not statistically significant, the data show that microaggressions are associated with more negative perceptions of diversity initiatives and reduced trust in the Organisation's inclusivity efforts. Qualitative insights further emphasise that subtle discriminatory behaviours—such as interruptions, dismissal or appropriation of ideas, and gendered remarks—erode confidence and discourage active participation in decision-making, while also reinforcing exclusion in the workplace. These findings underscore the critical need for robust, comprehensive strategies to address microaggressions, enhance support systems, and foster an inclusive culture that truly values and integrates the contributions of all employees.

## 3.15 Organisations addressing Microaggressions

### **Quantitative Findings:**

- 70% of respondents do not agree that their workplace policies effectively address microaggressions.
- No statistically significant differences in perceptions were found across age, years of experience, role type, or ethnicity, suggesting that uncertainty about policy effectiveness is widespread.
- Below are the findings of correlations,
  - **Effective Microaggression Policies Enhance Trust and Inclusivity** - The findings indicate that effective microaggression policies are a key component of a supportive and inclusive Organisational culture. Employees who perceive that their workplace has robust policies to address microaggressions also tend to report positive indicators in several areas: they observe active promotion of gender diversity, balanced leadership, face less gender-based discrimination and clear, fair career advancement opportunities. These employees also feel more comfortable reporting microaggressions and discussing pay equity, which is bolstered by regular training and transparent compensation practices.

**Qualitative Insights:**

Several respondents mentioned that, despite formal policies, the day-to-day reality often falls short. For example, some noted that microaggressions continue unabated because they are either normalised or not adequately escalated to leadership. One respondent described the “vicious cycle” where raising concerns about microaggressions led to being perceived as a troublemaker, thereby discouraging further reporting.

**Inference:**

Despite a significant majority of employees indicating that microaggression policies are ineffective, the correlations reveal that robust, consistently enforced policies are a vital element of an inclusive workplace culture. Where such policies are perceived to work well, employees also report active promotion of gender diversity, balanced leadership, fewer instances of gender-based discrimination, and fairer career advancement opportunities—suggesting that effective measures against microaggressions can boost overall Organisational trust and inclusivity. Interestingly, however, employees who view microaggression policies as strong also tend to be slightly less comfortable discussing pay equity, hinting that while anti-bias mechanisms may be well established, compensation remains a more sensitive or less transparent topic. Qualitative accounts reinforce that day-to-day experiences do not always align with formal policies, as microaggressions can be normalized or insufficiently escalated, leading to a “troublemaker” label for those who speak out. This underscores the need for not only robust anti-microaggression policies but also transparent compensation practices and open dialogue around pay, so that employees feel equally empowered to address both subtle discriminatory behaviours and pay-related concerns.

### 3.16 – Comfortable in reporting incidents of Microaggressions to HR

**Quantitative Findings:**

- Approximately 60% of respondents do not feel comfortable reporting microaggressions to HR.
- Demographic analysis reveals that comfort levels do not differ significantly by age, years of experience, role type, or ethnicity, indicating that the issue is pervasive across the board.

- Here are the insights from correlations.
  - **Inclusive Culture and Transparent Practices Enhance Reporting Confidence-**  
Employees who feel comfortable reporting microaggressions to HR tend to work in environments characterized by balanced leadership, where there is no gender-based discrimination and proactive inclusion practices—such as actively considering gender diversity in team formation—which are closely linked with transparent career pathways, fair promotions, and equitable compensation. These positive Organisational factors are further reinforced by supportive HR practices, including regular training on preventing microaggressions and clear policies that enable open discussions about pay equity and leadership development. Overall, these correlations suggest that a comprehensive and transparent work environment not only enhances comfort in reporting microaggressions but also fosters a culture of inclusivity and employee advocacy.

#### **Qualitative Insights:**

Some interviewees recounted that while they are aware of HR channels, past experiences or a lack of prompt action has led them to feel hesitant about reporting. A recurring theme is that, in many cases, the onus is on the individual to “tough it out,” which perpetuates the cycle of underreporting.

#### **Inference:**

The findings reveal that nearly 60% of respondents do not feel comfortable reporting microaggressions to HR, and this discomfort is consistent across all demographic groups, indicating a widespread issue within the Organisation. Correlation analysis shows that employees who work in environments with balanced leadership, less discrimination, proactive diversity in team formation, clear career pathways, fair promotions, and transparent HR practices—such as regular anti-microaggression training and open discussions about pay equity—tend to feel more confident in reporting. Qualitative insights further underscore these trends, as several interviewees noted that past inaction and the burden of “toughing it out” discourage reporting, emphasising the critical need for a more responsive and supportive HR framework to foster an inclusive culture and promote employee advocacy.

### 3.17 – Workplace Training on recognising and preventing Microaggressions

#### **Quantitative Findings:**

- Approximately 86% of respondents do not agree that regular training on microaggressions is provided.
- ANOVA analysis indicates that perceptions of training do not significantly vary by age, experience, or role type—but there is a significant variation by ethnicity, suggesting that cultural factors may influence how training is perceived.
- Correlation findings reveal the below.
  - **Microaggression Training as a Catalyst for Organisational Support and Career Advancement** - The data reveal that regular training on recognising and preventing microaggressions is strongly linked with a broad spectrum of supportive workplace practices. Employees who receive this training tend to have a clearer understanding of their career paths, benefit from adequate training and development programs, and enjoy better access to mentorship opportunities. Furthermore, these individuals also report feeling more encouraged to pursue leadership roles, experience effective policies to address microaggressions, and feel comfortable reporting such issues to HR, while also perceiving their Organisation as having transparent pay and compensation practices. Collectively, these correlations suggest that robust microaggression training is a critical component of an inclusive work environment that not only mitigates subtle biases but also reinforces a culture of continuous learning, transparent communication, and supportive career advancement.

#### **Qualitative Insights:**

Respondents noted that while training programs exist, they are often infrequent or optional, which limits their impact. Some expressed a desire for more regular and mandatory sessions, coupled with practical, scenario-based learning that addresses real-life situations.

#### **Inference:**

The quantitative findings reveal a critical gap in Organisational support for addressing microaggressions, with approximately 86% of respondents disagreeing that regular training is provided. Although perceptions of training do not significantly vary by age, experience, or role



type, significant ethnic differences suggest that cultural factors influence its effectiveness. Moreover, the correlations indicate that robust microaggression training is closely linked to a clearer understanding of career pathways, enhanced access to mentorship, supportive leadership, and transparent compensation practices—factors that together foster an inclusive work environment. Qualitative insights reinforce these findings by highlighting that existing training is often infrequent and optional, with employees calling for more regular, mandatory, and practical sessions to effectively mitigate subtle biases and promote continuous learning.

### 3.18 - Pay Equity & Career Progressions Challenges

#### **Qualitative Findings (Open-Ended Responses):**

The responses highlight persistent issues with pay transparency and inequity, with many respondents frustrated by opaque pay scales that leave women—especially those in technical and senior roles, and migrant women without extended family support—consistently underpaid relative to their male peers. Several noted that exclusion from key projects and decision-making opportunities reinforces a vicious cycle: without being given challenging work, their performance cannot be fully showcased, which in turn stifles their career progression and future pay raises.

#### **Inference:**

Overall, the responses call for more granular, role-specific pay equity data, fair and transparent promotion practices, and systemic changes to disrupt traditional, male-dominated hiring and advancement practices.

## 4. Key Insights and Recommendations

### Key Insights

#### **Superficial vs. Genuine Diversity**

Many employees perceive that while Organisations claim to promote gender diversity, these efforts often remain superficial. Without systemic policies in recruitment, promotion, and retention, diversity initiatives fail to translate into meaningful inclusivity and equitable treatment. Negative experiences—such as gender-based discrimination and microaggressions—undermine confidence in these initiatives and affect both internal advocacy and external reputation.

### **Clarity of Career Pathways**

A significant proportion of employees lack a clear understanding of their career trajectories. Those who do have clarity often work in environments that prioritise diversity in team formation, maintain supportive work-life policies, and provide robust training, fair promotions, and transparent pay. Yet, even in Organisations with well-defined entry-level and mid-level frameworks, senior technical or leadership pathways remain ambiguous, especially for women returning from leave or from migrant backgrounds, highlighting the need for targeted long-term career support.

### **Team Formation and Compensation Transparency**

Many employees do not believe that diversity is actively considered when forming teams, with certain demographic groups (e.g., specific ethnicities, mid-career employees) expressing higher dissatisfaction. Correlations show that inclusive Organisational practices—balanced leadership, flexible work arrangements, career development opportunities, and robust microaggression policies—significantly improve perceptions of team diversity. However, a concerning gap emerges between visible team diversity efforts and transparency in pay practices, underscoring the need for a unified approach that addresses both diversity in staffing and equity in compensation.

### **Leadership Representation and Organisational Culture**

Leadership roles are widely seen as unbalanced, with mid-career professionals and longer-tenured employees expressing the most concern. Balanced leadership, on the other hand, is strongly linked to a range of positive outcomes: from enhanced innovation and inclusive team formation to healthier work-life balance, clear career pathways, and equitable compensation. Negative workplace behaviours—such as discrimination and microaggressions—correlate with perceptions of unbalanced leadership and impede career advancement.

### **Discrimination, Microaggressions, and Career Development**

Employees who encounter gender-based discrimination or microaggressions report more negative views on career pathways, promotions, leadership support, and compensation fairness. These experiences heighten awareness of bias yet also highlight the need for effective

reporting channels and robust policies to address both overt and subtle discriminatory behaviours. Subtle forms of bias, such as undervaluation of expertise and tokenistic treatment, cumulatively erode confidence and stall career progression.

### **Diversity as a Catalyst for Innovation**

There is broad recognition that gender diversity significantly drives innovation, particularly in technical roles. Organisations with balanced leadership, inclusive team-building practices, and supportive work-life policies tend to harness diverse perspectives for creative problem-solving. However, discriminatory behaviours and subtle biases substantially erode these benefits, emphasising the importance of eliminating barriers to fully realize the innovative potential of diverse teams.

### **Work-Life Balance and Domestic Responsibilities**

While many employees report a manageable work-life balance—often aided by flexible work arrangements—a notable group still perceives significant strains on personal or family time. Women, particularly those bearing disproportionate domestic responsibilities, struggle to benefit fully from flexible policies due to blurred boundaries and cultural assumptions about caregiving. This underscores the need for comprehensive strategies that address workload management, scheduling fairness, and cultural norms to mitigate these tensions.

### **Value and Limitations of Flexible/Remote Work**

Flexible working hours and remote/hybrid models are broadly valued for managing professional and caregiving duties, correlating with stronger perceptions of diversity, balanced leadership, and inclusive team formation. However, these practices do not entirely alleviate workload pressures or domestic burdens. Implementation challenges—such as uneven distribution of tasks—can reduce their positive impact, signalling the importance of refining policies to ensure equitable workload allocation and clear expectations.

### **Training, Mentorship, and Fair Promotions**

Effective training programs—particularly those addressing both technical and soft skills—emerge as foundational to fostering inclusive team formation, better work-life balance, and clearer career paths. Access to mentorship and encouragement for leadership roles are also crucial, indicating that structured, proactive engagement and transparent promotion practices can significantly bolster employees' sense of growth and inclusion. Conversely, many perceive promotions as unfair, reinforcing the necessity for more objective, transparent criteria.

### **Managerial Feedback and Inclusive Policies**

Regular, constructive feedback is associated with higher trust in anti-microaggression policies and greater comfort in discussing pay equity. However, a substantial group does not receive sufficient managerial guidance, particularly among certain age brackets. This gap suggests the importance of performance review systems that integrate career development and inclusivity goals, ultimately fostering a more transparent and supportive work environment.

### **Microaggression Policies and Reporting Culture**

A majority of employees do not find their workplace microaggression policies effective. Nonetheless, correlations show that strong policies significantly improve perceptions of diversity, leadership balance, and fair career advancement. Interestingly, comfort in reporting microaggressions is still lacking, even where formal policies exist, partly due to normalization of such behaviours and the fear of being labelled a troublemaker. These findings emphasise the need for consistent policy enforcement and open dialogue around pay equity and microaggressions to ensure employees feel secure in voicing concerns.

### **Retention, Advocacy, and Pay Equity**

While employees value flexible arrangements and a supportive environment, some still contemplate leaving their jobs or the tech sector altogether, often varying by ethnicity. Robust anti-discrimination measures, clear career pathways, and transparent compensation practices can mitigate these turnover intentions. Notably, some employees remain hesitant to discuss pay equity, highlighting an ongoing need for clarity and openness in compensation and promotion processes.

## Recommendations

### **Embed Genuine Inclusivity in All HR Practices**

Move beyond superficial diversity claims by integrating anti-bias, anti-discrimination, and microaggression training into mandatory, regularly updated HR protocols.

Implement transparent recruitment, promotion, and retention strategies, ensuring that all decisions are merit-based and free from subjective biases.

### **Strengthen Leadership Development and Career Pathways**

Provide structured mentorship, regular managerial feedback, and equitable leadership opportunities.

Clarify and communicate senior technical and leadership pathways, especially for women returning from parental leave or for migrant employees, ensuring equitable advancement is achievable for all.

### **Promote Transparent and Equitable Compensation**

Conduct regular pay audits and publicly share clear pay structures and promotion criteria.

Foster an environment where discussions about pay equity are normalized, ensuring that trust in anti-bias measures extends equally to compensation matters.

### **Enhance Work-Life Balance and Flexible Policies**

Refine flexible work arrangements, including remote/hybrid options, to address scheduling conflicts and uneven task distribution.

Develop strategies to mitigate domestic burdens on women and caregivers, including explicit support for balancing professional and home responsibilities.

### **Expand Training and Development Initiatives**

Invest in comprehensive programs that cover both technical skills and soft skills (e.g., leadership, communication, and anti-microaggression training).

Tailor training to various career stages and backgrounds to accommodate diverse learning needs and cultural differences.

### **Ensure Robust Microaggression Policies and Reporting Channels**

Communicate policies clearly and enforce them consistently.

Create a supportive reporting framework that encourages employees to raise concerns about discrimination, microaggressions, and pay equity without fear of retaliation.

### **Adopt a Holistic Approach to Inclusive Team Formation**

Actively integrate diversity considerations into project team composition.

Pair these efforts with transparent compensation practices and promotion criteria, so that visible diversity initiatives are reinforced by equitable financial recognition.

### **Monitor Retention and Address Cultural Gaps**

Track and analyse turnover intentions, especially among underrepresented ethnic groups and mid-career professionals.

Use targeted interventions (e.g., mentorship, leadership programs, flexible policies) to address the unique challenges these groups face.

### **Encourage Constructive Managerial Feedback**

Implement performance review systems that prioritise individualized, actionable guidance and align with career development and inclusivity goals.

Train managers to provide culturally sensitive, constructive feedback that fosters employee growth and addresses subtle biases.

### **Regularly Assess and Evolve Diversity and Inclusion Strategies**

Gather continuous employee feedback through surveys and listening sessions.

Evaluate the effectiveness of current initiatives—such as mentorship, flexible work policies, and anti-discrimination training—and refine them to ensure meaningful, sustained improvements in workplace inclusivity.

By adopting these recommendations, Organisations can transition from superficial diversity efforts to a fully integrated, equitable culture—strengthening employee satisfaction, fostering innovation, and enhancing overall Organisational reputation in the competitive tech industry.

## **5. Conclusion**

In conclusion, our findings underscore the need for a comprehensive, systemic approach to diversity and inclusion within the Organisation. While visible diversity initiatives are in place,

many employees—particularly mid-career professionals and certain ethnic groups—perceive that these efforts are superficial and fail to address deeper issues such as biased promotion practices, unclear career pathways, and inequitable compensation. To foster genuine inclusivity and improve Organisational outcomes, it is essential to integrate robust leadership development, transparent pay practices, flexible work policies, and comprehensive anti-discrimination measures. By addressing these interconnected areas through targeted interventions and continuous evaluation, the Organisation can enhance employee satisfaction, retention, and its external reputation as a truly inclusive workplace.

## **Glossary of Terms:**

**ANOVA (Analysis of Variance):** A statistical method used in the study to analyse differences between group means and their variations among different demographic groups.

**Career Pathways:** Structured progression routes within an organisation that outline potential advancement opportunities and requirements for career growth.

**Discrimination:** Unfair or prejudicial treatment based on gender, leading to negative impacts on career progression, job satisfaction, and workplace advocacy.

**Gender Diversity:** The equitable representation and inclusion of people of different genders within the organisation, particularly in leadership and technical roles.

**Gender-based Microaggressions:** Subtle, often unintentional discriminatory behaviours such as interruptions, idea appropriation, or dismissive treatment based on gender.

**Hybrid Work:** A flexible work arrangement that combines remote and office-based working.

**Inclusivity:** The practice of providing equal access to opportunities and resources for people who might otherwise be excluded or marginalised.

**Leadership Representation:** The balance of different genders in management and senior positions within the organisation.

**Mentorship Programs:** Formal or informal arrangements where experienced professionals provide guidance and support to less experienced colleagues.

**Pay Equity:** The principle and practice of providing equal compensation for work of equal value, regardless of gender or other demographic factors.

**Remote Work:** Work arrangements where employees can perform their duties from locations outside the traditional office environment.

**Retention:** The ability of an organisation to maintain its employees and reduce turnover, particularly among underrepresented groups.



**Systemic Change:** Fundamental modifications to organizational policies, practices, and culture that address root causes rather than surface-level symptoms.

**Team Formation:** The process of assembling work groups, with consideration for diversity and inclusion factors.

**Work-life Balance:** The equilibrium between professional responsibilities and personal life, including family commitments and personal time.